DIARY OF A BOHEMIAN COLLEGE STUDENT

~By Kamran

Preface

*We are a psychic process which we do not control, or only partly direct. Consequently, we cannot have any final judgment about ourselves or our lives. If we had, we would know everything but at most that is only a pretense. At bottom we never know how it has all come about. The story of a life begins somewhere, at some particular point we happen to remember; and even then it was already highly complex. We do not know how life is going to turn out. Therefore the story has no beginning, and the end can only be vaguely hinted at.*

~Carl G Jung in *Memories, dreams, reflections*

When we give a fair amount of thought to such a quotation, we begin to feel insignificance of our lives or of the reality in which our body functions. We then begin to disintegrate the force of our body and the cognizance of our mind into two separate entities. Sometimes we also go so far as to compare one with the other and then value one over the other. The question however is not of the dispute between the idealistic world and the materialistic one. So what then, do we deem ‘psychic’ and stamp the words ‘inexplicable’ or ‘uncontrollable’ on the file that contains the documents of such nature in the cabinet of our mind. The answer to that is simple. The uncontrollable nature is not of the thoughts or the psychic process but that of the psyche itself and in that essence, the words ‘uncontrollable’ and ‘inexplicable’ are written on the tenement walls of our ideologically devastated minds. In simple words, our past and future and immaterial because we live in a world of moments that keep coming and going and moments that have not yet come to us become our future while moments that we have lived through, sometimes surely and sometimes only supposedly become our past. We have no absolute past or absolute future and so there can be no absolute story of a life.

The story that is told in these pages, are of a specific era, and being a story of a specific era, it has certain allusions to actual events and institutions all seen from a definite perspective. There is no beginning, no end, the story is not cyclical. It follows no conformity of perception and flows freely as a coagulation of visions and phenomena followed not even the conformity of language or grammar. The sole attempt of this work of fiction is absolute realism which means the documentation of every continuous and non-continuous process of the story. The story, if it can be called so is of development in all aspects such as social, political, psychological and others. The progression however is not gradual because of the circumlocution of ideals and circumstances.

So, the text of the novel remains what it must ideally remain- a perception, a collection or recollection of events that occur in every sphere of our reality.

**1**

To

The Principal

Sri Venkateswara

Benito Juarez Marg

Dhaula Kuan

Sub: **Student accommodation and students’ rights**

Dear ma’am

With all due respect, I am writing to inform you about the ordeals and the tribulations faced by the students of your college on various grounds right from administrational autonomy and rude behavior of office bearers to lack of even the most basic amenities needed the most by students like ample campus housing, lack of proper drinking water and excessive use of force and guards on student campus and not only will I point out the problems but I will also guide you to the solutions to these problems. Moreover, I would also point to you the consequences should you choose not to heed to my peacefully put solutions for a better and more student friendly campus. In the end, after having created a viable and substantial argument from the perspective of a common student, I would then give your good-self an ultimatum to heed to our demands which would be firm, resolute and absolute. I hope that by the time you reach the end of the letter, you would be so convinced with our issues and agenda that you would be sympathetic to us and give us the proper treatment we so deserve as students of Sri Venkateswara and students of Delhi University.

I would start by pointing to the autocratic nature of the college administration and the hierarchal setup the office bearers who misuse their power for all but students’ welfare and leave no transparency in the working of various aspects of college to students even on their demands. First of all, the counter system of the office is in itself flawed in many ways. The counter system puts pressure on students as students wait in long queues for even the most common work like verification of bus pass forms had the administration not acted so prejudiced and arrogant. We are students, not a bunch of lepers whom you don’t even let inside your office. This is a malpractice that you must eradicate or else the student activists will eradicate it for you. There should at least such amount of official forum between students and administration where a certain level of personal contact or even an emotional one can be possible.

Further, it has also come to notice to certain student activists that a child with disabilities was mistreated by the ICT lab authorities when he went there to avail the username and password for college Wi-Fi. I take it you are well aware that the college internet connectivity is more mine than yours and in fact the whole college is more mine than yours, me being the whole student community here. It is for shame that the college authorities don’t understand this and resort to such fascist sentiments. It has come to notice to certain activists that even though the officials were free and were just lounging around in their ICT office, they said they were busy and the student couldn’t make it out as he was blind. In a way, the officials made a joke on his blindness which is completely unacceptable in a college where there is an active and working Equal Opportunity Cell. This is a direct violation of students’ rights and therefore the administration is liable to action. This is the kind of dictatorial regime the college apparatus of Sri Venkateswara has become and somewhere the student population is to be blamed for all this because we remained silent and let the forces that be take over us our rights, our freedom and our space.

Let me enlighten you with some words about the student population. You might think that ‘student power’ or student mobilization’ are words people use in a speech to make it more rhetorical and fiery. A student is the loneliest person in the world. Students who come from small states or different states will tell you the difficulties of being a student. They are the most miserable, downtrodden and ignored sect of our society, especially here at Delhi University, and more so at Sri Venkateswara. A student from a small city has to cope with many problems than just the course work and the studies in the college and he cannot be called a ‘student’ anymore. When the University ceases to take responsibility of students’ housing and accommodation, food and travel, books and other services, it throws the student into a web of darkness and myriad problems. This is unfair for the student as he is only a student, and he is only supposed to be that way. He is not supposed to be caught in the finance troubles of juggling rent of paying guest accommodation, three-course meal and cost of buying the semester books. As you might know, the University has implemented the Four Year Undergraduate Program Under which there would be four years of undergraduate courses, and under which there was an over-admission of students in almost every course. But the hostel facilities were granted to only one or two students per course. The College authority cannot hide behind the reason of ‘not having enough funds’ because Sri Vekateswara receives bi-annual funding from both Andhra-based TTD committee and Delhi University (Central Govt.). Please understand the compulsion which enabled us to do such extensive research and to go to such extent for our rights. Please try to grasp the fact that we students are humans too, we are a minority too, but there is no Party, no committee, no pressure group for fighting and protecting our rights so we fight our own battles and we take arms to protect our own rights. We take the path of protests and break the barricades of the fascist setup that enslaves us. But we do not do it for our pleasure. We do it just because of the situation you arise, your authority arises and your administration arises. You violate our rights and you expect us to be quiet and then you impose yourself on us even when we are silent.

A great example of your dictatorial stance is the daily appointment of a uniformed guard at the College gate. Let me enlighten you as you may not know properly because your house falls inside the college camps but the guard standing at the gate is dressed in Khaki and enjoys the power that comes with it. I remind you again that the college is a student space and not an LOC border or a terrorist liberated zone where you set up uniformed men. I urge you to stop turning the college campus into a police cantonment.

Actions like these could have been taken silently by students in the past but we have suffered too much now to remain silent. I myself have been at the helm of the ordeals that have cast me now to the path of student activism and fighting for students’ rights. I come from the small town of Andaman and Nicobar and I came to study English literature with aspirations of greatness and ambition but the beasts of real life and the hounds of struggling in a big city gnawed and teethed on my intellectual soul. I was thrown out of my paying guest accommodation because I was contesting for the Delhi University Students’ Union Elections. Consequently, I had to pay a month’s rent for the room in which I stayed for just two days and then I had to pay the full rent, plus the advance and the security deposit for a new room. I was broken, disheartened and totally financially bankrupt. It took me some time to get out of the state of depression which I was in.

Then hidden among the jungles, I find a place of escape, the opium of intellectual mind, Jawaharlal Nehru University and I get more and more engrossed in the campus lifestyle, the witty debates and discussions and the laid out overall environment of a University Campus whose semester fee is just about 200 rupees and the hostel fee is 20 rupees a month and every potential student is given a hostel. Then I analyzed the reason for the establishment of such an idealistic society and this was where I found out about the history of student activism at JNU. The students of JNU are more than aware of their rights and not only are they aware but they are also willing to readily fight whenever their rights are violated. And they don’t stop there. The students there also fight for issues that affect the society in which they live like gender sensitization, minority witch-hunt, fake encounters, peasant revolution and corruption. They have always been at the forefront of activism be it their issues or not, and so they reaped the benefits of their labor.

They have set the example for the next generation of students, us, which you being the educator, the system, could not and they have inspired us to fight for our rights because we have right on our side. They taught us that there is nothing wrong in questioning you vocally, and if need be physically; you are employed because of us and in a way we are your employers. We are the ones whom you should provide the finest service that you never do, not in terms of academic education, or self conduct or basic civil necessities. Let me ask you why there is over a dozen blocks of staff housing when there is not enough housing for students. At least the staff gets a regular salary with which it can afford a lavish house and on the other hand, a student has to spend thousands in college fees, not counting the thousands more on accommodation. This is totally unfair and is a slander of basic students’ rights. Teachers are supposed to be the example for students and here the teachers themselves are money-minded and selfish and the worst part of it is that they are money minded and selfish at the cost of the students.

But now the students are organizing, they are mobilizing. They will not tolerate the lack of housing for their fellow comrades. They will not tolerate the autonomy of college administration and complete opacity in their working. They will not tolerate being shouted at or ignored over by the college staff. They will not tolerate cheap drinking water that is too old to drink just because the maintenance staff is unable to keep a proper water purifier and stabilizing cooler at every floor. They will not tolerate the fascist hierarchy that has been prevailing for long in the college. They will not tolerate the deterioration of any and every student right that is entitled to them, to us, as a part of the Venkateswara student community, as a part of the Delhi University student community.

I have been very respectably and cordially giving you the problems faced by the student community and the solutions that you can opt for that would work towards a mutual benefit but now I must levy upon you the charges, the sentence, the accusation and the ultimatum that we as students, the heartbeat of the education system, the youth and immediate future of the country, and your indirect employers have decided. We would occupy the college ground with every bit of luggage we brought with us as a student because it is the college’s and the University’s combined responsibility to take care of our housing and our belongings which are supposed to be in a college hostel rather than an expensive but worthless paying guest accommodation. We will not vacate the college premises as long as we are not transferred to a college-controlled permanent housing for which we are willing to pay too. This is not just a movement for student accommodation but for every student right that has been incessantly broken down and violated by the whims and fancies of the college authorities. The occupy movement will be convened at an unspecific time if in ***three days*** there isn’t a valid assurance for your side. I hope you heed the gravity of the situation, the serious tone of this letter and of the moment and the prime importance of time which you should follow through in your correspondence. This is propaganda of the deed. The whole student community of the college is expected to be a part of this. We have nothing to lose but the chains that enslave us. We have a world to win.

Hoping for a favorable reply from your end.

Yours sincerely

(Kamran)

This was the anarchist’s gunshot. He had a flashback of everything, right from time he set foot on Delhi, the college life, lige in the accommodation, the wild conversations, the movement and and his involvement in it, the elections, the debating society, the tournaments he attended, the tournaments he missed, the whirling hallucinations, the maddening walks, the deafening silence of the nights. One by one they all came back.

-The crow…the symbol of the start and a calling of the dead…I am the dying. I hear. Wake up…wake up up…rise …rise...Caw…caw… the sunshine is extinct in the ravine of darkness. Break it…Break the house of darkness and let light live long…. Borrow from the artificial orifice but break it. Bleak mind in the dark…Still so under light. The window is sightless, grilled like a prison facing a wall with only a hope yonder to see. No plebeian sight no patrician either. Just the genteel hope ligers and whence this hope should substance, all my melancholy should breeze away and the consonance of live should catch up with me. The future holds for me promises as is the case with everyone and so I am no different from the unwashed masses not even in their straightness to be unwashed. The calamitous is not frightful anymore as it would claim everything and then that would be the end of all. The tragedy therefore would not be the calamity but to survive after it in the rubbles of a post-apocalyptic world. Living in this tenement housing, I could only wonder of the foxy coffeehouse conversations and the fulsome antics of society and student life…the binge music, the uncouth inconsideration and the imposture of ethics they seem to portray like a fully naked woman who, out of some shame for her natural body tries to hide one of her exposed breast with a handkerchief being under full knowledge that the rest of her body is still exposed to the eyes of the onlooker and in that attempt she makes a mockery out of her respect which is not deflowered by the act of covering herself partially but she disgraces herself by the mere act of shame towards her body. If she had been reckless enough to exert herself in the present state then she should have the courtesy, nay the bravery to follow through and this bravery is something that will earn her respect and not the cowardice of clothing herself with the bare minimum amid the penetrative eyes of the ‘civilized’ society. Refinement, something we pride ourselves lauding it as the vindication of our sophisticated and complex society. Roses, they bloom under the sunny blue sky that coalesces with the thick condensed white clouds. I see the darkness inside the colors and the brightness as my vision reverts back to its original scope, and so things to me appear black and white but not in the monotonous sense of good and evil; it is a sense of being in the world and being out of it. If you see the colors, you are in the world and if you see darkness, you are out of it. What of music then, and what of those ears that are unmoved by the melody that is constituted ‘music’. Games are played as one foot beats the other in a race to the next step. Music is then heard and sight is then seen and a man is said to live only then. Time can be managed as men can but the circumstances ought to be favorable and idle time ought to be beaten. If any of the conditions fail to concur, the manager, no matter how much of an iron hand he claims to be will lose control over his working body and time in the similar manner will wreak havoc upon the man who has failed to abide by it. Time is a primarily unbroken moment divided only by the will of man to put things in order. The first sight of the gates were an abnormality, it was a fiction that in the present moment could be libelous and so I enter yet I hope nothing in particular, expect nothing in substance, just maintain to have a ‘a nice day’-

He walked along in the company of people who paid no attention to him albeit he was not looking for attention but familiarity and not a fraternal familiarity but the slightest hint of similitude that one potential student would look for in the other. That was not found. He remembered to buy a notebook to make notes in classes and he went to the nearest stationery store to buy a register. He approached the counter and asked for one and he was provided with a thick register as was his demand. He pulled out a five hundred rupee note from his wallet and the owner stated that he had no change and it was Rahil’s responsibility to gather change from some source. He was not sure what to do. He looked at the time and found he was late for the class.

“Hey, you’re in English Honors, right?” a boy with medium sized curly hair and thick lips, thick enough to be a peculiar feature for his identification asked him only partially looking at him. He was dressed in a loose and faded t-shirt and loose jeans that was also of lost color but the look did not make him shabby at all. Or perhaps it was Rahil’s perception that saw no shabbiness in him but only another fellow student an in all likeliness a friend if present state of things elongated themselves into the future. He was not in need of a friend that would be a brother to him; he was in need of a friend that would be a lover to him. But the ones that were of his sorts hid in somewhere to avoid the eclipse of the present age.

“Yes, as a matter of fact I am. You’re in English honors too?” Rahil asked with intent forgetting again the habit of asking a person he conversed with his name. He could not redound to his disposition towards him with the formality of asking his never but then he was always loathsome of such formalistic technicalities.

“Where are you from?” asked Rahil, adding another question to and follow with a conversation.

“I’m from Tripura but I am a Bengali” he replied with a sense of hidden pride that Rahil could not detect because he was not keen on detecting it. He was also not keen of getting to the class in time now that he had found a partner in crime but he was keen on knowing this young man in a much better way. The young man saw the matter to his delay as he haggled over the shopkeeper for change.

“Here, let me take that for you.” He said and took a bunch of notes from his wallet to pay for the notebook.

“I’ll return you as fast as I can manage some spare change.” Rahil replied to his philanthropic generosity.

“Just return me in good time.” The boy replied.

They walked together towards the college.

“What’s your name?” asked the young man.

“Rahil, and what’s yours?” he remembered the question and mouthed it, the previous question of the boy serving as a cue to his memory.

“My name is Arnab.” He said, looking at him with glowing eyes. There was something very delicate about his voice and it could have been feminine but Rahil was not in a mood to make out. He was not in a mood to look at his antics and make out what kind of a person he was. He did not care for his personality although he did seem of shy nature. On asking whether he was interested in writing, he replied that he was interested but not in a commercial manner as to publish it. Arnab replied that he was more content on writing rather than seeing it get published and the true joy came in giving words to emotions and the thoughts going inside the mind. This was something that Rahil was completely against because for him, writing was a painful process and the preservation of writing and the restriction of his works only to himself was a wound which sent waves of sharp neuralgic pain as long as it remained. The only release from the pain was if the words were incanted and its meaning was understood by something other than himself too and it did not matter if the understanding of his work was built along a different concept as a different reader made meanings out of his words as long as some form of meanings were made and mortal words on paper that can be burnt, erased or obliterated was transformed into immortal ideas.

Both of them were confused as to where there class actually was. The official timetable had not yet been launched and so they strolled aimlessly, climbing the stairs and finally stopping opposite to the Department of English and finding out to their amazement that many other students were waiting there too. He eyes shied away when he wanted to take a look at his peers. He wondered why it had shied away standing among them as equal to them still there was something he had in his hear that they did not and though it was painful, it still was a part of his personality. He was not a shy person in presence of people his age and was always a boisterous one in such a company. He would be the vital vein, the bulletin, the sparkling one but now e was a black horse and he was not even sure if other students acknowledged his presence.

‘Probably not’ he thought to himself.

The herd of the students was then aligned in order as the figure of a woman approached them. She in stopped in half way and made a gesture with her hand to follow her. She led them to the far end of the corridor and was the first to enter into room 206. She moved her face continuously and all attempts of Rahil’s to focus on her face were blown away by her constant movements and his own activity of finding a seat. Arnab sat on a bench in the front row with a girl and Rahil wanted to sit in the front row but all the seats being full, he was not able to do so. He took a seat exactly in the middle of the room. His position made him a lighthouse standing on the bench and being surrounded on all sides by the endless ocean of youth. Somehow he finally gathered enough blood in his heart to pull up his eyes from the ground and look at the face of his classmates. They all had different faces. ‘But that is the rule of life isn’t it? Every face is different as every life is different. If that is the case, why do I still feel that they all have something in common and I do not share that common link with them?’ he thought to himself repeatedly.

“So class, this is your first proper academic day in your four year course. Though of structure of the course might have been changed, the nature of study of English literature remains the same. There is no doubt about it. Most of you might have studied English under the national board and expect to be the syllabus in the college of similar laxity. Well let me tell you that is not the case. A study into English literature is more difficult than sciences because in disciplines like engineering, you have to be aware of the facts and the facts are limited. When you have the facts, you work with those facts and train yourself to engineer things and hence the study is of a limited and reasonable formulation whereas literature is endless. There are no facts, just theories and each book or a poem or any form of literature is based on a new theory or a newer version of a theory. It is therefore impossible to study a vast course such as literature to its completion. The theories are sometimes wrapped in stories and sometimes arranged abstractly in verses of a poem and sometimes laid bare by means of essays and academic papers. That being said, literature is not just about a theory but it is about the stories and the poems in which is enwrapped as well. It is our job also to admire the beauty of those stories and those poems. You will learn not just about the stratagems of those stories but also other factors to admire the inherent nature of story in a better manner. It requires reading and reading with considerable voracity. It also requires a fine taste in reading. Don’t dull your tastes with commercial potboilers and strive for better literary novels. They might seem difficult to read but they are worth reading. I tell you all this because you have made a choice that has already changed your life without your knowledge. You’ll feel that gradually but I want you to be prepared for it. You will be taken over by trivial nature the course is rumored to be. Don’t ever make the mistake of believing such rumors. Studying literature is the most complex enterprise any person can take because it is the point of concurrence of all spheres of knowledge known to man right from philosophy, psychology, history to even medical sciences and fine arts such as painting and music. Life will grow toilsome if you reject this fact and on the other hand should you accept this and study with an inspiration, you will feel a lot light and relaxed from the rigor and vastness of literature.” The teacher finally ended.

She followed her speech by reading out the list of books for our semester. In Greek literature, the students needed to be well-versed with the complete texts of Homer’s Odyssey, Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex, Plautus’ Pot of Gold, Ovid’s Metamorphoses and Horace’s Satires. She was assigned to take the classes for the Homeric epic.

For the convenience of students, a Penguin version of the epic was assigned to students where the verse was written in a form of story which would be easy to grasp that the epic poem. Rahil only found this out in the evening when he went out to buy the book. The shopkeeper had given him the book on a discounted rate on his insisting. He did not buy the plays of Plautus and Sophocles as they were only plays and they can always be downloaded and read as an eBook. That was his supreme tendency. ‘But on what would I read’ he thought to himself. He had left his laptop in Port Blair. There was still his mobile phone which had an application for reading documents. With the book stuffed under his arm, he walked through the bright evening streets of the area just opposite to college in which he lived thinking about all that had happened the first day.

-Arnab was a nice, a bit of an existentialist and why should he not be, he is well read. At the cafeteria, it does not matter to him… things do no not matter to him… Life, matters only as much as it means naturally… anything out of the natural is out of his comprehensibility. But then things do not matter to him as it matters to me… All random sorts of things matter to me when it should not, and he calls himself a Marxist. Some communist he will make, the bourgeois kid playing poet. Verlaine, Rimbaud, Valery, Mallarme…quite the latter than the former. I did not suspect him to be homoerotic. He hasn’t read Sartre…he hasn’t read Beauvoir. The tendency is still a mystery, the tenacity, not that much. Is… Pretty much he wants to be called a homosexual rather than actually being one even though an evidence of his amatory affairs was mentioned by him. My doubts cannot be confirmed. What difference would it make? Live is just evil spelt backwards. Libidinal drives are drives no matter if the subject has a penis or a vagina. A mind is gifted to human to explore its possibilities. It is completely wrong to come up with a complaint towards homosexuality as a perversion and a deviation from the natural course of humans, and animals for that matter. If such is the case, then any desire of man, save the Jungian libidinal desires such as hunger and pleasure are unnatural. All animals indulge in sexual activities only for the sake of parturition. The idea of a form of attraction towards members of different sex is not biological but only psychological. This psychology has developed in animals only through eons of ages of evolution and only to enable a form of consciousness towards mating. An animal reduces all sense and forms of judgment to things that he likes and things that he does not. He would avoid doing things that he does not derive pleasure out of. Consequently, if sex were without pleasure creatures of habit would not even consider having sex much less make sex a form of habit. Humans are at the highest of the evolutionary stage and the models of a perfect form of evolution. We have developed a reason and logic apart from the primeval idea of a pleasure drive and have perfected an elaborate system of ethics that urges us to do things we are not much fond of and sometimes refrain from things we crave for the most. Under this system, even sex for pleasure is a taboo. We however have grown a system of alternate ethics and logic to agree with the fact that sexual activity between opposite sex is a form of pleasure and hence must be undertaken. In that case, we have reduced the material aspect of sex which is gestation to sex as the idea of pleasure. Having made that point, we have o understand that if sex is a form of pleasure, the partner ought not to matter. The desire for one man towards another can be sexual as well, if the man derives pleasure out of it.

-Creatures of habit…social animals…God-fearing people. Death-fearing people and life-loving people and concourses between us two were cosmic. Why did Hemingway commit suicide? I believe he shouldn’t have. He believes that the fact that Hemingway committed suicide is the reason he takes his illustrious and a concoctor of the finest literary creation. Denying that point is hard, once realized, but does that affect a man’s literary genius? Poetry… and his obvious Tagore fetish which did not seem awkward or awry considering the fact that his intention on preservation of Urdu resounded in his intention as well; not many people have that habit, and at least not collectively. A gun in the hand of a man wrought with melancholy is deadlier than in the hands of a trained soldier of an elite outfit. Move that Soutine over or I may go bland. The classes, oh yes, the pain of going astray from the stream of literature and to study history, uncloaking it with indiscreet observations and much talk was given about the nature of history, that of world-view and subaltern. We do not have A history. We have many histories and it is not just the case with us but of every person of any nationality. History is just a form of semblance, a big cloak we use to hide the events we wish to abrogate. He… a man who wants to have no priorities is also a being of semblance. I do not hold it against him and I do not judge him. I just do not wish to be hoodwinked and so I view things with an incandescent clarity, sepia- the color of autumn. The summer- yellow-

The next few days in the college and in the accommodation where he lived was marked by an audacious enthusiasm of a knowledge-seeking and knowledge-giving Rahil. He had absconded with guilt of his knowledge away from the society for far too long a time and now it was time appropriate for him to confess to his sins and still go deeper into perdition. He had become the Satan’s son or the closest thing to it. His mind had barricaded the ideals of vitality towards a normal life and steered his soul to a life of constant shift and tug. These shifts and tugs were of course metaphorical and it symbolized his mental strangulations on vivisecting the ordinariness of other people’s lives and at the same time his own. He did not gain much from the people he encountered and the only thing he gathered out of quixotic manipulation of their social thought was experience and notoriety. The latter however was rather an indirect affect than a direct outcome. The affect that it had on his own mind was the comprehension of the independence that he now so luxuriously enjoyed and had also tested it to its flailing limits. He had the religious freedom to become a practicing atheist and spit on the face on any God that showed itself in his peers’ argument but never did the spitting directly and used subversive means to meet his ends. The trend of dethroning a God from a person’s mind was obvious to him. Firstly, produce an excessive image of a God that demands too much and gives too little in return. Such a God was not hard to conjure especially for the generation quarantined by the mass media and surrounded by the fast food culture. These people have high hopes and God is an essentiality for them to ethicize their advertently dishonorable ambitions. Rahil’s job here, instead of the traditional method of convincing people the contradiction and corruption they worshipped was to magnify the dogma that laid the truth of religion. This meant going with them to temples and Rahil did meander with one to a Gurudwara for three days straight. His name was Akshay and he was one of the residents who studied in the same college as his. Both the other person and Akshay were pursuing a degree in mathematics. Rahil went to Gurudwara on his invitation for three days and spend a considerable amount of time that he had left after college. He also spend a great deal of time in college and even after the final period would be over, he would spend his time in the library till it was time to close the library and then he would go to the botanical garden which was a small enclosed area jus opposite to the college campus and take a seat on a bench to write poetry or read in company of the obedient lanes of small red leafed shrubs with thick woody stem and the green broad queue of silky green leaves that eased his sensation when he touched them. Akshay was a fair and frail figure but in contrast to his figure was highly active in sports. He had a handsome face with thick dark haired and unevenly lined eyebrow that had a derelict twist always plastered on it. His hands were tough as an elk’s antlers and as a rule he kept them straight. Initially, he was the son of an army man and had a high air of sturdiness as to who he chose to talk to. It was Rahil who gradually broke the shells of his narcissism and made him a humble being.

It was in these stages of dissolution of the shells that Rahil had taken a subversive course with him. At the time that he had begun going to Gurudwara with him, he practiced all the physical customs practiced inside the place to mirrored perfection and it made Akshay awe at his tolerance. He was wonderstruck by the companionship by what he thought of as an outsider. This was followed by night-long discussions and sometimes even debates on matters most of them probably had heard little of before in their lives. Rahil planned to bombard them with the weirdness of the world even though most of them were born out of such weirdness. However, their own weirdness to them seemed funny and humorous while the weirdness of others seemed sad and terrifying and sometimes even revolting.

“See, the idea of the BDSM or the bondage dominations sadism and masochism is the psychological pleasures of sex and not the physical one. Of course there is physical satisfaction for some, in, say taking a lady’s beautiful sandal covered feet, soft, supple and rosy pink, cold and skinny but pulsating with life and constantly shifting position and assaulting it, gently of course with pursed lips to feel the silky and smooth skin of her ankles, soft skin of her soles and the sleek glimmering skin of her shin with the tough touch of the bone underneath and the odd scent of a feet pleasing and tantalizing the senses all at once.” Rahil announced to the group circled around him on two beds of the main room.

“The idea is mouth watering. But why settle for the leg? I say quest on to where it leads and then you’ll reach the Shangri-la, oo-lala.” A boy said with a vehement force of sexual excitation mixed with high male chauvinism.

“I’m talking about something much much more than sex here. Do you know what it’s like to be bound to a chair and have yourself owned by a girl who wishes to do anything while you are helpless, powerless and hopeless and she holds the power and she literally holds the whip and she cracks your skin with it…”

“Ooh, that’s gotta hurt!” exclaimed another boy in the middle interrupting the long speeches that Rahil was so used to giving on matters both intelligent and vague.

These regular sessions were a form of union which was partly out of habit and partly out of interest. It was a union where human nature was at its most experimental form and there was more scientific uncertainty rather than a logical one. Uncertainty is never born out of logic for purpose to logic is to make certitude of things in order to warrant the nature and legacy of man and also its reason. Reason was the glue that was partly missing and was a variable in the current system of equation. These people wanted to bond with each other and there was a sense of belonging born out of want of belonging rather than any definitive cause. Naturally, this belonging was less solid as it had no cause and so circumstances had to be extenuated in order to keep the sense of belonging in balance.

The idea of a social disintegration that Rahil wanted to emanate upon the people with him might seem somewhat malicious to anyone in the first thought. Akshay went to Gurudwara for three days and then had crumbled to Rahil’s subversive obbligato and instead took on a more social curve.

Not a day went by when the supply of water would run out and the taps would be dry and mercilessly stringent when the students demanded for water. Usually, the students living there used water at the time of its supply and fulfilled all of their chores like bathing and washing cloth at that particular bracket of time. One day the water supply had been too meek and there was no water for the chores. It came to such a point where there was not even drinking water in the purifier. This effused confusion among them as none of them had the experience to cope with the situation. The most that they could offer out of their naïve nascent minds was to go and ask around other people who lived in the same building. There were three more rooms one of top of the other over Rahil’s residence and other students in the PG accommodation were sure that one of those rooms were occupied by a group of girls whom they desperately wanted to encounter but not without a reason. This opportunity, despite of its nettlesome origin provided them with an incentive to pleasurably weave into their rooms for a meeting without looking like sexual predators.

Their lusty guts led them first to the topmost room of the building. Rahil was accompanied by two other residents, Akshay and Ranjan, who was a stereotypical Bihari with his accent and his ambition to clear the civil cervices examination. The three of them knocked at the door of the room on the topmost floor and stood in wait for it to be opened. It did not open soon and a voice testified to it.

“Please wait outside. It might take a while” the voice said in English with a brilliant accent. And so they waited. Rahil was keener on meeting the bearer of such a sweet voice blessed with such finesse of the language. He looked at the two faces that hung on his either side and they had no clue why Rahil was waiting. They were asking Rahil to head down to the bottom level and not waste time here but it was a holiday and there was much time to waste. Added to that, Rahil had something others occupants of the residence barely had and that virtue was patience. He was not calmly patient but just patient. He would be galled if the wait was too long but something or the other would then overtake his mind and throw him into a languorous state of thoughts. He was as patient as he was unpredictable and some would say that his patience was the reason for his unpredictability and for his indecision, for he pondered on a fresh point to make it stale, on a flowing contention to make it stagnant, on a fresh point to make it ripe and from a ripe point to make it rotten. Patience might be a virtue but pacifism can be taken advantage of and Rahil was often taken advantage of, sometime without his knowledge and sometimes with. It was only his patience then that kept him from an outburst on finding out that he was used by people to meet their own ends.

The lock on the other side clicked and before a sight of a body or a sensation or presence of some physical being, an odor took charge of the space almost instantly as the door opened. The smell was that of old clothes and in spite of being odd, to Rahil it seemed somewhat familiar and even pleasant. The scent was a cloud and out of the cloud came the fair body of the long, curly-haired college student like the bright yellow sun brightening as he came close to the three standing at his doorstep. Rahil peeked inside and saw mounds of books and a mattress in the main room. The room was untidy and unkempt and in some ways it seemed more appropriate than abashed as it complemented to the physical attribute of the fair young man with long curly hair. He had a very thin construct and an invisible face. It was an invisible face because it did not attract Rahil’s attention. In the brief time that they spent together, Rahil’s eyes were fixated on the strange student’s hand. It was a white mouse that he petted with the palm of his one had and cupped with ever so ease with the help of the other hand as if it was his pet. The mouse was really an odd thing to have for a pet and so it captured all his attention which could have focused on a more primary interaction that for Rahil was much needed. None of the other two thought of questioning him about the water although they were nudging Rahil by their elbows to ask him the same. Finally, Rahil parted is lips and spoke to the young man who was also most probably a college student in the second or third year, still in his undergraduate degree.

“Do you have running water?” Rahil asked him.

For awhile no answer came, just a blank stare and silence as if he was measuring Rahil and his intents to craft a diplomatic answer. Rahil looked straight into the reflecting pupils of his eyes and as if out of guilt, he cast his eyes down and stood with his head bent downwards. It appeared that he was tending to his pet mouse as he gave the mouse his thumb to nibble on while his head was down.

The head then rose up, as if recharged with hope or some kind of power that was required for him to give an answer and now he stared into the shy eyes of Rahil. His eyes were stoned from consumption and from leading a dissipative. There was unfulfilled bliss in his eyes, the kind one only gets out of consumption and sometimes perchance in alcoholism.

“nn….O” his lips chucked out. There was something very placid in those moments quite different than the placidity of the mind at a time of consumption. It was dejection. It was a resignation to the circumstances, a jettison by the wind or an excision from the dictum of a civil life. Rahil saw a hermitic peaceful solitude in his eyes and yet it came with a cost which was castration from the society. They turned their heads to the direction of the stairs and Rahil heard the door close behind. He wanted to further a conversation, make acquaintances with a man such as him but neither time time permitted such a union nor the company.

They descended the stairs and came to the room just one floor over them and rung the bell as the door was fortified by another door of hard metallic cage in front of it to keep away robbers when the room is without guard. A stout and confident youngster opened the door with a cigarette held between the first two fingers of his right hand. His face was dark and he wore a white t-shirt along with blue shorts.

“And just who might you lot be?” he asked with a personal familiarity.

“We live in the PG on the lower floor.” Ranjan answered, slurping up words from Rahil’s mouth, unwilling to open.

“Ha-ha. I used to live there. I take it you’re not having a good time?” The senior asked and Akshay tried to voice an answer but almost instantaneously Rahil ushered in and said:

“We’re getting by okay. Troubles are ineluctable sometimes but that’s life.”

Seeing as how Rahil wanted to avoid talking about the troubles of their accommodation, the senior changed the topic to a more introductory phase and asked all of them their names and their spare-time activity. His name was Jagat and the first person he asked about was Akshay. Akshay had a penchant for cricket and it just so happened to be that the senior was the captain of the cricket team. He invited him to practice at a later time. Then his attention turned to Rahil and Rahil was asked his leisurely hobbies. Rahil did not specify anything in particular and told he just liked talking, having intelligent conversations, about the state and the state of things, about the manner of live and about political theories. He then revealed to him his Leftist tendencies and egalitarian treatment of the Leftist rebels.

“So, you are for an internal revolution to distort the peace we have in our country?” asked Jagat.

“No country is completely peaceful if there is need for an army to sustain peace.” Rahil replied.

“There are more means to ensure justice for oneself that take up arms. The basic thing which is needed development is a proper education of the policies laid down by our government.” Jagat told Rahil with gestures of his hands.

“Everything that the government issues, everything that it initiates are but safeguarding the position of the government and nothing else. It’s a form of indoctrination and Lenin talks about it in state of revolution and even Marx- that of the state taking a violent role in repressing the class conflicts.” Rahil debated.

“What would you rather have then? Would you rather have it like the Middle Eastern countries where there’s not a moment’s peace and people fight each other on a daily basis? Our most important undertaking should be fortifying our borders because we have Pakistan plundering one end of our borders and China plundering the other. We need to develop enough military strength and stronger national integrity to keep these foreign national threats from invading our country.” He replied and then fell silent.

-Spoken like a true patriarchal conservative-

“I do not see the point in patriotism….” Rahil began but just before he could continue Jagat was taken over by another instant wave of narration.

“I mean, the government has laid down so many provision but people are just not aware. I can assure you that not a handful of people would properly know the power of Right to Information act. Do you know what an RTI is and power vests in it.” He asked, turning his head brashly towards him, the flesh of his cheek trembling by the rapidity of his turn.

“I do.” Rahil replied, with veritable indifference.

“You have not been to JNU, have you? I’ll take you there sometimes.” He told Rahil.

“What goes there?” Rahil asked inquisitively.

Jagat saw the glint at the very mention of the name and held the answer that he thought he was divulging to soon. Instead, he gave it a cryptic turn and laid down on Rahil in a manner as to confound him.

“People just talk…with each other….have conversations…” he said with a smile. Rahil could not understand his intent and turned his head in another direction and looked at the muddy brown ceiling thinking what could have been the cause of it.

“We’ll also go to the Nizamuddin dargah. You get the most delicious biryani there. Oh, both of you are vegetarian. Well, no worries because me and my buddy Rahil are going to have a blast there… aren’t we?” he asked Rahil slapping his back violently and with a harsh percussive sound.

“Sure” Rahil replied recovering from the hard blow.

“Akshay, I’m going for practice tomorrow at our college’s pitch for cricket practice and I would very much like the pleasure of your company. I would also get to see some of your game in that way.” Jagat said, turning his attention to the fair boy who stood unattended along with Ranjan.

“When?” he asked with a smooth voice and flattery could be detected in it.

“Say, around four in the afternoon, okay? You’ll be free at that time?” he asked of him.

“Yes, I will and I’ll be looking forward to meeting you.” He said and rose from where he sat on a divan. Rahil followed him out of the room and he was followed by Jagat who came to greet them outside.

“Smell you later then, tigers.” He said and parted from them temporarily.

-The prime matter in hand remains unresolved-

They entered the PG room and felt the same congested air take over them.

“Can somebody tell me what happened to the water?” Ranjan asked tauntingly and he was right for that part. His anger was also right and so was his short bait. Disappointingly, Rahil went into his room and sat for some moments in the lonely small room the cemented roof of which touched his head every time he stretched to his full height to lax the pressure on his vertebral column. He went into the toilet and turned on the faucet to miraculously find out that it was giving that pure colorless cold liquid that they were in dire need of. Without wasting any moment then, he brought a bucket from the adjacent bathroom and put it under the tap. Patiently then, he turned the on and relieved he was to discover that it was flowing with water too. Hurriedly, he cleaned himself up and dried his body with his towel.

-A friend made or a sly conversation, there is no means to know. Gather all your stones and one by one throw them into the paused pond to watch the ripples artful groove in succession of the other, the lines in the ripples too, one in succession of the other and the thoughts in the mind too one in succession of the other, or infused? Mutated, amputated from one body and joined to the other, a three-eyed monster or a cherub with three limbs on each side- the angel of thrashing morbidity. Which is the most frightening? None; all God’s creatures, the passionate and the merciful, and also the non-existent to those who climb outside the pit of mob-mindedness but alas none ever do. The stakes, the stocks, the brims and the folds to which many… yes, many layers are affixed affront to make the stratum…unawares; kind of, give it a stratum. Think of that-

-I am. I am doing. I am on my own. These are glorious people who amount to worthless existence, an existence that they are proud of and others like them are proud of, but not me. I live on the crags of humanity, the sharp ones and do live-

-Starting with one, and then the other and then the other. One page turns to reveal the printed words on the other side...laws of nature? Not coined, living free and feigning wit to those who seek wit in us. The mind, she is a mistress, the heart a slave. Never think otherwise. The heart is just a beating pulp of muscle matter and blood. No romance in that. You’re interested in poetry, Jagat had asked me? A bard, the word he did not mention? Most probably I am. He is too. Read some of his poetry, he insisted. Jagat would not read mine. His criticism means less to me. Make it a note to read his poetry? Surely, time ought to give its permission. The ghosts, the hosts…the ghosts, their voices, the roommates, the ghosts, their voices… Far, near, around about…the skirmish of their sounds, the ambuscade of their high and low pitches; sonic warfare. The weapons are helped out of the lockers and loaded….reloaded. Shot…shot… Senses are blazing in the fire…. Toes are numb… Fading parades… people willing to do anything…Warfare…warfare… The shoe fits but the sandals are comfortable. The proud sovereign kneels down at the foot of the people. Stand…nay…heel...heed…kneel. Far in the distance, the flag of the sovereign burns and the people celebrate the grandiose of their revelatory power and might. Such is youth. Not living in a dumpster and extending an image of greatness just because one controls the numbers. I feel hot. Is the air conditioner on? No, better switch it on then. Sweat sticks. Dab it with a cloth, a kerchief. Don’t have one, underwear then. Beware you, a fresh one. Fell your breath…count it- per second, per minute; the way to check a working heart, a sound heart. Grouch in your room and at any person who comes inside. Why? Because you can. Be spiteful. Do so. But they comply, don’t they? Still. Some of them don’t. The classes are going well. Well enough. All my writings sit in a laptop sit at Port Blair…repentance. The novels were not of quality however. It would only lessen my repute, if I ever had one. Need to lobby more. What more? Friends? Are there? Sure. One…two…three…people who live with me…Arnab, sure. A one to share thoughts with, he is. Honest. Don’t make the same mistake Othello did. How much time it has been here? Not even a week. The classes haven’t even been properly started. Tragedy, comedy, the Indian stories…phish. Zounds! Friends I shall have but of quality rather than quantity. In that I shall look into. Can I connect? It is a multi-stranded question that cannot be answered without practicality. Go on, step out, the world is yours and the house is empty. Burn it down. See what it feels like to be a delinquent. Evening, I have to be with Akshay and with Jagat. Looks nothing to recompense but peace, company, a smile, a laugh even perhaps…do not look then-

*Now I, a boat lost in the hair of bays,*

*Hurled by the hurricane through bird-less ether,*

*I, whose carcass, sodden with salt-sea water,*

*No Monitor or Hanseatic vessel would recover:*

-The evening comes with all its brightness unsheathed-

The evening air beat on their soft stretched cotton t-shirt as the four strolled by way of the dingy Satya Niketan street out to the busy road to cross it and get into the playfield of the college. There were three netted concrete cricket pitches all of which were occupied. Rahil was asked by another of his roommate who accompanied them, one of the four to be in his proximity at the basketball court which was adjacent to the tennis court. The tennis court was occupied by two short skirt clad ladies with tennis cap keeping their locks firmly aback and with plump white tennis shoes gracing their feet, their socks rolled down to their ankles. Rahil took a seat near the basketball court but his eyes were transfixed on the jaunty movement of those fervent legs that outmoded the fervency of the summer evening. Their feet were a muse to him, more a muse of lust than of beauty and their shining white sneakers ornamenting the quaint stretching and laming muscles of their feet and the more enhanced view of them which included the pink plaited skirt. The sweat changed the complete texture and chromatic hue of her feet. The little drops of sweat refracted light with a prismatic affect as Rahil gazed straight into that salty murky liquid on the back of her smooth and tight thigh. The ladies had their oval and tender backs turned towards him with the butt of their hair gracefully carpeted over their white collar and fallen upon their pink shirt. They stood in a stance playing a game of doubles with their torsos crouched forwards and their faces pruned of any frivolity.

Rahil then turned his sights to the sky, the most beautiful dame of all and the most demanding mistress of all.

*Though you might hear laughing spinning, swinging madly across the sun*

*It’s not aimed at anyone; it’s just escaping on the run*

*And but for the sky there are no fences facing*

The sky was his savior, and nature, the green, the blue, the white and all colors that she in it beholds. The reign of darkness had ended. The mystique of the purple had ended. The glory of the yellow and began to slowly fade away, and blue was the force to dominate. The ground beneath his feet was green, the green that broke out from the brown of the earth, sprouted out as an evidence of life other than that of man’s. Slowly and slowly, Rahil began to contemplate things other than his own self. He began to contemplate his meeting with Jagat and the hearty optimism with which he greeted him although they got into a discussion of polemics. The world was too big for him to brood over and he discovered that people did not live in the world per se, but in their own flotsam of a world, a blue world, an oceanic world, a tantric world. It is not a complete fallacy to live in such a world but it is wrong to glorify such a world that they themselves know little about. His eyes leaned down on the red brick building of the college. It was a building too small. It was not like the older colleges of the University of Delhi. He was not dissatisfied with his college because he had come in contact with some wondrous professors that had put him in wonder. His position, too, in class was that of an experienced litterateur and a giver of discourse if only in an amateur level. His reputation was still building itself and it built itself with affable veracity. He had already made himself a humanist in the eyes of PG residents as he very well was. In his own class too, they were looking up to him as a man of letters and of thorough intellection. The foundation courses were a bore for everyone though, more so for him but the foundation course for English held some promise for students of English literature. The textbooks however were a piddle noting of relevance to the craft of the English language in them.

The teacher however made things interesting. Her name was Miss Latha. She was a Masters’ student at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and taught in the college on an ad-hoc basis. It was in her class that Rahil had first opened the cork of his champagne that was both expensive and exquisite and it opened with orgasmic fuzz.

“Okay class” the lady said loudly and added “tell me about some of the books you have read. Let’s see how well-read all of you are.”

That being said, she started to raise one student after another and asked to ask his or her reading preferences. Most of them resorted to the obvious Charles Dickens’ works or some heathen spirits unknown of the purity of English language intoned the cursed name of Jhumpa Lahiri. Rahil rolled his eyes at such an utterance. When it came to Rahil, he stood u and looked the teacher in the eye. At that moment, all the pedagogical differences were overcome and all he saw standing on the other side was a short dark lady with well trimmed hair held together by sunglasses that she wore over her head and a white short kurta and blue jeans. There was also some kind of a round medallion hanging from her neck, the string for which running along the seam of the kurta’s neck and the silver flashing medallion resting just below it.

“Well, my most prominent influence would be D.H Lawrence…I mean every aspect of his prose is a meticulous breakdown of the human psychology in its most tender phase. Sons and lovers, Lady Chatterley’s lovers, Women in Love…all show very deep analyses of the middle-class culture of Britain and also of the innate, sexual experience both the sub-conscious sexual yearnings and its manifestations. Besides that, I am proud of reading War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy and Ulysses by James Joyce.” He finished but did not take his seat back yet.

“Wow, who is your favorite character?” the teacher then asked.

Rahil was not really sure if an exclamation of a ‘wow’ was in its right place and he was also unsure as to which novel he had posed her question towards. There are many well-developed characters in War and Peace and Women in Love. But he chose best to answer for Ulysses as he felt the teacher was in need for the topic to be spoken.

“I prefer mostly all the characters of Joyce’s brilliant novel and I feel it is the segments of thoughts and figment of consciousness that are more noteworthy than characters altogether, like the final chapter of Penelope, the one in which Molly Blooms ponders over herself and longs for a lover’s touch, recreating the meet of her husband’s when she had given him the seedcake. And then as for characters, Stephen Dedalus, Buck Mulligan… these are fantastically built characters explored psychologically with and beyond all possibilities.” He finished and sat down. He felt all the eyes beaming towards him as he sat down in his place, lonely, not anymore. He had stated his possibility and with that, his quality. None would ever doubt his standing now though it was in the least of his intention to create a literary Arminius of himself. Thus the power of the word of mouth was shown to him, upon him.

The teacher then asked to tear off a piece of paper and write randomly, prose, poem or just random thoughts. Rahil, the looked around him and wrote of what went through his mind and so he wrote of melting faces and of the walls giving off the foul smell of sulfur and their off-white creamy color scrounging to the floor and then coming up in a torrential lapping of spoilt milk to with its putrid smell and acidic taste to drown him. He saw burning eyes fitted into empty sockets in the skull but he wrote that he was not scared now that he was a part of this scar grotesque circus.

As if this was not enough, another class awaited Rahil to indent his nonpareil in the class of Indian writing in English where the students were to study the works of R.K Narayanan. The teacher this time, unlike the one that she succeeded, was a thin stern one with the long face bearing stark resemblance to Virginia Woolf.

She too went through the same routine of asking her students the ‘good reads’.

“Lately, I have read works of Ibsen. Plays…” Rahil said but before he could say anything, she stopped him and asked:

“So is that your thing? You are more into reading plays? I am just trying to figure out your reading spectrum.” She said with squinted eyes.

“Well, I read very divergently…mostly anything I can lay my hands on. As a matter of fact, I read Lenin’s State and Revolution in the college library.” He replied.

-Ibsen…and Lenin…go figure…so much for being your quest of reading spectrum-

After some more clichéd introductory sentences and statements about why does one read a book and what good comes out from it?

-They read the book for fun… I have never heard of a more wasteful use of books… for fun. For pleasure, reading is outmoded by television and the internet and they say reading is for fun! My heart aches…my heart hurts. How could they be so inconsiderate to the very reason of their congregation? One reads to know, to know and only to know. People do not read to have fun. For fun, they can go out and have a dame.

*This is my rifle*

*This is my gun*

*This is for fighting*

*This is for fun*

You read to illuminate your mind. They confuse the term ‘reading for pleasure’, these fools. It dost not meaneth, pleasure. It means reading FOR pleasure...to read in search of pleasure...in search…in words...as they turn into emotions…as they lead to formation of clauses and situations. The pleasure is a teaching then rather that pleasure for sake-

The teacher didactically turned towards the students with a more interactional perambulation about the room and asked the students in her prune thin voice:

“How many of you have left a book in half?”

With just one exception, all of the hands in that class rose and the exception was Rahil. The teacher’s eyes, sheathed by her heavy glasses turned to him and her head bent over him to observe him more closely. Other eyes that of the students turned to his direction too in dismay or disbelief; that could not be said. He felt that their all their stare-downs, the teacher’s included, called for an explanation on his part and so with much obligation, he puffed his chest with nervous breath to make sounds out of his mouth like the keys of a flute shining metallic flute.

“I believe reading is the most giving when we read to know or to find out rather than for bare pleasure. Reading is always, even amidst all the trivialities a form of internalization from the load of matter in a book out of which you choose to retain some and rebuke the left.” He said.

Some nodded their heads, but he felt they did so in disapproval. Their minds could not contemplate the difference between pedagogical learning and self learning because they were destroyed by an education system. He felt pity for them. That is how most of his day went in college and in classes, in collision of ideals and discussions of textual and non-textual matters. He had started going about getting acquainted with the knock-around guys of his batch as such was the company he attracted towards him. As his manners correlated him, he was not to isolate himself in an Ivory tower with people who would thrift his attention and affine him to derail from the bulk of students. He loathed such a company, a company or a suit of friends that would pejoratively if he would associate with someone of a lesser strain of intellect. He thought that not associating himself with such high suit, he could well be labeled as a drifter and a poseur as they would think that his unwillingness to indulge with them came from a fact that he would have to prove himself around them. This is he did not care about.

-Political analysts, journalists and theorists of all kind had their heads very interestingly turned to this year’s University student union elections because the rise of the proto-fascist and soon to be fascist regime of Narendra Modi. With his conservative views and his anti-poor Hindu fundamentalist ideology, he is no good a leader than Laden, or perhaps laden was better, I know Arafat was. Through corporate PR publicity by top Public Relations firm, he has so far made a so-called Modi wave owing to his so-called Gujarat model which is a farce and a dupe. It was so emasculating to the farmers and the small sharecroppers of the city and the proletariat workforce that produced cotton that they had to migrate from the place. It was an economic genocide, and then we have the Gujarat riots, the real genocide. And then there is Gandhi, the corporate corruption model as opposed to the corporate fascist model of Modi. Gadhi, they who have been the reapers of dead souls of the serfs, they who have been the gravediggers of the farmers, the workers and the unions, they who have hoarded so much money that the nation is on the brink of a recession, and Modi will thwart the country into recession, blame it on the past government, like Hitler had done, and Mussolini after him…like all fascist regimes do.

*If my thoughts and dreams*

*Could be seen*

*They’d put my head*

*In a guillotine*

*But it’s alright ma*

*It’s life and life only…*

-and they blame the communists and the activists standing against corporatization as ‘anti-development’. What kind of a development is it if the capital shifts to foreign nation, and even the capital that cannot be shifted, namely outsourcing, which is growing like a sexual urge among the young students who drop out to work as ‘cyber-coolies’. If they mean to say that economic genocide is economic development and the emancipation of unionism and syndicalism is legitimate on grounds of opening doors for foreign investments and mechanization of labor as a consequence to which thousands of workers would lose their jobs, I am sorry to say that you would be the one taking India far back into the age of industrialization and the pangs of that age that we as colonial countries felt in a different way but the British working class felt it sharply and potently. Dickens’ narrative in the novel ‘Hard Times’ tells us of the dark times and the dread of living in such a space. Bill Douglas movies are also a testimony to that age. It is a space where all liberal views are broken asunder, all holistic development is arrested and only a utilitarian empiricist world is left with machines and a creamy one percent owning the means of productions. The mere thought of it is enough to give you a convulsion-

So it was thus that the need of the hour was change, but the question that then rose was whether Rahil was the means to it. He had little say in it though. He was a part of a greater vision and his vision, though enamored by the vision of the collective was an independent picture in a stereoscopic panorama. This was surely the time when not the winds of change but the storms of revolution would shriek the university and the greater environment. The same could not be expected from JNU because a Left-wing Party winning in JNU was a very common occurrence and hence JNU is referred to as the last Left bastion in India. The problem for Left, particularly the revolutionary Left was DU politics and there were significant reasons for that. One was that the students were so depoliticized that they had no clue about what the role of the union potentially was, and this led to the second problem which was the unconscious voting that happened due to many secondary reasons, a prime one being that a day or two before the elections, the larger right-wing student parties would take the students out on free trips to amusement parks, cinema theatres and restaurants to win them over which was a very disgusting practice for a political campaign any which way you look at it. Then there was the practice of distributing free booze to college hostels and student residential areas by the same right-wing parties which one need not mention is another disgusting practice. To top all that, these parties also trade votes of ethnic student groups present in various colleges across Delhi University. So the North-Eastern students’ votes or the votes of different Sections of students from Haryana were bought by a sum of money by the supposed ‘leaders’ of these groups and then the ballot numbers were committed to their memories. Here, as always they had the upper hand again. The candidates of these parties used punctuations and capital and small ‘A’ in front of their name to make sure that their ballot number was one or two. So if the candidate’s name was Aman Chaudhary, his name would appear as A.A.Aman Chaudhary which was an absurd attempt. This just went to show how elite they were obviously apart from how uneducated and asinine they were because a normal student would have to make ten rounds of the office for a legitimate change in his name if the University makes a mistake on their part but these people, enroll in the university with their real names, then file an affidavit and change their names to A.A. what have you and then after the elections change their names back to their original ones. This proved their bureaucratic power and their reach within the college as well as in the university. If that was not all pleasing enough, there is always the muscle power that these candidates have by their side and use to force and intimidate people to cancel their nominations if they see them as a viable threat to their position.

This had happened in the past with an AISA candidate contesting for the Post of President who in fact was Ved Prakash. He was intimidated first, and then strong-armed by the goons of another party who punched him and left him on the street. Obviously, they did not know the power of protest and the reach of AISA in JNU from where a large mob came and instantly filed a report against the assailant and demanded from justice. Consequently, the other candidate’s nomination was cancelled owing to the Lyngdoh recommendation. Still Ved Prakash was not able to win but he managed to five thousand votes which was a big win for a small party like AISA.

In the general body meeting two days after the postcard protest, it was decided that the election was to be given preference and was to be fought on the agenda of the rollback of four year course. A day after that, Amit and Ved came to Vekateswara College and made Rahil skip the day’s classes to make him fill the nomination form for all the posts. Which post he would ultimately fight for, would be decided later. The whole day was long and strenuous as the three had to make rounds between the internet café in the dungeon of Satya Niketan and the perdition that went by the name of Venky. After the printouts of the forms were obtained and the credentials filled, Rahil had to look for two people two propose and second his nomination which was a complicated task given the circumstance that most of his friends from the course were busy with their classes as he was the only one bunking them. Then suddenly the name of Rohit popped up in his mind, and Vishwa, the two seniors who had accompanied him to the theatre. He called Rohit up and was pleased to find out that he was free. So Rahil, along with Amit and Ved went to to Rohit to ask for his signature on the nomination and a copy of his college identity card which was invariably easy as there was a photocopy shop ride besides the college canteen.

“I am happy for you, man. This is a big step. DUSU is no child’s play and you’re contesting it as a first year student. I doff my cap for you, sir.” He congratulated Rahil on his feat with n air of theatricality about him. The person Rahil had narrowed down to second his nomination, Vishwa, had a dilemma of his own and it was only made known to Rahil once he came into contact with him.

“You see, I have no problem in seconding your nomination but the catch is I myself am involved in Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad, or the ABVP- you might not have known this- and if any of the senior members of the Party find out about me seconding a nomination for a person from another Party, it might jeopardize both you and me, because the instant they find out they would ask me to cancel your nomination by taking my name back as seconding your proposal.” He said, with a thoughtful look on his face, more thoughtful for Rahil perhaps than about himself.

“You see, none of this would get out. This just goes to the principal, who verifies it only by seeing your ID card- I mean, they won’t even call you to testify or something- and the form would be straightaway sent to the election commission and locked in a box till scrutiny.” Amit took him step by step in a detailed manner throughout the whole process of nomination and scrutiny and how secretive it was supposed to be to the point that Vishwa had no more doubts left in his mind and was convinced enough to second the nomination. He signed the nomination form and stapled a copy of his identity card along with Rohit’s and in the same manner as Rohit had congratulated him, he did too, just without the theatricality. And so the smaller process was done and now awaited the larger process which was to get the principal’s signature and seal on the nomination papers which was a very frustrating and daunting task as the principal was seldom in her room and was practically non-existent around the college campus which was pretty odd thing considering the fact that the ‘principal’s villa’ was just inside the college campus opposite to the staff quarters hidden under well-maintained garden and large iron gates. It was not a humble home but a home that breathed and bustled with vanity not unlike those posh and guarded houses in the area subsequent to Satya Niketan called Anand Niketan which stood opposite the two colleges Ram Lal Anand and Motilal Nehru College. The situation was worsened as a deadline hung over the entire work of filling the nomination forms and submitting it. The office clerks of the college also proved to be a hindrance as they themselves were frustrated with the Kafkaesque agony of the constricted workspace and the snot-nosed college kids they had to deal with round the clock and all through the office time. They were in a state of stalwartness, not quite here and not quite there, not the owners, the white-collars and neither the working-class, they were stuck somewhere in between in a very horrific frightening space which filled them and with dismay and out of that dismay broke anger and discontent which was highly misguided and not ably channelized. They procrastinated, unknown to the wise works of Samuel Johnson and they misguided and misadvised us, again unknown to the wise works of Confucius.

It took a full two working days to finally manage to get the esteemed principal’s signature and seal. This was less of an abuse of power and more of a display of power in the hidden form of power abuse which is not very uncommon among practicing bureaucrats. Since bureaucracy is highly celebrated in a fascist structure, conclusively the college authority and the college space can well be called a fascist regime.

Rahil’s internal life was simultaneously getting caught up in this greater movement and he began to get the idea that if he won the election for his post, things would never be the same again if they are ever the same in different spaces of time. But the change that Rahil knew he would undergo would not be a change of one form of personality into another but what is known as praxis- the change of ideas into action. It had already begun ever since the filing of the nomination. He was to tag along with Amit and Ved to North Campus where he was to live all throughout the stretch of the election campaign and there was a reason for that. Colleges of Delhi University stretched out to all the four corners of Delhi and beyond and AISA believed that it was important for every candidate of theirs to go to as many colleges as possible and address classes, interact with students and make them aware about conscious voting and the strength of a proper students’ union. Rahil was to start his campaign from North Campus as he had already campaigned in Venkateswara as well as other colleges of South Campus for different issues and events but to colleges in North Campus, he was a stranger. He was a stranger to that crowd, though supposedly and he was stranger to the people there. He needed interaction among that crowd but it was only possible once the nomination was finalized after scrutiny. It would be during the process of scrutiny that the ballot numbers would be announced and ballot number was a very important tool for election campaign. The scrutiny was supposed to happen the next day. The night before the scrutiny, Rahil spent at the North Campus office of All India Students’ Association where he had been for the first time. It was an apartment with two rooms, an adequately big living room, a small kitchen, a big bathroom and a small toilet. There were already close to five people living there including Amit and Ved. There was Dheeraj who looked too old to be a student and was a member of AISA Delhi state unit. Though Mohan, the long-haired fellow with the thick-rimmed glasses did not stay in the same flat, he spent most of time in the office discussing miscellaneous topics from election campaign to strategies of the party in the future. Rahil unconsciously felt heavily influenced with him. Before coming to the South Campus office, Amit and Ved had asked him to wear a kurta which he did and pack an extra ‘roundcollar’ as the word went for t-shirts and a pair of boxers. This was the kurta that Rahil was to wear through the entire process of the over straining election process.

The AISA office had hordes of books neatly lined in many bookshelves and racks. Not all of them were about communism and Marxism though most of them were and a great section of these books were also in Hindi which was a little sad for Rahil as he could not read as fast as he could read English. He could write in Hindi though and since in Andaman, a very distilled and broken version of Hindi is spoken mixed with Urdu and accents from Malayalam and Telugu, reading and even sometimes talking in pure Hindi, the kind that the North-Indians are used to anyways was a bit difficult for him. He found a copy of Orwell’s nineteen eighty four though he had read it once before. But the idea of the novel is one that needs going back to again and again, even though nineteen eighty four, the year might have well passed us.

He heard conversations about him but paid little attention. He saw other people enter the room and join in the conversations about him but paid little attention. All his attention was subscribed to Big Brother who was always watching and Winston Smith evading the omnipotent watchful vision of the Big Brother though the plot is much more than that and he understood that well. He read on knowing that this was his way of resting for a big day that was to come. Finally, his reading was broken by the words spoken from the mouth of Mohan who said “Come candidate, you need your fair share of sleep. Spend the night in my room.” There was a need to do that as the office was so occupied that there were three people who always slept on the floor with a straw mat spread over the floor. They went to his room only after having a hearty meal, paid for by the others as a courtesy and he being the ‘candidate’ was always looked after. It was a compensation for being reduced from ‘Rahil’ to the nameless entity of ‘candidate’ which was of course temporary and that was the very point that bothered Rahil but only mildly. However, for him the ‘candidate’ might well have been a substitute for ‘commandant’ although he neither desired nor felt for such kind of power. More boldly, he was an opponent to it.

The next day marked for arduous work and long wait. First, the finalized four candidates were to go to the election commission office situated right near the Vice Chancellor office where days ago they had protested in front of the gates, and have their nominations checked again and finally submitted. The building was made with such comfort that is seemed unbelievable that it was actually a part of the university. This was in stark contrast to the colleges, especially the ones in the South Campus, Venky included which were small, flooding with students, brick-walled and had bare minimum facilities. The building was architecturally superior to college campuses even of the North Campus and was more than sufficiently air-conditioned, painted, decorated with portraits hanging on the walls that obviously none of the people there paid attention to, and a beautiful staircase that led the candidates to the upper part where the offices of the concerned authorities were located. Here, as always is the case with offices and office people, procrastination was a necessary skill that each of them possessed very ardently. The person in-charge had gone out and the assistant made the candidates wait standing outside the main office. The four disbanded students then banded together as candidates of AISA looked around, talked to each other, and then looked around some more. Rahil was perhaps the most introvert one in the group and he knew not why. Maybe it was something in the architecture that aroused great feelings of distaste in him, or great feelings of injustice and inequality. The others seemed to have little problems with it as they merrily talked to one another and seeing Rahil gradually cutting off involved him only when the time called immensely for it. After a long wait, the official arrived and the whole job turned out to be a matter of two minutes. Then they had to jaunt on to another office where the scrutiny was to be held and submit the papers there. Instead of taking the main road, the four took the short-cut from the Department of Geology and then ended up near the office in no time at all. This work was fast as all the nomination forms were well-viewed over by the senior members of the Party so there was little scope for error. In this phase of the scrutiny, all they had to do was submit the documents that were going to be locked and then scrutinized over by a panel and the final result of the short-listed candidates would be declared later that evening. The sun had already started to lighten and evening was not that far now. So after they submitted the document, they made way outside the gates. As they moved outside, they heard loud slogans and bangs of drums and they knew what the scene was outside. The candidates of National Students’ Union of India and Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the two right-wing parties that had always been elected since time immemorial in the history of Delhi University and had been tarnishing the history of student unionism since time immemorial had also sent their candidates to submit their nomination forms. Outside a hoard of people had gathered, goons all of them, with white shirts and blue jeans which was the uniform for student politicians in the election season and none of them even bore the slightest resemblance to a university student.

This was a morose sight of celebration, a sight that brought out the most hideous and disgusting face of student politics to imminent public attention. The candidates of these two parties wore garlands around their necks while the reverberating sound of the Indian dhols gave way to a festive mood which made people to believe that these candidates had already won, even before filing the nomination. That is false consciousness in a nutshell.

*No rose without thorns, Galilei*

*No prince without monks*

They waited in the canteen of the arts faculty till the time of the scrutiny and had a chat among themselves.

“Do you think we have a legitimate chance of winning, this time?” Rahil asked inquisitively.

“With the way we have been spearheading the movement against FYUP along with the teachers’ union, I think the students should know better than to vote on false gold of that kind.” The candidate for the post of president answered. Her name was Anjali and she was from Hansraj.

“But it is our job to make the students aware of that. Because without proper guidance, the fireflies only move towards light and inevitably die.” Ankit, the candidate for the post of secretary answered in a metaphorical statement.

“Yes, it is. And that is why we have to put all our strength in our campaign and not lose a college in the entire radius of Delhi University.” Rahil replied, after hearing all the others and delivering his comments with deliberate chastity.

One of them signaled when it was time to leave for the scrutiny and they all walked out, paid their bills and made way through the heavy crowd of non-students gathered in front of the scrutiny hall creating the illusion of celebration and perpetrating a lie that has oftentimes been very successfully propagated through self-inflation. The rogue band of four, the rogue band that knew the reality behind this farce, the rogue band that understood right from wrong, the rogue band that was caught up in their own ism, cut through the crowd and went to the gates of the scrutiny hall but they were only allowed to enter after they had shown the pass duly signed and sealed by the respective principals of their colleges. These principals were each very harsh and calculating, and seldom present to dispose a document that is in need of urgent attention.

They went inside and found places among the back while the candidates from the right-wing parties sat in the front row like attentive students in a beloved professor’s lecture though the candidates of these parties had the legacy of never being seen in the college grounds throughout their course. It was a surrealistic juxtaposition and made Rahil, along with the other candidates of AISA laugh in a bout of tragicomic humor. Following the short speech, the senior officials sitting in front of a large table just opposite the students with a distance of a few paces between them and with a stand-held microphone in front of them to aid their old, senile, withered voices echo throughout the room, the dignitaries started announcing the names of the candidates who had passed the scrutiny along with their ballot numbers. First came the list of the president, followed by the vice president, then the secretary and lastly joint secretary. Rahil’s ballot number turned out to be five and the whole panel’s ballet number turned out to be three, six, seven and five. The crowd outside was throbbing with a vulgar libidinal energy that was a sore sight to see. The Darwinian dogma of evolution was reversed and men turned into apes and lower subhuman species like *Homo erectus* and *Australopithecus*. This was the vile effect that Delhi University politics had upon society. One cannot say students at this point because apart from the four candidates who were drop-outs and readmission cases and one definitely does not talk of the Beat kind, and the crowd that was with them, except the AISA panel there were not many students to be seen who found solace in such celebration. On the other hand, they found it deplorable.

After this day started the real drudge- the election campaign and the whole of the organization resolved to leave no stones unturned. While the general strategy of the right-wing parties was to go to a college, hoot with a couple of people, go into a class and just say the words ‘vote and support’, the candidates of AISA aimed at addressing classes and at the same time rousing and recruiting new activists in the process or at least making new contacts. A class addressing took about five minutes per class and by the end of a single floor left the orator exhausted beyond limits, and that was the reason why it was so important to break limits and have none. This was something that Rahil learned only gradually and painfully.

The first day of the election campaign, and there were eleven more left after that day was to be around three colleges off-campus which were Aurobindo, Zakir Hussain, and Rajdhani. These were colleges that were miles away from one and that became the purpose of hiring vehicles for candidates. In the same day, one of the candidates was covering the South Campus, the other the North Campus and one girl candidate-although there were two girl candidates- covered the girls’ colleges of Delhi University. It was all decided well in advance but there were many things that could not be accounted for; one such travesty happened to Rahil. Zakir Hussain College worked in two shifts, one in the morning and the other in the evening. Rahil, the candidate and a band of three others were so involved with addressing classes, engaging in discussions, handing out pamphlets with ballot numbers on them that the morning shift of Zakir Hussain College that they thought they would address at such a time when subsequently they would also be able to address the evening shift, was lost to them. The candidate was lax- they blamed but not whole-heartedly. It was not his fault that he had not any prior experience. It was not his fault that he behaved more like an activist, remaining among the group than a leader, leading the group. He was just acting out what the organization had made him out to be which was not all bad and even people with Rahil understood that and respected him for that. A leader does not always have to take the stand and give the final word, even though it might not meet the consensus. A leader has to be more lenient and more liberal, in the proper sense of the word and not the contemporary. He need not be the absolute statue of civility and morality but he ought to be dialectical and use fair means. He is not to create an air of superiority around him which is artificial, an aura which people find divine and overpowering, no. This is the kind of leaders that bring down a population rather than developing it. A leader does not have to talk big words and base all of his popularity on big speeches although there is a certain amount of oratory skills involved but a leader need not be wholly composed of that. A leader should be like a mirror that makes the society reflect upon itself but that is not all. A leader then has to take the responsibility of formulating a mechanism that will rid the society of its evils after their critical self-reflection which needs to be an intelligent one and that too the leader needs to maintain. A leader has to know everything there is to know but instead of imposing upon people his knowledge which may or may not be right and then he is to guide the people and that is much harder than knowing everything.

This is the version of leader that Rahil was striving to become but as it demanded from him, he had to know all and not to say that he did not know anything, he was on the process of knowing all but had not yet achieved that. His way of approach as a result differed due to his half-persuasion of the understanding of a leader and it was embedded in the fact that he took many things for granted. He took for granted that he understood things he knew about and he took for granted that others also knew things and so it was easy, by this logic, to approach them on an advanced level. This was absurd but prevalent in many other cases among those with leniencies like Rahil’s and Rahil was going to meet such people in the near future.

For now, the machinery had to be well-oiled and run but Rahil physically felt short at being a part of it and it was due this reason, solely due to this reason and nothing more, that he missed the college’s morning shift. By the time they reached, the evening shift had started and population was not that dense. Still, classes were happening and that gave Rahil the opportunity to address them. He addressed the classes with both Hindi as well as English but he rarely mixed the two in the same address and if he had ever done so, that would have been a mistake on his part to which he would also have consented. So it remained that there were choices to make. And choices, as the philosophers say are destinations themselves because they lead you somewhere. The mere fact that he addressed students in that college was something that was able to win the hearts and minds of people. With Hindi, he was able to make that inner folk connect that Galileo did when he started writing in folk language instead of Latin. And with English, he could open to them something not just for observation but also for introspection because there was a whole post-colonial aspect to it. The only question that hovered around his mind after all that assiduous language juggling was ‘will they be able to grasp it?’ and he thought in the negative.

A lot of time was also spent near Rajdhani College to look for a well enough cheap restaurant and have lunch. The act of eating lunch was unconscious for Rahil he was so tired and hungry. Campaigning in Zakir Hussain, addressing every class, answering question of students who had them, and walking around in corridors sucked whatever energy Rahil had managed to store or regain after his meal and left him beat and the beat was not the good kind of Beat. And this was just the end of the first day. Herein, on the ride back to North Campus, Rahil doubted whether he had the strength necessary to survive throughout the campaign and have a viable chance of still contesting the elections. He had undergone a physical deficiency of flesh over the course of his stay in Delhi but one day’s election campaign had double the effect than the viral infection of staying in Delhi as an oppressed student and he was hollowed throughout. He spent the night again with Mohan and slept the moment his body touched the mattress stretched on the floor. Even the meeting of the eyelids mattered little and Rahil could not recall whether he slept with his eyes open or closed and after he woke up, he could not recall whether he had slept at all. Granted there was a lag of time but he was still so exhausted that he felt the night he spent was unjustified. Still, the larger forces did not wait and there was more to see than fatigue and exhaustion, there was the sight of victory which even though far-sighted, was still visible. It was this vision and this goal that kept him going even after his body had completely failed him. This proved to him how unimportant the body was when it came to the pursuit of the absolute. And so cared lesser and lesser for the body and more and more for the mind because his mind was resolved to contesting the elections as a force to be reckoned with and there were truly great reasons for it. They spent only one percent of the money spent by the right-wing parties who bought the votes by giving the students free liquor, free tickets to amusement parks and theatres which of course was anything but fair practice and anything but conduct becoming of a union. A union’s need, a union’s constitution is to politicize the students, to represent them as a proper political body and not just hold a position of power and abuse it. A real union gets hold of the administration by the collar and asks about the many misfortunes borne by the students. A good union stands for the rights of students, stands against the injustices done to students and asks not just the students but the general population “Which side are you on, my friends?”

Sadly, in the current scenario everything went towards the contrary, even the students, those who were oppressed, cast a blind eye over their oppressors just because they thought that the oppressors were never to be opposed. They lacked even the consciousness, let alone the bravery to understand what their rights as students of Delhi University were. It was a pathetic sight of moral decay with all its stench and carcass and the bigger parties feasted and reveled and the behest of these carcasses.

The elections in Jawaharlal Nehru University went parallel to Delhi University elections and the time difference between elections was only a day or two where JNU students’ union was revealed after the results of Delhi University elections. This was due to the reason that Delhi University used digital ballots instead of the earlier paper ones. JNU however did not break from the age old tradition and still did the manual counting of the votes wherein they ‘celebrated’ democracy for three whole days and nights. And what a celebration it would always be! Of course they could only do this because the total strength of the University was equal to just the strength of a larger single college in Delhi University. Nobody was bothered about the long wait and the stalling of the election results. All political enmity would be forgotten and democracy, in the campus would be united with its subsidiaries liberty, equality and fraternity.

All the three virtues were exercised in the most extraordinary manner over the course of three days in which the counting of the ballots was to be done that was always done inside the central library, one ballot after another and one box after another and outside the central library over wide area of open field, carpets and rugs were set for people who would be sitting under a widely stretched canopy which hid the students of the University like a mother hiding her children from the prying eyes of the stalking stars in the skies open sky all night at campsites of different parties supporting their respective political leanings. There was no enmity, no threats or intimidations between different student wings. The University was truly a haven for progressive politics and indeed it was the last haven of such. The place was lighted with bulbs hanging alongside the poles used to erect the canopy and all along the border of the central library pavement were stalls- food stalls and book stalls. It was truly a fair of democratic spirit and it was only here, of all the places in the world that call themselves the provider and beacon of democracy both nationally and internationally, where democracy was not for sale. It was exhibited for all the aficionados and connoisseurs of politics to see and marvel the beauty and art that is democracy. Here democracy was framed, constructed, ornamented in an almost utopian inaccessibility and inapplicability. Here people walked with their head in a cloud of illusion, of opium smoke. People from other places also came to consume the opium. Three was total and libertine freedom. Many people wanted in on the utopia. Many people inside the university were glad to already be inside that utopia. Many, like Rahil wandered into the utopia, lost and then found themselves in a spontaneous moment of self-revelation.

Making not a minute of compromise, Rahil maintained his campaign in full swing till the evening and then decided to go to JNU for the night to listen to the presidential debate. He was accompanied by three other comrades of his and by the time they reached the central library, it was already way past dusk and deep into the darkness of the night. Groups of people sat together and the yellow bulb lit their features with an extraordinary glow. The whole world was centered in that one place for Rahil as if it was the axis that went through the centre of the Earth from North Pole to South Pole and the whole world rotated around it, tilted a little towards the Left permanently. Sounds of tambourine disks dinging against each other lightly and soundly came from different corners. The mood was both lively and somber. Rahil looked around him as though he was in wonderland. At least for his own sake, he was. If for nobody else, it was his wonderland. He did not want to own it for he knew well that the spirit of it, the soul, can never be owned. The two friends who accompanied him, Shashi and Amit, showed him around and introduced him to the JNU cadre of the association. There were stark differences between the Delhi University cadre of AISA and the Jawaharlal University cadre. The former worked in a much delocalized manner and had much more expenditures and extensive modes of campaigning and organization building. The latter was more ideological and tightly knit in that there was no obscurity between the conversations of two members of that unit which was the cause of more docility in their working and humility in their manners. The JNU unit was the first unit of AISA in Delhi and it showed brilliantly in their maturity and their foxy intellectualism. This was not pseudo-intellectualism as they were striving for some form of concrete goal and creating grounds for legitimization at every step of their success but the style of their politics was exclusive, a problem which can attribute to running an ideologically tight ship. It was not like they did not try to be more inclusive but they somehow lacked the means to do so. Rahil did not experience this distancing until later. For now he was as much included in the campus festivity of the elections as any JNU student. He sat with his friends, his longing stare looking for familiar faces, some of which he found sitting on a tables and chairs in a corner over which a several people huddled up looking for some kind of information. There were two familiar faces, one of Shantanu Mukherjee, one Rahil knew as Shanto sir, the professor of his college before his time. The other was a familiar face that Rahil had seen on his meet with Professor Nikita. On enquiring from Amit who she was, she found out her name was Prerna and she was one of the leading comrade of the organization’s JNU think-tank. He met both of them and asked how the Party was doing in terms of votes and counting. Shanto sir replied that the party was leading unanimously in three of the seats, but the fourth seat, that is the joint secretary, was a tough call between the candidate of All India Students’ Association and another candidate of Students’ Federation of India. After having a byte of information, he went on to revel in the fair, browsing through different stalls and browsing through different titles at the bookstall.

Suddenly, there was deadened silence. A microphone screeched over a loud speaker and voice boomed revealing the votes after the counting of the votes in the School of Social Sciences. Everyone heard the announcement with utmost concentration and silence. Those were a little loud or bustling in their conversations inattentively not attending to the gravity of the moment were shushed and passively silenced. The announcement came from the fifth floor of the ten-storied library where a window was wide open and a light glowed. Representatives, councilors of all the parties that took part in the student elections, one from each party accompanied the counting staff and took part in the counting of ballots. The announcement was repeated thrice for the clarity of the message and for the benefit of the mass. A loud roar of slogans followed the voice over the microphone and the echo of the latter was so loud, resonant, forceful and passionate that the voice of the former was decimated to dust. All India Students’ Association was slowly making its way to another victory in the Jawaharlal Nehru student union elections and this time Rahil was there to witness the dazzling spectacle. The loud music sourced by the sound boxes of flesh and bones resounded like a gala which captivated Rahil, and it was not only the sound but the words.

***Tata hota har din nata, lamba hota Nandigram***

***Naxalbari Naxalbari Naxalbari lal salaam!***

Rahil tried to join in as soon as he got the rhythm and words. The emotions stormed him and the boat of his personality was capsized into the sea of ever widening experiences, each drop, an experience, a moment anew.

***Kashmir se Kanyakumari***

***Naxalbari Naxalbari***

***Gujarat se Bengal ki khadi***

***Naxalbari Naxalbari!***

Slogan by slogan, the chain that owed to the bondage and regression of the society were broken asunder link by link. The body became a political unit that had no sovereign, no state, no class, just a soul, hovering formlessly with indivisible and undisputed presence.

***We salute Red Salute***

***Red Salute to Comrade!***

Rahil sat with his friends, thinking of the origin of their mutual friendship coming to the conclusion that it can only be political. He looked around, observing the students of the university, deliberately dull in appearance but sharp in intellect, passion sucked out of them and replaced by the stride towards the end of all normative behavior. Rahil could look into the future and see their cynical fate. He had heard stories and knew of many exemplary examples. But he had also heard of role models, Chandrashekhar, better known in the campus as Chandu. His portrait stood upright on a wall in the AISA office where Rahil stayed for the elections. He was a true revolutionary who had started building popular support and was murdered in cold blood by goons of a local politician in Bihar. He was a martyr but one man or a mob did not kill him; the system took his life and took the life of the hopes and dreams of the oppressed and the voices of those whose necks still lie under the boots of the rich, the powerful, the army and the corrupt officials in Kashmir, in Manipur, in Tripura, the hopes and dreams that dwelled in his mind. But his hopes and his dreams did not die with his body; it remained like the spirit of revolution that was Chandu.

***Chandu tere sapno ko***

***Hum manzil tak pahuchayenge!***

***Chandu tera mission adhoora***

***Hum sab milke karenge poora!***

This message, this spirit, this fervor was not limited a political party, was not limited to a university campus, was not limited to a state. The spirit was universal, crossing boundaries, breaking them with unsurpassable might.

***El Pueblo unido gama sera vencido***

***The people united shall always be victorious!***

Rahil sat dazzled by the stellar glow of this fire. It mystified him and filled him with passion at the same time. But also at the same time, he felt that there was a part of him that he was distancing. He was too frivolous to accept a form of existence at this point. He suppressed his speculative sense because the environment was too ideal for him. He wanted to make a compromise with his existential void and accept the ideology as the backbone of his personality if he had not already done so. The personality which he longed for could only come by building a wall as a check to rid his psyche of the void that kept changing him. This void sourced his doubt, his speculation, and his sense of a deranged and chaotic rationality. This void also led to an abstraction which made his identity very dissociative and this was also the reason that he was considered a good activist. Though he was too radical a person and started to become, as Muktibodh once wrote ‘so very far from you’, his force of personality was such that it attracted people of different backgrounds to a warm intimacy. This was a very deadly duality that was the only antidote for his alienation and it became the reason of his presence there and the reason he was contesting the elections. He thought he had it all figured out; he still doubt it. Every inch, every connection, axiom, every design was deconstructed and rebuilt in his mind.

In this manner, slowly and slowly the lights outside grew fainter and fainter as he descended into the cave of his mind. The counting still went on and the slogans stirred in the still air of the brightly lit night. His friends saw him brooding and staring endlessly into the moon like a lone wolf and patted him on the back. They thought he was tired from the morning campaign and did not see the deep dark on which that tree grew that reached for the moon in the sky. Meanwhile the slogans stiffened in intensity.

***Lal Kile pe lal nishaan***

***Maang raha hai Hindustan!***

Gradually he realized the utopian nature of the island that was JNU. A place, whose ideals cannot be transferred or transported outside its boundaries, and when people tried to change the world and forge it differently, they got transformed instead. The place was a political health resort for the communists. However, the mission given to Rahil and his cadre was more real, more substantial and would make a much bigger difference on a larger scale. Rahil did not fully know his mission and his purpose in Delhi University. He was a pawn who did not see any strings attached to him. Perhaps there were no strings. Rahil knew for sure that there were no strings; there was just an idea turning into a will which is a vector quality. It is vector in the physical sense; in that it has a direction. This will was what he constituted as an ideology, as his ideology. That was the psychological manifestation of the ideology in him. Things turned out differently for him because of his very reasoning in this way. He anticipated things differently, not wrongly but differently and so arrived at the conclusion with different sense than others. His world was constituted of this anti-reality and it was primarily because of the difference in his perception. He knew something was wrong in his presence there but he could not accurately designate or name it. This was later clarified by a phone call which came from Ved Prakash. The phone rotated from the different members of the DU cadre finally making its way to Rahil who received the call and heard the blaring voice on the other end:

“Are you raving insane, or just plain stupid? You have an election to tend to, the DU elections and you elude from your responsibility and go to hear the presidential debate in JNU! If you were so idle, you could have campaigned through the student accommodations of Satya Niketan, or taken a decent rest. Now go back to Satya and campaign there and do not repeat the same mistake again, for the sake of the organization. Rahil did not stay long after that and went on his way back to his room. It was his fortune that he came with his friends in the vehicle that they used for campaign which gave him a lift till Satya Niketan.

On the evening that followed an uneventful morning after the disappointment of the Delhi University elections, Rahil was again taken to JNU on the final day of the counting and the declaration of results and this time the asylum to spend the night there was formally sanctioned and granted to the four candidates of the DUSU elections. Still this move could neither alleviate the grief of missing the presidential debate nor that of losing the elections. But grief was a part of life as much as politics. But the welcome in JNU was liberating for their senses. The four candidates entered the counting grounds and were instantly recognized as victors because the cadre in JNU knew that in the political battlefield of DU, to have a footing and survive was also a viable victory. Most of them knew that they found something of a strong activist and perhaps a future Party worker in Rahil but Rahil was not among the ones who thought so.

Rahil sat for some time with the group reveling in the new companionship unlocked by no other virtue than time. They had conversations about what was to be done to concretize the base of sympathizers as well as activists and involve them in the movement against the four year program.

“Your votes include all conscious votes. These votes mean that they did not vote for booze, money, free movie tickets or other opportunities. These votes went to the candidates the dreams you made them envision. If we are able to go back to the same population again and look for activists to join our movement, they will definitely not turn a blind eye to it. That is the first step to take after the elections. You should remember that.” Shanto sir explained with one figure structurally moving in the air magically giving diagrammatic explanations, the tip of the finger becoming a piece of the chalk writing on the black space between the man and Rahil.

“What do you think about help from JNU? Is it feasible for the organization to utilize the skilled expertise of the cadre, especially in South Campus?” Rahil asked, his eyes glowing with want of practical knowledge.

“Listen Rahil, don’t be so naïve. You have a burning torch in your hands in the form of the FYUP movement. A thing like that was never the case here. Our main line of campaign was the banishment of the four year program from our curriculum if we came in power. We cannot just leave a struggle in the middle like opportunists. This is the future of the students we are talking about and the question of preserving the purity of the university space and its freedom. The fight is yours. People will come if the battle-cry is loud enough. We are at a time when we can take the whole system of education into our own hands and change it for the better, restore its dignity.” Shanto replied, a fire burning in his eyes form his own experience. There was a pessimistic wave in him about the future of the movement. For him, it was just a matter of time.

After a chat with him, he strolled about the different camps and found Ashim, the student from Hindi literature who helped Rahil with during the referendum. He greeted him with a smile and then a friendly handshake.

“Red salute, comrade, your performance in Delhi University has been iconic. Part of it is obviously fuelled your….or I should say, our…constant struggle against the four year program. Who took the credit and the fruit of the labor is a different matter.” Ashim replied, with a little friendly competition. Rahil replied to his snide comment with an abrupt directness.

“I don’t recall seeing any AISF posters or people, and neither did your people organize anything on your own.” He replied.

“A lot of things happen behind the screen. What you see is not the ultimate reality.”

“That may be so. But it doesn’t concern.”

“Brother, it does not just concern you. It ‘involves’ you.”

“You mean ‘my’ organization?”

“Yes”

“What is it?”

“There are a lot of things. You should know them.”

“From you?”

“Don’t take my word for it. Ask your president Ved.”

Rahil was not the least bit willing to get into the whole cobweb of deceit that time seemed to cast between the two, Ashim and Ved. Politics for him meant much more than lobbying and being elected as the office bearer. It meant going to people with an ideal that would make their life better. It meant to conserve that ideal, to fight for it, to shed blood, to educate the oppressed people in order to relieve them from their burden of oppression. He parted ways with Ashim on a well enough note telling him that he would examine this matter and talk to Ved or Amit about it. Perhaps in a small corner of his mind, he was actually contemplating; for that moment though he just blurted it out to rid himself of company and quietly stroll along the gentle dimness of the bulb-lit night.

After taking a few steps in complete solitude just when he was starting to enjoy his loneliness, another character appeared in a green kurta with long hair and round-framed glasses, his fair face staring Rahil straight in the eyes. His voice was soft and tender, lovely and filled with a puritanical sobriety. It was a sure fact, thought Rahil that this fellow tried too hard and was being too rigorous to live free.

“Hello comrade, how was your performance in DUSU elections? All of JNU is talking about it.” He asked.

“It was decent. There was great percentage of increase in votes in our favor compared to last year. Our struggle in the movement is strong. We are the spearhead force in the anti-FYUP processions and protests. We have been ably successful to raise concerns and make them sufficiently conscious to stand and question their system.” Rahil replied.

“Good. That is all very good. My name is Suman, by the way.”

“Are you in AISA?”

“No, I’m in SFI.”

“Is it even active in Delhi University? I mean it with no disrespect but your comrades in DU have done next to nothing. Did you know that SFI consequently won three years in a row and even this year?” Rahil raved like a lunatic.

“Yes….” He was silent for a long time and it was a signal for Rahil that he had no idea what was going on in his Party on a larger scale. He was one of the many pseudo-intellectuals who attached themselves with a Party just to attend the talks and discussions organized by them, have a closer insight. They have no knowledge whatsoever of the ground work, the appeasement of the masses, the toil of spreading propaganda, creating awareness, the spirit of brotherhood between working comrades. They just milk the four years of hanging on the Party name by mentioning it in their resume. There was no political future for these lost causes. In hem, Rahil saw a health hazard and possibly his own future and that vision of his future filled him with fear.

Rahil wanted to forget it all. He wanted to be a communist to the extreme point of losing his individuality and being a part of the collective that he believed should define him completely. Maybe he was running towards a ball of flame or maybe he was running from a storm that brought an apocalypse and plagued the land and he was the only survivor looking for shelter. He took his shelter over the sheeted ground and under the open sky looking intently at the crowd gathered around him to the point that they lost their form and became scepters. The very individual presence of his mind such a politically charged and conscious environment was a testament that his individuality is unforgettable and indelible. He tried to forget all his pressures and reveled in atmosphere of the valiant night. The thoughts in his mind were in complete contradiction to the mood of the moment. The light was not red for him; he stood on moonbeams, reaching for the stars with his open hands like a child with his soft open fists trying to catch the sugar dust floating through free open space. He was the child astronaut, eventful, zesty, un-wombed but still sheathed in the university space, free from the pangs of real life, real dangers of life. His sole absolute certainty was towards his ideology. For that very reason, he was seating there. The formless entities clouding his empty stare began to take shape again like the clouds seen with the eyes of measured rationality and fanciful association- one a lion, a group a mountain. A battle waged inside him with one of his sensation; that of sleep. He tried to keep his mind intact but it swiveled in the music of life, of the bright lights and the dark sky.

He strolled about in the moonlight with no one accompanying him but his loneliness. He walked back to the place and by this time, the weight of sleep was too heavy in his eyes for him to keep them open. It was around one in the night when he saw around him that most of the people there were stretched out on the carpets with half-closed eyes. He found a group that consisted of some students of Delhi University who were from his cadre and asked them if he could spread himself there just enough to have a shut eye for a couple of hours.

There was a discontinuing blackness the moment Rahil closed his eyes and when he opened them it seemed as though there was no discontinuity. But some things had changed. He saw the tones of those near and those far away had changed. He saw with his eyes closed. He saw faint break of dawn in the veil of the night sky. Everything was befallen by the first light of day. Cool winds blew over the sweaty backs of the sleepless students. The wind played with his hair, cooed in his ear, percolated through his clothes and embraced his bosoms. He saw that the company he had spent the night with was no longer there. Gradually, the sense began to rekindle in his body and he found out that his head was resting on the lap of a woman. He did not know her and he took it that she did not know him. As his senses came back to his body, he realized that there was a group sitting around him talking among each other and he was the non-existent object that did not even fall into the bracket of their reality. This was as close as Rahil could to absolute dilution of the self. He reached a high point of self-saturation in the tincture of the collective. He lay there in the lap of that woman of whom he knew absolutely nothing about, not even a name or a face as his eyes were still closed. The only two senses that connected him to the external world were hearing and touch. There was a very pleasant sense of oneness as he lay there that was may have been romantic but was definitely not sexual. He was romancing with the moment and if there was any deep psychologically intense passion, it was spirituality. Rahil was not waking up; he was in a dream land of his mind. He had just begun to meander through the avenues of the unseen, glissading through the ice rink showered by the many colors of spectrum, one, and then another, and then suddenly all at once, with a symphony of arabesque mystery, stringed harmony and oral atonality. He kept losing himself and finding himself again in a disorderly cycle of events and happenstances. He was split between the two worlds of the mind and the matter; his boy in one and his consciousness in another. He was in a waking state of a dream. He moved and the world moved with him; he swayed and the voices swayed around him in the same fashion. He listened to the voices of the group that had given him refuge in their league but with a distance and a feeling of indifference.

The moment announcement of the results neared each increasing beam of the sun. His sensitivity towards the real life and the external gradually escalated and he rose from the refuge of the lost psychonaut prophets who showed him a world humans had only seldom entered. He rose to greet them but could not do so, not even with a gaze of farewell for his heart was filled was filled with too much reverence for them. He walked under the first lights of the sun looking for his university friends and after seeking them for about an hour, finding some. He went along with them to a canteen to have a cup of tea and a medium breakfast as he had not supped the night before. While having lunch, the news reached them that all the four candidates of AISA had won the JNU students’ union elections. In an instant, their happiness knew no bounds and surpassed the definition of ecstasy.

They somehow physically controlled their zeal brought about by this victory to finish their breakfast and when all of them were done with their eating, they darted to the library and on reaching their they found that the victory parade had already left for the student union office going through this the different hostels of the university. The lost brigade of DU went in search for their JNU comrades and reached one hostel after another with no success. They finally met the victory march near the Ganga canteen and that was sight Rahil could not erase from his memory. There were red flags, snaring tambourines, clenched fists raised in the air. It was a show, all right, and Rahil knew it better than anyone but even he had a flair for the theatric. People stood on the stairs, on the embankments, anything that served as a higher pedestal from the all too common ground and waved red flags symbolizing the victory of their ideology. It was a glorious occasion.

Now joined with the victory march, Rahil and the others from DU moved along their path as they made their way through the deep woods in the middle of which JNU was built like eggs in a nest. They treaded along uneven terrains, red flags on their shoulders. By now, Rahil had also managed to get a flag from someone and then the long walk did not appear that tiring. The tender branches broke with a crispy sound and the wilted brown leaves pulverized into dust under their marching feet. The walk was filled with a poise of its own; it was like walking through the mountainous jungles of Andhra or the forests of Chhattisgarh, the rays of the sun hitting the skin sifting through the twists and turns of the branches, leaves and twigs. Here a cooing of a bird, there a slither of an insignificant chameleon. The natural reversion of the university space was a gift for the students that students received only here. Wilderness is the biggest library, the biggest conservatory, the biggest art gallery because it is the point of emergence of the trifles that fills the empty halls that later become these significant places.

The group ended their march in front of the student union office and Teflas hostel where the rebel poet Vidrohi unleashed his emblematic progressive poetry. After his rendition of the moustache and beard of Lenin, Stalin, Marx, Castro, Ho Chi Minh and others, the march dissembled and all went their separate ways.

-I am lost and I am found. I am still and yet abound…as always…as never before. My body has lost track of its metabolisms. I eat…automatically as I sleep as I drink as I excrete as I piss, I do it in an automatism but I am not a machine. I am quite contrary to that. I am losing my shape, my form in which I have grown and aged is now losing me or I am losing it but at any case I am standing as it is pervading and waving it farewell because goodbye just might be too good a word. The next day, and the day after that, and the day after that are all the same to me and yet time never ends and it is never a repetition. It is always different until that one moment of déjà vu kicks in and you know that you have known seen felt or experienced it before. It is uncanny how times come unstuck and how I have come unstuck in time. Time…times, seems like it is one and yet there are many. Universal…not universal, a day here might be an evening there or night thereabout but a second is a second and a minute is a minute and that you can be sure of with your eyes closed, or not. Living defines time unto death and the dead have no concept of time just because they have o concept of life. No, it is much more complicated than that. Was time still a concept before the Big bang? That is the question for the physicists to ask, not the philosophers but physicists are the philosophers now. Objective and subjective, universe and multiverse and parallel existences have trickled down into physics and the end of it is that the answer lies not in physics but in philosophy. Where do you draw the line though? It comes from the human mind and goes into the moon, into Mars and into space. Open space dead space, all different species of spaces. Everything, living or dead is subject to taxonomy, at least their name is. What of their being than? Does a table have a being? It has existence…as an object. What of humans then? Are we subjects or objects or objective subjects or subjective objects, all of those, none of those? Here is the question of the body and the mind. How futile is the body and how necessary is the mind? How wasteful are the doctors and how necessary are the unionists? Well, they’re all the same when they are not anything…when they sit at their homes…watching television and eating store-brought food, they are consumers. Then they are objects and the sings on the wall, the hoardings over the streets are the subjects. Every day is a new one, for better or for worse but every day is an opportunity to learn new things even for the highly learned. A new action is taken every day. Ere in North Campus, or in Satyawati College, or in Deshbandhu College where a gang of twenty other activists surround me, and we are strong there and we are solid there. Automatically it all happens, or randomly, in a arbitration. The senses just perceive what they want to perceive, find patters, astronomy, astrology, numerology, constantly revised, changed as one fact tops the other but society remains the same- the haves rule the have-nots. Feudal…backward…regressive... And yet aesthetics develop, yet we are all educated and adorned with a university as reputed and exemplary as the University of Delhi. What is the meaning of it? Oh hark. Again I am bound by my primordial instincts to find patters where there are none unless we fully subscribe to facts, empirical data, loads tones and tabs of them statistically stockpile and stored by the statisticians…unity in diversity, disharmony in unbelief…belief over reason…triumph over will! One day jogged on to another. High days, low days, all sunny days, red green blue days, white nights black dark and still time…time…time overruled it all and was unbroken. The chains of conformity wrangled around everyone’s necks and we were only ones with the hammer. Knock! Knock! Clam! Clam! Break it about! Off with it! You still want them? You should, you’re only human. Humans, all too human! Fiction is life not when it is perfect but when it is true…when it is honest and ritualistic. Creation is not imitation. Society is imitation. Creation is a process of election, the campaign is the time put in to produce the art on the bigger social canvas. Socialist realism…My art is my path. Nothing can shift me from it and I know my journey will never end because with each step I take the world gets wider. So what’s time? It does not matter. Now I toil, day in day out, in the same clothes eating from the same restaurant in the building of Law Faculty at North Campus. The dish never changes, the place never changes and still something is new every day. The monotony is neutered. Five days, six days, seven days, three days left, two days left, all the same to me. Again, it does not matter. So what does? Fate? Pre-destined fate? Or the fate that is to be carved out from the iceberg of time and tools of opportunity? Maybe. But the vision in imminent. The substantiation of the vision is imminent. Because the apocalypse is close, in time, in space, in politics and we are the mighty few fighting…the last ones left. Oh the farce, the tragedy, the horror, the humor of it! It engulfs me in rich deep thoughts and anesthetizes my body into a dark unending spiraling vortex. The solipsism has caught me up again. But they need my body, if not I. They do. And for them, my body is necessary and ergo for me too. One last push one last shove and that does it. Then some more… and some more. All around the fortified watchtower, well guarded and holding the blind people captive. We guerillas hide in the jungles. We seem less but are many. This is the tactic of the Apache resistance. Hit them when they are vulnerable. Hit them with numbers and run. And now I am in the fortress of the heavily guarded, hungry in my stomach and a dagger between my teeth. I have been wandering in the jungles, eating leaves and things inedible. The pain in my stomach is more haunting than the idea of infiltrating the fortress though I am alone, left astray by my battalion. I know they are out there but I do not know where they exactly are. We do not follow high-tech methods, no. We build underground trails to keep the armies well hid and on the road. We maintain complete radio silence. This is also an assault upon my mental senses as I have been talking to myself, raving giving lectures to myself about rationality and the order of the world. All that matters little now, for my mission has reached its fruition. No more of hiding behind trees and spending time in dirty trenches puddle with day old greenish black waters. The time is now. Has it not always been so? No. Time is like the wind. One can feel it here and not there, but one knows that the wind is universal because the existence of it is universal. It would be unintelligent to think that the wind is here but not there but it actually is. Still it does not negate the question of its universality. The storm however is a different case. Why? Because it rises up and dies just like a tide. Like a wave. The wave that is so talked about now will also die and we will be the ones to hammer the nails to its coffin. What is not seen is often misunderstood at the bitter expense of the ignorant masses. That is something which has been happening for the greater part of our past. What is ancient is never to be relied upon. We constantly need new things. History is nothing but a dream. We can learn many things from our dreams only if know how. We cannot just celebrate our dreams the way we celebrate our history, the way we celebrate our independence day. When the day comes, when we shall be free, all shall know and then there would not be any particular day of celebration like the independence or the republic day or Christmas because each day shall be as celebrated as the other. For that we toil, for that I toil, now turned to hollowed frame of fragile bones free from flesh. This is not something that is unachievable; on the contrary now that the masses are dissatisfied with their masters and with the constitutions of the governance it is the most appropriate for them to turn to the right ideals. Granted that won’t happen in a day or two, or even a month or two. The greatest victory is the victory which does not come overnight but over years because an overnight victory can lead to indirect. Take the case of American War of Independence. One of the first movements for independence, successful led to the biggest oppression of racism, violence of racism, and then the internal Civil Wars, the quelling of rightful movements incited by martyrs like Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. Americans do not like their martyrs. They prefer their hypocrites instead- Washingtons and Lincolns-

On the night of the ninth day, Rahil stayed back at the office and slept with the other activists of AISA helping them stamp the ballot numbers of flyers to be handed out to students. The whole effort was put on account of the Lyngdoh Committee which maintained that there was to be no printed material distributed during the election campaign or its usage in any form thereof. The bigger parties made a mockery out of this regulation by printing all their materials, their posters, their flyers, their cards but did so in a sly manner by using fonts for their characters similar to handwriting. It was an obvious deception and so obvious it was that one could smell printing ink on their posters and flyers. The members of AISA did lodge a complaint against it but to no proper result. The bureaucratic system very maliciously hid their poster children under their bosoms giving not even a slap on the wrists for their wrongdoings.

This was the whole context in which AISA, and Rahil as a part of AISA, fought the Delhi University Students’ Union elections. A day before the elections, Rahil was assigned the South Campus colleges to campaign which included his own. He campaigned there throughout the colleges. Venky was his first target so he campaigned there first thing in the morning moving on to ARSD and then RLA. By that time, Ram Lal Anand had started Aryabhatta College which was the official name of Ram Lal Anand Evening though no one called it that. They just called it Ram Lal Evening. There they found a huge spectacle that Rahil for one, was witnessing the first time. There were twenty to thirty hoodlums who represented the student wings of Congress and Bhartiya Janata Party although the student wing of the Bharitya Janata party liked it better to be called the student wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and they stood in front of the gate of RLA evening throwing flyers all over the road. They had hundreds and hundreds of them and they never shied away from throwing flyers even for the sake of environmental conservation. Since both the student parties were present, they had started a naïve childish competition among themselves as to who would throw the flyers higher and so the goons stood upon their SUVs and luxury air-conditioned cars and threw as fast and hard as they could. This was not just a competition but a show of power to show the students the immensity of the erection of their political penises to the general crowd of students. And an alarming fact was that the students were actually charmed by it, overlooking the fact that the road to their college had turned into a grave of paper where the candidates’ named were buried under dust, mud and boots of ignorant people throwing more and more pamphlets. Cutting through the crowd of unconscious dead men and women, Rahil and two other activists approached the gates. This was the point where Rahil had to show the gate pass attested by the principal and the election committee which gave the candidate entry into any college during the time of election campaign with two other activists.

Having completed his campaign there, he went to Moti Lal evening wherein the same scene confounded him not with amazement or stupidity but with humor and disgust and he was tired by the time the whole process was finished and so, even skipping his dinner as he had not enough strength left in him even to chew, he went to his dismal room and slept like a baby. His strategy was mapped and planned in his sleep wherein he had no dreams but a void and there lied all the solutions to his earthly, mortal problems relating to the inefficiency of the matter, not the mind.

The next day was the Election Day and the only thing Rahil could do was dress up. He could not, however much he wanted groom himself, because there was acute shortage of all the amenities that were needed. These amenities did not mean water or face powder, no. These amenities were much more internal and more wanted than even the basic necessities like shelter and clothing. The amenities here mentioned are the physical strength to groom which he kept latent knowing how much he would have to travel back and forth the three colleges on the South Campus, the another amenity was the willpower which was by now shredded and torn down; that not being altogether a bad thing, bothered Rahil under the present circumstances where his actions, willed actions, were necessary and then there was the room with all its negative psychic energy, a room like a voodoo cave where random chants and paranormal behavioral patterns held significant meanings and outcomes for the participants and dwellers of the voodoo cave. It was a cave he wanted to relieve himself from but as of that moment, he did not pay much of his attention to the third hovering force that hindered his sense of security, another amenity. There was a lack of sense of understanding in his mind about what he had truly become. To be so separated from one’s materiality as far as his point, one would say he had next to nothing to look forward to in reality but his demise. The elections would be a point of turnover in his entity provided he won it. But it was uncertain at this point. Things looked bleak and disconcerted as the campaign reaction was not very upstanding.

Still he tried to rejuvenate himself with the littlest of actions. He put on a clean kurta, a new one which he had only worn for two days and which was given to him by one of his AISA comrades. Then he shaved his beard till there were not even stubs of tough black hair under his chin. He cleaned it all out like it was the history of the defeat of the Left in the DUSU elections so far. His aim was not to be fired up but maintain a constancy of action all throughout the day. He could not risk drifting away into the tempest currents of his own mind. He exited the room and entered the streets. At the mouth of Satya Niketan, there was a big fair waiting for him. This was how DU celebrated the spirit of democracy. Twenty goons lined in front of his eyes throwing fliers with the ballot numbers printed on them in handwritten format when it was very precisely mentioned in the election regulations that no printed matter is to be used all throughout the campaign. Rahil was outmanned and hence was in no position to act as he felt like. He disappeared into the crowd of spectators and like a cipher he made his way out of the ruckus that was exemplified with beating drums and dancing cronies of the student parties with garlands over their necks as if they had already won. This was a show of religious festivity with all its phallic glory. The giant throbbing cock of Shiva shading them with its erect roof of phallus over their heads and they, dancing into submission as they grow ready to devour the large black cock and take from it all that it gives as one receives bounty. As for Rahil, his godlessness saved him from this homosexual orgy. It was a homosexual orgy because as they danced and made merry with each other, all boys, there was not a girl in sight who joined, or even enjoyed the procession from a remote distance because they saw the event for what it was- an institutionalization of the patriarchal god in a democratic political domain.

Rahil had a lot of other things to do than stand and stare at the bunch of idiots and concoct theories. He was told in the call he received just before leaving the room that he was to meet some other activists who were coming from North Campus and Shashi and Sanatan who were waiting for him at Satya Niketan. He went to meet Shashi and Sanatan and they advised him to brace himself for the most grueling and intense day of the election campaign- the final day. The few hours of the last day is always crucial to the polling dynamics of the student elections. Owing to their absolutely depoliticized frame of mind and surrounding, students of Delhi University are confused even when they push the buttons in the electoral voting machines about who they want to vote for and what good or bad is going to come out of it. On an average, the percentage of unconscious votes is about seventy and out of the total population of DU students, less than thirty percent of students come to vote on polling day. This thirty percent included Siddharth, Rahul, Richie and people from his class who were the supposed intellectuals with a panache for having politically and sociologically charged conversations in the cafes and with their professors. Voting was too plebian a process for these elites to be involved in. They equivocate for social activism but they have a very fixed notion of one protest on an issue most dear to them and even that is conditional on any prior engagements such a night-out in a pub or a music concert, and if these are the creamiest one percent, the smartest, pride and poster children of the college and the university, one can very well judge from it the attitude of the general crowd of DU students.

Rahil, Shashi and Sanatan decided after waiting for the activists coming from North campus for a half an hour that they would commence the campaign on their own which consisted of nothing but walking around the streets handing out flyers that the activists made by hand all night and convincing the student voters making their way inside the college to press the buttons of the electoral voting machines to vote for AISA. On doing a sound inspection of the students by means of their survey, the three found that the students knew about AISA from their involvement in the struggle against the four year program. This had a twofold effect on the demographic of voters and polarized them into pro-FYUP and anti-FYUP voters. As AISA took a harsh stand against the four year program and other parties talked about the issues only knavishly if they ever talked about it, the students understood that AISA was the only organization to be trusted to wage the battle against FYUP and after the referendum it was clear. But even this split only occurred between the conscious voters in the university which were so dew that they were countable at fingertips. So the organization, in its attempt to be righteous in winning a battle partitioned an already fractional percentage of voters. In doing this though, instead of harming themselves, the organization actually had much to gain. It may not be in the context of the elections but for the struggle against the four year program and for other student-centric struggles, AISA would emerge as the only viable pressure group in the political ground of Delhi University that took the path of protest, activism and spreading awareness to reach its aim of a student-dominant campus.

After a tour of four streets, the three made their way back to the main street opposite Venkateswara College where Rahil witnessed an unseen spectacle which was indeed shameful. The contestant of the other major right wing party ran towards the college gate, entered the college while the polling was still in place with the police, the election officials and the election commission representatives all watching stock still like a statue.

“What was that?” Rahil asked the other two veterans with a smile on his face.

“This is chutzpa.” Sanatan replied, with a similar smile suggesting the manifestation of a similar emotion, one which comes about being a witness of a chutzpah. Rahil waited for inevitable to happen and it finally did when the candidate was brought back out of the college with three police escorts who accompanied him till the other end of the street a few feet away from where Rahil was standing.

“Look at your student leader. For shame!” shouted Rahil, as the other candidate as the other candidate was still under the grasp of police.

“Easy” Shashi advised.

“They run, jump, perch like a monkey and they play politics like one too.” Santan stated, a little poet rising out of him.

“It’s a fool’s show. Student politics in this university is nothing but a fool’s show, just like the politics of the nation… a fool’s show. Wait here for me.” Rahil stated and made his way towards the gate of his college. His kurta flew magnificently, the light brown color of the smooth cotton cloth made golden under the scintillating rays of the sun. His long black hair waved like a frilled tapestry over a window throwing the silhouetted sun on the eyes of the many gathered on the other side. He walked with a bold stride, with a confident, out struck chest and the triangular face of a fallen prophet. He neared the gate and the police, with a concerned face closed in on him right outside the gate. Seeing them, Rahil pulled out from his pocket the gate pass that would allow him to enter the college and make rounds to see if the polling process went along smoothly. The policemen were not compliant at first and seeing this Rahil said to them in a manner not very formal which showed his ever-present disgust for the khaki uniform:

“You boys don’t do your job when you’re supposed to do it, and you let whoever wild running goon who wishes to enter the college premises in a sensitive time such as the Election Day. You cannot lay a finger on him because he is protected by your benefactors, and your hands are cuffed but when a candidate comes to you without any support, you are ready to unleash your latent anger and frustration on him.”

Here, one of the policeman interrupted him and barked at him in a husky voice “Kid, don’t teach your father how o do his job.”

“Well, if the father does not do his job properly, the only alternatives left to do is either inheriting the trade or teaching him what he does not know.” Rahil replied.

The policeman grabbed his hand but before he could make a fool of himself and the whole force in front of the students who had gathered about and the officials who, by now swarmed to the scene to handle the situation, a superior of the policeman made his junior stop and called Rahil to him asking him what the matter was. Rahil confidently stated that all he wanted to do was go inside and inspect the polling status.

“Which Party are you standing from?” he asked.

“All India Students’ Association” Rahil answered.

“That Naxalite student wing?” he policeman asked with raised eyebrows.

“No sir, we are a student organization.” Rahil answered sincerely, not a flinch in his face seeing the raised eyebrows and raised concerns of the policeman.

“You’re the same organization that is in JNU, right?”

“Yes”

“Then skip the part where you try to justify your origins as a students’ organization. Come with me.”

There was a great misconception, especially in the minds of the police force that all activists were militant extremists. They would embark a bus going from JNU to any protest, mislead them, delay them or in many cases force the students to disembark the bus or take the bus back to the campus. The policeman took him to a teacher who was also in the election duty for that year. His name was Mr. Mehra and he was the teacher’s head of administration.

“You’re a fiery brand, are you?” asked the over-audacious Mr. Mehra with the bald patch in the middle of his shining like silver. He was very fair and clear of tongue and sweet of voice but only of voice. His personality was buffed with arrogance, self-love and bureaucracy of the highest manner. One could say he was the ideal right-wing professor who knew when to keep his mouth shut and when to open it to receive baksheesh from the big brother. And he also knew how to keep other mouths shut too. He went with him to the two separate polling setups where he went and looked over the machines which were kept in a covered booth so that no other person can see who the person in the booth was voting for. Rahil tried to steal a peak but he was not that adept in dark arts.

After spending about a half an hour inside the college, he came out and found Santan and Shashi waiting near the college with the other three activists from North Campus. The campaign went in full swing from then on. Rahil went to RLA campus and entered in the same manner as he had done in Venky. The activists waited outside, handed out flyers. No one had any idea when the morning started turning into afternoon and the bright of the afternoon dulled at the coming of dark clouds hinting that rain was about to pour. Rahil was inside RLA when it started raining. Once inside RLA, Rahil made a routine round of the electoral voting machines and the polling booths where nothing suspicious was going on as his sights conferred. On coming outside and seeing the mood of the rain and the siege of dark clouds over the blue sky, he remained inside the campus shaking hands with every student in line waiting for his turn to vote and tried to convince them to vote for AISA. One person stopped him and called him to one side. He was a teacher in the Department of Hindi but Rahil did not ask him his name. He asked his Rahil if he was from AISA and replied in the affirmative.

“You think you can win this year? Times are tough and DU is no Left bastion like JNU.”

“Sir, times are tough all over. It does not matter where one is. These are times when one has to struggle even for the bare minimum.”

“Are you ready to struggle then, comrade?” the professor asked him with a smile which had become familiar to him the few days he campaigned for the elections. This was the smile of the cynic, one who was quick to leave the activism in his student life but was not so quick to turn his face from the evils of the society and let them be. He remained ideologically intact but this break in the duality of theory and practice made him sardonic towards the activities of Left-wing groups in the college of students and teachers. He might have been a good activist in the past when he was a student of JNU and there was nothing to feel insecure about; but as time went by, he started thinking about his future and saw the limit of his future in activism and understood the fact that there was no swag in activism when you are fifty and bald. Slogans lose their poise then, according to him and then after having let go of his firebrand spirit, having buried it in the red lands of JNU, one begins to get nostalgic of the days and cynical towards the people who try to reclaim it today.

“You should know what you’re talking about, son. The burdens you take on your shoulder demands from you that you understand them. I used to drink tea with Chandrashekhar. I did my time.”

-It’s not a jail old man that you do your time, and we are not felons. Once a rebel, always a rebel, and you broke the code and now I can understand that you hurt from inside but your hands are empty now. We bear the flag now. Now you are too busy securing your pension and your life. Let us waste our lives, and if we are to waste our lives, we are not going waste it just a little; we are going to waste it entirely. Damn it all-

His wet clothes clung to his frail body and the thin cotton cloth became translucent on getting wet. All of that did not bother Rahil because he had an election to win. He paused, gave it a little thought, precisely on the part of winning the election and then questioned it. The answer was clear enough, comprehensible enough but still there was something lacking for Rahil, something empty. He found out that the answer to his question was too easy and so it could not be that way. Brimming with self-doubt and physically broken, he left the college and re-united with his band of activists who were all drenched in the rain but still their determination and their commitment towards the organization was such that they handed out flyers all the while.

Suddenly a car stopped in front of the gate of RLA and three boys came out of it dressed in well-ironed white shirt and extraordinarily blue jeans. They got out of their SUV and one of them, the candidate had a garland over his neck. His two cronies started throwing flyers like they were garbage all around the gate and in front of it. The candidate turned back to greet and shake hands with some of the bystanders and in all his haste and inconsideration, even shook hands with Shashi. Shashi smiled and on getting a desired reaction from a supposed voter, his temporary interest, the candidate did what any human being with an apish mind would do- deepen his intimacy. He patted Shashi on the back and still Shashi did not say anything but looked at him in complete and absolute awe. As soon as the candidate left, Shashi looked at the direction at which he walked until he disappeared into the college building.

“Wow that is a man of some charisma! That is surely our DUSU president.” Uttered Shashi and these few words were enough to rouse the unforeseen wrath of the mild, calm and collected Sanatan.

“Are you out of your mind, Shashi? What rubbish are you talking about? Everything that we do, everything that we have done, you have wasted our entire effort.”

“Sanatan, what did I say? I’m just…”

“This shows what your motive of doing politics really is? If you want to do that kind of politics and respect that shitty freak show you call charisma then why did you ever join AISA?”

“Look, I meant nothing….I’m just saying.”

“This shows how much faith you have in our ideals, how wavering your ideology is. What do you understand is the difference between their politics and ours? What have they ever done for you that you are so taken by them at the last moment? See this is how they do it…how they win the election….you know that, I know that and Rahil here also knows that and knowing about and not being able to do amend it or do something about it does not upset as much as it upsets me that you fall…you fall for such a mirage that we are fighting…..again. That we are fighting to break. And this is our fight. Comrade, you dropped the weapon before the enemy’s feet. What does that make you? Nothing but a deserter. What good are you as an example to Rahil? And this is not just of now. I have seen this tendency in you many a times.”

It rained as the two quarreled with words. Sanatan had no intentions of quarrelling but Shashi felt a need for defense as every word he said, Shashi took as an allegation rather an honest critique.

-I am an honest man living in dishonest times. Lies, slander, deceptions reign supreme. Nothing will be salvaged. I am a man living in the end of times. There will be no more after me. I am infinite, I am immortal, I am one. I look at the silence and see art. It is not dullness but the sharpness of the moment, a sharpness that pierces through time, transports us into a different dimension. Nothing is as grandiose as silence. Silence is the force which moves us to speak. It is the source of noise; there can be no noise without silence. I am the four wals of a room keeping my mind prisoner in my mortal body. The soul is free to wander, but after death. The only thing left to do is to wait. I have stripped myself of mortal possessions and I have accepted a life of altruism and simplicity. I have passed the ultimate test and now I shall receive my deliverance. But where am I? It is not some exotic, enchanted land; it is only the polluted populated Earth full of the dying, the hungry, the crippled and the stout. It is only the politically corrupt Earth where we are shackled to the chains of discipline in every step of our life. Our bodies are owned by order; a person without a face owns us as slave, or perhaps he has a face. Darwin says flight or fight- but neither do I have wings to fly or control over my body to fight. The truth has revealed itself to me that life is not all about time and wait, slavery and hopelessness. There is more to it. The first is the understanding. As you gain the first step of knowledge which is the understanding, you are mastering the system at the same time, perfecting it. With its tools of oppression you can be, like the others, a guardian of the system but you would only guard it for the fact that it serves your own interest, maintains your mastery over the masses. To be one, however you must understand there there ought not to be any system. So when you gain mstery of the system after understanding it, the time comes for you to end the system. That requires a higher form of knowledge, not just theoretical but also practical. At the second step, you are faced with the problem of the randomness chanelled upon you by the system questioning your very existence outside of it. You are told that there can be no world without system and existence outside of it. You are mired because the logic to their argument comes from the system of ideas that they themselves have created. Now comes the time for you to innovate. To do away with traditional forms of knowledge that led to your understanding and from your developed understanding, extricate new logic that is antisystemic in nature. Doing it theoretically requires the knowledge of philosophy and doing it practically requires the expertise of politics. Art and literature provide newer and better aesthetics. The greatest thing to keep in mind is that a revolution of any kind is a shift of power, and a revolution is never utilitarian. It expects humans to transcend the limits and confinements of humanity. The body politic of each individual cannot be governed by a superstructure. It has to be rooted in the material conditions of each individual. This would ensure that each individual is a sovereign. Redistribution would be based on this particular reassessment. Of course there ought to be reservations for the oppressed to null any unexpected accumulation of capital. So long as this happens peacefully and it should, violence would be systemic and not revolutionary meaning the state machinery or the disciplinary mechanism of the system would indulge in a direct form of violence, a physical violence which would surface in an antagonized manner to the raised consciousness of people who are no longer servile to the discipline which was even then a form of violence that kept the society in fear. This indirect violence when realized is replaced by a more direct and physical form of violence. In a disciplined society where people follow a homogenous order or even sovereign state machinery, this form of direct physical violence passes itself legitimately as popular violence because the perpetrators of that violence are given a place under the state machinery in the body of governance, that is executive.Apart from violence, there will a dialectical conflict due to the transformation of ideas. Our logic against the system should portray itself as it is- which is evolutionary. We should understand that the newer logic is the new thesis formed by a dialectic conflict of the thesis of order and the antithesis of our critique. Theotetically the system has no grounds to call the newer logic mutational. To call it a mutation eould mean that the rebellion was born out of a manifestation of an anomaly within the system. The diagnosis that comes out of this analysis is that by amending a particular anomaly inside the system, all will be well and the system shall prevail. Given this allowance to the system, it will forge conspiracy theories at different parts of the system one after the other to keep the detectives who seek to find the anomaly riddled. This will buy the system an immense amount tof time to amend on its system of logic in a manner that ensures a limiting of the raised consciousness of the masses and at the same time maintaining its hegemony. That is why the concept of time is flawed. The system manipulates time to its benefit to improve their overall production by keeping the workforce engaged in extended hours of production and also to discipline the bodies of individuals. The revolutionary use of time of time should be in such a manner that it fast forwards itself to any form of systemic break and rebellion and then condense the pace of time to free the people from the oppression of time and the usage of time as a form of capital. Time, then will become immemorial and infinite for each and every indivual and so the production will automatically increase given the abundance of resources-

Rahil and the oher activists waited under a bus stand near RLA College for the rainfall to stop. The three longfully gazed at the college gate in silence. The long line gradually decreased to a few. The polling for the morning colleges was almost over. The result for the college election would be declared that day itself. All the fliers thrown by the candidates from cars were churned into a paste mixed with rainwater and mud, slurry of wasteful names. These were dead corpses and the tombstone eroded under the acid rain leaving no trace of their existence. The vain existence of the spirit that the paper held in symbolic names degenated into what it was- black mud that belongs to the ground. A man without an idea will die with his soul rapped in his body and with the body the soul will rot and end. The colorful papers with the names of candidates bore a testimony to the idea that Sanatan was upholding about the mortality of glamor. Glamor is like a radiation; it is powerful in its affect, attraction but it dies fast.

They went to a stall in front of the college which served bread and curry for a cheap price and had a filling meal. By that time, the polling in the morning colleges came to a halt and a break was taken before the counting of ballots and declaration of the results of the college elections. Rahil found out that Krishna, the candidate who was backed by Arjun, the dramatics guru of the college, won the election for the post of president. It was bad, because Rahil had rooted for Ashok, who was the presidential candidate backed up by Arjun’s friend Vishwa. He knew that Vishwa was harcore Hindu nationalist but his candidate Ashok to be a good enough fellow. But obviously had he won, the decisions would be taken by the king maker and not the king. As it turned out though, the person winning the post of Venky president was also another Hindu nationalist but seeing as how his king maker was affiliated with Left-wing theatrical groups such as Indian People’s Theatre Association and Jan Natya Manch, he would not compromise his relationship with those groups and so keep the devil of fundamentalism controlled and well hidden inside Krishna as a rule.

The story was elections started to connect gradually as shades became broader and darker. Who wanted what would be decided from here on. In Ram LalAnand College, Student Federation of India won on all the college posts but it had always been like that. Never did they actually stand for a single student issue in the college campus.

“We left Motilal. I should have gone there once too.” Rahil stated to Amit.

“Don’t worry. Our secretary candidate went there once and met the students. It’s okay.” Amit replied.

“Okay, so what do we do now?”

“Wait for the second innings to start and then repeat the same thing all over again.”

The second innings went just like the first and by the time the whole polling process ended, Rahil was tired and in a complete catatonic state with just his feet marching to wherever Amit and the rest took him. The following day was the counting and Rahil had to spend the night in North Campus office in order to make it to the counting venue on time. Rahil had no memory of how he ended up in the North Campus office or of the night after the elections; the only thing he remembered was getting in a car and driving off to the counting venue which was near a police station. The hing crowd gathered in front of the counting venue marked the significance of the occasion and the climax of the result. It did not take long for Rahil to not only regain his composure but also a boost of excitement in the form of an adrenaline rush similar to that of a gambler betting all against the odds and goin for double or nothing. He entered the venue showing his gate pass at the heavily guarded gate along with the other candidates of his organization.

“Do you think we have a legitimate chance of winning this time?” Rahil asked from the presidential candidate of AISA.

“It is hard to say. Usually I would say we do not stand a chance but the way things turned out to e, especially since after our involvement in the anti-FYUP struggle and the general consent among the student to annul the four year program, the winds may blow our sails to cast our ship to the shores of victory.” The girl replied.

They entered from the gate to a small courtyard that had here rooms with little space left open in the middle. The first room, the smallest one was the restroom which consisted of a sofa, air conditioner, a water purifier, and some snacks on a table. The second room, a bigger one consisted of all the voting machines sealed and packed in cases which were only to be opened at the commencement of counting process. Rahil along with the others entered this room to check if the cases were properly sealed and if any of the seals were broken. Rahil called the attention of the officials to some seals which to him seemed tampered with but the officials made a turn from his allegations saying that nothing was wrong with the cases and as long as the threads were intact, the cases were not tampered with. He could see however that the wx was cracked in some cases which enclose the polling machines. The officials were not ready to listen and after a little explanation, even the other candidates of his organization thought nothing was wrong with the boxes; still Rahil was in doubt.

He did not say anything or object to anything after that and knew that things would not turn out the way he thought. He started to get a sense of conspiracy that riddled his mind so much that he remained distanced from his comrades the entire time they were there.

The boxes were then taken to the third room which was the counting room. It was the largest room; it was barricaded from the foor sides leaving just a gully between the wall and the yellow painted police barricade for the candidates to pass through. The rest of the space was taken up by counting officials who sat inside the confines of barricading in the middle of the room with a table in front of them and each one of them having a definite number of machines in front of them along with a diary, a pen and a calculator. They were waiting for some kind of a signal, waiting at the table with folded hands seated in their chairs as if for a Morning Prayer. He did not see any sign of a signal but almost at the same moment all of them started their work on the polling machines. There was soft beeping sound when a polling machine was switched on like a modern fire alarm going off for a specific moment. The rat race then began. Each organization appointed different candidates at different positions who had a pen and paper in their hands and who watched intently and noted down the number of votes each candidate got for each post. The machines were college-wise and the number of votes flashed to the right of the buttons with the ballot numbers and the names. Rahil did not busy himself with such triviality knowing they were going to announce the full number of ballots and the victor of the election in due time. This did not mean that he was not interested at all in the numbers, especially his. It was all a game of numbers; it was like stock market. AISA was holding its ground in Hindu, Hansraj; it went up in Venky, for the post of joint secrtary, Rahil’s post, and went up in Deshbandhu, up in Satyawati, crashed in Motilal, was down by an inch in Ram Lal, crashed in Aurobindo, Shaheed Bhagat Shing, Rajdhani, went up in in Law Centre one, tied in Law Centre two, up by two fifty, up by three fifty, down by a thousand, up by two hundred, down by five hundred, up by two thousand, for the post of president, for the post of secretary, for the post of joint secretary, up by thousand in Zakir Hussain for the post of vice president. This was the kind of vernacular which persisted among the candidates present their irrespective of their political ideologies or political dirt. All stood on equal platform.

The counting was done and the result was soon to be announced. Everyone who believed in God waited with their fingers crossed; those who did not waited with their breath held. Goosebumps were raised at the spontaneity of such proportions. The entire process of elections, the ground networking, the unseen web of activists and party members working behind the curtain, in the trenches of the political battlefield, their toil, their labor, their hard work and progress, was forgotten in the limelight of these few moments. But Rahil remembered. And Rahil would remember and would remember it with penance; this penance would not be of his own but of those around him, those who would not care for such pitiful human emotions. Rahil would bear their cross.

“Do you think we have a close chance of winning? I feel somewhat sure…I mean there is an intuition that we’re sure on one seat at least.” Rahil comforted others but had something completely different going through his mind.

“If that happens, we are going to change the institution of DU as we know it.”

That did not happen. The results did not turn to their favor. On all the four seats, the Party came third with the range of votes from eight thousand to four thousand. Rahil managed to get around seven thousand five hundred votes. As soon as the results were declared, the four winning candidates dashed out of the room towards the open ground to greet his cronies. The press was all over the four DUSU representatives asking questions about their victory and how they felt as if they had just won a beauty pagent. It was taken for a fact even in the press that asking a question of a political nature to these respected individuals would be like throwing a diamond to a monkey. Though the press did ask if the so called Modi wave worked in their favor to which they gave a clichéd reply that it was the hard work of their activists that won them the election and it was also indeed a stupid reply which did not even acknowledge or credit the factor of ideology. This proved one thing most certainly that no one gave the votes to the winning candidates on an ideological platform. This put Rahil in a waffle and he walked out of the room with his head held high and his shoulders alongside his comrades but his mind in a waffle.

As he went his activists, he spirit was again lighted by their congratulatory comments on a battle well fought. The initial dialogues were followed by a march from the counting booth to the Arts Faculty in the North Campus. This was neither a victory march nor a condolence march; this was also not a march for the sake of marching. This was a march of burning hearts and fuelling desires, a march of hope and endurance. A march like that is always needed to know how far we are from the destination and how near. This march had an importance of its own; it was the guiding light at the end of the tunnel, the last gulp of water in the pail of a traveler crossing the endless desrt through sand dunes with their changing forms.

-I pass through the wild scenery I look; I see the highway, the road on which our jeep drives and I feel the vibrations coming from the jeep, funny and I look at all the other locals sitting inside the jeep. I always sit at the back; find a sense of comfort in doing so, always a companion by my side, someone I like, sometimes not, all locals, the men, the boys often dressed in shirts, mostly and never had I seen or rarely had I seen them in T-shirts but the Nicobarese do wear T-shirts and they are quite fashionable that way. Dada dada they call each other, sometimes me too, their way of salutation; well respected well dignified. And the girls, the women, always dressed in Sarees and suits, mostly Sarees and always with a bag in their hands, always. Most of the women with big bags, some with small, but bags! And the roads, the forests, as I pass them by, the greenery, I wonder what’s hidden deep inside those forests and what it would be like to actually trek inside to find that out and unfold the mystique of the woods. And woods there were a lot. And I passed them all. Important is to feel the importance of the wood and importunateness that it holds to the soul of a human, thing, the ideal ‘thing’. And the woods then extend and extend and I ride through them like some hippie in the 60s riding through the contours of American prairies before it was ‘the manned’ by corporations and mass production gluttons. It feels a different world, a world real but still unreachable. I can feel its reality but I cannot go into it, due to the society, due to the structure and to go in it I would actually have to disintegrate from my reality and engage with the reality of the woods and then I would be an animal, like the movie ‘Exterminating angel’ by Bunuel. I see then as the forests end and blissful unending sex starts, a sex between the sand and the sea so erotic and tempting that one would want to be lying over them. The oceanic beauty and the beau of the knightly sandy beaches come together in a breathtaking and inexplicable collaboration that spectacularly and inadvertently conjugates to the Hieronymus Bosch painting of the Garden of Earthly Delights, not in that miserable manner but in that synchronized unification of two inseparables; the sand and the sea. The thing that holds us all together is the inseparability of the two. Which is which, the Butler Bay cove, they call it that beach; that golden, fine mesmerizing, golden beach, all acres of it pristine. Spellbound I am, and breath taken, where can such beauty be found? Not even in the movies. Such clarity! Another window to another reality that can only be found by taking the leap of faith, the leap that I never took, never took out of my plastic reality, put together, broken, but put together, out of my own accord, my own free will, yet manufactured somehow, artificial, manipulated into this pagan nature-worshipping reality where nature is God and God is nature and we are products of nature and nature hence is our mother and nature hence is greater than us, but is it? So much, so profound, over exposure, the longevity, the sheerness, the malice, the greed, of man over nature and as I pass I see, those little shops that haplessly held on to the little stretch of the nature that mankind managed to capture, managed to salvage out of vastness of nature. I hear them talking- *Toi ke kre! Kothai jaa- ch-chhi! –* The locals, in their local tongue. I pay little attention to them. Then there is the Netaji nagar, more exposed to civilization than the Butler Bay Cove, but the beach, a beach is a beach, and on the opposite of a beach, a school, and I wonder whether the students in the school would feel like studying with such a howling beach, to their disposal, the sound of the seas, \*gush \*gush \*gush, howling at them to come have a swim, or at least a dip, or maybe just at the dock of the bay, watch the tides roll away, sit at the docks of the bay, wasting time………… The school children, slaving away to the education, not knowledge but education, the disillusioned idea of knowledge in the India, almost to be spat on! What is the point of education, that slavery they call education when you are actually not giving the students the freedom to think, because learning becomes knowledge becomes education becomes wisdom becomes intellect only when you think. Food for thought! I am hungry, better roll out fast, or I roll down, in hunger, ribs clenching, stomach rumbling, but still I look, like a fakir, a sage so entranced by the inner outside that he forgets the outer inside. We move on, move on, comfortable feel, the jerks of a jeep, and to be on the backside of it, sit and look from the open back end of the jeep, the road rolling away and then turn the head and look at the road unfolding forward and then turn head back to look at the road that we just rode through, that I and other couple of people just rode through, beautiful screechy black velvety tough black road rolling away, like a magic carpet that slithers as you unravel it, endless and unending, and it just unravels and slithers, like a stinted roll of film just piling away infinitesimally but in a constant continuity. There is something very haunting in the way it goes on and on and on, like it stares at you as you stare it, this long serpentine serpent of black tar with its white stripes, like an elegant cobra in all its ferocity, and I then forget about the little shops and the jeep that I am in as I am entranced by this snaky cobra. I look at its eyes, I see no eyes, but I still look at it, the eyes that aren’t there as I travel through the nature that isn’t there, but it is, isn’t it, is it? And the jeep stops near the ATM machine, time to milk the cash cow, grab those milky-thingamajigs and just spurt it all out, card in, pin, in, oiling the thingamajigs and \*spurt-

It is the need of time to be able to survive solitarily, especially when you see a tightly knit community all around you, but that doesn’t keep the light away from the fact that we are all indeed, alone. As for Rahil, he was feeling more and more down and out than he had ever felt. Perhaps it was the lack of friendly chat; perhaps it was the excess of thoughts in his mind that seemed to give him a nosebleed.

There was more psychological unsettlement in his mind as time came closer and as time went by. Sooner or later, it would be time enough for him to make a decision for his future that would then shape his life in a mold he would never ever be able to break out of. That’s what the Indian society does to people; it stereotypically binds them, restrains them and then forever imprisons them into this built stereotype. Time was passing by, but not the importance of it.

-Walk, beside me, Shadow, as I walk and see me, walking as I see you, o my dark self, talk to me I have no one else to talk to and you are my only friend, as of now, Shadow! You are my only friend. I will be gone soon, be gone though you will stay with me, till eternity if there is such a thing like that, like a circle. Is life a circle, and people that don’t admit that, are they are too square? Maybe that is why it is such a bad thing to be square nowadays, but to me, life is a fractal, a shape that has no shape, form that that beholds in it many. Forms; and in this fractal life, everything goes and everything *is*. Because if life were circle, life and death wouldn’t matter to men but in this world it seems that these are the only two things humans seem to matter, not societal development but exploitation in the name of symbiosis or mutual dependence, not education but petty tradecraft in the name of learning, not living but surviving, not like humans but like cockroaches and rats. Shadow! Noir, the ‘dark’, the shady, yet the dependable, the comforting, the shade of a good tree in a blazing sunny afternoon is what everyone wants, though it is at the cost of that tree burning and scalding its branches, its lush green leaves and its tender brown bark in the frenzy heat of the afternoon sun. And that is why I love you, Shadow! You are the ideal ‘human’, one who lives life off life, like a parasite yet be so condescending about it when you are actually not. And yet you gambol with nature, yet you gamble, and yet you cry about gambling with it, and then yet you live so peacefully. You do so many things in your life, there is so much time in your life to think about so many things and to be so many things and yet you cry that life is short, is failing, is ending and then you are afraid of death, and you are bored with life and you are afraid of death but in all this kaleidoscopic burst of emotions, Shadow, why why why is it that we do not think the way we are to? –

It was during his school. He studied in a naval school and so the school had a lot of students from the mainland as well and to some extent, they were a majority as opposed local students from the Islands. It was during his final year in high school that he had actually heard about Delhi University through his friends, two of whom were from Delhi. One of them was an army officer’s son named Abhishek Sigh, a burly boy with very blubbery features that extended from the tip of his head down to his toes. He used to keep really short hair that seemed to look like black polish just sopped up on a bald head. The other was Pooja Kumari, a young slender *bella figura* in her early teens, like many of the others in the school who had been quite the spectacle of the school although outside the school. The latter rode on a red Vespa, with a peculiar kind of helmet that just covered head like a cap. The helmet, too, was red. The two were of strikingly different personalities yet they both shrived only one thing in Rahil and that was the peril of the high cutoffs of Delhi University.

They were in the auditorium of the school after a successful examination and the three, along with some other friends had a long discussion amidst them about good colleges in India, even for the general sciences, other than the engineering colleges and for the arts too. Though Rahil was not much interested in these career oriented conversations, he had the good humor of sitting with his friends and accompanying them in this conversation which for him was long, boring and punishment next to death penalty. After hearing a load about engineering colleges on ever half an inch of the country, they finally got to the much less lucrative, according to them, courses of honors in physics, chemistry and mathematics.

“Yeah sure, these fields of study are great if you want to be an expert scholar or a research scientist, though at this conjuncture, more research opportunities are seized by engineering grads rather than science grad.” Abhishek said, with one arm perpendicular to the table with his hand resting on the top of it.

“I would like to pursue my degree there though. I should like to pursue mass communication or journalism. I have keen interest in a career as a journalist.” Pooja remarked, with a wry smile, as though her dream meant nothing to her, and her aspiration was just a statistical probability rather than a passionate demand.

“How is Delhi University? I’ve not heard much about it, except that it’s good for extra-curricular activities.” Rahil asked, as innocent as a sheep about to be slaughtered, his lonesome dreamy eyes looking at Pooja as he saw the Cartesian analysis of that dream of hers.

“It’s great, but getting into it is damn near impossible. The first cutoff is always a hundred percent and then there is an interview too. And they make sure they take the best.” Abhishek said and everyone just looked at him.

“How many colleges are under Delhi University?” Rahil asked again, not foolish enough like all the rest, intelligent enough to know that there are more than one colleges in a University, especially if it is a State University like the Delhi University or the University of Calcutta.

“Don’t know for certain though there are quite a couple. Entry point is one though. Who cares? Delhi University is Delhi University.” Abhishek said, a little flustered by the persistent question of Rahil on matters he knew little about.

“Don’t listen to him. There are many colleges in the Delhi University but you have to look for the prestigious ones, most of which fall in the North Campus of the Delhi University like the Hindu College, St. Stephens and a couple others. It’s really difficult to get into these top-notch colleges as they take nothing except your grades but if you manage to get good grades, then you get a direct pass into one of the best colleges in India.” Pooja explained it, with fruitful explicability.

Thus endeth his train of thoughts and he was back to his house in R.K Pur relying on the new information that he had now regurgitated from the regressed depths of his minds in an astounding meditation that provided him with a solution that was easy enough as picking up the phone and dialing a number. The solution was picking up a phone and then dialing a number. He would now talk to Pooja who, he knew from reliable sources was pursuing an honors degree in mathematics in the University of Delhi very happily abandoning his statistically her dream of becoming a career journalist thinking to himself, ‘when they say numbers don’t lie, they lie’.

He checked to see if her number which he didn’t had but he had a friend’s name who knew a friend who knew a friend who knew her number. So he talked to his friend to see if he could the number of his friend, and that he did and then he called this friend to see if she had the number to her friend which she fortunately did and then he called the friend who would have Pooja’s number and in this way, Rahil got Pooja’s number and then called her up.

He called her and the phone ringed, and Rahil waited timelessly as the phone kept on ringing and just at the last ring, just when the phone was about to disconnect, at the very last chord, Pooja did pick up the phone, or someone who answered “Hello?”

He was a little confused and a little alarmed at the sudden long distance connection and in that disconcerted state, he asked “Is this Pooja?”

“Wait a minute.”

Rahil waited. There was a little disturbance and sounds of muffled fumbling.

“Yes, who is this?”

“Hello, this is Rahil.” He said quite formally. There was a long pause, as if she needed to feel the name for a moment, and then answer.

“Rahil, Okay, hello………” she answered, confused herself why he had called.

“I hear you are in Delhi University nowadays. Which college? And what happened to your career in journalism?” he asked her. He had so many questions but there was something very unnatural he felt during talking on the phone so he would choose to wait if they would actually and keep the talking on the phone to a minimum.

“Yeah, I’m in Hansraj college, North Campus.” She answered valiantly like the name of the college and the campus was an insignia she wore on her breast. She however, avoided the later question. Rahil wanted to point it out but did not out of respect and sheer goodwill towards her. He felt heartache about it though. He felt that a sandcastle had just been brought down the dust of which had hurt his eyes, brought tears to it. He was at a loss of words to answer or question, forgetting the reason he had called her, but then he regained his composure and enquired:

“Okay, here’s the deal. I was looking for good colleges to study English literature and I wanted to know how good Delhi University is at it, and which colleges are the good ones. Also, I also want to know the procedures of admission and how to apply to different colleges in the University.”

She was taken aback he could feel, by the sudden outburst of questions that had avalanched over her from the other end of the phone. He could imagine her puzzled and bewildered expression she would hold on her face as she held the mobile phone with her one of her hand.

“Slow down there. Okay, firstly if you want to pursue English literature as a course, this is the place for you. A lot of extra-curricular activities that you can participate in and be a part of and I know you’d like that very much.” She said, almost as swiftly as she tried to match the swiftness in which he had asked her the question.

“Yes.” He answered only in one word.

“But be sure to take admission in one of the better colleges among Delhi University which are all in the North Campus. Only a few good colleges remain in the South Campus and elsewhere.” She told.

-Voice, form the past! Speak to me! Quench my thirst with your gusty voice, that sweet melancholic song midst the Islands I hear like a haunted lonely traveler, marooned, and your voice transforms me, moves me, Earth to unearth, to space. Marvel, I simply marvel. Time! Be timely, be gentle, and don’t be as harsh on her as you have been to me, my compatriots. Be gentle and shrewd, be not! Speak on, sister, Lady speak on, for I hear truth in your voice, not words for words have no meaning but the meaning we give to them. Respect I have the utmost for you, for you have given me a meaning not to word but to meaning itself. ‘Meaning’ is a ‘word’ and words have no meaning, so what is meaning; nothingness? This cacophony in between, this contraption of cell phone, like having rock to your ear while hearing sweet music, so unpleasant and so crass that I would rather find myself mute than to be able to talk with this mobile phone, a mobile pain! But your voice delivers me from all that. I don’t need you nor do I fantasize about you but that crystalline, chivalrous, memory-ridden voice of yours like sweet music playing in the middle of a montage of dreams, dreams too good to remember, sweet dreams with sweet music, saccharine sweetness swindles savor something so sensitizing……… and what great time than when night is at its young; the perfect time to hear sweet music, a music and you, muse, an inspiration to poetry, to creation, excelsior. Favor me, o muse, create! Create and help me do what I do best, in the moment, the best moment, something ravishing, escapist, like the sound of music, the music of sound, of mere dialogue, monologue, soliloquy, stream of consciousness, let me get wet in that stream, get into the fiction of fiction, a metafiction and let that sound be my dialogue, me poetry, my verse, that sound. Midst the music midst the scented sonata of sound, I hear distinct words, “best for you” “close to north” “no problem” and seem almost metric, iambic, like romantic poetry, purging my mind, soul, heart, body from the ‘Dark Age’ of alienation into the robustness of ‘Renaissance’, you Illuminati you! Violins I hear, major to minor, and saxophone, the leads, with fingers pressing on it I don’t see but feel and experience the trance of the musical voice.

\*Heartache, dreams, why dreams of a sparrow, broken, as if the world was structured that way, to break and take from what is delicate, like a rough wild child, taking the doll from a little girl’s hands and poking holes in it, scratching its cotton, its stuffed soft cotton and then running and the little girl meekly running behind him, her skirt perkily lifting and waving as she sadly runs, in her steps, in her leaps, a defeat, a dejection of glory, a deference of ease, a compromise, and when he is done running and seeing she is done running they both reach a well and the boy, the wild child that he is throwing the doll inside the well, the endless tunnel of darkness and says ‘you’re never going to get it’ and she, for the worst part accepts it, compromises. Goes………

In a decade, a baby grows into a child in a decade a child grows into a boy in a decade a boy grows into a man in a decade a man grows into a legend and in those many decades somewhere between those many phases he comes about, grows about with something organically imbibed in him not by birth but by the system, compromise. From a moment a child is born, taught that he can have anything in the world if he wishes so. This promise unconditional to him at the beginning becomes conditional as he grows and then promised to have all the pleasures of a fine living if he works hard enough for it and in this stage that he starts to compromise on whatever he can get ‘If not the finest grades, one step down, if not the finest education, one step down’ Then, the status quo changes and he is forced to work hard because if he doesn’t, he cannot even get the bare minimum and he realizes that he has become just another hamster in a wheel, a wheel which he has to run in for life and after his death, his children will take up his place. This is the heartache that I feel. The heartache of being a prophet, of seeing things beforehand, more than educated guess; certain truth and this truth heartache because it just might be the truth of the mouth, of the Lady, of the Form, that plays the sweet music as she talks, fine…… fine smooth tunes with her words, not poetry, yes poetry but not that form, music more, Chamber Music. Savor it, O Me While it lasts! For you know it won’ last too much, that something in it has already been lost, could never be found, and is replaced by a non-tone, placebo but the damage is yet to be done, the damage is still to come. Something, anything, save that voice, I! What is *your future* I? Just another vice that was once sweet music; just another Being that was once worth being; just another heartbeat, about to lose its beat and become lub-dub lub-dub lub-dub. Terror………terror………terror; life cruel, death achievable but futile waste of talent, of so much so Beware the charms of Lady Death for she eroticize, worship death, serve her, be her Slave, kiss the boot of the shiny leather, be under her leathery soles but never o never embrace her like so many fools before you did. Live O! Live for the sake of dreams broken, and leave for the sake of dreams unseen, live I on bleeding on the broken dreams, they hurt as I lay on them cut me bleed me like broken glasses these dreams hurt my eyes, these fading, already faded sandcastles. Why in this moment does the Impersonal becomes *the* personal, why O I! A broken shard of her dream cuts through my heart, all their pains I bear! And hers, that shard in my heart I shall bear whether I like it or not, that shard, pulled it won’t be only hurt me and I shall hurt for the sake of others, for others to be happy I shall suffer, like Christ, the overman, like Napoleon, not the great conqueror of lands but the conquerors of life, each death he lived, in life every moment he died until at Waterloo, he was freed, the overman. Cherish her voice I shall and remember it, embrace t, enliven it with each passing moment into my heart but that is not all I ought to do. I ought to do to be able to do others and in this sense do her and in doing her save her. For that I ought to Be evermore……… evermore……… evermore and larger than life if I am not already that, upper than all fetish. I shall be a fetish, for it is the fetish that breaks dreams, I shall the fetish that weaves them. A foot, a shoe, latex velvet………… to each its own- and all that I shall be, will be; a Dreamweaver. But can I be a Savior? No. I have not the strength for that, or for that matter the soul, all I have is this thing ‘the will to power’ but not materialistic capitalist power but power of love, of fractionalization and of devotion to the Other, not in any Godly sense but in humanitarian, groovy terms, understand me-

“Okay, buh-bye” she ended.

“Yeah.” He concurred.

He could not make anything out of her conversation except the initial few parts of the conversation when he actually had sense during their entire conversation and after that something in him took over hearing her very voice that ignited in him this constant feeling of loss and separation that was more anti-real than real perhaps due to the fact that he could envision her dream broken and be moved by the pathos of it better and more indulgingly that she would and he saw the far-future repercussions of the same more clearly than she did but the question that rotted away in his mind after they had this long conversation was why did she let herself go that easily when she could have had anything she wanted, because it was not for her grade that she had to choose mathematics honors as they were excellent and so she could have pursued journalism in any college of her choice that offered the subject. Then why didn’t she? Maybe it was due to some consequential pressure that she took the more financially giving pursuit of mathematics. After all, she does live in India where anything and everything is controlled by the economy and the job market more than any other country in the world. People are on a tight rope, almost bound to each other for want of this money, and if one fails, the whole breaks down and the system doesn’t want it and so there is high selectivity and competition in the job market and anyone that poses so much as a liability to the sustenance of the system is seen as a liability to the job market and thus excluded from it.

Pooja was battling in this cutthroat competition but so were everyone else, and all of them like her, had their dreams thrashed, smashed and broken in many ways. Only Rahil nurtured his. Watered it, gave it sunshine, proper care and that dream gave him fruits, more of which were to come but with those fruits there was also suffering which had only mildly started for him. Suffering in the form of alienation and detachment and this constant conflict of the intellect with logic as if they were contradictory or imposed on each other in a way they weren’t supposed to. This conflict was the result of a development of a rationale in Rahil, different from the general rationale or the logical rationale.

The logical rationale is limited, always dogmatic. The neo-rationale is something born out of purity of ideas and thoughts, endless streams of rudimentary truths formulating together but not in a direct form, more like a deconstructionist rearrangement. It was like the liquidation of all rationale, even the rudimentary truth and then emergence of a self-supplicated and self-organizational matrix that in the end formed a direct structure that is most basic and cannot be called structure at all; simply chaos. This chaos was non-deterministic which is completely against the very fundamental laws of organization because regardless of faith and belief, this one idea of determinism is the most fundamental and truthful notion known to many but somehow this new formed rationale of Rahil defied that notion.ect of it.

His rationale therefore became highly anti-establishment and destructive towards authoritarianism. This was the general aspect of it. The deeper aspect of it was the loss of firmness of this rationale which was not as structured but fluid, which became the reason for his adherence to idealism in his ideology and the justification of his rationale. The latter had just been formed out of an extensive soul-searching and constant evaluation of dogmatic psychology of the conscious mind and hence his ideology was unformed as of yet because he was isolated, like a lonely husband waiting at a train station to reunite with his wife and family after long and his mind and heart, filled with the emotions, the recollections of the time they had spent together and the time they were going to spend together and both these memory, though in different timelines scourge in his heart the very same time inciting the very same emotions; wait.

His distinctive self now started taking over in making much of his choices and did it with quite ease due to the resignation of his old self. The old self was somehow, or didn’t feel somehow to be intellectually capable of being dominant over the new self when it came to making decisions and so he started acting differently, more committed to the newer self. This newer self was yet untested to the outside world, though his mother had to put up with him, whom he had much dialogue with. She did show a little outcry over her son’s increased interest in writing. He had always had an interest in reading and now since he had all the more free time for himself that it was obvious, thought his mother, for him to read even more.

All in all, her son’s reaction did not seem that astonishing to her. He had more dialogue with him than he used to have before but she pegged the reason to be the detachment from all his friends. His mother was the only friend he had. She was more concerned for the future of the child than for this new psychological development, the latter needing more concern and attention than the prior. But the psychological condition of the son was something she could neither visibly see nor chart out that expertly.

His relationship with his mother was strong, oedipal almost. He felt a strong attachment towards her, felt the dire need to convince her with every action he was to take. But this newer self had started putting a hindrance to that. It started giving him contempt for others and a general sense of contempt for the whole world and it’s System, and her mother was also a victim of it. This contempt was based somewhat on the way society looked at him. He was a drop-out now. He used to get frequent whiplashes of embittered comments that really put him off. He knew he was more than that. He knew he was more than a drop out. He was an aspiring writer and now he was even published both as a columnist and as a poet. Though his nature might be amateurish but he sure was on some kind of track. The society however regarded this track as a feint to escape from the general lines of life. His uncles, his aunts and his brothers all wanted him to run along the same path but this path was totally rejected by Rahil both by his old self and his new one; the only difference being the newer one was radical in his rejection and rightfully so as he was enlightened enough to back his actions, his radical actions with reasons. His reasons were natural and not concrete like the reasoning his uncles gave him about the whole ‘man’s responsibility is to earn and make a good living and have a family and be able to provide for it’ but more questioning and penetrative that not only challenged but also shocked the logic of his uncles almost to the point of resignation.

It was clear by now that Rahil had started to possess age advanced qualities in what he wished to pursue. He had proper backing when it came to ideas and was willing to put forward the needed effort to bring ideas to action, to life not just as a writer but also as a thinker involved in a continuous discourse. There would be a plethora of activities Rahil thought he was suitably fit for which ranged from public speaking to singing. All he needed now was a base and all that stood between him and that base was time and choice.

Rahil would always stay in R.K Pur and read or write. Even though he wanted to go to Port Blair, something in him made the place feel abysmal and sodomizing even though it was urban. For Rahil, it could be the very fact that it was an urban place that made him feel sodomizing about it. He never went to Port Blair unless it was really necessary. He was also fed up of the constant nagging by his relatives in Port Blair to join an engineering college in the next academic cycle. But still he would go over to Port Blair sometimes. He would take that long ten hour ferry from one island to another, travel all that water but he would do it.

The reason for doing this was his brother, Yusuf who was twenty two and was working in a ship. He would occasionally go to Port Blair whenever his ship would dock at the Chatham jetty in Port Blair. He was a graduate from the same college that Rahil had dropped out of, except that his degree was just of one year while Rahil had four years of study ahead of him. He was a cousin of Rahil whom he famously got along with. They would watch movies together, talk to each other for hours and also go sit at the family shop together. Rahil felt a sense of fulfillment just by having him on the same ground as him due to a more fundamental appreciation.

Characteristically though they were stark opposites. Yusuf was physical, almost to a brutish extent, always imposing and domineering even in conversational spaces, had more interaction with the aunts and being more languid with them while on the other hand Rahil was subjectively introvert, never physical-he could almost not recall the last time he had played a physical sport- and always in a psychedelic world of his own as he sat between a family talk. Yet somehow they got with each other pretty well.

-*Water water everywhere and all the boards did shrink water water everywhere and not a drop to drink* is what I’ll be saying pretty soon. Ah! My parched throat, and look at the drinking water cooler here, so dirty, red with Pan Spit crusted up on the tray of the cooler, giving off the ugly stench of the *zarda* that was mixed in it. Oh gosh damn, I hate it! It’s below me to be travelling like this. How can Yusuf take this for months on end? His ship is no different that this! Water, I have to drink, come on drink it. Bend down, ah the stench, don’t get on my face please, not the face or the lips or the hands or the cloth. What then just drink it up come on come on come on! Lug glug………………ah! Problem solved! Wait, what is that? A little girl child puking; Oh my god, ugly! Look at that thick yellow grainy slime coming out of her mouth, belching out of her stomach with that horrid sound, so ugly! IS there art in it? Is not art in every suffering, every misery and every bitter experience? What experience than having partially digested food come right back at your mouth, I should like to think. Hit the deck, get out of this sitting room, and hit the deck. Walk, over! Ahhhhh! The blue seas, the blue sky and the white clouds at the cringe of dusk and nothing else but the cringe eehhhh………… Be a mariner, everyone told me, like my brother! You don’t have sea-sickness; you can hold your own! Why don’t you, the money’s good?-they said. And I would have been a mariner, but not to work like a labor eight-ten hours a day to put food on the table. I’d rather die of hunger. But to see the finest portrait of nature, its colors in such abstract beauty like a Nudist painting I would be a mariner all my life! Ease your hands on the railings and just look at that beauty of that……that………at a loss of words…… so just look, and feel and close your eyes and feel the grandiloquence of the most ultimate form of nature as it encloses you, almost identical beneath your feet as above your head, completely devouring you.

*Oh! Why beauty can never be told?*

*Let your glimmering body unfold*

*Let your fierce fancy uncaged*

*Reveal your virgin beauty-unaged*

The truest form of nature, O! I envy you, your immortality; give me if I can take it! Your charm, give me and give me your omnipresence. The white foam over the sea like the extra paint shining from artist’s new work as it hangs to dry, glimmering, bulbously bubbling, almost formlessly but gives it a tone, a tint of gloss, chromic………not so much but as the sun goes down and smooth rays of sun smoothly fall on the foam, it glows, and gives a glossy cellophane feel to the sea and you feel that you almost feel it physically but then you cannot, you are boxed in your own natural truth.

If I would have been a mariner……………

Those white rough uniforms with ceramic name tags and those black epaulets with golden lines running over them decorating them and giving them authority, importance…………something much needed in this world and something not given to people like us; writers. It is ***we*** who then give importance to the world, to the people in the world because it is the compulsion of our art to do so. We are painters and the words, our paint. And like the millions, like the salon de artists, like Picasso, Modigliani, Rembrandt, Titian, Velázquez, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Van Gogh, Monet, Pissarro, Matisse, Braque, Dali, Champaigne, Boucher, Fragonard, Rivera, Renoir, Degas, Boudin, Whistler………………

We are. They paint the sea with colors. I, with words… They only paint once, I do every time I see it, and every time differently and also in those days those nights when I do not see it but think of it, I paint. Strokes; S.T.R.O.K.E.Sssssss……… What about a mariner? What does he do? Slaves off to the seas, not out of will but necessity, the evil of men, evilness that feasts on people’s lives, people like my brother; young, fresh, bursting with youth, readiness, exuberating with a persona of his own, hunted, sacrificed like a deer in sadistic supplication, against its whims, her eyelids fluttering. I pity him like I do me, only more. Why does it have to be this way? Fate! I loathe you, detest your non-existent existence. What are you? Even Death has a way of coming and going but you suck on people’s lives, claim it like your own, fate! Like my brother’s……

But then you were his dream……… Ever since he had got out of school, he had wanted to be off shore, living the life of a mariner. Kind, fate can be but not to everyone. Fate is inevitable but you must never admit it. Be realistic……… demand the impossible. Never admit what is but always try to change it for the right if it wrong, for the better if it is right but don’t stop changing. Brother, where art thou? I miss you……… miss to see you in your uniform. I miss the times that we spent together in the near past and past of the years gone by, when we were in school, I miss studying together, miss using your worn books as you went to an upper grade and I went to yours. Miss I do, the way we wrestled and the way we came to a halt when the aunt hollered. Fraternity, such a big word, so formal, Formalist but its meaning its emotion and its idea so simple so ecumenical and its presence so heavy, hardwired and we think love is lost among two men. As long as there is a man and there another man and there is the existence of the word ‘fraternity’ in this world and the word has a meaning pertaining to the emotion of fraternity, then one man and another man are two men; brothers.

I see land…… I see a thread a dark green…… blackish thread. I see land. It’s still an hour away, maybe an hour and a half. Many things can happen in an hour and a half. So much in life; so much in death- What is in death? Nobody knows, but I sure would want to know. Does that mean I want to die? Well I am not afraid of death, if anything I am fascinated by it. But the life…. The life counts. My mother, her pain when I am gone, for her I live. My art, my literature, all that I have ever written to see it read by people, applauded, for that I live. In actuality, nobody is afraid of dying; they are afraid of living after dying. Confusing though; let me simplify. When a man dies, he dies, his substance dies, but his soul lives, in the form of memories grieved by his loved ones, and this substance is the reason why we fear death, the aspirations that we have in life, that we fear death is going to rid of us is a part of this substance and so it is the presence of this substance we fear and the grief of our loved ones after death and the loss of aspirations after our death.

Morbid thoughts……… Land! Ahoy! A little closer, faraway and the smell of the sea, fishy, but free, blowing through my face one ends and another comes but I cannot cut it. –

That evening, Rahil met his brother and they both had a short reunion because Yusuf had to go meet his friends which left Rahil alone in his house in Port Blair. He used to watch a lot of television before but after the discovery of his new self, he completely lost interest in the mainstream media. He felt it highly repetitive no matter what channel he watched. All the Indian family channels showing the same kind of Indian middle-class family sitcoms if they can be thinly called so. All the characters in the sitcom, or the serial, as it is more popularly known in India, dressed in their best Sarees, face completely pan-caked by makeup and the men always dressed in suits as if every middle-class blue collar man can afford a suit much less use it as a daily-wear. And the movie channels, be it English or Hindi, all broadcasting the same blockbuster movies that do amusingly well in box office but amusingly morose in critic’s sheets without even so much as one art movie by Satyajit Ray or any other director. The Hollywood channels seem stupider in doing so because they *can* broadcast an occasional good movies because it least in Hollywood, a fraction of art movies are still being made and not completely extinct from mainstream like in our case. All the channels screamed on top of their voices only one idea to Rahil- brainwash through repetition. It is like crypto-hypnotism, he thought and something he should be very wary of and not just be wary himself but also make others wary of it. Then there were the youth regalia channels like channel V and MTV that boasted to have the same spectrum of thoughts as the Indian youth. According to Rahil, although they didn’t share the same spectrum of thoughts like India’s youth, they did share the same amount of stupidity and deterioration of mental clarity of thoughts.

Cinema, however, for him was more real than reality itself in a very philosophical way. He was highly critical for this reason of the contemporary Indian cinema. His fascination for cinema, now more rejuvenated, came from the idea of the screen, the cinema and the viewer- the three media of reality. Average cinema goers goes to cinema to drown himself into a reality that can only be portrayed to him through the screen so in his view the screen was more real than the movie logically but in the psychoanalysis of this seemingly simple, proved sophisticated outcomes for him in the form that the sub-conscious mind defies the reality of the screen and the reality of the real life itself to create a artificial reality. However, to call it artificial would be an understatement because it is born out of the same reality that cinema goers live in and the same memory they experienced in their real lives. The cinema just invokes those memories using the certain necessary symbols to ‘realize’ the possibility of impossibility in a very Homeric fashion. Cinema to him was more than just a form of entertainment but a form of reality. The question in his mind was not whether the cinema holds proper importance in our life as it is supposed to but whether we give the necessary attention and detailed penetration to it as it so craves for.

In the days that he spent in Port Blair were the only days that he had internet connectivity which he used to the fullest extent for the creation of his career. He would jaunt over to an internet café, pride himself on taking a fine walk on the way, looking at the long snakes of traffic and the buzzing cars and the screechy auto rickshaws with their familiar black and yellow body, a sight of the city life he could relate to and then he would get himself a meal, a nice burger from the Tillai Bakery that was only a curved alone away from his house and after having a contented stomach, he would let his fingers do the talking in one of those stiff plastic keyboards attached to a desktop for which he thought he always needed specially fancied boxing gloves for each finger as he would literally be punching buttons.

-My future, in my hands now. Let us see……… What I am looking for. Damn net! Too slow……… Refresh, refresh, refresh, mouse drag. Click……… click…… click. Ah! Here’s the Delhi university website and now let’s see. Okay, what’s the FYUP? Oh, four years now for arts instead of three? What a load! Blow it off! But Delhi’s good…… it is the intellectual capital; Daryganj-the address of every publishing house both local and multi-national and I want to get published. I need a printing outlet and Delhi’s the place for it. For God’s sake, English is the third preferred language in Calcutta and Chennai. Yes, Calcutta! I refuse to call it Kolkata out of spite! Didn’t you know? I am a sick man, I am a spiteful man, I am a dying man……… Sick I am! Sick enough to surf fetish porn on another tab. There is a philosophy about beauty very dear to my heart that there is no such thing as absolute beauty and there is no such thing as absolute sexuality. The perfect beauty is scattered in scattered in bits and pieces among the millions of women on Earth, because God is feminist, if there is a God. I will respect the Hegelian concept of God that ‘*there is a God if he wants to be*’ and so in his grand plan, he didn’t want women to be objectified. So he sent down women in bits and pieces, some having astoundingly beautiful eyes you can never stop watching…… always stalking, black, brown, blue, sometimes green, maybe the eyes are perfect but is she the perfect girl. Something or the other about her is off-putting in some way or the other. Or absolutely beautiful feet, tight, petite, slender, lightly colored not too fair and risk coming off as fibrous nor too dark, ebony but just the perfect amount of tan with fine finish, waxed, tinted and those curves of knees, the flatness of the shin, the firmness of the calves, the curve of the ankles, the extension of the flatness of the soles and their ideal ending in the form of rightly shaped toes finished with properly maintained fingernails. The most beautiful ‘thing’ in the world; still disintegrated though, from the wholeness of the perfect beauty. Similarly, the breasts, rotund in their form, formless in their appeal……… There is so much that a man fantasizes about it and there is so much a woman does to put a chaste to their fantasies……… Covers it civically, but the shape of it persists, desists the choice of girl to abstain to lure the phallic with its charm. All men are not phallic, but those that are, are because they are idiotic nincompoops who do not know how to fully appreciate the woman form. God made the woman form to be appreciated, for men to appreciate, as he made a part of the man to be appreciated, his penis, hence many cultures practice phallic worship, hence there is such a thing as Oedipus complex, hence the *Shiva lingam* and it not unsafe to proclaim the fact that homosexual desire among men is due to this penis, made such to be appreciated, to be worshipped not just for its aesthetics but for its appropriateness to give highest of pleasures, to both men and women.

And so God, or substance for atheists, made women knowing that man will fall for her, and the literature of Milton suggests man did fall of her, strong enough to reject the pleasures of paradise. And so women were made beautiful, but only in small quantities and not entirely. The entirety of beauty, female beauty in particular would be too desirous for men to handle, with all their phallic superiority but man, the profligate that he is, will go after the perfect woman ravishing it and destroying the true beauty. Feminists would also hold this point valid though not being a literature junkie like me, they would not appreciate the effect of such an outwardly philosophy pertaining to the physical beauty of woman, almost to the extent of objectifying it.

Look, the tab on the four year undergraduate program of Delhi University has opened. Stop now, philosophizing about fetishism. Four years……… for an arts degree that’s three years around the country; why? In the name, lies the answer…… University of Delhi and then what is harm of pursing a degree for three years or for four if my main aim struggling in the city as a writer and a thinker.

Still, alternatives are ought to be found. Jamila Milliah University, Jawahar Lal Nehru University……… ah, yes, JNU, ad heard a lot about it; the Left bastion, they said. Let me check their website, they might have place for a little young boy with a little knowledge in a minor little things, of course being humble, and see. Delhi University………… still’s an option. Now! What? Okay, there, ah, no bachelor’s for English, only foreign subjects. The University is only for master’s students. Another one goes down the pipe. Jamia Milliah, what’s the admission procedure, look………look, an admission form; physical. You need to be there to get it and then fill it out, bollocks. Do I know anyone in Delhi? No, then why am I going to study in Delhi, because I am a fool? Am I an artist and a Bohemian perhaps? Traveler, ventriloquist, mascara, jester with a back-story, a fairly tragic one, like the joker from batman only less psychotic and more anarchic or something more, deeper; the pull of the city on me and me towards it but I do not feel that. One cannot tell of its fate until it has been sealed. A coffin is made only once and then you sleep in it forever. Options are open, join Jamiah and get hold of someone in Delhi, a friend of friend of a friend who lives there. Pooja would do it, no I recall, in her conversation, she said she would be out of city that time. Stupid time! JNU is a no-go though…… too bad for it I feel, heard a lot about it. I would’ve met some good people. Who knows, maybe if I am in Delhi, I would pay a visit there once or twice and attend some of their events. Delhi University is still an option.

Calcutta……Chennai.

Well, the site for St. Xavier’s is quite nice, oh, the application submissions have started. Let get applied, and now, fill the form, mane, date of birth, address……… This, that. Okay, now I have to do what? Okay, here’s something- take a printout of this form and get it attested by your school principal, okay. I have to go to school again. Rewind, reverie! St. Xavier’s has a still competition heard, very selective and so they have a high cutoff percentage. I just might not be able to get, time for backup. Wait, St. Xavier’s is my backup. Then what is your first choice? Delhi University……… with the four year undergraduate program and am I serious about it? Delhi; how bad could it be even with the Four Year Program; If not Delhi, then Calcutta, and if not Calcutta, then what? Madras? There is one Madras Christian College caught my attention and it is not that selective. What else, oh yeah, there is Loyola college of arts and commerce, the best in Chennai they say. I have a good chance in that. But wouldn’t that be mediocre. I don’t want to be mediocre. I want to be a proletariat but not mediocre. I want to be, just be. Be. Other choices…… any…

Any? What’s on the second tab, more of fetish porn, dominatrix? Mistress; a word most misused, for a woman that’s uppity not in the exact term but superior, that would be its meaning but it is used for a woman, often for she who takes, from a man, often used for a second affair of a man who has already an affair, a marriage. He buys her jewelry, gifts, for this mistress to please her. But that is not what a mistress stands for. Sure, a mistress is someone who wished to be pleased but not objectively, not materialistically, as many see it, as dictionaries define it. And here, we see the test of the extensity of words, and when test, they rip, and reveal to us nothingness, that can or cannot have meaning, that meanings can be manipulated, constructed, that they can sometimes just lose meanings. Words, like humans are existential. Words are not objects. Words are projection of human thought and projections of human thoughts are *like* humans in that they are acted upon by the same actors that act on humans. And like that we give meaning to meaninglessness; give reason and sense to the unreasonable and nonsensical. And that is how life is. *You* give meaning to it; make sense out of the nonsensical, give it goals, set some norms, like the goal of becoming a writer, and setting up norms like education in a good college. But I know life would still be if I do not achieve that dream but my fear is that if it would be along the lines of a heightened reality almost to the extent that it becomes a nightmare; this reality where I cannot pursue my dreams. I have lived this reality for a year and it has proved to be unfulfilling in the very least. That is the purpose of life, isn’t it? Fulfillment. That is why we do things we do and act the way we act, t gives us a sense of who we are in doing so, a self-dependence and dependence on this reliable cushion of the self.

Colleges, courses, future…… it is Christ University, Bangalore; another University that can be used for backup so let’s apply and be sure that I have been applied. Name, address, high school……… all that mumbo-jumbo filled and now, print this form out and get it attested from the principal, then post it on this address- they say. Fair enough. Ah, radiation! Burning my eyes, these big, fat monitors, they don’t have those sleek monitors. Live in the twenty first century! And now for the big finish, let’s check my emails. Okay, spam……spams……spam……and hey, a reply to my email requesting publication of my completed manuscript. Click……click, it’s not opening. It’s too slow to be opened. Wait for it, patient. Marvel, now, at the beauty of those pretty feet and the exposure of their fleshed nakedness that was presented to him from the monitor screen.

Ah, now it opens……

*Many thanks for your mail and submission. We have evaluated your work, and we are happy to let you know that your work meets our basic criterion for publishing. We have placed your book in our section of-‘manuscripts in consideration’. This however is a preliminary expression of interest and we wish to evaluate the project further.*

Still not published, still the sweet taste of complete happiness too far to taste but one thing I know about success is success is what success does and then it becomes a memory. Anything else left to do. No. Time to pay the piper and be gone; where shall I go now? Take a walk, short one, through the crowd, the sparse crowd going about involved in their sparse lives. Okay, \*brrk comes the sliding door and I slide out of it. And down the spiral stairs I come to the ground, a little shaky at the final step, I wonder why. Never mind. Mind Ease it, savor it, mindless make it. And now, straight I walk wondering this that, feeling the cold wind, not cold but cool, simple, healing, but no wound. The night brings out the blues in life. Aqualung; and especially this differently lit night, streetlights, people, no end, only continuity, an endless cycle. I walk over to the temple and I take the road down; a lot of people, not sparse but still their life, sparse. I like walking around people with sparse lives; it’s comforting. To be still in their lives is very easy; their life is still and their entity, stable. I am conscious, I am aware, filled with anxiety that comes with a certain kind of neurosis. Their lives are between brackets, mine without commas. The yellow lights serve a purpose in being yellow. They serve a kind of a nature, a characteristic, their yellowness. Their yellowness, the yellowness of the streetlights is the symbol of the sun the night never had, never has and will never have. The night wants sun badly, and that is why fire is yellow, orange even, to mimic the sun in its appearance, as if the sun and the night were once lovers but the sun did not care for her in his life and married day, and so they remain together, forever, till eternity and now the when dusk comes, the day walks away, hand in hand with the sun, as it fades away into the horizon and the night appears, wryly, with sadness, and with the tears from her eyes falling over her black gown and glimmer as stars in the sky. She cries she cries she cries and star shine……they shine………they shine. It seems like a play with the sun, the day and the night as parts, characters in a play with their perfect timings in their destined, no, scripted roles, like a well-played ensemble, Les Miserablès! I walk down the Sagar Cool Bar, and then Lulu Electronics, then the Milan Hotel, love their Chicken Biryani. The rice has a different taste to it and it is also really fragranced with spices. I could almost feel the rice on my lips, the scent venting through my nose. And I feel like going in there and having a plate. Not now though, later maybe. Walking down to the Gandhi statue, I see a friend. Hey! I wave to him. He didn’t see me. What becomes! Friendship is a thin thread; it’s organic. You have to maintain it. A good friendship is a friendship well maintained, but I never seem to do that. That’s my problem. And that’s my problem because of which I have the problem of not being indulging with friends in reciprocity. It is neither egoism nor egotism. I keep them but only insomuch as they keep me. If they keep me, I am kept. Though I can boast of never losing friends, or can I? Silly me, building on a thing I can’t even remember a thing about. My mind is losing is retentiveness……… don’t know why. Look at those girls, amour prope…… filled with self-love so much so that they are almost imposing on others with their self-love, imposing on passers-by, passers-by like me. Never mind. People are people, women are women…… Feminists are nicer women, I can only assert by their writings. As analytical as women should come, as analytical as I would like a woman to be……women, can’t live with them, can’t tie them to a rocket and launch them into moon. Don’t procrastinate on the account of thinking, the walking but walking is supposed to me stimulating. Not in the modern world, not in the modern neo-liberal consumerist opportunist Platonic world it isn’t. Walking the roads, according to the modern laws of the road, without intent is actually a crime with intent. You walk on the road, you goddamn better have a reason to do so-they say. Those fools……… The walk has ended but the journey hasn’t. The journey is a spiritual one, a psychoanalytical one and time would itself end one day, for me that is, but this journey is endless like that man over there, walking with a stick, his bronze statue reminding people not so much of the trials and the tribulations he faced during the British rule, under it but glorifying and immortalizing the spirit of his pacifist struggles and his non-violent endeavors. I personally advocate for violence in the manner of great Black Nationalist leader and the precursor to the Black Panther movement Malcolm X in one of his speeches when he said *I am for violence when it is done for self-defense and against the oppression of tyranny. I don’t even call it violence, I call it intelligence.* But to see that bronze statue stand there tall glaring as the lights from the nearby streetlights and lights from small sops opened at the side of the street lit the form of that person, as a satire to mortality, transcendental. Te question in my mind is whether that is the greatness people talk about; to be a statue is not about the statue but about the stature that comes with it. Is that immortality? His philosophies besmirched, his name taken in vain in mainstream politics yet that statue stands tall. The satire, almost like a form of irony.-

Rahil had to go to school now to get those two forms, the forms for the application for the college, to get it attested by the Principal of his college whom he had not seen for a time as long as an estimated year. Funny how repetition feels like when it happens, he thought.

-Déjà vu. Something inside me lingers on as it had lingered before. O my God! It can’t be that it exists still, fear of school!-

Rahil actually did not have fear of school during his schooling life but then he was also not the readiest person to go to school either. As a result, he missed a lot of classes and had quite the notorious reputation for it. His fear now was a result of the outcome of his life so far which according to the teachers and the school community was next to nothing. To them, he had been a washout. To them, he was a graduate from a prestigious high school and that was about it. They did not care of his artistic pursuits or his writing endeavors, his intellectual development. They were more concerned of talking or if need be, brainwashing some sense into him that he was going in the wrong direction and that there was still time to swerve back to the right one.

Only his Principal knew he had dropped out from the college as she had strong ties with his family. It was these strong ties that got him admission into the school when he was a child in the first place. So one can imagine how strong these ties were. From the family also, it was instructed, or more formally, advised to the teacher to talk to Rahil about these matters, about Rahil being a renegade when it came following a set tradition. Be that as it may, the Principal however had a soft spot for Rahil and his aspirations though she was very condoning of it. She, in any way, could not undermine the great amount of raw talent that Rahil had in him and she felt it was only natural for him to take such trade but then she had to battle his individual perspective with the macro-perspective of the society, what was becoming of Rahil as a science student.

Rahil did not go to the school for two days since he printed out the form, not because he could not but because he would not. Spending much of the night writing poetry, he woke up late in the morning much to the fury of his aunt who would fling his blanket off from his body, fold it and pack it in the cupboard and after a quarter of an hour or so, he would wake up with a bobby head and an even more bobby and blurred vision.

The he would get fresh, which took him longer than usual, due to his bobby head and distorted vision. As e threw the cold water on his face and as the water hit the dark skin that covered his face bone, he would regain his senses and his sights would fix to its original self. He would then walk out the bathroom and sit for a little while, not doing anything, not even looking and just sitting on a chair near a window that shone o his back and partially on his face and his chest the broad sunlight of the day and wait for the tea that would be served to him. He would drink a mug full tea to restore himself, as if restoring a machine through a lubricant and then he would go upstairs on the first floor and watch a little bit of television, just the tiniest peek of that customary radiation to fake the impression that he was still in the order of things. After a tiny peek, he would gladly switch off the television and get to work over a book reading or over his diary writing poetry.

The poetry he wrote initially was rhythmic, highly rhymed and structured. He had not started off reading about rhymes and meters as he started writing. He wrote rhymes with his ears, like a classical poet. It was during his phase of compulsive writing that he started experimenting with iambic meters, spondee, dactyls, trimesters, tetrameters and other technicalities of the poetic style. This was also limited to certain time. When he had started reading poetry on online magazines and discovered that most of them were free verse poetry with no sense of structure or minimalist structure, prosaic in nature, he still wrote rhymed poetry. This was only till the time he was in contact with editor Burton Biggs who published his poetry in the ‘London Grip’ magazine and told him to write a little more freely so he could better encompass ideas and represent them in his poetry. He took his advice, only much later but confessed to himself that it helped him a lot. He started to prosaic poetry which were clearer in thoughts and ideas and seemed more mature than his dire attempts in rhyming with meters which needed a high lenience on rhyming vocabulary and usage of a versatile language which for him were difficult collectively. Hence, it was also easier for him to write free verse poetry too.

Writing free verse poetry also gave him the freedom of experimenting with the length of the novel as he was not strained when it came to language and could write long poems that essentially had more to say than shorter poems. He was not for deliberately making a supposed short poem long just for the sake of its craft and compromising with its idea making the general theme repetitive and uninteresting. He would rather end his poems shortly with a resounding, like a proud performer taking a curt bow after his performance.

The evolution of his short story writing was also quite interesting to him. At first, he was not interested in writing short-stories at all. He used to start with an idea of a story and with the proper setting and backdrop, and then it automatically extrapolated into a novella, which he would then stop writing. He would then start on another idea pretty much with the same backdrop and it became more than a short story like its predecessor. His novels were a collage of similar short stories with remarkable non-linearity due to the arrangement and rearrangement that Rahil subjected its stories to and since they had the same origin, it was much less distorted as a work formed through a technique like this would expect to be.

Then he was advised, he could not recall from where, writing short stories with a post-modern narrative, avant-garde techniques and shifting narratives. His first short story dealt with a topic he had a major affinity for. He used a noir technique to describe a gang shootout in naturalistic descriptive details. In his noir technique, he chose not to name the characters but point them out, whenever they needed to be pointed out, by their features. He also used a diner conversation setting before the actual shootout that also takes place in the diner and he created the conversation in such a way so as to deliberately point out the artificiality of their presence there and thus indemnifying the idea of a climax in an expected yet surprising manner. He was very proud of the way he wrote, both in his poetry and his short stories. As a result, he would always be writing them. The short stories came later and he wrote much less frequently than he wrote poetry.

Sometimes things would not come out of his even when he tried. This was an issue for him as he would usually have no difficulties in writing the moment he sat prepared to write. But when in these odd moments he had a writer’s block, he would get very upset, almost deranged in his finding in him the fault that was responsible for this creative blockade.

‘Maybe it is overexposure to computer radiation’ he thought. ‘Maybe I ought to get a typewriter from an antique store, a nostalgia shop’ he thought. He knew this was not the exact answer to his question. In his opinion, no answer was an exact answer to a question even more so when it came to questions of the mind, about the psyche. He needed to have some kind of closure when he could not write and so he would usually think of an idea and propagate it in his mind. He was very methodical at that. His mind was a fountain of ideas that was capable of bringing to life every faculty of someone’s thinking with words. His words were exact, true, unlike the bulk of writers he came about in his journey through literature that were so Romantic in their writing of prose, they could almost pass for poets. Writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez in their vivid notion of a ‘magical realism’ somehow bend the idea of prose as a form of a narrative incision on the fine fabric of human society and a parallel explanation to the impeccabilities of our daily life in the way that they are and not more. Marquez however, started in the tradition of romanticizing with the realistic and elevating it to a sort of oversized depiction of a world of fantasy, not fit to be called realism itself, commented Rahil. According to him, his works were symbolic at best with the idea of a picaresque hero in a pseudo-ethical world. This idea of a hero in his novels is then taken to such an extent that he makes a stand in terms of good and evil, beyond good and evil where there is an unsure marshland, of what, Rahil couldn’t quite put his finger on. Marquez challenged ethics but not in a direct manner but his mannerisms were lofted in their sense, never truly down to earth as something you can cite directly. This was the drabness he found in Marquez’s work. But as he read Marquez, he was bound by the narrative, so macho and valiant and in such a theme as that of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that he was forced to single out just the device used in his novel and appreciate it. He did not know any other word for that device but “Spaniardity”, the braveness and the passion of the Spaniards. It was obvious to him that it would glance off to literature as well.

Rahil had also read much of Spanish history as well and how it coincided with the Latin American history as well. He saw in the successful efforts of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in raising an armed revolution against the dictator Batista and the failed revolution of Spanish anarchists of Andalusia, and the urban individualists of Barcelona blowing up cafes and theatres, a place of the bourgeois and implicating on them the propaganda by the dead, also their armed insurrections against the then Spanish fascist monarch, fearless as they were, a similarity in their moods and their general connect with the people and this general connect extended to the period of Hugo Chavez. It was obvious that Marquez, having such a powerful history in his hands, would resort to the simple forms of fiction in depicting. He should not, thought Rahil and in some ways his ‘magical realism’ is justified for his use because of the history that he embodies. The realism of the Big Other, history itself, has been magical in the case of Marquez and Mario Vargas and of Cortazar, because their history, their reality, so to say, has been nothing short of magical.

He thought and thought about the things that were worthy of writing but all the while his thoughts would take him somewhere else, somewhere derivate and analytical and too stagnant for a poet or a writer. He thought and thought:

-Bleak mind, o! Tell me, what. Tell me how, when or at least why but tell me of yourself. I can look but I cannot see, blinded I am by consciousness, by the ability to see. What has caused this ailment in me? The very nature of my knowledge, my thinking and my consciousness has become too overpowered for me to bear. I am in a circular reasoning with myself. With myself, I am in a circularly converse, and me converses with I, and then I replies to me and then me replies again and then I comments on the reply of me and it goes on and on, this incessant boxing match between the ego and the superego, the superego as it is but the ego getting more and more dominant. Speak O! Modernism – poetry from the point of view of a suitcase, novel from the point of view of a dog… No, that’s post modernism, different though from the more sociological term ‘post-modernity’. Dada, the realization of existentialism in literature, ends of utilitarian thoughts of the nineteenth century by the intuitionist thoughts of the Dadaists and the Situationalists. Oh, the literature, more interesting is the way literature *is* than literature itself. Going through time, going through space, sliding it breaking it, living, drying, loving, hating, going insane, demented, realizing it was all a dream, I have tried it all, even trying I have tried. What’s next? What’s more? Be more. Nothing more to see……… Nothing really matters………nothing really matters……… to me. Hah! Lie down. The fan; the spiraling eye of the fan, hypnotic, hitting on the subconscious mind and its wings like the outer whirlpool of a hurricane, fierce, but it is the core that is appalling to me. The centre, the deepness of it, the completeness of its power and the power with which it holds the whole gyre, the centre holds good, firm strong, overlong. The feeling of the fan is always inspiring, coaxing, like the sight of a tiny strip of land after hours of relentless journey through the vastness of the seas. Oh what harshness is this bleakness of mind, bleakness not caused by the inability to think but bleakness caused by thinking itself! Why does nothing suit my fancy? Why do I not find inspiration of the kind that would rekindle my mind into activity? But there is creativity in bleakness, like the winter bleakness, also a beauty if not the perfect form. There is no perfect form, that much is said. But this, ah this, shall be the source of my inspiration, the ability of inactivity; not taking a step is a step in itself, a practical agent of chaos has to be imbibed in a system in order to make it anarchic. –

It was more reality than fiction that he lived in those words. His fiction was his reality. His art was his profession, his professionalism. He was always critical of the use of the word ‘professional’ courses for media sciences, engineering and all the courses that came under the umbrella of ‘professional courses’ where a skill of apprenticeship was taught. Engineering was apprenticeship, he thought and nothing more than a craft such as plumbing, electrical fitting, contract construction or simple carpentry. Carpentry, though was more artistic that engineering but the tradecraft to be learned was still of similar sorts. Is there any dignity in that, he thought; to be treated like someone with no perspective at all and to complete crushes the aesthetic art into ascetic practice of blindfolded technicality?

However, he was glad for himself that the dark days of engineering were far behind him but he was also skeptical of what lay ahead of him. His mind, distorted by the time, almost a year that he spent in solitude, had somehow affected his quality of decision making in the effect that it impeded it. He knew he was supposed to sign and attest the forms from his school’s Principal but something in him was really unwilling to go to the school, something not so much deep but still dominant over him. He felt almost paralyzed the moment he thought about his trip to the school. He felt unwell like some psychosomatic symptoms were actually claiming the best of him. He was keener on spending the day inside, then two days.

The weather was also dotingly to Rahil’s side in those two days. The December days were always a little misty in the Islands, but the two days were heavily clouded giving the whole place a dark, sketchy impression to it like an artist’s shaded drawing on cream-colored drawing paper. The days seemed like evenings both in their appearance and their comfort. One could almost wake up from sleep and feel as if he had just woken up from an evening nap. Such was the tone of the morning. It never did rain though. The whole cloudy weather seemed like farce played on Rahil to actually keep him from going to school.

Suddenly, in the afternoon just after Rahil had eaten his lunch and was leaning on his bed, his back reclined on a pillow between him and the wall to cushion his firm back, it rained. When it started raining, the rain seemed to like a spray, like the periphery of a fire hose as it shoots a streamlined jet of water straight to where it is directed. Then it gradually became a downpour banging heavily on the tin rooftops of his house. He liked the rain. He loved the rain. Rain filled him with euphoria, especially when it rained heavily. He did not like to get wet himself but he liked the way things looked outside as it rained; a distorted reality as if everything we see and we know is about to melt with the rain and the curtain would fall gracefully, and that would be the end of the show. He also liked the sound, the more consonating hiss, more in voice and noise than a snake’s, equal in attention, both demanding attention from the observer and in this case, from Rahil. He was a product of something more as he looked at the rain through the glass on his window, fogged, but still clear and still doing what a window does best, condense or elaborate, depending on the observer’s view.

Rahil always wondered the history of rain, its archetype. In his opinion, many mistake rain as gloomy, dreary in styles like ‘*it was dark and dreary and raining*’ like the use of rain Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar in the premonition of Calpurnia about the death of Caesar. She did not see Caesar’s death outright but saw these archetypes, the archetype of a lion roaming on the streets, taken from the Roman civilization as it fell asunder, people drinking blood from the fountain and staining their handkerchiefs with the blood as a form of insignia. These primordial images correspond to Caesar’s death. The thing in the representation of these archetypes that interested Rahil was not in its representation or the fact that these images constituted in foretelling he death of Caesar but the willingness and the innovative genius of Shakespeare to have used these archetypes that again were discoveries of a much later age in Jungian terminology. Folktales and mythical lore used these archetypes even before Shakespeare’s era but what was significant in Shakespeare’s usage of primordial archetypes was in the placement of these archetypes in the dreams, that is the sub-conscious mind of Calpurnia, he thought, that accounted for Shakespeare’s cunning insight into the minds of his audiences.

Rahil saw the afternoon turn into evening in very much the same way, the same tint, the same gaily gloom. In the evening of the second, somewhere around five, Rahil got a phone call.

“Hello” the voice said.

“Hello” Rahil replied.

“This is Deepika calling from Edumetis. It is regarding your application for internship. We want to let you know that we would be delightfully pleased on working with you. We have sent the writing assignment in your mail and also a sample on how the work is to be done. We will settle the monetary matters of our arrangement once you complete the writing assignment. I hope you do enjoy content writing for Edumetis.” The voice said, as if in a haste.

“Okay, thank you.” Rahil replied trying to recollect which content writing internship it was that he got accepted for.

And without any reply, like an automated call, voice on the other line went blank without a whisper of reply, just the blank tone of the disconnected line hanging in the air.

He recalled he had applied for a couple of internships, to kill the time had in his hand in between reading and writing to crack a swing at the mainstream writing market. He figured that some of his work as a content writer would dissipate a lot of his work over the net thus giving him notoriety among the writing contingent. He was also very enthusiastic towards it and made a striking resume just for the very purpose of getting placed well as an intern. He now had more to do. He wanted to head down to the internet café at once and access the document that the girl had sent him but the rain stopped him. He cursed the rain and he blessed the rain.

The next day he planned on going to the school. Others students, his friends, when they came to Port Blair usually went to school to meet their teachers and they went in groups. Rahil had not visited the school for almost a year now even though he was still in Port Blair and now that he was going, he was going alone. This crippled Rahil internally, the spontaneity in placidity. His life had reached a complacency that no man would want to stay much longer in yet things kept sprouting up, blossoming from the marsh about him in which he was stuck, getting sucked in moment by moment but he, trying to emerge out of it.

Shortly after he woke up the next morning after cleaning himself up and having a hearty breakfast with a mug of tea, he got ready for school, without uniforms. Getting ready in normal outgoing clothes to go to school was an eerily staggering feeling for him. With each shirt button that he buttoned, he could almost feel himself going back into time to the moment that he used to get ready for school. Button by button, as he buttoned his brown Levi’s half-sleeved checkered shirt he could almost feel the shape, the little dent on the rim of his old school-shirt’s button and he could feel the same when he wore the shirt each morning to school buttoning his invisibly white shirt totally covered with thin navy blue pin stripes worn to the extent that the cloth wore out and thinned to a napkin, its button holes dilapidated from overuse but the buttons still firm and loyal to the shirt, not one missing. His school-shirt was a little out of shape, a little too loose but it was comfortable in the hot and humid days of Andaman and Nicobar Islands for that very reason as it did not stick to the skin with sweat.

He looked outside the window ready to leave and so the sun shining brightly on the burgundy colored rooftop of the Netaji club built inside the ground in front of his house. He turned his look to his feet, naked and put on his sandals, locked his straps on his feet using the Velcro straps of his sandals, tapped the feet twice on the ground and up on his feet he was then ready to leave. He had in his pocket, his wallet in which he had the meager bus fare and some notes for his daily pleasures and other among other things in his pockets, there was his phone and a folded empty paper in case he had some idea that was too valued to just let go. After his final examinations by his hands through the pocket, he was ready to leave. Then he remembered to take the two forms along with the copies of his mark sheets just for the sake of it.

He walked to the bus terminus, passing the same roads, the same gullies, the dame narrow ways, the same shops, the same restaurants and cafes as he walked the same crowd but the people in it, different. Or maybe they were the same and it was only just that he was seeing much now than he did before. The crippling effect was still lingering in him, deep. He needed to get rid of it. He couldn’t. He reached the bus terminus and boarded the bus that would take him to Minnie Bay junction. The bus was still, didn’t move.

-Hmm here I go, back to where I loved going, where I loathed going. Back to where it was wonderful, back to where I avoided going, back to where I learned everything, back to where I was spoon-fed the facts, back to the same teachers, the deities, the naysayers………

When I was there, I was something, aren’t I? Purposeful, but them what is purpose if not the opium to shroud us from finding our real purpose which is to find out the purpose but what is the ultimate purpose. The ultimate purpose is the quest, just what the Buddhists mean by their ‘circle of life’. The circle of life isn’t some eternal, never ending reincarnating journey of death and life until you reach nirvana, no. The circle of life *is* life and each time we fulfill some purpose in life, we allegorically die, and it is on us to take rebirth by seeking another purpose. Life is all about connecting the dots between these purposes. And in the end, that line which is left after connecting all those dots, that line is the reality of life. But to find out your reality is not as simple as connecting the dots, no, even harder, even more cruel, ruthless even. Think of it.

Ah, the bus moves slowly, half full half, my side empty, wait it is getting full, almost as if they were waiting for the bus to start so they would get in. My side, half full, and I shift to the window seat, my side and my seat’s side still empty. I like that. I like travelling alone unless I travel together with some friend, or friends. The conductor whistles and he bus prepares to go, it goes. A jerk jerks us all, backwards, funnily, and then little rocking in the moribund rickety bus. Half full bus moves forward towards the marine hall, and then towards marine jetty. Let the sunshine fall on my face as I glide in the bus, in my bus. The sun heats the wind heats my face heats my senses and I feel, I feel anew. The jerk now too jerky for me as the buss enters into the Gandhi market traffic, stuck in it, brooding, shouting, the traffic shouting back, the passengers regardless of the shouts, in their own world. This bus is moving too slow. My hands, clasped to the iron rod attached to the front of my seat as my support. It smells rusty, probably from holding on the iron rod too long. At the seat is not ironed, well it is ironed but I am sitting on a cushioned pad that is perfectly in perfect compatibility with my buttocks; the journey is log so it better. And this stiff feeling at the edge of my foot; what is it? Ah, a sound box. Never mind. And? The winds, the winds oh, the winds, thank God for the winds blowing through my long hair as I watch the morning sun increase in intensity as morning rivets up into noon. Chuck…chuck……chuck…chuck…the sound of the bus is really unsettling, almost like a mechanical stomach undergoing peristalsis with its crackamimies and gosh-hollies. The bus now turns towards Middle Point, goes up a straight road, nothing on side but unnamed small shops, or named but insignificantly, not popular enough to be kept in mind and on the other side the Office of Andaman Public Works Department with its board that held the initials ‘APWD’ and it always brought old memories in me, how I used to carpool back to home from school. The carpool, with fairly exorbitant monthly rates took me to and from school every day, day in day out. Oh how I used to travel with my friends, Shivam and Aswin and Sohail long before that, Sohail when I was little, very little in the sixth or seventh grade and he was big, very big, in the tenth grade. No, he was just one year bigger than me. Why am I exaggerating? Yes, because he seemed way bigger than me. A big, dark, gargantuan figure, specked though, but the speck in no way tarnishing on his ferocity, if anything it added to it. He was the ‘it’, tall, dark and fearsome. His shoulders, broad as if he wore a hanger under his shirt every time, and his hands, matched in girth to both of mine combined, not hands but thighs and the force with which he would get on the van, half of the van would bend to his side but we were always on good terms. As good as we physically can be, by the laws of gravity, holding to the law that a big body has some kind of an attractive force on a strong body through inverse square law. A fine lad he was, though we had our good terms and we had our bad. A figure in the shadows, he always was and in the action of things he would always fall behind and action there was in school life. Oh, there was action, sure and in fact, there were…actionsss… Climbing the roof of classes to get down the ball and then being shouted at by the teachers and the principal and the peons for doing it and reciting those comic poetries in Hindi in front of everyone at the morning school assembly

-*Kya hamare poorvaj Bandar Thhey?-*

Not mine of course but it was entertaining nonetheless, and fun, and applause stealing, the applauses, so much of them and so loud. School time was a really fun time but there were those brooding days, those open houses when I used to get less marks and had to bear the humiliation of being a dunce in front of teachers and parents and the old proverbial line that stuck to their lips like milestone at the side of the road or like a tombstone at the head of a rotting corpse buried down under, those words ‘*He can do better, the child. He has more potential*’. Those words, a current goes down as I relive those words again, in my mind; that dictate, now a whisper. And my class, one of those classes, newly made within the school, the newest with the e-board and all, but they used the old whiteboard and black marker to teach, to make us understand and to understand themselves. The new block that ha those highly polished, fine wooden benches and desks, highly polished I remember. And I remember writing my name on them, scratching symbols and seeing others scratch symbols and sometimes getting caught but a little slap on the wrist does it. We were high-school students; no teacher would thrash us, unless we did something really thrash-worthy. But then when I was little, when I was a child in short pants and shorter hair, then they used the old cane and then the era of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’ but then I was a good student, an ideal student even. Something in growing happened that I grew anarchist. The time does it, I think or the emotions that come with time or something or the other. But it happens to all of us. Rules lose shape, lose size and then resize, reshape, formulate all over again, and on the bluest of moons to same rarest of persons, rules just disappear. But that is not freedom; that is not liberty, not even on an individual level. Why? Well, Freud for starters and then the whole meal of Frankfurt school.

Ah, the public library now, so many books it holds and I should visit it more often than to waste my eyes of reading on computer screen for long hours, hour long, more…… I should sit in the library, read some books, classically and then see others read books, what books they read, what thoughts they think, like a mind reader and if they read the same books such as mine, or of the same genre, or even of the same taste, when can get into a chat, maybe in the library or maybe out of it, and then we can have a really insightful rapport, a verbal jousting as it were because I like hearing other’s thoughts more than my own for my own thoughts are always with me, like a plague I cannot get rid of, like a tumor that cannot be operated and it is like a plague no matter how intelligent those thoughts are for they stagnate and when they stagnate they stink, they solidify and form order. Knowledge is not order; it is the questioning of order of systemic outputs, of systemic product and byproducts in the tradition of Aristotle and Plato, and Socrates and Dostoevsky who criticized social theory of their time and paid much less the similar price. Library, there are books on math and science too in library, I recall. Math and science; fields I have long abandoned because science is also an ideology and to be free one must be free from all ideologies. During Marx, in the ages that he lived, science was something revolutionary, something that not only challenged authority and establishment but also came close to destroying it. And Marx was for scientific exploration and he singlehandedly did mathematical exploration backed his theories of economy with a complete mathematical manuscript as well, though not in much relation to each other, these two works but some way and in some way, isn’t everything inter-related. Isn’t everything so inter-related that if a butterfly beats its wings, then that little change could bring a Tsunami or a giant tidal wave somewhere on the coast of Okinawa? What do they call it? Butterfly effect? What is it an exponent of? Yes, Chaos theory. See, science and philosophy and reasoning and sociology all related to one thing; us. It is how we see the world as, in a utopia or in a dystopia. I see it as bits and pieces, broken, shattered and lying about. Not broken in the sense of post-dystopian but broken beyond recognition whether the pieces were of a utopian society or a dystopian one; they seem like both, some pieces here and some pieces there. Why not? World is like that, not as destroyed as broken pieces of glass but as chaotic and complex filled with ‘complexes’. Darwin and Marx, Marx and Darwin, one mistaken for the other for Marx wrote more substantially than Darwin, more profoundly than Darwin and more surely than Darwin. Darwin was empirical, more classical yet he is considered the father of evolutionary biology, a science that ‘evolved’, his terminology that I am using into something so rationalist and challenging towards empiricism. An observation now means nothing unless is it backed by the proper scientifically approved proofs. Diaries filled with notes about birds and Australian marsupials would not help, it would hurt. Modern science would denounce all that, make Darwin sit on a stool and say, ‘*Uncle Darwin, we have genetics now*’. But Darwin was analytical, as analytical as Woody Allen, if not Marx. Facts, facts and inference were his rosary beads, Darwin. The critique of his theory is not possible, more or less, well, I simply do not wish to. What I wish to critique however are his methods and the fact that his *Origin of Species* is brooded over. If we were to follow Darwinism, feminism would fall asunder. Women would be objectified again as a desire object for men, subject to competition among men, making her a prize, through Darwinist theory. Then we would have to do a cultural study, see which cultures holds women how, and then *infer* from that. Difficult task, surely. How did Darwin pull it off? To be able to look at such diverse things in one lifetime is appreciable. He did travel in a cruise. No, they didn’t have cruise those days, it was a ship. HMS Beagle, it was. He travelled! He travelled! Still, there are a lot of his theories that cite his observations in England, mostly in comparison. Oh, what was that? Ah, Darwin can never be Marx. Darwinian theories were heavily backed up by Marx himself. And also, Marx was highly supportive of Darwinian theories, especially that of evolution. I do not know whether Marx would be appreciative of natural selection I am not. I am critical of it. I am critical too much of Darwinian Theory for some innate cringing reason in me that I for all the life in me cannot seem to remember. Yes! Darwin builds on the whole notion of the grand history that isn’t there. Well theoretically it is there but it is not affective to us, it does not affect our realities in any way. Marxist vision of history, as documented in the communist manifesto, on the other hand shows the turn of events in history and the materialism that directly affects the very base of our life which is economy, and thus it affects us. Darwinian Theory, I find effective in the sociological and behavioral study of the physical world but not the social one and hence I find his works not to be taken seriously. At least for someone with my kind of bent, for someone with more influences from existentialist philosophy than science. Existentialists, still often regard Darwin as a seminal character in human history. Well, Sartre did not. Or did; I am not exactly sure. I have not been able to find any proper literature in Sartre’s work to link the two and I cannot postulate theories for a man as unpredictable as Sartre. His literature so varied, his philosophy so rich and one can almost say he singlehandedly gave shape to the modern French theory. I mean there was Beauvoir and Camus but Sartre defined the French salon de Elites. Comparing Darwin to Sartre, no, Darwin was bigger than Sartre, well voluminously at least. Darwin wrote more and with better vision and clarity but Sartre was into much more varied fields; philosophy, literature, political theory and even social activism. Darwin wrote about more life-changing topics still. Darwin…… Darwin. Something in me still wants to find that inner error that Darwin has. Darwin was a great personality, the most influential when it comes to nineteenth century biology. His rival for that time could be considered Mendel. Ah yes, the rise of classic genetics and with it a scope for the modern. Never did give much thought in it though. One person can only tend to a certain things in his life and I have tended to one too many. But then wisdom is like an immortal tree, giving out fruits every time you nurture it, waters it and every time giving you the fruits all the more tantalizing.

Ah, now crossing the tuition that I use to go when I was in the tenth grade, tenth grade when I was at the hype of my ripeness as an anarchist Bohemian. I did things all right, and I did things aplenty. Those mischief, never perceived beforehand but always last minute burst-out, yet they seemed so perfectly planned as if there was a whole grand scheme to it of which I was the playmaker. The commune style education, it was. All of us lined in those long extended benches that stretched from one end of the room to the other, and one after the other. The whole room was nothing but these benches and on one end of the room, on a raised platform facing the wall on which the whiteboard was nailed, the science tuition teacher. The science teacher was a mild-headed and a funny personality, a hard find in the sad, grumpy, money-minded and frustrated with their life kind of crowd of teachers with their open mouths to ready to teach the students for the right price; it was all in the market. Education was privatized right out, but at least our science tuition teacher did it with dignity, with kindness but the good ones always do. Pranks, I remember the ones I played and the ones rarely played on me and I remember those heart-in-mouth moments when the teacher took oral quizzes for everybody in the room and if you didn’t answer, you were supposed to attend the entire class standing and I remember the little boys and the little girls used to dress up, in their Sunday best for their tuitions as it was the only where they met their friends, there were no discos or pubs or hangouts in Port Blair but these tuition centers and so these tuition centers became hangouts and when these tuition centers became hangouts, little boys and little girls became conscious, or even over-conscious or even paranoid about what they wore to these tuition centers.

And people socialized and people got into fights and people made groups, groups based on what schools they were from, not schools of thought but schools of schools and in these schools of schools there were many. But among all these groups from all the schools of schools, I was a drifter just looking to catch a conversation, a friendly acquaintance and some sense of belonging in every single group. I was in every group and I was in no group at all. My school’s group was the group of educationists, nerds, schleps and for the worst part or for the better I actually was in that group and I actually was a kind of a schlep. Being a schlep and not being conscious about it is eternal bliss as they say in the Bible, ‘*ignorance is bliss and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow*’ and so in that tradition a happy man I was and a blissful one too. The innocence of a child is hidden in a smile, like that cat from Alice in Wonderland but as we grow older and as we lose childhood, everything of the innocence that once was slowly starts to disintegrate, part by part, everything but that smile and that smile remains as a remainder of the childhood, innocent that it once was. Memory slides down back and forth, jiggles and joggles and swishes and swirls and hits and misses and serves, some ties, more than once what I think and give words to what I feel and give words to many of the expressions that lay around us, unmentioned, need, feel, demand to be mentioned and experienced and through words, disseminate the nature of the expression for the world to be felt for words give actions to meanings, meanings to actions and words stand between man and the substance that guides man, that man heeds every time as bigger than its existence, this substance, and no matter how learned a man is in logic or in science or in exponential reasoning and whosoever he may be he would be under the mushroom cloud of the substance and the only way that man can truly feel or know or even begin to imagine the vitality of the substance, words have to be used; words that form the sacrosanct bridge between the man and the divine and this divine may not be divine at all for certain men, divine as in religious but it is divine in substance, divine as in art, divine in the sense that its meaning is very demanding, it takes courage to be determined, interest to be examined. New becomes old as times pass and men become ghosts as times pass but in everything that is natural, lies a change, a degradation, a slow morbidity that lingers like a cancer which one cannot run away from and this cancer is not something to be disappointed or scared of but to be celebrated because the times change because of this cancer, and pages turn because of this cancer. We have to revere this cancer, imbibe it in our daily lives if it is not already imbibed and then work with it, live with it and wait and see what it holds for us, good or bad, or a mixture of both. –

He stood from his seat as he looked out of the window and saw the Uma bakery, as the bus passed it, for he had arrived at his destination. At the next stop, he would have to get down. The bus came to its rickety stop at the bus stop and Rahil jerked forward not being able to take the sudden motion of his body out of inertia. This jerk automatically threw him to the mouth of the bus, like Tarzan swinging on the branches and he walked down the stairs and hurriedly out of the bus, no particular reason he could think for his haste. After getting down, the first thing he did was give a long prying look to the road that went upwards from the junction to his school, the road taken and the road that was now to take.

He did not to how to travel up that road. The school was still too far to walk, at least for Rahil it was due to his complete lack of any kind of physical activity for days, months. Seeing as how he would not get a lift due to the less frequency of traffic going up the road, he started to walk up the road in the cruel heat of the afternoon. It was good for him that he was lightly dressed in a T-shirt and jeans but his long black hair started to absorb the heat. Fortunately for him, after walking up the road till a temple situated on the right of the road, he saw an army jeep coming from down the road and what was even more fortunate was that the jeep stopped to his aid the moment he signaled to hitchhike.

The jeep took him near to Dhanvantri hospital which was a defense hospital located only a half a mile away from the school. The jeep dropped him in front of the hospital as it had to diverge from there. He took a right from the hospital and took the road that led to the primary block of his school.

His school was like a decentralized army barrack built about and around a mountain. Built in the lowest levels were the primary classes with their staff rooms. There were two levels of primary classes. The first level consisted of classes for the third and fourth grade while the second level catered to the fifth and the sixth grade. Each of these levels had a staff room and the upper level had a smaller library. Then there were open steps that led to the next block of the school which was the secondary and the senior secondary block. The stairs were the first thing to fill him with nostalgia. He could almost see specter of his own gliding down nonchalantly from those steps in the middle surrounded by his friends laughing and jesting as they indulged themselves and completely occupied with each other. He felt the specter walk past him, his shoulder lightly chipping on his specters as one figure crossed the other.

-One spirit haunts the other and I am not sure which is scarier, the ghost of Christmas past or the ghost of Christmas present? The scrupulousness sent me crashing down to the state I am now. A face I now despise in the mirror for there is no self-love, in many terms, in a collectivist term wherein I have lost my vanity completely to the point that I care not for my disrespect because of the opinionated nature of respect itself and in the terms that self-love is not for someone who mimes others, others’ feelings, others’ emotions, others’ visions and that of himself too, of his mind, the mind of the bard. These times, no those times, and now, and it seems that between it everything was nothing, just a moment and I never really left school. I wasn’t even a college dropout anymore, just a high school graduate who was back in his school. Oh, to carry the weight of the past on these shoulders of mine, and as time goes the weight goes on to increase in effect, affect..s my senses. Glimpses of the past come like jump shots in a French movie, almost cutting through my real vision as I walk up those steps. Clank, clank, clank it cuts and those colorful high-contrast images from the past, of the same place of me comes to mind and the scent too, of those sweaty bodies of my friends around me and my own uniform giving a peculiar student-like smell that reminded me of being in this captivity not of the school, but of the uniform, of the pinstripe shirt, the navy blue socks and those black shoes with black laces, oh those black shoes and how they burned and baked my feet as I played during the lunch under the afternoon sun and then there is a short-lived collage, the bigger picture of life then and afterlife now, the pains and the joys and everything in between, serrated by time because, ah yes, time does something to all wounds. Does it heal them? Well, the saying says so, the saying of the fools? Time doesn’t heal anything. It only gives us more scope to suffer with those wounds, more time to suffer, it increases our sufferings. But when one comes to terms, or comes face to face with the cause of the wound, the wound heals, like it wasn’t even there and all you feel is pity for the cause, not anger, not resentment but love and pity. And pity I felt, as I walked up those stairs, wondering why it was that I missed classes, that I missed lectures, that I hated, well not hated but found it bitter coming to school, that I felt a load more than the bag pack full of notebooks on my back every day each day from home to school an school to home, that I loathed being punished when the punishment wasn’t redemptive to my *mens uria* and was just a slap on the wrist not condemning the intent but deeply played a part in the exponentiation of it because I always felt a sense of rejoice in going through that act of punishment, a form of rejoice in shame, in taking that shame in front of all those proud eyes of my peers. The shame that should downcast me, did work in alleviating me in the eyes of myself and that alleviation mirrored to me from the eyes of the students in the class and so shame became a very proud thing for me to feel as if taking pleasure in kneeling at the master’s feet and licking and cleaning the dusty leather boots of his in public and actually feeling damn well god about it, shame-

As he came to the higher level of the school, he saw besides him the parking shed for school staff’s vehicle and a little far on his right the principal’s office and attached to it a couple of more rooms, one of them the old computer room and three other classes. But in front of him lay the real spectacle. Behold, he thought the ground of slain memories and the proverbial prison yard to be epic in a manner that Brecht would be- the school assembly ground. It was the place that shaped Rahil’s childhood memories associated with the school. Everything about the school was a part of this ground and this ground was an undifferentiated part of everything that was in the school, be it physically or behaviorally or even geographically. That is to say, everything mediated to and from the school ground, period.

He walked towards the assembly ground, taking another series of steps and passing the foundation stone of the school he had never properly got the grasp of. The school hall was opposite to the school ground and he could see a couple of maintenance persons sitting inside the school hall and chatting among themselves. He felt he had to, he needed, for one moment, to step on to the green grass of the school ground where he had once stood obliviously having no idea of what emotions were with which he stood there now. The principal’s office was on the other side but he did not care anymore. His life traversed into the past now and he was a man of the past now. The present and the future held no promises to him for that precise moment. His thinking pattern were altered; deconstructed. He felt nothing, saw nothing, just a series of laughter and figures of students in the same uniform all busy in their own activities and all with their backs turned to them and he stood frozen like decorative Gargoyle and saw this totally realistic projection from the past. He saw with utter interest the coming of this sudden jet of memories that did not seem to stop; endless. He could not move, he could even flinch and he thought he was grabbed, possessed even by a force. Yes, he was and that force was his own personal history. History does that to people but they never realized it. They never realized that history is not just a story, it is an experience, a life that changes tense from ‘embodiment’ to ‘embodied’ and the only thing that marks the difference between our present seemingly complex and sophisticated life and this history that appears to us as simply linear, single-stranded and bare is just time and that moment, Rahil, standing there fixed, realized that very idea of how complex and veridical history can be.

In the midst of his tryst with history, he was broken from his trance by a voice that screamed “Oye Rahil, what’re you doing here?”

He looked back in amazement, wondering who was it that not only remembered him but also had the promptness to call on him with such dearly persuasion.

The figure he saw dressed in a Khakhi colored shirt and dark brown pants was a thin fellow named Nagraj, curved like a bow. He was one of the peons and both Rahil and Nagraj were mutually fond of each other. Being overly extrovert in his school life, he never missed the opportunity to talk to a friendly voice no matter whom that voice belonged to. Usually peons do not even bother to talk to the students as they felt they had no business doing so but seeing as how Rahil was always involved in one thing or the other and even when he was involved in things officially, he would still be clinging to a lot of attention and hence they felt to some extent that it was their business, if not business, an interest, to talk to Rahil and it started with Nagraj.

“Hey, where are you nowadays?” Nagraj asked, with an ear to ear smile tearing his face in half.

“Here and there; I’ve still not joined any college though.” Replied Rahil, giving him the detail that he needed in haste and tried to end the conversation before it got bigger.

“You say that with some pride!” Nagraj said alarmingly, comparing him to most of the students that had cleared the entrance exams and went off to engineering and medical colleges and were now proper college students, according to him.

“Hmph!” grumbled Rahil in silence.

“Anyways, how have you lost your way here?” Nagraj asked.

“I just had to sign some papers for college from her also get them attested. Is she in now?” Rahil stated, his tone changing to a diplomatic one.

“I don’t exactly know.” The peon said. “Just get those papers attested by the office first and then go see in the principal’s room for yourself, or have you forgot where the principal’s room is?”

Rahil had already started walking slowly. As he heard Nagraj talk behind him and end his dialogue with that silly question, Rahil did not feel it necessary to stop and he just walked on, but as he walked on he turned back and gave a silly smile to the peon but as he made his way towards the principal’s room, he thought to himself ‘has it really been that long?’.

He never cared for time anyways. For him, the order was in relevance of memories, bright or dull but he could not begin to estimate the amount of time actually gone by since his past trip to the school. For him, it was just one memory ago. He wanted to live regardless of time not in the sense of immortality but in terms of timelessness. Matters like immortality seemed too high-handed to him, something that was alluring to people with faith, people with aspirations and expectations, not Godless Bohemian socialists like him.

He walked to the principal’s office and knocked on the door. Knowing that he would have to peek in, he slightly opened the door and saw the principal sitting in her chair talking over the phone but her attention was caught by Rahil, and she, with her fingers commanding him to take a seat inside a chamber. Rahil sat on one of those well cushioned chairs that was opposite to the principal and which Rahil had the pleasure of occupying once or twice before too. The call kept the principal occupied for only a little while after Rahil made himself abundant sitting in front of her in that well cushioned chair, his hands he rested on the principal’s desk.

“So Rahil, long time no see. Where have you been?” the principal stated her question that was going though everyone’s mind when it came to the subject of Rahil’s academic life as if it was his general life.

“I’m writing freelance, a little. I am now preparing to join a college to study English literature.” Rahil said, trying to sound as mundane as he could while he made the most unconventional line the principal had ever heard in her life when it came to making statements about career choices.

“Okay, at least get yourself sorted out. Don’t go in and out of colleges like you’ve been going at it now. Which colleges do you have in mind?” asked the principal.

“That’s partly a reason why I am here. See, ma’am there are these two colleges whose forms need to be signed and attested by you before I send these to the respective colleges. Here’s one for St. Xavier’s Kolkata and here’s another for Christ College in Bangalore.” Rahil replied and handed over the forms to her.

She took a look at the forms and then took out a stamp and a stamp pad from the drawer. As she took out the stamp, she asked Rahil “Tell me Rahil, do you have any other colleges where have applied because St. Xavier’s is pretty tough to get into.”

“I have also applied to Delhi University and Jamia Milliah Islamiya.” Rahil said.

“No kidding, did you? Delhi University also has a very high cutoff rate. Don’t go wasting away another year is all I’m saying.” She advised Rahil. That was what the bulk of people thought Rahil was doing with his life, wasting it in futility and just lying around doing nothing.

“What was wrong in studying engineering here that you dropped out?” the principal asked again feeling agitated with the mutual pause and the need to know more about Rahil’s opinions to then tackle him and kick him back on the right track.

“Ma’am, I do not feel there’s anything wrong *to* study engineering but somehow it felt wrong for me to be studying engineering and I felt I was not built for, not that I could not do it. I simply chose I would not do it.” Rahil said.

That was the last question she asked, followed by three thumps from the stamp, one on the stamp pad which stained the stamp with blue ink and the other two on the two different forms that she lay stretched and exposed before her on her table. Then she leaned forward, keeping the stamp on the open stamp pad and reaching for the pan, taking it in her hands and signing the two forms, one after the other. She did all that in one swift act.

As the two sat inside the chamber and as Rail was getting to leave, another teacher, a mutual familiar of both Rahil and obviously the principal and who longed to catch up with both of them and thus out of custom forced Rahil into this triangular conversation which was much unsettling for Rahil given the dark cloud of repute that followed him over his head.

He sat there nodding his head throughout the entire conversation and after every question the teacher asked him which the principal answered. All Rahil had to do then was nod in consent. That was the way a triangular conversation with Rahil and people who were not in the same spectrum as him went. A couple of minutes might have only passed by and it seemed like hours to Rahil. He asked for a leave, but in his mind he was begging for it like asthma patient begs for his inhaler as he gets an adverse attack. His palms were sweaty and he felt his world going dark and their voices, as they talked to each other started sounding funny to him, started pitching down and echoing.

He felt a lot better once he got out of the room and breathed the fresh nostalgic air of the school as the wind blew, carrying in it the same scent it carried when scores of students lined against each other with their pubescent, virile, agitated bodies of boys and girls brushing and wreathing against each other, held. The world was still the same, he thought; just that his contempt for it changed, increased.

There was nothing left to do now in the school, at least nothing noteworthy and for all the life in him, he did not feel the need to stay there. Yet his own mind contradicted him on this. His mind was programmed to stay in school once he came here; it was programmed as he followed the same procedure of coming to school and spending six hours in the school and repeating it for twelve long years. The ages had grown on him, on his mind and the fact that he was away from school for a whole year seemed to eviscerate as he stood now, in front of the principal’s office, in the school. Rahil knew that surely this was the last time that he was seeing school and that he would not be able to see it after for a very long time. He did not know how long but he knew the separation would be difficult and hurtful.

Seeing his school like that, like the image that he had framed in his mind, and now seeing it in reality brought hidden tears in Rahil’s eye. He thought then, only if the future that he had framed in his mind could also be as exact to reality as the past. However, the difference between perceiving the past and conceiving the future is that the future is subject to change and the past is something we have already seen and only need to recollect. The past and future were very alike according to Rahil and he thought that they were so alike that all of the rules of the past should and would apply to the rules of the future. That was the reason of his keen interest in world history and in his own history, a history of opinions, of choices and interests, something he had recently started making a note of. He started making a note, in his own mind, of what choices he made in some things and how those choices ended up and when the same circumstances surged again, he would take an alternate choice and then record those observations. It was like everything he did was analyzed in trial and error. There were a lot of instances that always repeated in his life and gave him more scope to experiment with more and more alternatives to the conclusion of those instances. More than influence, more than theories, more than reading, more than conversing, analysis of daily banal activities contributed to his learning and formed the basis of his intellect. His temperament had not completely changed when compared to other people in his community and there were still a lot of things that were inherent to him as a part of that community. The change lay in the transgression of the moral boundaries within itself. That is to say, in simple words, a type of boundaries replaces for another kind, another type, never completely removed. This was the case with his thinking, not his ethics. His ethics went through an existential breakdown due to the change in his thinking and the replacement of the ‘boundaries’.

He got home by the bus which was not fully occupied and so he managed to get a seat. Instead of going home directly, he went to the internet café to check on his mails and to see if there was any new piece of information on the internship. He found none. He knew that they would not write to him unless he sent them the completed writing assignment that they gave him. There was nothing more left to do and since his hour was almost up, he bailed from the café and walked back home.

December was about to end and the end of December meant the coming of the New Year. Rahil was not all jitters and joys about the New Year because the coming of the New Year meant the passing away of the old one. The old year was a time gone by he held more prosperous than the next year that was to come. He did know what lay ahead of him the next year. He knew it held a complete frame shift from what he was now. It also meant that he was growing, both in terms of age and in terms of logic, probably more in terms of logic and in terms of sense. Sense and logic were two different things, he thought. Not contradictory altogether or parallel to each other but different, alternate. Logic, to him, was a derivative of a more analytical, more organized sense but in that formation of the logic, it becomes dogmatic, almost ideological. And when one has this ideological form of logic, certain senses are usually suspended, some would also say sacrificed, in the name of logic. This dogma is something that would abstain one from having total sense of things. So logic and sense cannot be seen together. It is a safe assertion to make that sense is the mother of logic because man always found easier to have logic than have sense because in some ways, sense is a more crude form of knowing than logic. The suspension of certain senses due to logic was also something that Rahil had a theory about. According to him, when one sees thing through this lens of logic, the pillars of objective understanding are given more regard than perception. These pillars include cost and benefit, means and ends, cause and effect and other such forms of logical connectivity that were a more complex form of analysis. That these means of analysis do not cater to the multiple perceptions from different points of view would be a partial fallacy. The point of contest for Rahil in using these means of analysis through logic remained in the act whether or not the points of view were taken forward so much so that they all could be justified.

The next day Rahil had an important and crucial job to do. He had to post the form for Christ University to Bangalore in order for them to review his application along with his high school transcripts and credentials and decided on whether or not they were going to invite him for an interview. He got up early just for that day because he knew that the post office would be less crowded in the mornings. He was very uncomfortable waking up in the morning. His hands were shaking as he tried to hold the toothbrush tightly enough to brush his teeth. He always felt this discombobulating shakiness of his neural coordination much like a Parkinson’s disease patient. The same thing would happen to him while he would hold his mug of tea filled with the hot liquid, the weight of which would rattle his hands slightly and noiselessly. He had to use both of his hands to drink the tea properly. He was going through this problem for quite some time, long since his days in high school. It had not gotten worse over the years but all the free time he had now that he never had in his school days gave him space for thinking about his condition and what it could pertain to.

He took the early bus to Haddo Post Office after putting all the necessary documents, checking and cross-checking if he had made any kind of mistake. He did not. All the transcripts and credentials were properly in the envelope that was to be sent. He arrived at the post office and was glad to find out that there was only a sparse crowd and so he just submitted the letter to the clerk without having to wait in a line.

The clerk looked at the address and asked “Speed Post?”

Rahil nodded. The man then pulled out a sticker that had a bar code on it and stuck it to the letter. Then he got onto his computer and made an entry of the letter for which a receipt popped out from the printer sitting besides the computer just as he finished typing. The clerk then tore off the receipt from the printer and handed it over to Rahil.

“That will be twenty eight rupees.” He said without even looking at Rahil.

Rahil took his black fake-leather wallet and paid the man his money. Next thing he knew, he was out of the post office and into a bus heading back home. He had done all this by himself for the first time. He would be helped by others, mostly by his brother but now something in him made him do it all by himself, be self-dependent or self-independent.

-My fate shall now travel, there it goes, sealed in that packet; paper glued with paper and in it, paper. But not just paper for me, but my past, my past life that will decide my future life. Small wonder that one should be so afraid of grades in school and system controls system, one scratches the back of another. It is like one of those Russian dolls, an enclosed series of dolls, one into another until the smallest one. All of them are practically alike but in their shape, exactly like problems in different human stages of life. When you are small, you have small problems, problems nonetheless. As you grow, your problem grows on you, maybe not in vigor or in frequency but in some wretched form or the other. This problem, like a cancer, just like one of those Russian dolls, one enclosed in the other and then enclosed in the other down to the last one, and it is these small ones, like the Russian dolls, these small ones that are complex. It is simply like all the others in design but due to its size, the design becomes more sophisticated and even painting the design on it becomes complex. This complexity is what stays in human life if we choose to ignore it and these later sticks to our character giving it certain kinds of ‘complexes’. That is why the nature of most of these complexes is negative, safe to say ‘problematic’ and that is simply because they arise out of problems. This is a complete dejection of the theory that complexes are born out of habits because habits tend to stick to people from a very infantile stage of our lives. But these habits, methinks, are not just there but arise due to some problem, maybe an emotional or mood-related problem of the infant not of itself but born out of the situation around him which attributed him, due to certain psycho-emotional problems these ‘habits’ that we see as fundamental acts in a baby that cannot be accounted for.

What would happen to me now? I want to know. I wish the answer for here somewhere, hidden in a book or mentioned about in an essay so that I could just read it and know about my future. What is the point of anything being objective if our futures are not objective? Of course our futures are pre-determined and we cannot do anything about it but learn by treading through it as we pass on into the future. The minute a minute from the future becomes present, we know a little about the future that once was; and a lot more about the present that now is. It is very confusing what we ought to think about in the course of our lives; our future and work towards making it better or our present and work towards making it lasting and pleasurable and how are we not thinking about present if we are thinking about future. Do we not think how to shape up our present for the future as we think of the future? So is not that thought given to our future already inclusive of our present? Does that mean we should give up on thinking about our present altogether so that we can build on a better future and live the present for the sake of the future? I think living in the present would mean being indulged in the present rather than being pre-occupied with the future. My future though, what of it? There are so many choices, so many subjectivities… so many deviations? What if? That… this is. If only I had two of me who would each go down a road and just live their lives their own ways, the way their roads led them. A child’s dreams; nay, a poet’s imagination that may not be wise but instills wisdom, which may not speak of success but it inspires one to be successful or it shows the real tremor, the pain, the pathos of suffering under the boot, having your dreams and ambitions crushed and your success stripped from you. Poetry is more than words arranged in lines; poetry is life arranged in time. But if we go with words, we lose the beauty of poetry. Words, in poetry, are not life partners. They are like guides that show you, point you to the direction which you seek and when you have reached there, they leave your side and then it is upon you to reach for what you seek in a poem and grab it. Never trust words in a poem; trust yourself. To be able to trust yourself is harder and to trust words is easier and many people will tell you that… the truth however is unaware to many people; the truth about poetry and the truth about language. That is where the sense and logic differs in language. In post-modern poetry you have the nonsensical verses which are basically words with meanings jumbled up in a haphazard sort of way, without logic. One thing to note is that the words do not lose sense in the verse, and if the words have sense the verse has sense. The whole thing is a play at logic. Through nonsensical poetry, one strives to make the poem more abstract by making it more illogical, therefore making it cruder. The poetry as a result does not essentially lose sense but loses logic because the words still have sense; they still have meaning. Ergo, the name nonsensical is wrongly used. In place of that, what can and should be used should be more along the lines of ‘non-logical’ or illogical verses. I cannot compare the coarseness between nonsensical and illogical… a word as any other, it seems to me. What’s a word as any other? What’s a life as any other? Ah, when it comes to life, people get serious, scared of mortality. Mortality defines morality. All that is deadly and all that is deathly is taboo. And man defines it all. And one thing man cannot define is himself. Is man god? He is himself ‘something that he cannot define’. He is he, or he is He. Is man the Universe? Is man a String of energy, the smallest, tiniest, fragment of a fabric much… much… much bigger than the whole of humanity? It is a foolish question of man being God, but more propriety could be established by the analysis of man’s origin and the analysis of God’s origin, and then we come to the idea… God is an idea. How man has evolved physically, the concept of God has evolved metaphysically. So mankind has no idea of what he is doing on planet Earth and that is why it conceived the idea of God. In earliest civilizations, God was just a force of nature; a power. God, in that time, was not a human form like Jesus Christ or God Rama, because man was still too primitive to perceive God in his image; too puny. As man evolved further, it combined forces of God with the body of human; in simple words, personified forces of nature. In Greeks, lightning became Zeus and the same in Nordic civilization became Thor. Sea became Poseidon for Greeks and Neptune for Romans. Early Hindu mythology was more complex than that and involved formation of God in both human and animal forms, and then there were Gods like Ganesh and Hanuman that were fusions of human and beast. Hindu mythology safeguards certain animals through this practice, like the cow. Cow is regarded as auspicious and is said to be the embodiment of God in some way. Cow, for the Hindu civilization was a source of great earning for a family. When a family married a girl, cows were given as dowry and the number of cows determined the repute of the family. Cows provided trade materials like milk, butter and many other forms of dairy products and also finished goods like sweets made out of milk. The safeguard of cow had to be done to safeguard the economy of the society. Hence the cow ‘had’ to be sacred. How does this affect the future, I think though? Even if God isn’t there, what is the point of bringing the whole metaphysical Germanic explanation of being if there is no end purpose to it? What becomes of it? A little freedom perhaps, on the ethics side and a little more sense of realization among the society but how does this lead to an understanding of the future? If everything is linked to one another, why is not this linked? Why is the future still so mysterious? When a man dies, what difference does it make if his soul goes to heaven or hell or if his rotting corpse lies dead buried in the ground? What makes a difference for the man would be to know when he would die, so that at least he could get some closure. This feeling of closure would stretch to all fields of life, not just death. As a start, it would be pretty good for me to know which college I might get admission into and would be good for me because I am just too tired of playing it safe betting on every horse that runs on the race course. Run horse run… Cross the finish line and make me a winner. Well, it’s not about winning or losing as much as knowing the result and being able to walk to the finish line instead of running. I would like for once to have my options narrowed down so that I could pursue instead of going through the emotional trauma of placing myself in every college’s scenario and meticulously think about it. –

Freedom was indeed slavery for Rahil, a slavery of the mind. After sending out the application for Christ University, Rahil suddenly started feeling uncertain about it. He started feeling it was somehow not good enough for him to be studying there. He thought about it and thought about and the more he thought the more he became sure that he would study in Delhi University. He knew there was exposure there and that there were many opportunities just lying around idly for him to seize. The problem lied in it being too far away. Then there was also a concern from family that there was no one responsible for Rahil in Delhi, and they sure had heard stories of Delhi. How unruly it was and how people just got murdered and disappeared at the blink of an eye. They seemed to care a lot about opinions, but not his.

It was New Year’s Eve the next day. Rahil had no plans. The only plan Rahil had was to sit in front of his television and watch other people celebrate their New Year. In the morning, he just watched an old movie because he did not feel like reading. He felt something disgusting lurching in him. He knew what it was. It was the feeling of being a loser just because he was not out celebrating the eve of New Year. Rahil, for the most part, liked that feeling of disgust. It was equal in magnitude, he thought, to the down-to-earth pain of one’s gonads pulling him down to the earth, extending itself to the highest possible level of elasticity of the scrotum. He knew it was disgusting but he could not help enjoying it. It was not objectively disgusting however. It was disgusting because the generation of today wanted it to be, out of the fanciest imagination of their minds. He spent his evenings till three just lying and thinking to himself till about quarter to four when he got a call from his friend.

“Hello, hey.” The voice said from the other end.

“Hello Manabesh. So, what’s the plan for tonight?” Rahil asked.

“Nothing much. What about you?” Manabesh asked in reply.

“Same as you, man.” Rahil replied, completely drained of energy for some reason.

“What about now? Are you free right now?” Manabesh asked.

“Sure man. I’m free always. You want to come over?” Rahil asked trying to sound his level best interested.

“Yeah, let’s swap some movies.” Manabesh said, feeling glad by Rahil’s acquittal.

“What do you have to give me?” Rahil asked, sneeringly, his voice sounding like a pair of scissors cutting through a large piece of cloth, a pincer.

“Stuff” Manabesh said in a feigned attempt to sound mysterious.

After a little more chat, both of them mutually hung up. Almost an hour later a doorbell rang and it was him, dressed mildly, not in the least sense of a New Year Celebration even though Rahil knew this was his excuse for a New Year’s celebration. When people would ask him, how he spent his New Year, he would say he was at a friend’s house. More technical details like the time of his visit, the purpose of his visit or the fact that he invited himself did not matter. Everybody then would at least think something for him only because of the sole reason that he did not spend his whole New Year’s Eve indoors. For Rahil, it did not matter. And therefore, he was more than generous to host Manabesh in and was glad in a certain friendly way that he came. Manabesh was one of his links to the civil, constrained world of the society. He needed these links to the world more than he thought.

It was a good deal as his friend had brought some really good movies that was really watchable for Rahil. Guess a little tea-party celebration of New Year’s Eve wasn’t bad after all, thought Rahil as he began to shut down. After the geeky business was done, Rahil and Manabesh headed out for a walk to the Marina Park. They walked with each other, swiftly as the sun was humbly mild that day. As they walked to the park, they could see that half of the shops on the way were closed and the other half was in their closing procedures, getting the stocks on display inside the shop, pulling down the shutters with a loud noise and locking it. They passed by the stadium and reached the park. As they entered the park, they could feel the cool winds blowing on their bodies with quite a forceful gush.

-Seas, the snot-green, scrotum-tightening seas, it was not well, scrotum-tightening always, but snot-green? Its blue, at least these waters are blue anyways, but the waters in the interisland ways on my route to Hut Bay; no the waters on the shores of the docks of Hut bay have a tint of green in them. Forget not, I’m here with a friend. Don’t let him feel all ‘catcher in the rye’. The winds seem to sweep me off my feet, the emotions the same. –

“How is the college going nowadays? Is our head of department back from his trip?” Rahil asked, trying to make a pad of interesting conversation for his friend to feel comfortable on.

“He was back since September. He’ll take our classes in the next semester. Probably teach us, material sciences or something, I assume.” Manabesh replied, perfectly coaxed in the pad.

“How is he? I heard he is strict?” Rahil asked. He had heard that the professor was strict.

“Yeah he is, but generally to the rotten ones.” Manabesh replied and then added “Like this one time, this guy from our class, you know him, Raj, and a couple of other boys bunked the class and took a little trip to Carbyn’s cove beach. They came back before the last period and he found out that they had bunked his class. The next day He called Raja and his friends to his chamber and called all of their parents in from of them. And you’d never guess what happened after that. The professor slapped Raj right across the face in front of his father, and a tight one it was!” He described it as if it was something about the college to be proud of.

Rahil felt ill, felt ill because of the conversation. He felt he could not keep it up. Rahil felt like escaping in his own world of thoughts, imagination. Still, he wanted to be with Manabesh for the sake of social structure, not because it was a structure to be followed but for the sole reason that Rahil wanted it, wanted the conversation. He did not know why. Maybe due to the fact that it had been a while since he had a close friend by his side. People need friends, he thought, out of their own selfish reason. Friendship, in his opinion was a form of selfish selflessness. Rahil knew his life was complicated in that moment and the complications would persist in his life no matter how enlightened he became in life.

After a small chat, they parted their separate ways and Rahil was left with an uncanny discovery on the eve of New Year. The next day, Rahil woke up to a new year, January the first, of course, the date was. From this point on, the seemingly slow life of Rahil began to take pace. The first and second month held little promise to Rahil but the end of March set the wheels of his academic future in motion. After the end of March, the academic cycle ended and by May, the board exam results would be out. So March meant Rahil had to take a critical decision about his college and the pursuit of his future.

It was a dreary day in mid-march when Rahil’s mother gave him an offer he could not refuse. She asked Rahil “How would you like to study in Madras Christian College?” It was one of the most prestigious colleges in Chennai and since it was closer to home, it was a really good offer that was impossible for Rahil to refuse. But Rahil was all about doing the impossible. He refused to study in Madras Christian College. There was no reason for Rahil to have refused this generous offer made from the part of his mother. The college had a great campus. Rahil had read about it. Te campus had a lake inside it, and woods and in those woods were deer. It was a writer’s Shangri-la. And what was better was that one of Rahil’s friend classmates, a girl, who had studied commerce, was going to take admissions there for pursuing commerce in collegiate level at MCC. Rahil knew this well before he rejected admission to the college. The reason behind doing so was very cheap for Rahil. It was overconfidence. Rahil had become so overconfident that he would, one way or the other, get admission in either of the colleges in Delhi. This was also the reason Rahil did not apply to much of the colleges in Calcutta despite his mother’s contention of keeping the options open. Rahil thought he had applied already in Calcutta’s St. Xavier’s and Scottish Church College and that was more than enough with the colleges in Delhi.

-This thing, that thing; quit juggling now. This is serious business, not tomfoolery. Humor, humorless, tragic… machismo, trashes it. What? I mean to. I really do. No, I do. Something in me tells me to do; the dogs, the voices, my mother, face, mark, moon, jackal, hyena, aborigines, the Simpsons……… Delhi, the city that I love and hate equally, only by reputation it is that I do so, but why have I still set my mind to it, on it, being there? An anarchist’s mind to plunge into the uncertain or the hunch of the poet in scourge for opportunities to greatness, I can say I don’t know. It is fine for me. Wait, is it? This is the process of my future here and I am questioning the basis of my thought. What bothers me is the standard of Delhi University matching the standard of MCC if I have left one for the other though it is not fit to compare, especially two institutions that are technical nemesis to each other. One, the liberal governmental institution and is able to create a much bigger Diaspora, setting the term of education and defining it, and the other the familiar, the known, the seemingly uptight conservative Christian college known for making known graduate products at a known local level. Known… Unfamiliar, and then there was Jamia Milliah, my second preference. Why, on this burning Earth does Delhi University have to commence its admission procedure so late? What if I lose faith? Don’t. When in doubt, read. Books are like hash to an open mind. I am growing, and growth is conspicuous. Time is discernible, woven perfectly till the point of discontinuity in the space. Time is slipping. I am slipping with it. No matter how hard I think, I am slipping. Me, ouch… -

By the end of March, Rahil had abandoned all reading, stopped all his writing and completely plunged his heart, his mind and his soul in making the right decision. The problem, Rahil thought, was that there was no centre, no core of ideas around which he could prioritize his choices and then base them. Everything was in a flux for him. Everything had shifting priorities. Things like luxury in campus and proximity to him mattered to him as much as opportunities and standard of education. There were these ideals in his head but there was no base. This is how confusion built up in his mind. His adherence to a choice was almost amnesiac; subject to many factors, mostly external factors like opinions from people he would take opinions that twisted and turned, shattered and mended his choices link by link, and then again.

He had already rejected Madras Christian College but he felt wrong in doing so. It seemed to him like all the knowledge that he had was sin his mind and he was standing on the edge of a cliff. And just as prior to a man’s death, as he is about to jump from the cliff, his mind goes blank in the sudden conception of the idea of death, the ‘mock death’, similarly Rahil’s education, his knowledge just clotted in his mind, and all he was left was with empty blank thoughts. He thought these were what people called ‘chance’. What this chance meant for Rahil individually was irrepressible fear, a kind of fear of the unknown, which was ironical in his case, he being a patron of uncertainty and chaos. Here he saw the divide between chance and chaos. Chance is basically a ‘gambler’ term for chaos which means it is amateur. Chance is an unattended version of chaos, not in the sense of crude or raw, just left, left out. Chaos is much more than chance, he thought. Chance is just the instance of an event happening or not happening; chance would not affect the facts although the factors would affect chance. Chaos is the complete rescinding of an event altogether.

To treat a problem at hand such as Rahil’s with chaos would destroy the outcome, blow it out of proportions and that was why Rahil could not trust himself completely to make a decision like this. To leave it on chance however was something that he could do and was doing. The best thing to do was to take advice and heed to it. But from who should come forth the best advice, he thought. He had to find someone completely trustworthy in order for him take his or her advice seriously. His mother’s advice, though having that maternal kindness and a strong oedipal compulsion to heed, was too authoritarian for him to follow. His family was also more or less in the same effect. The only ones to remain were his friends and examples from everyday life. For the latter, the only examples he could find were either from the movies or characters, situations in a book. When it came to friends, Rahil had a diverse bunch. Most of them had started coming back from their colleges on holiday trips and Rahil made it a point to at least meet them once before they head back. And in that meeting, they would have a frequent dialogue. Most of his friends had highly incongruous answers and advices. On one hand, they agreed and even vouched for the choice of going to Delhi for college but on the other hand they were also concerns about the complete alienation in a place too far away from home that had a different culture and tradition. Rahil was of the Jungian opinion that there were certain things that the whole of mankind would be able to relate to certain references by what he describes as the collective consciousness. That is what, according to Jung, gave humans humanity.

The passing of each day marked the increase of doubt in Rahil’s mind about everything. What he did so far and hat he was about to do. Sometimes he would think that he was playing with his future, something a lower middle-class fellow like him could not generally afford to do. That was partially the reason he always gave thought to why he had left engineering college when he could have had a financially secure future right after graduation. His mother was earning and they, his mother and he, were only able to maintain themselves afloat by the support of the joint family. If Rahil was of an anti-capitalist mindset, it was all the more sodomy for his parents and family. The financial curse of the past haunted his wits. His freedom was a counter to that prison of sodomy that besieged him and no matter what he would do or not do, that prison was there in front of him every time.

By the end of March and the coming of April, Rahil knew he had to gear up and make a choice, an ultimate one. May marked the declaration of results for the next year, and hence began another academic cycle for colleges. As time passed, options for him got narrower and narrower. When he wished to apply for Loyola College in Chennai thinking Delhi was too far for him to be, he found out that the dates for admission were over. He was left with self-remorse. He wanted to study in Chennai now. He had a short history with Chennai. He had visited the place a year before his college when he was in the final year of high school to give the SAT examinations. He stayed with some bachelors there who showed him the real Chennai from the eyes of a Bohemian student and he had a really good time seeing the real Chennai, those overcrowded local train bogies, walking through narrow lanes, cruising and window shopping at every mall.

He wanted all that he wanted to be in familiarity. Delhi was highly unfamiliar to him, a place that he had never really noticed in real life, but only as an inattentive peek at the newspaper headlines or a footer of an address of publishing companies. He always equated Delhi to a promise of greatness not knowing the truth and the actuality of the city. He had heard foul things about the city also and that was the reason he did not want to go there. It was all so confusing for him. He did not know what his likes and spites were. All he knew at the moment was that he wanted to go to Chennai because it was familiar. Another thing about Chennai to be noted should be that every second student passing his high school from Andaman went to Chennai for their higher education. For one reason, Chennai had a horde of private engineering colleges and most of the students passing from the islands were engineering aspirants. He felt he would easily belong there too.

He asked his mother if the offer still stood for MCC. He told her that he wanted to study there. The option was still open but not for long. He wanted to close in on the college but now he felt MCC to be distasteful. This usually happened with us, he thought. When something is in our hand, its importance is lost. It is reduced to something much less privileged than what it originally had given the hope to be. Same was the case with Rahil. He needed almost a week’s time to finalize whether he wanted to study at MCC or not. Studying in Chennai lad lost its charm now, and also its reason. So what if it is close to home, he thought. ‘I do not wish to pursue English literature just for the degree… I pursue it for the opportunity, something I completely don’t see in a place where English is the third language…’ he thought to himself.

In between the week of his decision, he received an email that racked his brains back and forth, both in exhilaration and in fright. The fright was of a totally different kind; it was the fright of making a decision. He got an email from Christ College, Bangalore stating he was short-listed for an interview and the interview was in three days. He could take the flight the next day and then be there for the interview. Being there for the interview was not a problem at all. The will to be there for the interview was a problem. The question of familiarity also roused here. Neither his mother nor anyone in the family knew anyone close to college in Bangalore. They barely knew anyone in Bangalore and the only ones they knew were acquaintances of acquaintances, in short, people not to trusted and there was no way they were going to let him go alone either. There was, however, a slight probability they would let him go alone if he was adamant enough.

Rahil, for the worst part, was not adamant. He was torn. He could now see chance throw opportunities at him even though he led a life of chaos. As a result, he could not see right from wrong in his choice. Then he sat down to assess it.

-My God what to do? What do I have in store at Bangalore? Throw titles at me. The high-tech city; what job has a writer in a high-tech city? Nothing; Might as well be more high tech than silicon valley, wouldn’t make the least bit difference to me, I would still be unemployed there after pursuing my degree in English. And they don’t even have proper English honors there too, just a combination of three subjects. That is a good thing? Well, for one, I might not get bored from studying the same thing over and over, and I might also have a higher field of knowledge. No, an honors course has more depth. I should pursue it, should pursue it. Bangalore as a city is also not a literary one and doesn’t have a literary culture. But it is sealed! I am in, I am not afraid of an interview. I welcome an interview. Finally a man-to-man interaction, somebody I would be able to talk to about literature and exchange theories on literary styles and techniques. I should be thankful to even get a chance such as this, I suppose. I suppose……

Logic, does it work here? What is the logic behind attending this interview? Early security, I would be n a college before everyone else. Is there every reason for me to be there? Should be, if the accepted my application, should be. What of just cause? What about alternative? The alternatives bug me! Glittering, they are; better looking, more charming. It is like you taking a walk through the street. You have a girlfriend, you are committed or even if you do not have a girlfriend, there is a reason you do not have one. Maybe you masturbate to keep yourself from sexual frustration; maybe you are sexually inert, still when you walk down the road at night, through the well-lit bazaar, your eyes like little mirrors reflecting everything you see and you see a dandy dame walk by, walk past you in her tight jeans,, those familiar walking ways of the woman, one leg crossing the other as the one moves forward, then the other, you cannot help yourself but gaze, no matter how short or long a moment, how comforted or uneasy the moment, at those legs, be they slender, be they flat, be they naked, be they clothed, and where it starts from, and see it jangle, seeing one muscle bulge back and forth as she walks, the other bulges too, and for that one moment, thoughts cloud the mind, clog it, cover it, shroud it, the thought of male promiscuity. Out of pure sense, it happens. Female promiscuity might work the same way but I may not be the best person to comment on it. This moment, of perverse thought, we lose sense of the obvious and delve into the perverted, almost as if it is obvious. To delve in this perversion is normal; to oppose it would be abnormal. To make the same illation for female promiscuity would not be completely laden with error, to say it is born out of obviousness would be correct, but t in the same manner of thought as male promiscuity. More complex, I assume. Female promiscuity has always been more complex and hence rarer. The servile chain of autocratic patriarchy enslaving feminism long since the dawn of time also plays a role in the shaping of woman promiscuity. The chains so heavy, so tight, it has left scars on female sexuality and the pain has made them grow hostile towards it. As a result, we find females more sexually defensive than the outwardly phallic male. For me, a choice is also divided as being feminine or masculine. A masculine choice is something that s simple, logical, not as much prone to thought as one would like otherwise and just rough-cut. A feminine choice is not emotional or feminine in terms of the stereotypical feminism but a feminine choice would be characterized as a cave, abysmal, deep, sometimes dark, multi-leveled, erudite, profound, much considered, pondered over to the extent of making a chaos out of it and giving it consideration and reconsideration over countless instances of time. These two spheres of human thought are present in us regardless of our biological sexes or our sociological genders, be it a he or a she; the male and female ego, scattered in all of our brain in perfectly proportional and equal amounts.

But then, what is? Sealed; I do not want it sealed. It is not good for me. No, I do not. No, I cannot. No, there should be something else. No, there should be some other way. No, I would not study a general combination course. No, I will not study in a city like Bangalore. No, I will not travel, I have always hated travelling, and travel so early, all of a sudden, out of the blue, without any prior notice I would not. No, I must find another way and I must drop this choice. No, I think it is something instinctive. No, the college would not suit me at all. No, I know Delhi is better than it and that I will have better prospects there. No, I will drop the idea of attending the interview. No, a surety is not good enough for me. No, something is definitely missing. –

He finally decided to skip the interview of the college in Bangalore and reject the unofficial surety of acceptance, thought Rahil to keep his options open. Whatever he would do, whichever college he would join, he would certainly not end up as he was now for the next year too. He promised himself he would get into the college and he knew how to keep a promise. He wanted to get out of his finality in life. He did not know yet what his finality was but there was something in his life that was recurrent, looping and that, Rahil thought, was the order of his finality. He wanted to live an unimaginable life, be it positive or negative. He was willing to take chances in life and take lose bets. His purview in life was to be different, different from the tradition, from the normal, almost counter-cultural but what Rahil had not thought was that to set off a counter-culture, one needed the proper base of culture in the first place or else he would just be living in his own world of delirium too sophisticated and complex for everybody. Maybe it was true. Perhaps his thoughts were isolated and perhaps he did live in a delirious world of his own cut off from the general tradition around him; the Indian culture. He was too far off from it. It was not like he was westernized, no. He despised western culture even more, the hypocritical western culture the tenets of which are based on false diplomacy, in saying one thing and doing quite the opposite and in falsely projecting themselves and their actions as just and ethical. He was on the verge of becoming a nihilist. He might have already embraced nihilism.

His internal life had become complicated but his physical life, even more so. He was constantly riddled with choices. The time had come, he thought. The month of April, brought with it, a kind of deliverance for him. His entrapment that he felt around him, the swamp of stagnation, was slowly disappearing, making sense.

-I do not know what I do not know but what I do know I know well. The fear, the fear the fear of making the wrong decision and the dread of making the right and having to live the wholeness of that right decision; too right to follow, it may well be. Haunted… haunted dreams, soul-extinguishing reality, representations of premise, these dreams, gouging with a pencil, my eyes, my two windows to the souls. There is something fascinating about the eyes, something meaningful and psychoanalytical than any part of the body. Eyes, most torturous, most emotionally leaking sorts of man, to a known man, or a woman, of a woman. A look in the yes gives me a connection, a sudden shrug of unprocessed information jetting from their minds, from their sub-consciousness to me, as if I was reading their soul. To look at those eyes continuously, without a pause, is painful, even for me, discomforting, to be trespassing into their souls, their wishes, their fantasies without their permission just like those psychics or mentalists. It is a stirring phenomenon for me because I feel they have the same access to my soul as I have to theirs and that they can look into my eyes and read what I see, not just looks, see. That is why I never look anybody in the eye for long, out of respect for their own privacy for their own sakes, and it is only fair that they should reciprocate or else, what’s the point of a social order or a societal structure, the collective fabric, the utilitarian mosaic and so on so forth… And that is why people say when they ‘*the government is* ***watching*** *you*’ because there is a certain information you can get from a person just by looking at him and the way he looks back at you and looking at somebody for a longer time than usual is perverted because when someone looks at you for longer than you find acceptable, he is getting into you inquisitively and without your permission… My heart is gassy… and so there is also such penetration, not sexual penetration but the same in adultery, a kind of rape so to speak, even when you’re having a general conversation. When people look at you as they talk, you are virtually transparent when it comes to the persistence of substance. Your substance no longer holds. You break and the person looking in your eyes is the one that whams the hammer every time. So what do you usually do? You make awkward glances, around the room, looking at the table or chair, the coffee mug if you’re in a coffeehouse setup, or more popularly you look at various features of the other’s face, of the one talking. You look at his or her lips, forehead, nose, cheeks, the end of the face in their chin, go down to their neck and sometimes even go down to their breasts, their belly, their arms and you find that that really awkward and nonsensical but you still do it. There is a sense of security to it that you feel; an absurdist sort of fulfillment. Our choices therefore are very intricately linked to inconspicuously minute details so that nothing we chose, we choose out of free will. Talking generally is the most liberated form of free will and yet there are so many minute sophistications in it over which we have no control. To demand freedom is not the point there, the tick is the boasting and celebration of freedom when each of our choices is pre-destined. But that never bothers. That has never bothered. What bothers them are people like me, who know the truth, and then it is I who bother them. And I then become freedom, not but freedom. I am freedom to them and they are scared of me. I am scared of myself. This is the life we choose. Is this the life we chose, or is this, the life given to us, handed over, forced down our unborn throats? The definition changes, the lives remain the same, the lies remain the same. Forced or chosen, they are all the same. Thickened blood has to clot, everything is dust in the winds, nothing flows free and everything repeats itself as if on a cue, but it changes too and new things do come. -

Rahil could not quite figure out the admission procedure for Delhi University. He had somehow gotten to know the procedure for admission to Jamia Milliah for literature which was through an entrance test scheduled on mid-June. He was however not fond of attending Jamia Milliah because it was a religion oriented college but he found it hypocritical for not feeling the same way for St. Xavier’s or Scottish Church. This made him feel guilty. If he was looking down on religious institutions, he should equally look down on all religious institutions, he thought. He was born and brought up in an Islamic background and the way he was brought up, he did not find any absolute orthodoxy that was stereotypical of Islam. Of course, his alienated example does not make up for the entire Muslim community. Now that he thought of it, he found Christian convent schools and Christian colleges to be the strictest schools and colleges, especially the catholic ones. Still he was very careful as to what he regarded hearsay or a scathed truth and what he saw as actually truthful especially when it came to matters of religion.

To get out of this bubble that he was caught in, Rahil decided to take a trip back to R.K Pur because there was a great chance that he would have to go to mainland sooner or later regarding his admission. It would have been sooner if he had taken the choice of going to Bangalore but he did not. Now his mother and his family decided for him to go to Delhi sometime in mid June to give the entrance test for Jamia Milliah College that they particularly wanted him to attend. There was, in their opinion, a sense of belonging for him there. Needless to say, they felt it because of the religious background of the college. They were very allayed by the idea of their son being around bearded Mullahs who make him pray five times a day. His consent did not matter. For them, it was the duty of their son to be like that. No matter what he did with his life, no matter if he dropped out of an engineering course against their will and joined a college so far away from home for a liberal arts course as long as he had faith. But if his faith turned loose or if he would be astray from it, then all hell would break loose on him. So Rahil did not completely denounce the idea of studying in a conservative college. He had heard of the college’s rigorous use of force that was quite successful in eradicating student unions from the college and banning college elections. Also the college administration was successful in installing cameras all around campus and making furthermore provisions to beef up the security of the place making the university space less and less liberal.

It was not altogether bad for Rahil. Delhi University or Jamia did not matter as long as he was in Delhi and as long as all the services and privileges of Delhi were available to him and at his disposable for his writing pursuits. Nonetheless, he felt it was terribly wrong to rid the students of the only voice they have by banning student unions. The administration had made itself liable and prone to enemies by this move, more than they would have had, he thought, in presence f student unions. None of it mattered now though. What was done was done.

He took the ship to Hut Bay two days later. The ship’s name was Samsun. The history of the ship was worth mentioning. It was a ship that had been running n the waters of Andaman sea for the past five years but it was actually of Turkish origin. The erstwhile Lieutenant had leased the ship for use in the islands seeing the problem of traveling passengers inter-islands face due to population explosion. The inside story however, was that there was a deal between the Turkish shipping corporation that had leased the ship to Andaman and Nicobar administration and the Lieutenant Governor and the governor siphoned off the funds demanded by the shipping corporation from the administration for the ship into his own personal bank account. The ship just cost too much and at first it was unbelievable for officers that a mere medium-sized ship could cost so much. However, there was nothing in the finances that was incriminating and so all everyone had were suspicions. The ship was also piloted and commandeered by a Turkish crew. The ship had all the features an Indian ship would never have in ages. They had a very elegant dining salon, a swimming pool though it was usually empty but the big deal was that it was there, nightclub, spa, gym, bar, an overhead deck with tanning recliners and under it an open cafeteria on the lower deck. The nightclub, bar, gym and spa were always closed for some reason. Perhaps they were too explicit for the Indian travelers.

Rahil enjoyed all kinds of sea travel as long as it did not involve floating on a wooden board but he particularly looked forward to traveling in ‘MF Samsun’. The cabins were also quaint. Two pairs of bunk beds, so four beds in total, neatly covered with bed sheets, white and clean and pillows, soft and warm. He found it odd that the pillows were warm thought he was thankful but his disturbance was more central because the air-conditioning was pretty strong and would have cooled down the pillow in no time. The fact that it was warm could have been due to the reason that maybe it was used, he thought. But then, they had just gotten on board and the pillows were freshly kept there from the linen store. So t was perfectly fine for it to be warm as the staff might have had picked his pillow somewhere from the middle of the stack, he deduced. After a thorough inspection of everything around him, he helped himself to a little sleep. The little sleep was made even briefer as a man entered clumsily carrying two suitcases. The sound of the suitcases colliding with the cabin walls and the lower bunk bed as he tried to plant it there woke up Rahil. He took a gander at the man. He was a well-built middle aged native Nicobarese with mongoloid features that glittered with liveliness. At first, Rahil behaved rudely, shrugged away from his smiling face turning the other side lying very still, as if pretending to sleep, with eyes closed.

Rahil eased a little after a couple of minutes. He could now talk to the man.

“Where are you going?” The native asked Rahil as he tried to make conversation. The answer to that question was obvious because the boat would only go to Hut Bay and there were no stops on the way.

“I will go sixteen.” Rahil said specifically. Sixteen actually meant sixteen kilometers from the Hut Bay jetty. Reflecting on the cultural richness of India, after independence and after independence from Japanese, the Andaman administration sought to modernize or in better words traditionalize Indian states and localities that, under British regime had a British name. And so Calcutta became Kolkata, Bombay became Mumbai, Madras became Chennai. In Andaman, the authorities took it a bit too far and started giving names like Vivekananda Puram or Ramakrishna Puram and Netaji Nagar. Obviously, the newer names were more complicated for the locals who were adept in their own native language as opposed to Hindi. It was common for them to use abbreviations like R.K Pur or V.K Pur and when even that seemed challenging, they started naming places in kilometers based on their distance from the harbor. So R.K Pur because it was sixteen kilometers from the harbor was better known as sixteen and V.K Pur as it lied twenty eight kilometers from the harbor was just called ‘twenty eight’.

“What about you? You’re going to Harinder Bay, right?” Rahil asked.

“Yeah” the Nicobarese replied. Rahil was so sure because all the residents of Nicobar were settled in Hut Bay on the other side of the island called Harminder Bay. It was especially built by the government and planned out by the administration of the Nicobar Islands as a part of some settlement extension program.

Rahil was racist still for his part of judgment of the fact that he lived in Harminder Bay, being a mongoloid or at least as racist as you can be on an Indian scale. Through the general interest of things, they got into a very active conversation and Rahil fund his name to be Samuel. It was pretty common for the people of Nicobar to have Christian names majorly because they were Christians. During the late 1800s, it might seem strange but before the British or any other colonial country could conquer the Islands because of its arid geographical position, the British or maybe the Dutch, missionaries were able to penetrate and spread Christianity there. It was a curious point of observation for Rahil that the Godlessness of Europe in that age with the coming of Nietzsche and the birth of existentialist philosophy marked the whole ‘civilizing’ movement by the Church which involved cadres of ministers and reverends armed with Bibles springing off to third world countries like Indochina and Africa while their own kernel was going through, what in their terms would be barbarianism.

Samuel took a keen interest on whether Rahil liked sports or not to which he replied he did not. When Samuel asked him the reason for that, he, not wanting to indulge in a debate regarding the ideological aspect of sports with a less aware man, replied that he simply did not have the necessary physicality for it. Samuel confessed on being a sports addict and having an abnormal love for volleyball at a time in his life.

His life story was quite interesting. He started his story from the end which involved his transfer to Calcutta. He was in the army and Rahil was quite astonished to hear that as rarely someone from the Islands went into the army. He was on his way to meet his family in Harminder Bay and would then take his wife and children to Calcutta with them. On further conversation, it was revealed that he was born and brought up in Car Nicobar, a section of the Nicobar detached from the Greater Nicobar Islands. Since he was a kid, Samuel was always interested in sports and had a very general behavior related to studies, that he hated it. But he still attended school because the school had a ground and a ball and other students to play with. As a child too, he was highly physical but always channeled his strength in a good way through sports. He had the typical mentality of an islander who was not bothered of mainstream competition because he had no particular ambitions for his future other than the general ambition of raising a family and providing for it. And so for him, there was nothing else in the world for him to think about other than sports. Finally when, like for all the other islanders, high school went by like a daze and that momentary grasp of uncertainty took Samuel by the neck, he immediately got rid of it by joining the army. The army is a kind of heaven, he testified for a physically fit person and the deepest hottest corner of hell for someone who is not built for it. He got rid of his uncertainty by joining the army, by giving the test for the soldier’s spot and getting selected under the administration’s reservation for scheduled tribes.

“It was the same there as it was in school. I got to play.” He stated in between, briefly. His affinity for volleyball was well received by the officers and his seniors and he got the opportunity to represent his battalion in tournaments.

“Yes, they make you get up every day at five and it is pretty strict, but I’d say I’d not made a bad choice. When I was young and fresh in the forces, I used to play a lot. That was around fifteen years ago. I saw three transfers somewhere between those fifteen years and I got to travel a lot too. With a few adjustments, I’d say the military has been the right career choice for me.

Rahil just wanted to hear his story and wanted him to go on and on. There was a very visible sense of innocence in his voice but as he made is final statement about the military being the right career choice for him with a few adjustments, he could sense a compromise in his tone as if he gone through a lot of adjustments. This did not however flicker his light of joy that shone in his eyes. It had been a long time since he had last come to visit his family, his wife, his mother, his son. He could not exactly count how many years it had been. Now that he was back, it was all that mattered and he was glad.

-Is it ignorance that makes men so happy and lively in this world or is it innocence? How is one different from the other? Guilt is the realization of knowledge and innocence is the ignorance of guilt. –

Over the course of their journey, Samuel had grown pretty fond of Rahil. He confessed that he talked to him just the way he would have long indulging conversations with his friends in the army or his friends back home. They talked of the same thing over and over but there was a connection that made the repetition of the topic and its importance irrelevant as long as one could hear the voice of the other and the other could respond. These general ties sometimes happen to us without our knowledge, without our control. The reason for that is not reason at all, its sense; pure, crystalline, passionate, fluid, primordial sense that exists in us naturally.

They accompanied each other to the lavish dining room of the boat and had a meal together. Rahil even shared his vegetables. Hi did not like vegetables. He never liked it and so he gave them over to Samuel seeing that he was eating his rice almost dry because he was out of vegetable.

After they had had their meal, Samuel went to his cabin while Rahil took a stroll through the deck of the ship and then climbed over to the upper deck. As he walked over the wooden floor and the winds blowing tightly over his face throwing his long hair all over his face, he knew what life was like and what life would be like. To discover happiness in life was absurd, to discover true happiness in life was absurd because one could have every possible materialistic possession and still be unhappy. And to the free, to those without possession comes the alleviated joy of having nothing to lose. And that becomes happiness but even that does not last forever. One cannot always be happy in order to truly enjoy happiness.

-There is no stagnancy in keeping life it is always changing undulating and ever free no matter how much you think of it you cannot estimate how it will pan itself eventually out there is nothing out there that can prove one thing or the other and I welcome this fluidity to all aspects of my life I cannot say much about how it is positive because it may well not be but it is necessary like a vague conversation one pulls when he sees in point in even the most meaningful of conversations and so why must not men have a decent vague obscene obscure conversations to themselves for it is also meaningless and two wrongs do not make a right but two rights can have some sort of effect over and about I stand here to redefine myself how do I make that happen standing here imagining myself elsewhere profoundly hurt by where I am not where I am but where I be where is I should be long gone but not gone I stayed for ever the time stays but time goes I have seen that time stays as units and goes as the wind blows back and forth to and fro and the tide that rolls the seas is that not the doing of coming and going time my hair growing as it grows biologically or physically is maybe biology is physics and I am a physical being more than biological being and should I jump into the seas either I drown not knowing how to swim or the propeller rotors tear me apart and rip me is that biological but as I whoosh down inside the sapphire blue seas the buoyancy will act equal and opposite to my weight inside the water under specific gravity for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction and then the buoyancy of salt-water is more than fresh water and that is why people can float without drowning all through the seas it is absurd but true visible scientific and hence true and why do we cherish this so much I mean a death is death and there is nothing scientific about it physically biologically what is mesmerizing is the phenomenology that surrounds death but no one knows about it I mystical for a loss of words we can peg it to the what about the truth is so fascinating and what about happiness so comfortable that people equate comfort to happiness unaware and untouched also by the point that there is no comfort that is always there it goes and comes and goes and never comes until you realize it is gone and work for it to come only then it comes but not in the way or in the way you would want it I think know no people can make it up but it is there like truth and wood and plant and nature and plastic in the atmosphere that is dark the sky is blue sea is blue clouds and white and me on the land am not of color or form if looked from above the clouds just a little speck that does matter in any way but I want to reach above and touch the sky and the I will be more and I will be born again-

He got back to the cabin and found Samuel dozing off. He had not realized but by now two other passengers had occupied the beds and the cabin was full. The other two were South Indian men, one with a skinny figure and thick moustache dressed in white shirt and the other one was a plump fellow with short curly hair. Both of them were sitting on Rahil’s bed. As Samuel had taken the upper bunk of the other side from the lower berth of Rahil, the two men were sitting on Rahil’s bed.

“Excuse me” Rahil said politely. They were polite enough to take their respective seats without any hassles. In the islands, things were as calm as the island breeze. Nobody wanted hassle anywhere. They were mature enough to talk any kind of matter and settle it peacefully and rarely were there any instances of physical altercations or disputes of a serious nature. Even in general work, there was not so much as a bad word exchanged between two islanders even if one made some kind of mistake that cost the other. They would just forget the mistake mutually and forgive each other and one would make sure not to commit the same mistake another time. Maybe that was the reason the islands lacked in development but what it mildly laced in the form of infrastructural maturity it made up in the form of individual and collective intellectual maturity. There was no backwardness in all of their thinking. They were thinkers of progressive nature and did not pass judgments on people like many other sub-cultures of India. It may partly be due to the reason that the Andamanese sub-culture was made up as a mixture of different culture united only through a recent history.

One of them stalked Rahil with a very heavy look as if trying to remember him from some place. He looked like an elitist with a face that dripped of vanity and self-love. They looked to him white-collar bureaucratic people probably having strong ties with the island administration, probably working for them. He could deduce that to pinpoint precision from the way they talked to each other, using phrases that were almost like popular mimes among departments.

“Which school do you attend?” the thin man with the moustache asked.

“I used to attend Navy Children School.” Rahil replied, putting emphasis that it was in his past and he had graduated but the man did not seem to take notice of that little emphasis and diverted his questions elsewhere.

“Were you in the felicitation event of Mr. Gyan Sharma?” he asked, and waited for answer. Rahil was a little taken aback by the blast from the past, the past when he was a completely different personality. At first, it took him some time to say yes. Rahil was a little confused whether the one that he had mentioned was indeed him because at first he could not link the two personalities together. Then he found the connecting link between the two-history. He had a history and it was time to cherish that history no matter how dissimilar it was to the truth that became of him later. When he conceded t his question, from then on the man unmasked himself, he became quite the gallant man that Rahil had never expected this man to be. He appreciated the showman charisma with which he had held the stage and that very few people had that quality. Most people would either crumble under pressure or end up blaming someone and become frustrated about it. He was also really appreciative of the creative way he had managed the glitch in the curtain fall making the problem a part of his showman appearance which demanded quick and ingenious thinking and a smart delivery. It was easy, Rahil thought, to dupe the crowd that is ideologically starved with fake nuances that seem interesting. The beauty of a good nuance is that it is not deep. The shallower the nuance, the more affect it holds. Many people however would take this as a critique on nuances but it is the truth. This is also the peculiar thing about critiques that they bring out the essential truth in things even though one might hate the bluntness of a critique. These were things Rahil did not know when he was performing those nuances but he knew of it now that he had the outside perspective to it. The truth behind any act of comedy is tragedy. A shallow tragedy has the exact construct of a practical form of comedy, like someone falling from a broken chair which is tragic but still we choose to laugh at it.

He looked at the impressed faces of the two departmental cheroots and could not help but notice the appreciation and respect for him in their eyes. He was on a higher pedestal and they were on the lower and it was them who put him at the top. This was the beauty of appreciation, Rahil thought. You are never on the top but you are always put to the top by others in a sort of illusion that is destined to fade off sooner or later. When you are the one who put yourself in that position, it is termed self-appreciation which ensures your position at the top but no one actually exists to confer it but you.

By the time the ship docked, Rahil had found this to be the ideal journey that he was looking for and that was much needed for what was next to come. He had a recollection of his past through a very cheerful audience and he became a reference point into the past of another person, a past built out of compromise and yet a past that was satisfactory and contented.

-What matters to us then? To have lived a wonderful life or to be living a disconsolate life, and the answer though has no scope for objectivity or universality. Every journey comes to an end but there are some that keep on going. Life is one such journey that keeps on going as long as your soul lives. People die but their souls live in the memory of their loved ones. Through this concept, life is logically eternal without having to fabricate the presence of heaven and hell. Complicated matters these are but the basis of all these are really simple, time; present and past and future. In the past what I was, in the present what I am and in the future what I will be all factor into my gradient of happiness. Truth is one can never break the bounds of happiness no matter how happy one feels. It is like building blocks where one piles up over the other and therefore increase the weight of the happiness but the structure of happiness is still maintained. That is why the phrase ‘happiness out of bonds’ is false in a general sense. That being said, there are kinds of happiness that are out-of bonds not because the magnitude of happiness is manifold but because the pursuit of that kind of happiness is different. This form of happiness pops up unexpectedly in the least of expected places, like the joy of taking a life, feeling powerful over taking something that only some can muster the courage to take, taking something that was given to them not as a salary, not as a gift, not as a form of remuneration so taking it isn’t stealing. And then there is pleasure in getting killed, or beat up, the pleasure of being hopeless, being miserable and having nothing to lose; all kinds of submissive and masochistic pleasures. –

When the gangway was fastened and was made ready for the passengers to disembark, Rahil was one of the first to get off. It was made easy for the reason that he had with him only his backpack containing his laptop and nothing as hand luggage and so it was easy to just squeeze through and down to the jetty. From there he took the bus going to R.K Pur. The bus ride was slower and took more time than the jeep ride. I had many fixed stops and it also traveled slower. It was a worse choice for many people and some only took it because it was cheaper. For Rahil however, it was a better alternative. It gave him more time to immerse himself in travel. It would give him more time to look out of the window and see wilderness, around him and about him. He could see the woods as the woods drove past them. Seeing the fine files of areca nut trees lines in a perfect linearity like nature’s own perfectly trained guerilla regime dressed in jungle khakis to wage an insurgency right from the heart of the island, he could not help but recollect what he had read about the agrarian revolutions that had made Che an international youth symbol of rebellion and he cringed at the irony of how he was glamorized posthumously for something that was so desiccated in real life and so troubling.

After reaching his home, he greeted his mother with a hearty hug. That was able to wipe his slate of memory clean from al the thoughts that were emerging in his mid whilst his travel. While in R.K Pur, he had nothing to do except read and write which was getting increasingly difficult back in Port Blair with the ongoing quest for college. He felt the moment he came to R.K Pur that eventually things would work out and that it would work out very smoothly. Meanwhile, as he was taking things smoothly, his mother was doing the heavy-duty work. His mother was calling almost every influential person she knew so that she could get him settled in a good college. She was the reason and the supporting power behind Rahil’s free thinking spirit. She was the only one who was appreciative of most of his ideas no matter how ludicrous it may have sounded to others. She had a different image of her son. She did not want to put pressure on his son. She just wanted to see her son succeed and live a happy and she would sacrifice anything and everything to ensure that. But along with her leniency also came a strict code of ethics she wanted her son to adhere to. For one thing, the mother was really religious and wanted her son to go down the same path and live life in belief and faith and the protection of that faith. The problem was that Rahil had already ridiculed the idea of God in his mid whether it was a form or a formless power. She wanted him to pray weekly, if not five times a week and that was made compulsory for him and would he miss it, she would make sure that his heart burnt with guilt for missing it.

She was also a staunch aggressor towards smoking, drinking and of course, doing drugs. She did not know that his son was already a user, though not addicted, of substances, especially domestic and homegrown substances. He believed the effect of these substances broadened the way he wrote, made it more Gonzo. He would use it while she was out working and by the time she would come, the effect would wear off and he would be seen by his mother as taking an early afternoon nap. Sometimes a bad trip would cause terrible hiccups like a village drunkard but his mother would ignore it saying “Have some water. It will be fine.”

If he did not smoke or drink, it was only out of respect for his mother but if he did drugs, it was out of respect for arts. He felt that there should be a disbanding of ethics to a level if one is to truly submit himself to the pursuit of art and the enrichment of philosophy. These were things his mother never understood and he thought she never can understand for she did not know the lure of art and the madness that art is or can be. He loved art in the Dionysian sense of the word. These were things the mother did not know about his son, his view of art, his madness for philosophical enrichment, his totally absurd sense of rationality yet he existed, to his mother and for her, the same he was. The mask that Rahil wore never wore off. We all wear masks in life, at one point or another. We are the same at all times and at times we are different, we mask ourselves with that difference and then our true self is hidden somewhere behind that subjective difference.

The next day that Rahil arrived, he woke up late and lagged from the sea journey that he had made yesterday. He woke up around eleven and opened and freshened up.

-A storm is approaching, better approach my laptop and use it to end it. Charring body, charring mind, charring soul, char, char, char, and char at the steamy red embers of passion, make honey melt and flow like myrrh. Laptop laptop on my lap……make it so my thing can snap. Pop a cherry now, it is time. The weather is right, sweaty sultry, twisted, deviant and I would not mind getting a little deviant with it. Pathetic, some might say, this act, but that is just me and I am just, just. Life is just, just. Be all that you can be while you are at it; fierce, fearless. Look at the screen, concentrate concentrate, for there lays my obstinate fantasies, my truest concessions and my most longed fetishes and now is the time to give in to them. Clothes, off and thus starteth the foreplay… Reach out and do what is necessary, important, immediate, immensely joyful especially on the unsheathed body and then lose your calm and be taken over by fancy and demons can fly, demons will fly. Evil will triumph for as long as truth triumphs. Watch those boots caressing the naked flesh, the glimmering naked flesh with such a resolution, glistens on the screen as truthful as the real thing and the affect of it throbbing real. Heart beats between the legs, and blood oozes from all parts of the body. Heart, numb, brain, numb, face, numb, hands, numb, feet ,numb, eyes, sensible just enough to witness the playful arms of hers caressing her body in an exposed lingerie and all blood and all sense clogged, between the legs. Now gasping for a release, it is, but not yet. There is more to come. Faces now, concentrate on the faces. The skin of the face no more different than that of the thigh, same in color, in shade, in glaze yet the face, to plant my lips on them, n their smoothness, on their firmness; haven to a lusty traveler. Lust is not shameful; to hide the lust is shameful and to hide the lust is harmful. Show of lust is glory…… And I am glorious now, at my most glorious moment, blissful, mind-numbing. Ah, the thrusts, faster, faster, faster, and then stop. Then slowly, slowly, let it build up from scratch, but more profoundly. And now, waiting for the very moment, making funny faces, a part of the act, a part of the act I am not embarrassed about like most people, I am somewhat proud of it. Faster, faster, better, no wait. Leave it all again. Pitch black. Now might come the right time, but I cannot say for sure. It is like safecracking, you have to be able to feel the touch of a hair from the other side while cracking it. Oh year, why do I do it? Does one even need to ask? The time is near, I can feel it and I can live it over and over so many times but this time I shall be released and now is the most opportune moment for it. The thirst and the desperation, like two kids playing in a seesaw, whip-whop, whip-whop, whip-whop and so the motion whip-whop, whip-whop, whip-whop, it goes. It is unstoppable now, inevitable, incubus, the devil, the exterminating angel. Senses soothe, blood boils, face tightens, motions gains momentum, eyes stop seeing completely now, now they start to live, and the feet gets cold, gets blue, blood from them is sucked out and the feet now are nowhere near those bright pink feet on the screen. The naked bodies appeal, their nude flesh demands, their bodies, their forms a shrine, I worship, I worship, and I am ready to tribute, filled with deepest desire and devotion I am ready to tribute and I will not stop until I have paid in full. I will pay in full. The time is now. Here Goddess is your rewards coming through my shuddering, shivering senselessly draining out body, pull after pull after pull and thrust after thrust, ineluctable and in the end, ignominious. The murder is committed; now, hide the body before the mother arrives.-

He passed the days there with a snail’s pace. He lived life there. He saw each moment as it passed him by, frame by frame. He was never the kind of person who would repeat things the same way. Even if things were repeating in his life, each way was different than the other. The next day Rahil had a really long talk with his mother about where he wanted to study and Delhi somehow had climbed up to his top priority. Her mother knew it was probably the best for him but was unwilling to let him go there. She wanted a place closer to home so that he could visit her and be visited by relatives frequently.

“Okay, your cousin sister said that the Jamia application has already been sent. She has talked to someone there who filed it for you and submitted the application. She said that you would receive your examination ticket via post. If that’s what you want to do, then…… But remember, you also have St. Xavier’s and Scottish Church in Kolkata in waiting and you will be lucky if you get in there. Let’s see if you get into Delhi University but you don’t even know the online procedure there.” She did not complete because Rahil interrupted her.

“This year they changed the whole procedure. Once we go back to Port Blair, I will apply online to Delhi University and we can add one more to the list.” He said.

“Yes, I just want to see you get on your own two feet.” She remarked.

The rest of the talk between both of them was very general which ranged from what would be on the dinner to tuning the channel and grouping them perfectly so that it would be easier to browse through. In this conversation, Rahil was more or less himself. It was the nature of the mother that made him to be that way. While talking to his mother, he could be himself and he felt no swindling towards something else that was common in others. Though his mother was a very bad listener, she at least had a very pious way of listening to what little she had listened and then reverberating on it. There was much dialogue between the two that was more general but to limit her mother’s ability to throw things out of track if she felt they were out of line, he would usually use dogmatic circular arguments to prove his points so that his mother could not get out of it. She liked to trap his mother in the midst of arguments she could not handle. She was too self-righteous and he hated that. He wanted her to suffer in their conversation because of it. He wanted to show how little of a ground she could really cover with her narrow-minded religion-backed crowd-minded intellect. Often she would get frustrated at his attempts to go out of bonds of morality.

The line between theory and practicality was still muddled for him because he had not got the opportunity to venture into practical spheres experimenting with what he had learned. He would soon be able to do that in college, he thought. But the question that constantly erupted in his mind was this: how would he really use the knowledge he had learnt so far in the grassroots that he wanted to use it to? He thought this was a question that was probably alike for any intellectual person; the question of how to implement what one has learned so far in his or her intellectual journey.

His stay in R.K Pur did not have much real excitement. Contrary to that, it was rather boring. He would laze around the house all day, either sit in front of his laptop or occasionally watch television. The channels gave him the hint of what was in the minds of thousands of Indians and what more was fed to them. He was repulsed by the drab and grotesque techniques of repetition and opinion manipulation that would seem as the truth to the general eye but he could see beyond that, beyond their profit. The media manufactured tasty and spicy news for their profit so that the channel viewers watch them regularly thus keeping the mass unconscious and intellectually blunt to the sordid truth and the wholeness of knowledge. The masses have no other choice otherwise. They turn to media channels for news and entertainment channels for a proper piece of meaningful entertainment but the channels, for their ratings show crime, sex, comedy and glamour in the most unwitting and commercial manner just for pure entertainment and an average Joe neither has the time nor the drive to surf through other means of entertainment, as they are busy with their own meager lives and ultimately they chow down any form of mindlessness that goes down the tube, on the tube. These were things he could deduce on his own without anyone telling him. He did not need to know whether it was right or wrong because it was the truth, the empirical and visible truth and if it was wrong, it was the wrong truth. The fact that it was wrong would not change its nature of truth, and all that is true, exists, and if it was a wrong truth, it still existed like all the other wrong things in the world that exists, as truths, bubbling with fallibility and waiting to be set right. He equated mass media to be the same kind of wrong truth that he demanded to be set right. He had already set it right for himself but he was not content with that. He wanted other people to understand and desist from the use or consumption of mass media or try to renovate it with higher standards and with the capability of being a little more sensible and considerate to the enlightenment of the masses instead of eking out profit from them.

It was not like nobody knew him there. He had lots of people who had grown fondness towards him, especially the firemen. When he and his mother had first moved to the place, they had no proper gas connection and so he had to avail the three course meals from the fire-station mess. There was something in him, a spark of difference that was admired by the firemen who always asked of him from his mother. They always invited him to play volleyball which he hated playing. There was a force, however between him and the firemen that in many ways prevented possible getting along with each other. Maybe this was the force of the psychological difference between them but then Rahil thought was it not the psychological difference that intrigued them in the first place? So how can one thing one feature of someone lure the other with its charm and then just cast the other aside? It was not just awkward but wrong, though when Rahil thought more and more about it, looked at it from various aspects, it seemed justifiable to a greater part.

The syntax error lied in the nature of association of him with the firemen. He did not consider him as friends, and they did not see him as their equal friend. To them he was more or less a figure to nod at, or to wave to as they passed by in their motor bikes, or occasionally shake hands and ask how were things going, but nothing more than that. The rules of engagement for Rahil in this case were different. He saw these warm intimacies as a hand towards friendship and seeing as how they were compliant with him yet indifferent, he knew it had meant much less for them. They were not used to treating each other coldly the way he was and they were friendly beyond a certain point to each and every acquaintance they had.

Rahil then started to emulate the same indifferent but externally friendly attitude they had the courtesy of showing him but he could not keep up this charade much longer as he did not find it natural and so he saw them only rarely when he had the compulsion to do so.

Consequently, in the days that he stayed there, his frequency of meeting people waned and he became reclusive and got most to the time to himself. His thoughts, then, flew freely around him like dead spirits in a graveyard. Most of his thoughts had the same intensity as that of a ghost, dull, placid, chilly, morose and harrowing. He would sit in front of his laptop, every time to read and write in the morning albeit the day turned to afternoon by the time he woke up, and he would sit in front of the laptop that he placed before himself on the bed where he sat with his two feet in right angles to one another, his head, resting on the knee of his right feet, the two soles of his feet kissing each other, one on top of the other and one of his hands caressed the bottom of his face, his scraggly unkempt beard and his dry, gentle lips and he looked blankly at the screen of the laptop thinking what would become of him. He would have to make something of himself in college to be at the stature that he wanted himself to be. He was past appreciation and being a megalomaniac at the expense of being sensationalizing. He wanted to tone down the sensuality to the scale of just being different from the others, only to his self. He did not want a cult that would walk upon the same ideals; he just wanted friends with whom he could at least talk to about these matters without being judged for his stark difference of opinions. He wanted an open atmosphere of debate, a liberal and Bohemian environment where he could pursue what he wanted both in the physical and actual world and the metaphysical world of his own soul.

Sooner or later, his journey would start. He was prepared for it. What he was not prepared for was the anticipation that precluded his odyssey. After staying a week in R.K Pur, he and his mother went to Port Blair. Rahil knew there was no coming back to R.K Pur now. He knew that this was his last stay at R.K Pur and so he grabbed everything of use from there and made way for Port Blair from where he would then start his quest for a college.

Three days after coming back to Port Blair, Rahil found out that the online admission form for Delhi University was now out. There was heavy publicity of the new course even on national media channels. Over thousands of forms were filled up just on the first day the online portal was released. The next day, he went to the internet café and filled his form. There was a choice of three subjects. In the first one, he chose English, in the second choice, he took philosophy and in the third, he was torn apart between economics and political science. Finally, he, being a practicing Marxist of the classicist kind, took economics, even though he detested mathematics and he knew that the undergraduate degree of economics was just micro and macro-economics, a brief and totally artificial history of money and the rise of economy without Smith and Hobbes in context, and then in the final year, he would learn economic growth models and slightly touch on economic theories, here also excluding crucial burning and contemporary models like the Hezbollah model and the Austrian economic model. When one would graduate from this program, he would be perfect to read and interpret for multinational corporations and be another brick of surplus value for the bourgeoisie without even knowing the meaning of the word ‘surplus value’ because they never studied it in economics.

He was confused when he did not get a choice of colleges as to how he would be allotted a college among the many colleges Delhi University comprises of. To clear this doubt f his, he knew the exact person to contact. His name was Gaurav. He was from a small town in the state of Haryana, not far from Delhi and he had studied with Rahil for two years as his father was transferred to Port Blair. Rahil called him and he obliged him with the right kind of information. He knew the university admission procedure in and out. He told him that sometime in July, most probably in the first week, each college would release their cutoff lists for different colleges. If one had more than the cutoff percentage for the course he had applied, he would just need to fill the form physically and he would be admitted. He also told him that the cutoff percentage would be taken on the basis of the best three subjects in which the students achieved the highest marks. Rahil asked him if he had to physically be present in Delhi to collect the form and go through the application procedure and his friend told him that it was necessary, mandatory.

His friend wished him good luck and advised him strongly to study in DU than any other college in Kolkata or Chennai for his own good as there would be better services there and more faculties to help him with his writing. He already knew all of this. He just could not confer with his inner self whether he could take such a leap of faith on his own just for the sake of a pipe dream. It was not that he considered it out of reach but he was skeptical whether it would be as fulfilling in full consummation, as utopian as he thought it to be. Because if it did not turn out to be that way, he would be a long way from home to go back on his doings or make it right. His was the fear that got the best of him and that constantly battled in him as he tried hard to defeat it and pay in full to his artistic aspirations.

His mother told him to be ready as he would be leaving by the end of June for the entrance test for Jamia. He was not too rebellious about studying in JMC because he knew one way or another he would at least be in Delhi. He was also anticipating the admission list f St. Xavier’s college, Kolkata because it was a highly prestigious college as far as repute went and since it was a Christian institution, it had the promise of ties with colleges abroad and thus would have various student exchange and foreign study programs that he could see himself being a part of. Also, St. Xavier’s promised of a more elite and enlightened crowd coming from intellectual circles, sons and daughters of professors, high ranking officials, big families and although he was not into elitism, he thought it would be good at least for his education and the shaping up of his future.

His mother had connections with influential people in the islands that could get him a seat. Though he was an outstanding student and never did he need any form of recommendation but this time the percentage that he had got just did not reflect his outstanding abilities. As a result, strings had to be pulled and favors had to be made to put Rahil in place, where he was supposed to be. Some would say it was unfair on his part and even corrupted to take aid from outside sources and keeping aside his grades and what he deserved. Some people would say he did not deserve what was coming to him. But Rahil mocked that because according to him, it was never about percentages or grades and when it came to defining his future and since he laid more stress on his own personal development and impressing others through his personal developments, he in turn felt unfair and even wronged that his knowledge and intelligence was judged by something as petty as his percentages and that other people so felt so strongly about his getting less percentage as a commentary on his personal intelligent. Rahil thought, it might be true for those who use their intelligence and work their minds to gain higher percentage of marks in examinations like aspirants of the civil services examinations who openly admit that they lack the subjectivity of knowledge just because they prepare meticulously for that particular exam and in that particular manner not exactly giving focus to a more theoretical and critical reading of the facts. They just have to learn those facts, as many as they can. These people see knowledge as simply knowing facts rather knowing about them or criticizing them.

This was one of many problems Rahil had with the currently existing stream of thoughts among the general public. The other chief problem among others was the generality of things the Indian mass would deem special and force on every single one of its patrons. The Indian stream of thought, the Indian culture did not care about individuality. He thought no form of dominant culture cared about individual or individualistic ideologies but it was very peculiar in Indian scenario in terms that Indians are very Janus faced about it.

He would seem a lot caustic, even to himself sometimes with his adherence to highest forms of idealism, the Gottlieb kind. This constant search inside himself and outside for idealism in him first and then in others called for a cleaning of the stiff dirt of acquired ethics that called for something caustic for cleansing it. He suspended his rationale, left it all to sense and instincts, forgot about time, forgot about space, forgot about every little or big characteristics that would shape or shape a normal man.

One day he was walking with a friend to drop him off at the bus stop. It had been quite some time since he last had contact with a friend that was as close as this on. He felt that by the time his friend was preparing to leave, their interaction was unfulfilling. It was getting late in the night and hi friend’s reasons of going were also justifiable because his house was a little far away and the last bus was due to leave soon. Normally, he would just walk his friend to the bus stop and then return to his home. That day, however, he was feeling a little bit typical than usual. He was so caught in the aura of the conversation between them and their interaction that time and space did not matter to him anymore and all that he cared about no were his instincts. And driven thusly by his instincts, as the bus rolled down and stopped in front of them and as his friend was boarding the bus, he got into the bus behind him right at the spur of the moment and saw a staggered look on his friend’s face for a second.

“Ah, what the hell.” He replied as he felt the rays of curiosity coming from his friend’s straight gaze quite unsettling and burning its way into his soul. They took a seat together inside the bus, and kept on their conversation. In this seemingly little action, Rahil had done something would be frightening to a great many. He had crossed the border of normalization and he did it involuntarily, impulsively, as if he was driven by some unseen divine, duex ex machine for a final resolution of the internal conflict that ensued in him as the two friends talked to each other.

“Hey, when are you gonna get off? It is starting to get really late for you head back home, dude.” His friend cut short his conversation which about something that he, for all the brains in him, could not recall. That was the purpose of the conversation as is the general purpose of conversation in general- an insatiable efficacious stasis of temporary escape, much like the rush of nicotine through the alveolar sacks of a smoker’s lungs, or maybe quite contrary to it, and more similar to the lost daze gaze through the open window into the bright morning and the yellow sun lashing irresistible and continuously over the green meadows, as one looks just in the wake of the moment as in the wake of himself.

“Don’t worry about me. I have the place mapped to the back of my brain.” He answered with a colloquial statement. As he now saw the conversation steering over to a different direction and fearing to be clobbered into complete dystopia in due time, he felt his escapist tendencies get the best of him and soon he was longing to get off the bus. After three stops, he bid his friend adieu very charmingly and languidly that was very unusual for his new self. As he got down from the bus and looked around, there was silence; silence with all its graceful coquetry and silence with all its ferocious eerie, and to the audile form of silence was added the visual form, darkness. There was not however, the stark darkness and Rahil was able to see by the moonlight and so he stood there, with the moonlight over his head like an angelic halo, guiding him by the light and also bathing him with its milky brightness. He looked around and saw only little hotels open for business and small houses with small families contributing perfectly to the Indian web of lives.

The heat was barely noticeable in the night as it grew soothingly windy, not too much but enough to easily have a long walk. Nobody walked in the night on the street though; their lives did not permit them to, their busy, petty and laughable life, thought Rahil. How was his life any different, he thought to himself as he walked along the moonlight with no purpose or intent driven by nothing but the most rudimentary and unreasonable instincts.

Suddenly he felt an ache in the belly. He wanted to eat and he wanted to eat something fancy. He did not know any good restaurants nearby so he decided to look for one as he walked aimlessly towards a set of bright lights he saw before him. He did not feel fear of being astray or going home late. It was beyond him. As he walked around, his long hair parted from the centre fell at the side of his eyes, but his forehead naked and as he walked, the two strands of hair across each of his eye moved like a pendulum.

-The night is the time when It roams. It could be a He or a She and there is no stopping It. It is the darkness of the night, the voice of silence and the invisible glimmer of the moonlight. It is the smell of a person that is not there, the echo of the bark of a dog, It is simple, It is complex, you cannot define It. It is me. When everyone is tucked into their beds comfortably and when everyone is in their homes, sitting on their sofas and spoiling themselves with a good book and warm milk or sitting in front of the television and doing what they do best, I do the same. I lose my mind. Yet they do it destructively and I do it constructively and I do it singly, simply……not… is there. What is? What am I doing here? I am treating myself to the perks of melancholy, the doze after the cocaine of conversation, now to reflect on it, words spurted…lines told…tales crossed…people mentioned…people not mentioned…the reason for not mentioning them…any…all… that which is useful forms the basis of our recollection of things of past and the memory of the recollection of the things of past. Out of the dark haze, we are the ones who make order, derive it………we used to…now it is invoked; A priori, the epistemological admittance of the sub-conscious mind, a mind that does not think but influences thinking in such a way that you would think that it dominates much of our thoughts. However it cannot dominate for it is too scrambled to do so; too disorganized. It is like night. Night brings day, it is that powerful. Night makes us powerless, week. Sleepy… it is with much effort that we get through it in entirety without sleeping only if we are firmly resolute in doing so. In overpowering night, we do not stand a chance. However, we must thank night for dreams. We must dream at night; sleep to dream because dreams are a chaotic escape from life; a surreal reality of its own, they are, where anything makes sense because it is bound by a scope of reality. You can die a thousand deaths, fly across the seas, leap and feel you are floating over the floor, live stories that you never could, alternate lives, people you have never met, you do in dreams. But what of those who roam at nights? It does what? What do I do? I roam the nights, senselessly, aimlessly, looking to look…to see. The asphalt rubs on my sandals and makes music as I walk… Crush…Crush…Crush. It gives me time to think…… to think how things are and how things can be, amidst the music of my walking feet like the beating of a tambourine, serene, soft…beat……beat. I walk slowly to increase the time between. There is no hurry. I really don’t have any hurry. I want to see more. It is all so mesmerizing to see. The town at night is intriguing; the music of the crickets, the random clicks and taps and raps from around, not scary but intriguing. The walk that I walk, am walking now, is not a burden, is not a curse, is not madness, it is ease, it is release. People think differently. Night has become the archetype of badness, of sadness, of the unknown, of horror when any event that happens during the night can as well happen in the day and the night is just a darker version of the day and the world doesn’t change at night. How far off have I come? Where is the restaurant? I can’t find it. I won’t find it. I should find it. Who is that? Look at that man, clothes torn, beard dripping wet with his own saliva, bare feet and soles tattered from walking on the streets, no home to go to, no people that would look after him, pants only serving its purpose because he is holding them up to his hip, a pathetic excuse for clothes, upper torso covered by a dirty white shirt, barely noticeable is the white on the shirt. This is the creature of the night, they say. Where does he go but the streets during the day but the people are so busy with their lives that they would barely notice him, let alone recognize this creature of the night. It is only during the night that he becomes a creature. During the day, he is just another story walking along the streets that nobody wants to listen. My story may be such so. I may be a pervert or a deviant sexual predator looking for young flesh to quell my lusty thirst by sucking on the breasts of innocent little girls too dumb, foolish or desperate to go out at night, too innocent to know people like me, their stories however always positive…or maybe negative…the vamp selling her flesh to reluctant strangers who don’t know better, drugging them and then taking them for everything they’ve got. The night antagonizes me. The night antagonizes them. It has always been so… it will always be so. The purpose of the night albeit is not to do so contrary to all popular belief. The dark must exist so that the light can have meaning. For some things to be meaningful, some secrets have to stay hidden. If we seek the whole truth, nothing will seem true afterwards and in pursuit of it, for me however, the loss of truth and the loss of meaning are worth the recognition of the fact that all forms of ethics, religious…judicial are all based to hinder man’s capability to defy them in quest for the ultimate Enlightenment. Existentialism and nihilism equivocate about the nothingness of truth, that there is no truth and so the quest for truth is absurd or illogical but to live with that nothingness, that emptiness one needs to work hard on enlightenment of his self and for that the quest is not only necessary but compulsory. This quest should take you beyond good and evil, take you beyond what you think is right and what you think is wrong and redefine it, rewrite it and come thus, a new personality. If everyone were enlightened such there would be no necessity for such contrasting views of good and evil, and right and wrong. Alas, it is not so! First were the Dark Ages and then came about Renaissance and now we enter the generation of the Ass. Ah, that seemed out of context. I am not slandering my generation’s intellect. Twenty first century is the avant-garde post-modern century, both in terms of art and philosophy. Why, philosophy is also as much a form of art as painting. No, art is a form of philosophy, both of objective and subjective philosophy. Walk……walk……walk……walk…there is more to it. I have to have a destination. There has to be a place where I should be going. A restaurant, it was, as I recall, the place where I wanted to go. Not far from here, there is one but at this time, I am not sure whether it will serve or not. What am I to do? To go looking for it and serve my purpose or walk back home with a purpose not served and my stomach still hungry. A hungry stomach, they say is good for a travelling Bohemian and an unresolved purpose burning in his heart is yet another necessity, so be off now, homeward bound, Simon and Garfunkel…Loosen up to the music…or to the imagination of the music… Hoooo-oommmeward bo’ound-I-Guesss I’am Hooo-ooommmewarrd bo’ound…-

In the night, he got home late much to the anger of his elders. They were speculating what he had been up to roaming in the streets so late in the night. They were thinking ugly things; they were thinking vile things but these were things he exactly pictured them thinking. He listened to a minute-long speech about how dark equates bad things and how one has to be home early. He recorded a change now in their way of speech. They did not scold him for being out this late; they scolded him for being out this late without informing them. He had been out late night many times before but he would always keep some or the other elder in his family informed. This time he did not and so this time they were angry.

In the night, long after he had fallen asleep he woke up, in his dreams. He usually dreamed in frames, one completely cut off from the other. He was walking into a bar cum restaurant he did not know which was near to the coast. The feel of the hotel and the coast were quite heavenly with the orange sun glimmering on people sitting outside in stools. He saw some of his friends sitting there and took a seat with them. He talked to them and among their conversation he found out that the President was going to visit the islands. It did not bother him much for some of the other reason. Behavioral patterns change considerably when one is dreaming. He found himself later on the top of a truck as it moved with rapid sped through the woods. He found himself so high up behind the trunk that he could see the trees from above. After the truck had covered a certain distance, it crossed through the airport. When near the airport, he saw a squadron of flights coming and a big Boeing airbus in the middle of them like a flock of glorious eagles into their territory. He found it fascinating though he was not used to mull over at the valor of the show of power but as dreams go, he could not stop looking at them and equated them to momentous magnificence.

Suddenly, he saw thick black smoke coming out of one of the turbine jets of the airplane. He was supposed to be alarmed and even scared but he was not. The whole vision was too bright and in complete abstraction and he could see everything in its minute detail. Before his eyes, the big Boeing seriously and drastically started losing altitude and started making its way for ground zero like a vivified meteorite. He could only anticipate what was to come. He saw in complete emotional stillness as the big airplane lost its way from the airway strip and came crashing towards the woods nearby and a little while later, the fireworks started as a big yellow mushroom of explosion took over, giving out putrid black smoke somewhere from under the green and rich embrace of the forests. He was so high above that he could see the mushroom turn into a fireball and watching that destruction, seeing it with some excitement and a compete detachment from the loss of life of the country’s President another thought crossed his mind, what if it happened to him. He was not wary of death and on the other hand, he was absolute about it and beyond all sense of rationality, he was curious about it. He did not know that his preparedness of death was soon to become useful as preparedness of the near future and that of the absolute.

The thoughts of his mortality became more and more clear and at the same time the truck in which he was sitting was gaining speed by the second, as it were. He panicked a little and bent down from his position to see why he was gaining speed and he saw the driver of the vehicle unconscious at the steering wheel. Consequently, admitting he could do more or less nothing at this point, he held tight to the back of the truck, and ducked and made himself ready for the accident. The truck sped and sped and after a certain point even Rahil started to wonder why the truck was not getting stopped by a tree. He thought that hitting a tree would break off the sped of the truck though he knew it would cause trauma to him but he did not know the extent.

The truck finally came to a crashing halt as it massively collided with a tree and it sent him flying off from the back of the truck along with the back metal portion of the truck that is usually attached to the axle of the body and comprises of the back part. He could not see himself or his surroundings as he spanned off after the collision still somehow inside the big back part of the truck. It glanced and toppled and tapped and jumped across its straight trajectory and he could feel his body getting thrown and beaten. He also felt part of metal and steel breaking off from the metal box and grazing his body one too many times, sometimes penetrating it at various parts almost immediately. At various points, his hands or feet would come between the ground and the tumbling wooden contraption and that ground his bones so that he could hear its sweet sound to but he felt nothing. He could also feel and hear clearly other parts other parts of his body churn and break and crackle. He was not in pain of his soul leaving his body; he was in anticipation of it. He wanted to live life after death and wanted to unravel the mysteries of afterlife if there ever was one. This thought presided over much of his mind absolutely without any kind of pain or physical anguish.

When the infernal ride finally stopped, he could feel he was about to die. He felt a sense of ease as the disturbance had finally ended. It was all that he thought about his ride through the forest in that big metal contraption, an exciting but disturbing ride with no emotional or psychological horror or physical pain whatsoever. He gasped dying breaths, low and crisp and just when he was ready to admit his fate, he woke up the next morning.

That dream never quite left his mind. He thought about it for quite a long time even when he was fully awake; what it had meant, was it some kind of prophecy made for his death. He did not believe in supernatural prophecies and premonitions but he did believe in Freud. He thought this to be surfacing of the overt fantasizing of death and afterlife he had been subjecting his mind to. His sub-conscious mind was brimming with it and thus made a release in the only form it knew. These dreams were his only source of deviation from an otherwise linear life.

In the days that came next, he prepared for his trip to Delhi, for the entrance examination. After he made the choice of not going to Bangalore, he was duty bound to take this choice. He was prepared to go to Delhi. He was also preparing for his examination. He had no problem with the grammar of English language and he knew they would not ask questions based on grammar for English literature. The questions had to come from literature, literary techniques, plot structures, plot devices, drama, poetry, meters and style, free verse, popular works of literature, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Mark Twain, Shakespeare, Byron, Dryden and other strictly English writers, not Tolstoy, Chekov, not Gibran or Delacroix, Rimbaud or Tagore, well maybe Tagore but not Prem Chand or Ghalib, and not Dostoevsky, probably Cervantes for his Don Quixote, and of course Dickens, and Jules Verne, but probably not Alexander Dumas, and certainly not Joyce or Sartre or Verlaine, Camus, one cannot say about Stevie Smith, and of course, it would be incomplete without Jane Austen and even Emily Bronte, at least for Wuthering Heights. He might have left some or the other titles but he was not unaware of it, he was just getting tired of calling it out from recollection.

He needed to get into Jamia desperately. He knew it would not be difficult so he was not as concerned as he was supposed to be but there was in him this feeling of unrest like he never really could make it there. He was also concerned for the cutoffs of the University of Delhi. He wanted to get into a college soon and discover the countless possibilities of college life and he swore to himself that he would live them all. The college life for him was not shifting from one form of education to another as everyone had described him. To him, it was the possibility, no, the surety of a new life that he could define out of complete emptiness, build from the ground up. He would finally be able to be himself and all that he had learned, all the philosophies he had discovered would be tested and he would finally get an opportunity to live them and be his own self, no matter how detached it may be from the cultural mainstream. He would become his own personality. He had no mentor on his intellectual journey; he had many mentors in his intellectual journey; Marx, Gottlieb, Kant, Lefebvre, Hegel, Levi Strauss, Schopenhauer, Rousseau, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Georges Perec, Bertrand Russell, Bernard Shaw, Kierkegaard and Heidegger to name a miniscule few and even their influence came and went as his mind aged. He had mentors all right but what he did not have and what he was in want of was a soul mate, an intellectually equivalent, if not challenging, similarly minded person whom he could come to a perfect synthesis of thoughts without losing much of his own. He was in want of that; he was in need of that, in desperation of that.

Nothing could however prepare him for what was about to come. He waited and waiting but the examination ticket for the entrance test for Jamia Milliah never came. Days kept on passing until it was less than a week before the exam, five days to be exact. There was no sign of the hall ticket in the post, no sign of hall ticket in the post office. He had already asked for it there and even though he did not have to. All the mails that came for Rahil were usually marked with the family shop’s address and it was delivered right away. There was no question of misplacement of the letter so surely the must have been made on the other end.

“Check with your sister” her mother said and then added “She is the one who asked her Delhi friend to send the form and avail the entrance ticket.” That’s what you get when you pick uncertain people to do your job; they screw it up, he thought to himself angrily. He could not bear this. This was his only one secure chance out of the life that lay before him and that lay ahead of him, his unavoidable fate. It was such and will be thus. He could not bear the binge of unease that unsettled him in all possible ways, consciously and psychologically not mentioning the way it affected others, particularly his mother who wanted what was best for him or the more complex form of effect on his family that was mixed with a fear for his future and at the same time a little resignation because they knew what was good for him and so they knew that studying in Delhi was not good for him. They felt even more powerful to express their views, even assert them for the fact that they were the masses, in majority and being in majority in an Indian democracy meant complete slandering of the rights and privacy of the minority to the whims and fancies of the majority.

He was strong at heart; he was firm at heart, and there was a certain way that he felt about uncertainty, he liked it in his life and he was confident that it would be this very uncertainty that would drive him to his successful future and closer to what he aspired to become. It was still unknown what had become of his admission form that his sister’s cursed friend sent to the college. He called up his sister who studied in Kolkata. The phone rang and she picked up after quite a while.

“Hello, well what happened?” she asked him. He hated how the caller ID in the mobile phone would reveal the identity of the caller right out. There was no mystique these days and everybody wanted everything simplified.

“Did your friend submit the form properly because we did not get any hall pass in post and for all possible reason and the way it seems to me, she must have duped us… that wretched friend of yours.” Rahil glared over the phone, a little agitated by the unconcerned attitude of his elder sister.

“Okay, okay I will talk to my friend and let you know soon enough.” She answered keeping up with the attitude.

“…as soon as possible!” cried Rahil over the phone before he harshly hung up. He was not totally thrown apart by the fact that things went wrong. He was thrown apart by the fact that things went wrong when someone had taken the responsibility that they would not. He could have easily asked her mother who had more than enough contacts in Delhi to have done this job. He guessed that his sister might have wanted to feel important in his little brother’s life and so she just up and decided to help him with his college application and trusted who would mess things up and run at the first sign of trouble and what do you know, she had messed things up and now she was trying to dodge his sister now that the trouble was upon her head.

His mother could not stop panicking; she was crying over spilt milk. What was done was done; now a thing of past. There were more choices; there were better choices. There were choices he personally wanted more than Jamia, like Delhi University. The announcement of the cutoffs was now just a few weeks away. Rahil thought how good it would be if he could be short-listed for St. Stephen’s college, a college that was the Ivory tower of some of India’s greatest writers, like Amitav Ghosh. But with his kind of percentage, it was simply not possible and he knew that. Dreams however are not a crime to see.

His sister called him later that day, after their conversation and said “My friend said she gave the form in an envelope to the receptionist sitting there and left. She did not ask about the hall ticket as she was not aware.”

Surely the receptionist must have thought nothing of a letter in a white envelope and just threw it at the side of his table. She should have had the least bit of decency to ask and inquire about the exam in the least.

-Why do I trust other people with my work? Where does it lead me to? Where has it led to me? Look for yourself…… in this mess! No one can help me now. I am beyond the point of salvation. I feel like Nero in the Matrix stuck at the train station for eternity or like Kronos forever banished in Tartarus, the underbelly of the Hades. When shall the iron gates open for me? When, o when, shall I be free? Or maybe there is no freedom, freedom for me, or for anyone at all……the real freedom…… the absolute…freedom. Drugs, sex, love are all means of it. Love, maybe not. Sex, of course, not the Freudian way, or partially the Freudian way, more likely the way of Wilhelm Reich….the theory of the orgone energy. Choices are bound by sex, manipulated by lust. Release it and you free yourself. Maybe my choice of college will also be resolved by sex but where shall I seek it. It is driving me to psychosis, deviance, perversion. I am alienated by my own choice, no longer under my control- one aspect of false consciousness, the Marxist aspect. In that case, what am I to do? I feel despair, sorrow, should I……… feel it? So many questions… answer, none. Reason with yourself; come, now. The obtuse nature of what besieges me makes it out of my reach, its distance from my range, its farness from my point of origin, on a Cartesian graph. The axes are different, and so the dimensions are different. Fold the graph paper, make the two points meet; defy laws, defy nature, you can do it, you can do it. Petty, petty, it is petty to think of yourself that way without knowing the way. You are a superhuman. How? Overcome your preference, overcome your fears your doubts, not through faith but through chaos and you shall…… you shall… find your way, sooner if you make haste……later if you parry. It is in my hands, not yours. My future, and yours…we are all linked but if we are all linked, then my future is also altered by the choices you make, he makes, she makes anyone makes. I am no longer a being of my own. I am just a consumer, woven intricately, in a consumer culture. Jamia was just a paradox, yet more is to come, more severe. No choice that I make is perfect. I live with the consequences. Success, with a consequence…will I be able to take it. –

His mother was not through with acceptance. She figured that if the form had been sent there, someone must have looked over it. It may still just an error on the part f giving out hall ticket. She called an old acquaintance in Delhi. This old acquaintance taught Urdu in Jamia Milliah. She should have called him sooner for what he was about to unfold was no mere play of chance. He told her that his son had also applied to the same college for physics. He was very helpful and adept in dealing with the mother’s problem.

He immediately asked her Rahil’s credentials with which he had filled the form and he would go check with the university admission cell whether a form with these credentials was submitted or not. His mother thought there still was hope while Rahil, with the stoic nature that took over him became indifferent to the whole matter. He started scourging for possibilities and possibilities he saw a plenty. There was little that could send him down in panic or shock. He could feel hopeless but that came with being a writer, and a poet. He saw art in Decadence, in Death, in them a symbol of the Christ-like mankind that needed that death, that decadence to flower into something better among themselves and collectively with each other. This was what this loss, the loss that Rahil now faced, had done. It brought them closer, on the same platform to rise from it with each other keeping care for each other’s ideas; Rahil, his mother and his whole family. The whole family felt what loss for Rahil felt at this pivotal stage of his life, only he did not. To his far-seeing eyes, there was no loss. Granted there was disappointment at the fact that he was not secure so early but not the sense of loss and brooding as he saw the whole family sitting in different positions, their bodies radiating pessimism in their own peculiar way, some with their hands over their heads, some with clicking sounds at particular or arbitrary intervals, some shaking their heads and looking at the ceiling above their heads as if hall ticket would come tearing down from the ceiling out of their psychic powers.

Sometime later, the call came again to the mother, the call from his acquaintance in Delhi.

“I checked with the Department of English that handles the admission forms for their course separately due to the entrance examination after they have been checked by the university admission cell, and I also checked with the admission cell and they have no record of the form with your son’s credentials. I am really sorry. He would have gotten in easily with his kind of percentage. You should’ve really contacted me to slip through your son’s admission form. If you give me the girl’s number and address who sent your son’s application, I can check with her about his application.” He asked her being very apologetic and helpful.

“No, I won’t give you that much trouble. Besides, nothing can be done at this point. If the girl has, the girl has it. I am really petrified about his future. I don’t know how something so sure could turn out to be such a disaster.” She confessed.

“Oh, don’t worry. You’ve also applied for Delhi University and that is a pretty good place to study too. If your son comes to Delhi, tell him to find me and meet me at least once. Delhi would be a good place for his skill if he is fond of writing.” He said.

After a small talk, they hung up. His mother was still worried and at the position that he was in, every mother would probably be scared of his future. They did not know things the way he did though. He also knew that her fears were just temporary and she would soon compromise her sorrow with the next promise of a future for his son. That would be the end of it. She could not, would not live with the emptiness that would come with the acceptance of this major incident as major. She would not associate with the memory of this incident. She would absolutely forget about it because there were other choices just lined up. She felt nervous at the loss of this one just because she felt things had slipped past her reach, out of her grip when in reality nothing really was in her grip. We think everything is in our control when it is clearly chance that cont5ols it all. Her mother had felt the gravity of it then whereas Rahil lived by the pull of that gravity, leaving everything to chance. Some would say this is no way for a man to live but it came to him quite useful in times like these; times when chance would ruin organized hopes.

The night brought added silenced, graveyard-like, to the house as the wind blew like the whistle of an undertaker who had just dug the grave of Rahil’s ambitions and came back after burying it. Everyone sat with their faces expressionless like stone, everyone sat in the dining room but there was no dinner to eat, there was only sodomy to breathe. “There will be other colleges, I’m sure” one of his aunts said, and thus the season of the kiss and make-up started; that of the pathetic compromise. He did not want any of this. He already accepted it. He was an agent of chaos in an organized system; the system was bound to play games on him.

-This is the Generation of the Ass and we are penetrating it. I am not speaking as a radical, a Marxist, an iconoclast, a student, an anarchist, a Bohemian, a Maoist, a Naxalite or even as a Situationalist. I am speaking as a sane human being. Or maybe I am insane. I do not know the nature of my rationale because I cannot think for myself. I need somebody else to think for me, my thoughts, my choices, my consents. I need a mechanism. I am a cripple, both physically and mentally. I do not know how to walk. I learn walking by seeing other people. I cannot walk myself, in my style. I do not know how. I am a cripple; I walk like a cripple but if I am a cripple then so are everybody else because I only mimic them ad go by my life. Would this mean? No, it does. It goes almost as obviously without saying.

-I HAVE NO LIFE OF MY OWN-

This is the world where faith is lost and even if there is such a thing, people use it for mere profit; to feed the rich and fuck the poor…… o my, where are my manners… I should apologize for my language but then again what are words but mirrors that reflect to us our very selves and if I am empty, I have no life of my own then my words mean nothing and so I can curse as much as I want. Yeah, yeah, yeah… by these words I only get reminded of the much less appreciated Godard movie ***Pierrot le fou*,** when he tries to eke some money out of the American sailors by portraying Uncle Sam in an enactment of the Vietnam war and all he says are the words ‘yeah’ and ‘communist’. I feel that that was the best representation of Vietnam War in movie culture, better that *Platoon* or even *Apocalypse Now*. The Vietnam War, soulless an empty and the only thing it was fought for? ***Communist…***

The intellectuals destroyed the world. Sartre should have taken his Nobel Prize, like Camus. The world has no future, so how we can in it, expect any? I must be a fool. Correct, I am a fool. But as I have already put before you, if I am a fool, so are you and so you need to watch your tone with me. I should’ve been an atavist. I am not made for this world. The sky is the limit, in a world like this they say, without mentioning that there is infernal abyss to fall into too. I live in a world of mannequins, alive as they go about their lives, dead.

Remembrance of all things past, all things lost, the Dark Age comes swinging back round. This is the fallacy of Galileo’s theory that everything revolves round us and so everything that comes and goes must come again. When, oh when must the Renaissance come? I live in an arrested state of freedom- the worst kind of slavery. I shall lick the boots of my fate, kiss it as it kicks me down and I shall not rise back up. On the other hand, I should find temperance for it, be masochistic. I should find pleasure in kissing the boots as it kicks me and tramples my facial features. I should develop a boot fetish like all the other inhabitants of the planet as they go about their lives. This is the life I live. This is the life you live. There is no truth in it, both subjectively and objectively. There is nothing to look forward to, and our history is also worthless, as artificial as the rulers meant it to be. We cannot trust any fact as a fact beforehand. Science is a hoax, a petty illusion. Don’t learn it; fight it. I can only advise you. I am beyond that. I am past that. I am speaking now as a radical, a Marxist, an iconoclast, a student, an anarchist, a Bohemian, a Maoist, a Naxalite and even as a Situationalist. This is my life to live. I now have a life, a life of constant rebellion against the powers that be, at any cost, by any means. This is not the end. This is just the beginning. This is the beginning of a game; the beginning of endgame. -

The next few days were spent in forgetting the tragedy that was not so much but was escalated to great proportions by the likes of his aunts and cousins. The next few days were spent in forgetting. He was not a part of it. He pretended to be a part of it but he was on his own terms. He was a futurist. He was ahead of the future, even into the super-future, beyond the constrictions of space and time like some mystical arabesque spirit; Rahil was not a man anymore. He was a spirit. He thought like a spirit, and everyone thought of him as odious due to his contempt for their emotions towards him. He made it evident that he wanted none of it. Instead of thinking he was not traumatized at all, they thought he was too traumatized. So in strictly cricket terms, they gave him the benefit of the doubt and the benefit of the doubt was sympathy.

He took bus rides to nowhere. He took bus rides that took him nowhere. He would just walk out of his home in the middle of the evening when it is mildly sunny and he would just saunter over to the bus stand and take any bus going anywhere without even giving it a second thought. He never gave things like these a second thought; things that were too physical because he was always tangled up in the metaphysical. He was so busy getting lost that he never had time to find a way. He did not take the ride for the luxury as it certainly was not luxurious as he was thrown and juggled from one end of the seat to the other in the rare cases when the bus was not packed to the Indian extent. He never took buses in which he had to travel standing when he was just taking empty bus rides. He would just wait for the next bus that had at least sitting spaces, if not the ideal window seat. In cases when he got the seats on other side of the window, he had a hard time using the might of his body trying to stay in place and not be thrown out of the seat as the bus swung to turn, in its fullest momentum. He did not mind all that. The journey did not matter, the destination did not matter, the aim of the travel was immaterial and yet it all made sense sense to him. His innate desire to be lost, always chaotic, never fully disclosed was in effect here, more aptly than anywhere, in his attempt to make sense out of the nonsense, a purpose out of nothingness. He saw familiar localities pass by, lived in their familiarity, and crossed one known terrain after another. The bus was also known, familiar, its rusty scent was familiar, and the bus conductor dressed in khakis handing out small colored ticket slips printed on cheap paper was familiar. There was nothing unknown or mystifying in the bus ride. It was the same as going out for a walk or going out for a drive and not as he had thought and not as one would think. It was all in the same perspective, stagnant, not boring, not frustrating but stagnant, not bad, not bad at all but stagnant. He was never an adventure junkie because he thought he was mature and so he did not do it for the fun. The cause was unresolved but the effect was not. The closest one could come to explaining it would be discovery and rediscovery. It is very difficult to give sense to it otherwise and it would also not justify it for him. The falsest thing to do would be to find a pattern in all of it and be stoic about it. The best thing to do would be test its practicality.

When he would be thoroughly satisfied with the bus ride, he would get off the bus at the nearest stop. He grew up in the islands and lived his life wandering through it and so he always knew almost every bus route. He loved the way bus stopped, slowing itself gradually but then finally stopping in one big shove, as if all kindness is lost in that very moment and something very unfriendly and animistic takes up the big metal giant. The giant belches then, spits out the passengers like they were grime stuck between its teeth. He too, was spat out in this fashion and he got out near School Lane. He liked that place. He liked that place because of its design. It was a very broad road, the broadest they made in the island and one side of the road was completely empty, with just the bus stop in a lonely corner and then a large open drain running beside it and parallel to the road and beside the drain was the wall that separated the town from the runway and on the other side of the road was a swanky straight line of shops, bazaars, tuition centers, some homes, hotels and in between this swanky lane, two schools and that was why the place was named school line.

He got off at the lonely bus stop but unlike all the other people, or most of the other people, he did not cross the road. Most people crossed the road because there was nothing on this side of the road. Some people remained on this side of the road because it was easier to walk there. Rahil chose this side of the road because it gave a very decent look, a point of observation to the other side of the road, the much lighted area, the brighter area, the more populated and social area as he looked at it like an outsider, like a stranger walking down the road stops and looks at a happy family enjoying their meals together at the dinner table. But unlike this stranger, he was not filled with remorse, he was filled with meditation. He walked slowly on the lonely side of the road, accompanied only by the drain that ran alongside his way. He compared the two views he had, the one with the shops and the hotels and the tuition centers flooding with well-dressed teenagers from good families who had a future to look forward to, a disillusionment, but nonetheless a future and the other, the drain with its black, foul smelling water with waste flowing powerlessly through it with absolutely nothing to look forward to but desiccation, the waste that was once a part of something, was once useful but now was out of need and hence discharged. The waste lay in the drain water, rotting away, in a kind of frustration and as they got frustrated, they got more and more foul smelling; this was their new motive-to be spiteful, envy the world and abuse it with their foul smell. He would keep on walking and keep on looking at the drain, then at the line of crowded shops and the tuition centers and then he would compare the two, then, he would watch his feet, one after the other, tapping with his body weight upon the unnatural tarred road, one after the other, and the balance of it, the mechanism of it helping him walk. He would walk to the end, right till the Minnie bay junction and then glance at the road moving up. It was the road that led to his school. He was not fond of that road though but still he could not take his eyes off it. He stood there for quite some time and then he crossed the road.

Now he was on the other side of the road, the swanky side. This side suffocated him but he enjoyed the suffocation as he was sure other people walking over there did, as he was sure people walking all over the world in places like these did. There was much to look at. There were those families, ideal, the mother, the properly dressed shirted father, the two uppity-looking children talking to each other as if there was no better place to live than earth, talking as if living was the best thing to do, so filled with the jest of life but they did not talk in those words, still you could feel it in their gesture, in their voices, in their expressions, in their clothing sense; he thought. Then there were those try-hard teenagers, he thought, going about their tuition centers waiting for the previous shift to end and theirs to start, like worker bees waiting for their turn to suck nectar out of flower or like ants working in shifts to make houses in which they would live miserably while the queen ant would live in complete comfort. They felt so stylish doing it, waiting for their shifts not knowing, too foolish and dumb to know that they are just well-dressed workers ready to be exploited and ruled over by some queen bee. He saw them and smiled them. He saw them and laughed. He was once like that, he thought to himself; not anymore. He was past that, for better or for worse, he did not care. He also saw some of those well-dressed teenagers coupling; oh, the spring with its blooming blossoms. He saw them and thought to what end they might follow it. They would never have sex because they are too young and emotionally immature for that. They might even not kiss because they were too emotionally immature even for that. What they would do is, the girlfriend and the boyfriend would be each others’ trophy dates and that would just be it and it would go on for the two of them, maybe with the same ones, maybe with different, until they are old enough to be married, in which case the families of both the girl and the boy would just arrange separate marriages for them and then they would both live unhappily ever after, using all the will in the world and all the might they have each trying to look happy to world, for the sake of the world.

After a while of walk on the other side, he felt like having something down his throat and so he stopped in a nearby tea stall and ordered a cup of tea, which in the tea stall was a shot glass of tea albeit they served it really good as in the tea is always authentic. He saw the people whom he stood next to; the people on the other end of the spectrum. The people whom the above mentioned ideal uppity looking family would point to and say ‘this will be future if you don’t read and do well in exams’ no matter how pointless and brain-altering those books are and how narrow minded and vain the purpose of the examination is. He liked having tea with the people he had tea. They never talked much but their faces told everything to him, and he was a very good listener as to what these faces told him. Each one had their own story, each story had their tribulation, each tribulation had its own cause, each cause had its own effect and the result of that effect became that story. It was a circle for him but this circle was idealistic. Most of the time there were missing pars to this wheel.

- A wheel, a dial, less of a wheel more of a dial…Tolstoy, a slow movement of the hand on the dial of human history; clockwork orange. These were the dials that did not matter. These were the dials that mattered only if they were fuse to a time bomb. Militancy is the key to praxis. The lack of militancy is what hinders the sociological progression. Wordsmith does not matter, Wordsworth does and it is all sense. Ah, the tea is not well made... perhaps it is the milk, perhaps the tea leaves, one can never tell... it is almost too uncertain and yet we criticize it because it makes us feel uneasy. I wonder why, if we are so polite and social and mannered and all. We should not and we would not. I bet we never gave much thought into this matter. I bet we never had much of free time to give much thought into this matter. I bet we were too busy trying to make money or too busy trying to grow to try and make money. Still, the skeptics blame the other side for being too unrealistic not understanding the proper definition of reality. For them, reality is mass and reality is power and reality is efficaciousness. Whatever bases all things is real. Reality is never ethical; reality is never justifiable and yet they are the ones who call themselves skeptics. I bet all skeptics are God-fearing God-loving phonies who only yap nothing but see-through thesis on things they either do not know about or they do not care about, and they call themselves skeptics; these phonies. ‘What’s become of this world?’ they would say, never having of care to look up what it initially started out as. I bet if they did, they would not be skeptic about things and would actually contribute to the world in some ways. The tea is good. The tea rids me of my thoughts. The tea is bad that way. No in confirm it, the tea is good. Yes, the tea is good. If it rids me of my thoughts, it probably does it for the better. If I am not of fallow mind like the rest of the world, how will I think like them? Then think with them and then think for them. To think is to bleed, and I will bleed till I am sore, for the better of mankind, the passion of the Christ, like it. Man is absolutely, immeasurably in love with sufferings… but not the modern man. Modern man is more akin to comforts, more akin to accumulation of capital, more akin to stealing Dead Souls for their profit dead lives brought to life through paper and stamp, because their profit brings them their comfort and as a result shopping malls take up farms but it is such a tragic humor, it is such a romantic tragedy, such an irony, that they are willing to suffer for their comfort. They are willing to claw, hour after hour, life after life, claw after claw, at then to accumulate capital, night and day and then again and night and also the following day and it goes on and on and they work... yes, they work. The more we work thinking at the end of all the work, there is a reward in the form of a utopia waiting for us, the more we are running away from a utopia and as we look back, the utopia is lost, claw after claw, it fades away. The purpose of our life is to always be in the middle. Try, now to slip through it. The far end... the far end-

After he had finished his tea, he thought of riding the bus back home and very slowly, barely moving, he walked towards the bus stop. There were almost three bus stops in quick succession, one following the other and in very short distances but he chose to go to the farthest one, the bus stop at Dairy Farm.

His walk was not a subject of curiosity of the people that walked, almost strode, by him as he thought it would be. He thought the people were so accustomed to their way of life that in every little thing, they developed a normality and if one did anything different than that, it would be an abnormality and that would cause a disorganization among people. People, he thought, had also some kind of a set standard for walking and he was breaking it that very moment. He thought it would awe and amaze the people passing by. It did not. However, he was sure that it still roused the interest and caught the attention of some even thought they did not turn to look at him. Every moment in his life, he thought he was conducting a sociological experiment, now a kind of survey, then, a research analysis. He always wanted to try things till the end, the end product.

He reached the bus stop at waited for the bus which was always in abundance. There was always one problem in waiting at the Dairy Farm bus top which was that the buses were always full and rarely could one manage a seat. It was late evening by the time he reached the bus stop. The sun had already gone down and the curtain of the sky was pulled, yet the sun gave a brazen pink color through it. He thought it was beautiful. This was a time the shifts in the tuition centers changed and so each student in the island was in a hurry making it to their respective tuitions in time. As a result, the buses were fully subscribed. He decided to wait for a bus that had free seats. He never got bored in waiting no matter how lonely he was and no matter in what place he was. He was always occupied by his thoughts and there was always for him something or the other to think about. After a moderate wait, he did get a bus which had some free seats and he hopped on. He climbed through those bulky bus stairs and with his head crooked down he made balance to push to an empty seat. He slithered across the space as he found his way as the bus was already in motion. To his joy, he found a window seat and occupied it shamelessly just bouncing over it but not before taking a spin at one of those poles meant for standing passengers to hold. The bus rolled down, as it was a little slope from there that was not to steep but steep enough for the big metal giant. He never got tired of seeing the same view over and over. To him, it was like going through a carousel, the fun ride one used to have when one was a child and then, paradise lost.

The bus eventually took him back from where he had started. It was all safe and sound. He got off the bus and started walking up from Gandhi Market and to his home through the crowd busy in their shopping, unaware, that an outsider is walking through them. He never considered himself an outsider but the people around him did, when they had nothing else to be conscious about and so they would be conscious about him. That part was always crowded but he always liked it crowded and for some reason, he would not like it any other way. It was not like he liked the crowd in respect that he would found someone he knew, an old acquaintance in the crowd and it was also not for the girls that he liked the crowd so that he could perch in a shady corner somewhere under the roof of a shop and stalk at the girls walking around in crowd not noticing the eyes that would be ogling her. It was also not that, more or less. He liked the crowd because of their pattern; familiarity with unfamiliarity. They were always people he knew, people whom he could talk to and people who were endemic but still these were people he never quite really knew or had any relations with.

-The crowd is always the same. It is just the people in the crowd who are different-

He reached home and he was always asked the question ‘where he was’ and would always answer ‘at a friend’s house’ and then the one asking the questions would always drop it at that and there would be no love’s labor lost. Then he would climb the stairs of his room and take a notebook and he would write what he had seen and what he had thought. It would be a very naturalistic account and not something and seemed to come out of one of those Emily Dickinson’s little leather-backed notebooks. As he put his thoughts in words, he lived it again, only this time it was different. This time he was making it immortal and by doing this he could live it again and again but still it would not be in the same way as he lived when he was actually there. But then it would also not be the same if he would again take a bus there and try to live the moment in a completely lost time, a different time. Something would always be different. It would not be he would be different but something would surely be different. Still he wrote. He forgot time and he wrote. He forgot where he was and he wrote. He kept on writing as a mad artist would keep on waving his brush like a saber slashing it through the canvas until his masterpiece was complete but here he was not in the making of a masterpiece, he was just in the making of himself.

In the next few days, he was supposed to wait for the next admissions outcome and he did wait but in his own way. Aside from the empty bus rides to nowhere that he could almost too frequently now, he had also started to write a lot, almost as if he had writing spells- one poem after the other, endless stretches of accounts in his journal, short stories after short stories and even small quotations in little notepads he walked around with. He felt he could not let anything fall off his mind in such a creative stretch of time and so he also wrote with haste, as if there was never enough time to complete a work. All of it was however never seen by his family and they remained indifferent to him not in a David Copperfield kind of way. On the other hand, he never opened up to them about these matters. He kept all of it to himself and he did not mind it. It was all so clear to him now, now that he wrote whatever came to his mind and he could see the bigger picture and the consciousness became the written and he could get a glimpse into the sub-conscious of his own mind. The clearer picture came as he made painted the shades himself. The lighting was perfect and so was the ambiance and he felt he needed nothing now, but silence. Then he got it. But silence, then, had a sound to it, a very peculiar one. It was like he could never get what he wanted, like nobody could ever get what they wanted and so the mere wish of something was absurd. This was liberating. This was humiliating.

He felt his belly crumble. He thought he could really use something to eat. He went downstairs where the aunts fixed up something to eat for him. They always did. He ate up and then just sat there resting his mind. He was not really exhausted from all the writing he had done but the general norm was that if you work hard enough, you are to give yourself some rest and that was what he did. He just sat there on the chair in front the table besides the window and looking out of it. The sunlight was a little more intense and he found it unpleasant to look outside just because of it. He did not want to quit looking outside but he felt like he should. He wanted to quit looking out of the window but he had grown keen to look outside. He sat there for hours like someone who had just been given shock therapy and gave a keen look outside.

This was pretty much how he spent his days and he liked spending it this way. There was something so gentle about the austerity of doing things the way he did. He grew gentler through his austerity. It is never something that people usually pay attention to but they see very sharply in the other person. He only got to know that through studying others and studying himself and thinking about it.

Soon the cutoff for the University of Delhi were about to be announced and he knew it was in or out for him in this one. He was waiting with in full trepidation for the cutoff. He was still rooting for studying in a place like Delhi. He preferred it to Calcutta. He had frequently visited and latter and never liked it. Although he thought he felt home there, he never liked it. He felt there were always bedbugs to rile with there and the language was also foreign to him and so the people were foreign to him too. He thought, at least in Delhi he would have no language barrier to deal with. But he knew that even in Delhi he would have vernacular difficulties because they spoke pure Hindi there, unlike the Hindi spoken in the island which had a heavy South-Indian and Urdu influence to it. He could make out the geographical connection for the South Indian influence but he was clueless as to how there was an Urdu influence in the Hindi they spoke in the islands. He thought maybe it was due to the far-fetched fact that even Urdu, during the time of its origin during the Mogul reign which was indulged in a conquest to the south of India and most of the soldiers deployed there spoke both Urdu and Tamil. Also, the origin of Urdu was supposed to be from the South Indian part of India if his knowledge of Indian history served him right. However he was not sure of it but seeing the Hindi in the islands, he was somewhat sure about it.

His mother also was also concerned as to where his child went and what his future would be. However, how happy he would be in that future she had made for him was not a question that concerned her. He thought him to be a normal human being who would be satisfied and happy with normal worldly pleasures that never did concern him really. On the contrary, things that his mother wanted for him sometimes, Rahil usually despised, but he was not vocal about it at that point because it was a point too prior to anything. He knew when the right time came, he would rather listen to his heart that listen to her even though he did car about her and even though he did have the highest respect for everything she did for her but he just could not let all that compromise an ideology that he had so painfully an harmoniously built. He was very sure of his standpoint in these matters and he did not let his mother jeopardize his views although people would think his mother had a right to do so, to define him through her perspective. Everyone had a right to define Rahil through their perspectives but he just did not care for it and always tried to curb it in some way or the other, usually by imposing his own train of thoughts about him on others so much that they would not form an opinion of him out of those set priorities. They would think it rude to do so. Rahil knew just the right amount about society and its beings to make them twitch and he was never hesitant to do so.

In the days that followed his dilemma of joining a college and the ruckus of college application forms, Rahil could not get even a little peace when he was in Port Blair. Other people would be hesitant to go to a place like R.K Pur with little access to something interest and always sparse in crowd and never with anything much to do but in his matter it was the perfect escape; if he wanted to be a temporary recluse, that place suited him the best but the problem was that he was so close to his climax, collegiate, that is to say, that he needed to stay in Port Blair and needed to stay in front of people’s eyes and in their thoughts.

Any guest that would come by, any relative or a far-distant acquaintance, after the general getting acquainted about the family and the family matters, physical health, financial hereabouts and thereabouts would ultimately bob around to the very very same question, that of Rahil’s college. And Rahil needed to be present there to expand on the point.

-Why can’t they be more interested in their own matters? Slip, swift, spendthrift, scattered and rushed, mouths awake, eyes gleaming in all fairness, cartoonish the reasoning, questions, a cacophonist in work, in words and the sorrow of it and the joys of it is the not in the information it produces but in the effect of the production of the said information, and later that would be recorded... and later that would be discussed-

It was the result of his reading that his hands would tremor as he would place it on above the keypad of his laptop, his hands ready to prance on the little springing keys to write. The problem was unusual among his age group but then there were many things he had in him that were unusual for people in his age-group. This shaking of hands, instead of putting a scare in him, quite to some extent entertained him. He thought of it as an initial ‘feel’ of the words before it from his mind and through his hands into the computer and become words, immortal, collective, resonant, romantic and resounding words. Words were something he would never compromise with, the juice of it he would always protect. When words became sound, it was too cruel from him, this transmigration and he would never comprehend his words ever being so cruelly represented in sounds, unless the sound itself was so pure that it could match the purity of words.

# 2

Rahil entered the guest house which was congenial and comforting. As he entered, a narrow passageway led him to the front desk and on the left side of this narrow passageway, there was a glass enclosed bookshelf which had books about Andaman and Nicobar Islands and there were books in both Hindi and English and there were books of all kind, books about history, about folklores, about geography and also some biographies of important officers who stayed there and wrote about their time there. Rahil was determined he would read some of those and analogize whether the book had the datum in order or not.

He went over to the front desk and told the person that he had a reservation. He looked it up and found it. His name was Rajnish and he was a bulky person who thought himself trendy and wore colorfully rimmed glasses and had spiked hair.

“I am a student, so charge me for it.” Rahil informed them to get the student concession. They asked him for some sort of verification and so he showed his school certificates. Rajnish took it to the manager’s office to get a photocopy of it and then brought it back to hand it over to Rahil.

“Everything is checked. Dormitory is room ‘Megapode’ on the second floor. Thank you.” Rajnish replied and handed him the key with a big brass metal tag as its keychain on which the words ‘Megapode’ were engraved.

“And if there’s anything… I can report here?” Rahil asked for his particular habit of maladjustment.

“Most surely sir, you can.” Rajnish responded.

“Don’t…don’t call me sir. Just call Rahil. That’s fine by me.” He corrected him and took the elevator to the second floor all the way jingling his keys and fidgeting with it. The built of the guest house was such that the centre part of the hotel was hollow on the second floor and the rooms were built around it. It was architecturally like a Baroque castle with a big chandelier hanging from above and a person from the second floor could lean on the railings and look down on the VIP lounge that was built especially for the Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and was always reserved and always under some kind of reparation.

He went to the room and opened the room with the key the receptionist had given him. H opened the room and saw four beds lined one after the other with a small locker accompanying a drawer between each. He entered the room and there were two more bed besides two large closets on the other side. He saw some belongings scattered about on one of those beds and so he made up that there was someone else who was boarding too. To the right, there was a big table with a wooden cushioned chair. One of the beds on the left side of the room was neatly made with white linen and soft clean pillows for him. He felt excited just looking at them and the cause of excitement was the riddle of the next few days. He did not know what it would bring to him. He did not anticipate anything and resultantly everything was a miracle to him.

He went into the shower and changed into a fresher set of clothes o go out. The sun was still out though it was close to six and so he thought he would go out to have snack and a drink. As he walked out of the hotel and into the road, he felt fresh wind blow over his face and the sun warm it up. The area where the guest house was situated was a pretty urbane and posh area because that was where all the embassies of different countries were located starting with the German, there was the Egyptian, Nigerian, Sudanese, Spanish, Pakistani, Japanese, Chinese, Lebanese, Somali, Russian, Slovak, Bulgarian, Croatian, Italian, French, Iranian, Iraqi, Turkish, Ethiopian, Canadian, Mexican, Peruvian, Brazilian, Indonesian, Australian and many others that he could was unable to see. Most of these were consecutively one after the other and they all were lavish big buildings with porticos and so they looked more like Lucullan outhouses than embassy buildings. It was around six in the evening but the sun was still shining and it was a bright afternoon sunshine. Still, the rays of the sun hit the concrete rather bluntly and the afternoon contrast of the ambience was little darker as the sunrays daintily danced about him lighting every feature of his surrounding he could lay his eyes on with its peculiarity.

He walked around it and found a marketplace but there was no proper café and he needed a food for thought in a withdrawn environment where everybody minded their own businesses and what better place to do that than an urbane high-end coffee shop where people would not care to look at your direction even if you pull out a pistol, place the barrel in your mouth and pull the trigger because they have such an advanced and sophisticated lives.

He went in and sat himself on one of the single tables and saw a suited maitre’d with properly kept hair and he appeared to Rahil someone who would use phrases like ‘That’s capital!’ or ‘for shame!’ even in the most general sense. The waiter stopped just before him and asked him what he would like to have. He chose to skip on snacks and just a have a latte. The waiter cocked his head, as if in requisition to part and then his well polished boots walked away and Rahil, like always, was left alone. Before looking he asked him to call her friend’s brother who would let him have his car the next morning to get to the college and that was the next thing that he did after making a short talk with his mother about the weather, about the flight journey and about how this time he would not return until he found a college.

When he called the man his mother wanted him to call, she mentioned his name was Sandeep. He did not know his name before that and now that he knew his name, he suddenly felt related to him. He found a taxonomic sense of relativity here and a relief that he felt awarded to him by such kinship. It was not because he was a man of means and now he granted his means to Rahil, but to know someone in an otherwise unknown city. He could see this as the very basis of human association and it did not take a naturalist scientist to observe what he had observed and the observance was not even physical-it was internal. In a sense, he also felt detached because of this strangeness of being in a city alone. He thought of himself as a puppet with all its strings cut but instead of adjudging his freedom as everyone thinks is bound to happen, he limply falls to the ground without a purpose. That impuissance itself is freedom in its most pure form and to achieve anything more dynamic than that, one would have to sacrifice one’s freedom to the laws of dynamics.

He had saved Mr. Sandeep’s number and so he called him. The phone rang without answer for some time and then the ring was broken by a voice on the other end.

“Hello, who’s there?” the voice asked very pleasantly.

“Yes sir, this is Rahil. Auntie must have told you about me…Uh, my trip in Delhi.” He said breaking the twigs of words and getting irritated from the dust that came out of it.

“Oh yeah, how are you, Rahil right? How was your trip to Delhi? She told me you would be coming to Delhi for the admission. Venky is a nice college. I checked it from my associates and… it’s a nice college…one of the best. So when do you need the car to be brought around?” he asked very confidently. Sandeep worked as an executive in the Ministry of External Affairs. Rahil did not know much about his job or exactly what he did because he felt he could not understand clandestine external government matters and because he had a folder full of books both of political and otherwise nature that were banned in the country for its individual causes. Some, like some of Mao’s work were deemed radical and some were deemed seditious. Some, like the works of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee just had a history of being banned which was never lifted. It might have been his nature of paranoia or his faded moral sense coming back to him as a dreary hallucination of explicit righteous authority.

“The journey has been fine, sir. And I’m please to find that my choice is optimum considering the high cutoffs this year.” Rahil replied with astute conversation skills.

“Ah yes. Delhi University is known for that. Still, good you managed eh? SO, when do you want the car to be brought around?” he asked.

“I have to be there at around ten in the morning and I don’t know how long it’s going to take from my guest house to reach the place…uh, Dhaula Kuan near Benito Juarez road…” he estimated.

“Why that’s in South Delhi not far from Chanakyapuri where you’re staying. It’s good… the place, isn’t it? It’s quite svelte. The drive to the college must take no more than an hour I believe even amid traffic. So, I’ll send driver from here at eight thirty and he’ll be by about nine, or before that. You know what, you can take his number and synch it up with him.” He helpingly said.

He gave the number to him and Rahil over whelmed him with appreciation. After a little more conversation on unimportant matters, Rahil was again submerged in his thoughts breathing through them. The waiter then brought to him the latte and after all the extended conversations Rahil grew a little hungry so he ordered for a chocolate brownie for himself as he blew over the hot, creamy and foamy brown surface of the latte which made waves as he breathed down on it. The brown color and the foamy appearance reminded him of the sandy sunny beaches he used to pass through while going from Hut Bay to his home in R.K Pur. He thought of true natural beauty, the true beauty of a place and the beauty of natural existence. Then he thought of the city where he landed in, a city of concrete jungles and social animals no different in mentality than the many insects and creatures dwelling in the jungles in Hut Bay. Peaceful coexistence was nowhere to be found in this place; just a direct form of authority and subjugation by masters of slaves. His face turned to the group of youth sitting over a large table and a couch put up against the wall talking vigorously and smiling and laughing and enjoying life as each part of their body shared the same intensity of zest. Their jeans- both of the girls and the boys- could be heard rustling against the leather of the couch as they moved about telling stories and indulging each other with snippets of arbitrary dialogues that all made sense to them and grew laterally like a Convolvulus without a support of logic. Their colorful clothes matched with their colorful personalities and their au courant style composed of their slaphappy glib were a source of great concern for Rahil. It was not a problematic concern however it did seem amorphous in accordance to the normative outlines of things of happiness for youth. Still, his concern was the miasma that of their excogitation which was built around imaginary superior post of their precedence.

It was not some charismatic attention that they held but more inclined to a devastating cultural superiority. They were ‘cultured’ or thought themselves cultured because they listened to trendy Bollywood music and committed themselves to the currency of national and international designs of fashion and talked in a combusted pace in a form of immodesty towards the vernaculars of Hindi language and still managed to bow their heads to whatever God they worshipped. This was their fallacy and displeased Rahil because of their categorical analogism. It was as if in their inexhaustible attempt to seem more modern, they seemed more and more backward and retrogressive. And hence they grew more tribal, more provincial and the air of their provinciality took over the whole café. It was then that Rahil realized that a minority with the right ideas is not the minority. ‘I recall Mao said that once…or Lenin’ thought Rahil to himself. Consequentially, they were the masters; he their slave and as long as he sat there, he cast down his eyes submissively after each short glance as in fear of a punishment for his transgression. It was not his place to be and he could notice that from their complete lack of regard for his lonely perched body holding itself up shoddily on a chair with his crouched back and his long unkempt hair. He could feel his body tease apart and fall on the floor in complete devotion to their power and submission to them. They were the Lords of the House and he was just a mere foot servant, lower even than the waiters that served them for they served *them*.

This air, however incriminating was not actual. It was just what they projected and it was not who they actually were. Rahil also saw them for their actual worth which was next to nothing but then how could such a thing that is actually bare, worthless, empty and uncongenial could be so dominating, demanding and powerful. There was some hand of mysticism in it and this probably was the mysticism of the Indian tradition which these Lords abided by. This is how culture and tradition takes air- by making slaves of those who do not follow it and aide by its norms. This is how it weakens people: by posing to them someone stronger who is a part of the system and these stronger people are herds of animals that will tear scathe you for life.

After having his latte and his brownie, he walked back to the guest house and as he walked out of the restaurant, he saw a park a bit farther on the other end of the road. He could not make out its name. He wished to go there sometime, probably the next day after his admission to celebrate.

When he got back to the guest house, it had become fairly dark and all the guests had occupied their rooms, guests who were probably touring the city or attending to the matters of their visit during the day or for the duration of the daylight.

He got near the front desk, pushed the button to board the elevator when he was stopped by Rajnish, the receptionist.

“Hey, you took the keys with you?” he asked, his eyes quailing.

“Uh, yeah….Why, shouldn’t I?” he asked him, directly looking at his eyes, and then breaking for a minute to gaze at his nametag.

“No, there’s another guy living with you. There’s only one key. Try not to do that again.” He said, still formally.

“Sure sure. My bad, I guess I got to be more careful next time.” Rahil replied quickly got into the elevator as it waited with its open door which was just about to close had he not entered timely.

He flung the keys gently to Rajnish who made a puckered face as though his lips beheld something he wanted to say. The elevator door closed before he could do so and took Rahil to the second floor. He got out of it and he was dulled in darkness as there were only a few lights that lit the area leading to the dormitory very scantily. He turned the knob of the door and it was locked from the inside. He tried to turn the knob and open it again, this time with considerable force. The door did not open. He thought somebody had locked it from inside so he knocked and during the first light knocks there was no answer. He burst violently on the door with punches but did not call out to anyone who was inside. After two or three rigorous punches, a boy older than his age with a firm built opened the door with heavy serious spectacled eyes and his muscles tightened on his bare-chested torso and thighs stiffen under his thigh length cotton boxer shorts which had dark blue checks on them. He let out an exasperated sigh as he entered and Rahil made out that his presence somehow vitiated his place of peace. He went in with slow steps as one does in presence of someone unexpected and prone to make unexpected gestures.

“You should know better than to jog around with keys when you know somebody else is also occupying this dormitory, boy.” The older boy said in an abrasive tone.

“Yeah, I’m… I’m really sorry for that. I can understand the trouble it may have caused you but fin it in your heart to forgive me, brother.” Rahil asked in a flagellant manner to recapitalize his goodwill and went out of way with a strong apology such as the older boy did not expect that someone would give away so easily, would part from his ego, his personality and yet bloom out inside his mind, his heart as a person of its own- the person that stood without askance even though he had been unkind to Rahil.

“Where do you live back in Port Blair?” he asked another question simultaneously.

“Aberdeen Bazaar” answered Rahil.

“Oh, so you are one of those, huh…” he ended with a long tone and then added “Well, my name’s Samrat but people like to call me Sunny and I liked to be called by that name. Which school did you attend?” With him, the questions never seemed to end.

“Navy Children School, I dropped out of first year civil engineering to study literature at DU. I take it you’re in college?” Rahil asked with a certain glaze of informal simpatico.

“No, I finished college- civil from Vellore Technical Institute and currently an intern at a shitty firm in the NCR region.” Sunny answered. His fingers rose to adjust his spectacles very sharply on his nose and then dropped back very precisely to their original place.

“What about you? Which school did you attend?” Rahil asked, now seated jovially and squatted over the bed with a pillow against his stomach as he leaned forward to make a talk with him.

“I am a Carmelite.” He answered and then took back to his own place on his bed. The light was firing beams but the room was still moderately lit. Rahil took a pause and gazed out of the big windows at the dark tress that lost the green color in the night and became black and at the many tall buildings he could see which still retained their colors of cement brown or black. He was filled with wonder at his presence there, at him talking with this Carmelite, Sunny who seemed to him such a nice fellow and so their conversation really lasted the whole night.

“What about the city? I mean, you lived long enough here, right, long enough to see what the city is like?” Rahil asked him with impaling directness.

“I guess its good overall. You can do things here that you can’t do back in the Islands, you know. You can really enjoy and there’s no limit to that enjoyment. It’s better than the South that way I tell you but I find Bangalore to be the best goddamned city in India. That, I’m absolutely sure about!” Sunny answered looking up at the ceiling with a smile on his face as if he was reciting it all out of a sweet memory hidden somewhere inside the tresses of his mind.

“What got you to drop such a profitable line such as civil engineering and pursue literature, man?” he asked, mellowing down and leaning head first on the bed as if bracing his mind for a long story.

-Ah, the story within a story of those fine days, I lived with such finesse although they were not all fine. It was an ordeal of epic proportions. An epic, yes with supernatural, par psychological characters with hideous features like the Cyclops in Homer’s epic or the Dante and I am at a reverie of verses…Hold…Memory afresh… the vices and vicissitudes of my whole life come from here and only through its resolution can you find the reason in me-

*"Through me you pass into the city of woe:*

*Through me you pass into eternal pain:*

*Through me among the people lost for aye.*

*Justice the founder of my fabric mov'd:*

*To rear me was the task of power divine,*

*Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.*

*Before me things create were none, save things*

*Eternal, and eternal I endure.*

*All hope abandon ye who enter here."*

At least that was what he thought. There was always a different sense in his thinking, his rationale. Never was he manufactured for mainstream it seemed, but the irony of it was that in the years that followed his manufacture, he was particularly loved and adored by the mainstream, for being different from it. He was always different from the rest, and still the best, at what he did, though he did different things and he did things differently.

Rahil was born nowhere; at least that’s what he found later in life. Well, actually he was born in Andaman and Nicobar Islands which is a small group of Islands somewhere South-East of India along the blueness of the Bay of Bengal. It was a heaven on Earth, for him it was. That is to say, at least till the time he felt the heaven turn into the hand of God trying to wring his neck as if he were an atheist. Rahil found religion, among many things, earlier in his life, and among many things earlier in his life he despised it. Among other things that he started to despise in his early life was romance; not as romance in the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions recollected in tranquility but the romance between a man and a woman, so to put it this way- romance, the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions recollected during coitus was something that he despised. He despised a horde of other things. He was an anarchist iconoclast and so it is established that he despised many other things like establishment, authority, capital and the petty bourgeois to name a few. However, hating the petty bourgeois in an Indian society was not that easy, at least for his time in Andaman because much of the society craves to be the petty bourgeois and so the bourgeois is not petty anymore for them, it’s desirous. But it was still petty for Rahil. To call him a Bohemian so early in his life would be an understatement of the term. A Bohemian is someone who holds no possession, and possession was something that Rahil had held one too many. The thing with Rahil was that he had an epiphany, a truly classic one that completely changed his life. After the little lad graduated high school from one of those common but prestigious private schools that one does see scattered all around mother India like fine particles of light brown sand scattered along the tanned, tight body of a naked lady surfer, he had expectations and like other fine young men sinking into the ever widening depths of anonymous abyss, his expectations were torn apart and he was thrown like many of his friends into a local engineering college as the lovable Nation of India seemed to be the factory for suave doctors and savvy engineers for the world economy, particularly the American one, to gnaw upon.

Although not ideologically enlightened yet, Rahil was already Left leaning about his opinions on how to doing things right. He was a rebel and with a rather ousted spirit. No accusation however, could be made on Rahil though, because he had never seen the outside world. He lived in an isotonic bubble; at least that was what he thought of it, not at the moment but at the end. Rahil studied in a naval school and there was no mischief he had been away from in his schooling life.

-I should like to perform on an event, for the students like me, find me interesting, entertaining and famous, why must I not use my fame in turn to be more famous through using my talents in the very way they are meant to be used-

He thought and so started a series of artistic endeavors that made him a legacy in school. He was a well appreciated writer, poet, public speaker and entertainer for the duration of stay in school.

Art for him was a drug, not like marijuana but more in terms of cocaine and when cocaine hits your veins, it sure as hell owns you and art owned him since that very thought that came and went through his mind. So he was addicted to cocaine but he was also addicted to meth, the meth of appreciation. He felt dazed, elated even, when he heard the echoes of cheers that showered him as he got on to the stage, before even he had started performing and he would often think to himself: what have I done to earn their such an undivided and enthusiastic attention? It must be my personality or my talents; why else would they be so delighted, filling the auditorium to get a look at me, at what I do. I must be good, I must be great. Nobody just takes interest to somebody just for the hell of, he takes an interest if the thing is interesting and I am interesting and the point of my interest must come from my talents and so by the hell of it boy am I talented!

This true, however shallow analysis led him to believe that he is actually destined to earn fame in the noble field of liberal arts and so he took a mighty bit of interest in it. He would take pride in grooming himself, kept long hair imitating Che Guevara just for the style, thinking of himself as a rebel dressed in denim jeans and blue denim jackets and shoes tightly laced to his feet as he would be about his business with friends, and business was a-boomin’. He would gang up with his friends at least once a day as a ritual and spend his time taking walks along the marina park and collectively gazing at the sea that kissed the horizon as the sun timidly looked at their heavenly romance red with color. The sound of the seas, though always hit Rahil on a more individualistic level.

-Day in day out I have watched this sea, others might give anything for a simple feel of the sea breeze caressing their hair but I loathe it. It’s very feel of freedom smells of the rusting iron shackles that have kept me down, hidden my talents from the rest of the world in this godforsaken island, the Kalapani- the black-waters. I must be free from it, and here I make this vow, here I proclaim that as the school ends I shall be away like the rest of my friends, far away, study somewhere I love something I love- he thought.

How funny it is when petulant dreams are crushed, how sad it is when petulant dreams are broken. Nobody sheds a tear, every laughs at the child for having such a stupid dream, as if he could have the moon to eat, as if he could have the stars to play with, as if he could study a field of his choice in a place of his choice. Competition-the producer, and the killer of the eager artist, for artist never strives to be the best, he strives to be different. Thus artist’s life is always compromised at the hands of the system. Rahil’s life was thus compromised at the hands of the education system.

-I shall have to study in a local college, and on top of that study engineering. What other choice do I have? What other fate do I have? Do I have wings to fly away from this determined fate? I have to make good of what’s at hand. Will I be able to do that? I am a man lower than my class, for I have let down my expectations. My expectations were high but I have hit rock bottom. I have to get up. I have to work it out. Friends, gone? Make new ones. Friends, I never had a problem with that department now, did I? The only person I cannot make friends with though is me. When am I going to overcome this?

I’m in college now, but is this the one I am supposed to be in? Ah! What are they teaching me? Integration with this, thermodynamics that and what’s more, I get to play with pointed objects. Wish I had a license to kill. I’d drive this stake they call a divider through the teacher’s, the principal’s and the dean’s hoo-haa and actually very happily go to jail for it. Many famous people went to jail, didn’t they? Plato, Aristotle, by God they were killed by their government, and now they are literally Greek Gods. Who am I fooling? I wouldn’t kill a fly if I wanted to! I’ve rarely been in a fight but at least I can hold my own in a fight. Who am I studying this for? Oh that’s right, my parents. They think after four years of this bullshit, I’d be sane enough to make large amounts of money. Huh, ‘large amounts’, as if money can be counted. I’ve always kept the notion that money cannot be counted, even when it can be quantized. It cannot be counted because, it is always flowing, and we are always greedy for it. Greedy greedy greedy… Oh, yes we are! Am I? Nevermore! Haha, surreal, Edgar Poe, I invoke your soul amidst my… what class is it? Chemistry class! Come out come out wherever you are! Why is the teacher staring at me like that? Phew, it was someone else. He’s raised him, he asking questions to him, who does that in a college, that’s ‘strictly for school’ shit. Wait, we *are* still in Indian education system. Kudos to the Congress government for this education system! How much more of this can I take? I should very well quit it. I should do something else and I should be something else. No more being slave to the system! I shall mend my own even if I have to do it right from the start. I see it! By Jove, I do! This is the start of an educational revolution. I will be the beacon, the apostle, the prophet of a whole new generation of educational hippies seeking the fundamental truth in the finer pastures of liberal arts rather than kissing the boots of the mistress of sciences. They have a word for it- BOHEMIAN!

-fuck! Fuck, fuck fuck, fuck. I mean, what’s so taboo about the word. Fucking is as natural to humans as living, breathing, dying; fucking. If any book should be naturalistic in the post-modern age or if any movie should be realistic in the New Wave, it should HAVE the word FUCK in it. The national anthem of countries should have ‘fuck’ in them. All national anthems talk about sons of nations and stuff like that. The national anthems should have the word in them as a rule.

*Oh say, can you fuck by the dawn of night...light…whatever that is...*

Well, where do they think and how do they think these ‘sons’ come from? We aren’t lizards reproducing through parenthesis, are we? No, we are all fuckers! Your mother is a fucker, your father is a fucker, and you, sir, ma’am, you and I and we are both fuckers, not for each other though! I mean the whole institution of marriage is based on fucking and fucking without a condom, and they celebrate marriage, don’t they? They have buffets and they pimp up their brides and grooms. What for? So they could go home and fuck the shit out of each other, free style, without a condom! So, marriage is based on sex and the whole idea of family, of social organization through family, the necessity of family which forms the basic purpose of human life, comes from the very word ‘fuck’. So fuck!-

This was the freedom of mind that Rail wanted and always found himself more wanting, especially as a young, sexually depraved, almost cuckolded engineering student. His life was really not that socially frustrated as one would get the idea though. He had a lot of friends, and a lot of company, a company that cared for him, which was rare as a rare gem in this world. He also cared for the people who were with him, no matter how different he was than all of them. Maybe this was the only glue, the only piece of tape that kept him still in that very college for four straight months. At the start of the college, he totally marked his entry, as a pariah from the general Indian college culture, the culture of culture of the compliant Indian student who kept his head down and spoke English with a clear but funny, Nadella.

The day was that of the orientation, one which marked the celebration of the intake of new donkeys ready to be branded as ‘engineers’ and hence one uses the term ‘donkeys’. Rahil did not know that he was attending a party thrown by none other than Orwell’s Big Brother, and the Big Brother was watching, always watching, tirelessly. Nonetheless, he enjoyed himself in the way that a college student ought to enjoy himself. He took the opportunity of singing a song on the stage and making merry off it.

-Wait, it actually is fun-he thought

And jumping and thrusting on the auditorium stage, he sang, and he was bathed in applause like the gladiator that he was. His spear was his charm, his trident his charisma and that was all the weapons that he needed to conquer the stage that day. So larger than life he seemed that day on stage that he actually challenged the power of the forces that be. And the forces that be, do not like their forces challenged because if their forces are challenged and found inferior, they just wouldn’t be. And this was how Rahil got into trouble, and this was how Rahil got his wings clipped by the college. “Your hair’s too big, cut it off” a teacher said and “Your belt’s too fancy” said another. It is pathetic how a student had to wear uniforms in college and the college establishment had to still find faults in them to actually show how small and inconspicuous a student really was.

-I have had enough of it, but why do I keep coming back, then. Is it because I don’t have any other place to go, I don’t have any other colleges to be in. Yeah, it may be. I was supposed to be free and here I am, in a military school, maybe much worse. Who am I supposed to blame? My family, my mother, what fault do they have? They could not afford my education aboard, where I planned. I was supposed to go places, Oxford, Stanford, at least New Castle University, but money matters, more than talent, more than necessity, more than passion, money matters. Oh how foolish I am to challenge that faculty of human thought. Money-mindedness! The centre of formation of the contemporary Indian middle class! The largest sociological middle class population bigger than anywhere around the world; the largest slave population also, and I was a slave too, now. Whip, whip, whips on my back, do this, do this and do that! And if you break the rules, there are more whips for you! And so I broke it! In your face, system!

I dance, I dance, I dance la la and sing and sing and sing ooh la la and I will go on for as long as I can go on. Hoot at me as if I was a cheap stripper on a pole, I don’t care! Tease me for being so boisterous while y’all sit there like gents and ladies. My feet taps the ground, look at them look at me. I take two steps back. Let me draw breath… vroom, then I skid on my knees like it was the jazz age and I was a smooth criminal. Oh, ah! I love the feel of a microphone in my hands, something that drives me crazy, rabid. Thank the God for making such a wonder. More cheers, more claps, more hoots? Is this ever going to end? Bright lights shine at my face, the empty stage holding the promise of transcending me into heaven if I’m not already in it and what’s more, I actually feel happy in hell-

In that one moment, in that short time that he spent on stage, he felt for real what it was like to be a true artist, but then like all good drugs, no matter how expensive they are or how long a trip they give you, they fade out, go weak and you are left with a sad, morbid world ready to use your anal hole as a sharpener till you vomit out the shavings of ‘good conduct’, according to them.

“What was the need to be so……so…… You understand, right? This is a not a school, this is a college; this is not some place you can go lollygagging around like you are at an amusement park. We have a strict reputation to keep up to and you, my boy, are on the verge of tarnishing it.” Miss Rajeswari proclaimed although she was at a loss of a precise word for his conduct that day and so she decided to spit a thesis on the accepted college discipline and how he should be.

“I understand you are a good boy, and I understand you have a flair for the artistic, you want to be an artiste, but his isn’t the place to do that, especially not the manner that you intend to pursue it. We have a college to run here, and we run it strictly and with discipline. You should be happy we are letting you go this time without a slap on the wrist. Believe me when I tell you that others have been expelled for the kind of charade that you pulled last evening. You have a good academic school record and I hope that you wish to uphold that all through your college don’t you?”

“Yes, ma’am” replied Rahil.

“I expected the very same answer, but in order to do that, you need to follow the rules that have been laid down for every student in this college, you not being an exception. If you fool around like this, break the rules, pester your classmates, pester your teachers, you are likely to lag in your classes, and likely to be suspended. You will work the whole time in our workshop to earn credits while you are suspended, I tell you. There is no escaping the consequences here. You do something, you are found doing something and we will make sure that you get your punishments all right. This is your first year here and we welcome young boys like you but you need to tone down your attitude the way you are going right now. You are burning boy, and you will burn down the whole college with you if you do not put it out…………

-Goddamn it, man! Is she ever going to end? Lady, seriously, you are starting to piss me off! Give me a match and a length of rope and let me tie you to your chair and I’ll show you burning, you back-talking rogue. What was I thinking I could stay here? This place is a jail, man and it is worse than the Cellular Jail. This lady won’t stop spitting on me, would she? Every time she says a word, she says a word, a jet of spit lands on my face. Here it comes! And again! Ach! This one went in my mouth! Thank your Gods in heaven, lady that I am one of those rare, sexually deviant and perverted guys with a spit to have a spit fetish or else I would have torn off your head from your body and shat down your neck. Speaking of shit, I do feel a little rumbling in the stomach. When does she end, oh my? Oh my! I feel it bulging and throbbing in my stomach, I feel it kicking and scratching inside on my stomach walls as if it has a life of its own. Come on lady, make it fast. Thanks a lot for making my day with your spit show. Maybe I’ll masturbate to you sometime later in the day. For now, be gone! I feel it touching the cloth of my underwear, indirectly putting pressure on the seat on which I’m sitting. Sit tight, man! Don’t let come out. Oops, I just farted. Will she notice? Who cares, let her notice and let her feel the scent from the depths of my rotten, churning, baking thickets of waste. After all, she didn’t hesitate in spitting on me, now what kind of a lady is that?-

“You may go now, but be careful on all the things I said.”

“Yes ma’am” said Rahil.

-Ah, who cares for your pile of waste, it properly disposed and for the next act let me put to proper disposal my waste. Where’s that damn bathroom now? – He thought.

Swiftly but clumsily, hitting at least three people on his way, he finally reached the toilet for men. He went inside, found all the stalls taken up but one, he opened the door and jackpot, and it’s a squatter!

-Pants down, undies down, squirt now, cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war-

There was always, for him, a sense of a more eased relief as he finished job in the squatter, which was an Indian style of toilet. He never liked the commode much, and for right reasons.

-The feel, the feel, the feel is always wrong. Why do I always, have to end up feeling the warmth of the last guy’s thigh on my thigh, and if someone uses it for pissing, he always HAS to get the aim right. If he pisses with the seat down and then I come to take a dump and find out he has missed his aim, I have to clean off HIS piss and imagine the grossness of having nothing to clean off the piss with, and then having to sit on that pissed-up toilet seat feeling the warm wet piss making my thigh slippery over the plastic seat of the commode and when I get off, wash off, I cannot put water over thighs now, and there are never any tissues anywhere in the Indian commode toilets, and so I am left with a thigh dabbed with a foreign piss, that strange feel, that strange smell-it always happens, waits to happen. How pathetically the Indians try to copy the Western culture can be easily noted by their desires to shit like them-

In the evenings, Rahil was also rarely free; troubled with his coursework even in his home, like it was homework. He didn’t have time to read, didn’t have time to write, didn’t have time to think, which was the most important and he didn’t have time to play. He rarely played physical sports. He used to play soccer with his school friends sometimes but after they were all gone to mainland to study, he never left home but to go to college. He had two homes, so to speak. His old home was where his family lived. His new home was the quarter is mother was allotted on her transfer to Garacharma. The place, Garacharma, was theoretically a village but practically much more vibrant than a city with a nightlife, or the closest thing to that in a culturally shy place like Andaman which boasted of having no cinema theatres or a multinational chain restaurant anywhere in the whole Islands.

As he got more and more frustrated and he wanted to be away from the hubbub of his engineering student life, a miracle, or the closest thing to it, happened. His mother, a pharmacist of homeopathy, was transferred to this another Islands in the group of Andaman Islands called Hut Bay. Precisely, the place was R.K Pur and it took a whole day of ferry ride to get to hut Bay, and then almost an hour by road in jeep or bus to get to R.K Pur but once you go there, you knew you were closer to the divine without dying. A place, a small place with just a handful of shops hidden in the heart of the jungles, so lush greenery all around and still being so close to the coast that you cannot see the waters but you can hear them mildly passing through far inside the jungles if you trekked to an appropriate distance inside the jungles and paid a good deal of attention to listen to the sound. The place was full of greenery, fuller of immigrant Bengalis that seemed to take up the place and give a feel more like that of Singur in West Bengal than of Hut Bay in Andaman Islands. For Rahil though, who didn’t mingle much with the locals and was more keen on enjoying the natural beauty of the pristine surroundings rather than talk of Tagore to bunch of people who knew nothing about him except that they had seen a bust of him in the marina park. He helped his mother shift which was a difficult job, and then shifted himself.

At first, he hated staying there. He hated every aspect of it. He hated staying with the locals, he hated the fact they charged extra money on drinks just because they served it chilled and he hated to be in so much wilderness all of a sudden. But one can say that the place grew on him. He gradually began to think of his little home, a one room modest quarter allotted to his mother by the District Health Society of Andaman and Nicobar islands, as a sage’s sanctum for inner and intellectual development. A week after moving out to R.K Pur, Rahil dropped out from Dr. B.R Ambedkar Institute of Technology, with more bitter memories than sweet. Sweet were the memories he shared with his friends, and the memories of ogling girls as they came out straightening their suits from the women’s room.

-Freedom at last, sweet sweet freedom, embrace me, kiss me, make sweet and sensuous love to me for I am you lover, your seeker and I have sacrificed my all for you. My future, I have washed away-that future which could have brought and bought me a big house, a car, an everlasting appreciation and sycophancy of the people around me, my elders, my relatives, people who care for me from their own slandered perspectives yet they care for me, nourish me and see to it that I am nourished. I have left it all in true search of you. You ought to proud at such a crusader, ought to applaud and write songs about as your keep your view from your lofty watchtower this knight in shining armor. Sure some sweet sentiency is left. I impose upon myself is anarchy…chaos…because I am born again and I shall write everything again, with the faculties I deem fit and not some Chair at the University of Pondicherry…no, me. No I was a slave all my life and now shall never be. Money- I’ll live my life as a vagabond poet. Marriage- I’ll live my life as a rebellious deviant publically acknowledged libertine… Family- ah, they will understand although I am highly doubtful as to the libertine part. I wish every man the same fate as me…I am free. Every thought, every reason, every expression, subject and point out of me would now be born out of free will and I do not mean the Indian secular free will. No man shall be the master of me now, and no God too. Slavery to God means slavery to man because any and every form of god is nothing but an apotheosis of man and so I must disengage and look for the meaning of God in the logic of God...in the logic of life for life is God and every person living is a God and no other power is greater than him or her-

-Morning…oh, it’s the day of the admission. Better get ready…better look at my best form or they won’t take me… but they should take me for what I am. So am I to confront the admission authorities with casual clothes and my scraggy self, or am I to refine myself and act as a student to become a student. Well, as the old Method acting proverb goes: Don’t just act, become and aren’t we all just characters playing our part, I play mine soon enough. The most important act, the climax, so what was it the last time I can to Delhi, the anti-climax? The antichrist, trip six… the destroyer of our race or the savior. Nietzsche’s antichrist…Ah, the cold drips of the shower, the glory of a morning bath is so much alleviated when there is a purpose to it. The naked body dances as the lines of streaming water dance on it and the showering water from above makes motile music. The strangeness at the end of the music at the static of standing without a purpose is flakey. ‘I would not be a part of any club that would have me as its member’ Woody Allen said that Julius Marx said that, better known as Groucho among the three Marx brothers. Funny, the three that started out as four Marx brothers are American imagery of Lenin, Stalin and Mao. Of course it is a shallow and imprudent comparison on their part to domesticate the idea of domesticating the fulgurated image to dispose Russian propensity and give each average American their own depoliticized triumvirate to think about and laud over. Such is a motif of entertainment and not even literature is unblemished from it. I must refrain from hitting on such spots of fulgurated images. I must keep to my own as much as possible. And…and… will I get there on time? So imprudent of me to ask such questions for time reigns supreme. That is why every blank question is answered with the word ‘It’s only a matter of time’. Oh, the fine smells of perfume…you I shall always carry with me…your smell. All set, perhaps no. Oh yes, the document folder, without it there won’t even be an entry much less an admission. I am a dog wagging my tail for something and like every dog wagging its tail for something I do not know what that thing is nor will I ever know. Yes, the completion of a man stands in front of the mirror looking at its reflection… and there is nothing chauvinism to think such a way. Chauvinism is one thing and self-preservation is another and I am for self preservation as long as it is not as a cost of genocide, although I would close the deal if it were a nuclear endgame because we would all be in peace…dead…in pieces…or pulverized…obliterated into wispy smoke or obliterating…tense does not matter-

He called up the driver and asked him to come and pick him up to which he obtained a reply that he had already left. He waited for several silent minutes as he was all alone in that dormitory full of beds. Sunny had already left for his internship and the amusing part was that Rahil did not even feel the slightest hint of him leaving although he would have had taken a bath, creaked about to wear some clothes and had made some sound or noise which Rahil was so soundly sleep to hear. It could be attributed to the fact that they slept very late in the night. His wait finally ended when a call came from the driver asking him to wait on the pavement next to the road opposite the guest house.

He came down from room and out of his guest just a few minutes after he had received the call from the river. The sun was booming on his face and the heat was suffocating him. Everything around him was bright yellow similar to the heavens shown in the movies but it was definitely burning like hell and there was only one place where both heaven and hell could exist at the same time with the same vigor simultaneously- Delhi.

He looked at the short bushy forest opposite the guest house, that last remnant of rural wildlife and the nature that man raped with its cement penis besides the Northeastern council which was a tall all well built guest house the tower of which was not seeable for Rahil as the sun protected it from the Rahil’s vision with its bright barricade of sunshine blinding him and foiling his attempt to do so. Two cars seethed through the road in front of Rahil and none stopped and so Rahil confirmed that neither were Mr. Sandeep’s. He waited and as he did not have any watch, he pulled out his mobile phone from his right jeans pocket with considerable effort-deverything took considerable effort in that blistering heat which baked him and pickled him with the heat and his sweat that by now drenched his clothes- and looked for the time only he could not do so because the display of the phone had started showing its usual problems. ‘Tsk’ he sounded deprecatingly.

-Everything is going wrong. No. The heat…the drenched clothes…my hair black…blistering… boiling….baking in this blazing summer heat. I could almost feel my scalp turn into liquid and come melting down from the back of my hand and from the back of my ears with its glutinous and mucilaginous pertinacity. Where is that man? My eyes seek him. He perfectly asserts the significance of the tiniest clog in the social machinery and what were to happen if it were to break down. For those who are about to strike, we salute you… I salute you. Why, I would even join you-

A white small car then came and stopped near the guest, some paces away from Rahil. It did not catch his attention and they both stood in wait of each other like pieces of chess waiting for a hand to move them completely unknown that their wait would end by just a turn of head. From the corner of his eye, Rahil saw the car and turned to that direction though he did not start walking. He thought it would be embarrassing if he approached the car and it was someone else’s and it was his observation that the residents of Delhi made it a habit to make such embarrassments into pilloried humiliation. Out of some random meteorological serendipity, a shade came over Rahil and he found himself fortified where he stood. Now Rahil grew impatient looking at the white car as though his solace was dissatisfactory or maybe it was just due to the reason he wanted to suffer and so he walked out of his shady hideout into the brazen glare of that cursed monstrous ball that was the source of his life to the car and stopped only near the person sitting in front.

“Are you… Mr. Sandeep’s….did Mr. Sandeep send you?” he asked to the man.

“Yeah, he did. Get in.” the man said invited him inside without wasting time or asking him why was paranoid enough to be a policeman at a stakeout for so long.

The man’s name was Sarang. He did not make or attempt to make a conversation with Rahil and sat motionless with his glance on the road and his hands clasping the steering wheel like a dying man’s last possession that he intends to take with him to the grave.

“Damn traffic” Rahil uttered but could get no answer out of this man as he just shrugged and even that he did motionlessly sitting upright with his back straight all the way to the stem of his head. He only moved once to adjust the rear view mirror above his head.

-How could a man not react to such a general and rhetoric question as that of traffic? Traffic is the most viable option as a conversation starter…other things…sports…weather… no…not politics… I would not do so. That child…child with naked soles desiccating his feet on the scalding black asphalt road and everybody goes about their jobs. I guess I am getting used to it, this cruelty. It’s only human to forget about him. He does not exist. He is just a figment of my imagination. An imagination of poverty in India which is quite impossible because how can there be poverty when our country has so such esteemed Indian Institute of Technology that produces scholars every year. No, that is not a scholar. Scholar is the poet who lives among the poor, who is a poor for he knows the pathos of that child…with the naked sole than any engineer with his eyes pressed against a theodolite. The world might need more such technical scholars but humanity needs more poet scholars… I strive to be one for this sight I am unable to bear. Good that it has passed me. What is the point of all such Westernization when we have not even clothed each and every one of us? And until we do not do that, we are all slaves… we are still a colony, exploited and misused … our masters may have changed but the chains of slavery remains. The ‘White man’s fault’ has become our excuse and we have not risen even an inch above it. We are seared by the ‘cultures’ and ‘traditions’ both ours and of the West and in that conflict we lose who we are and become where machinations driven with a sinister cause and an evil will. Yes. The will in us is evil and not free will. We talk so rudely of corruption and never realize that we, as corrupt people perpetuate it because corrupted are our culture, our traditions and our customs. It historically has been, logically is and by the looks of things probabilistically will be so. We have submitted ourselves to such high doses of pragmatism that we have lost our capability to think. With this impediment in our thinking, we have also developed an impediment in our sentimentality. We are our worst enemy. You are mine and I am yours and so let’s steal from each other, derogate each other, be bigot to each other, devalue each other’s human rights, betray each other’s trust and kill each other because we follow a certain culture. Why must we follow it? Because we are the second most populous nation of idiots in the world and we cannot accept the fact that we are nothing but passing strangers and not competing gladiator. Our country is a sweatshop-

When he reached the college gates, he felt some weird sensation take over him and a voice that advised him not to be there but his most basic instincts forwarded him towards the college gate, to approach it and be stopped by the guard in the blue uniform and then to enter the college campus. He was not going to repeat the same mistake again not because he did not want to but because he could not simply afford to. A loss now meant a spiraling fall with no centre. It simply meant extermination of all his aspirations, his ambitions, his thoughts, his expressions and all his beauty- that beauty which was not of figure but of mind; he had beautiful thoughts and they were beautiful because they were different and logically so and hence they were also complex and indiscrete. His mind was non-intentionally complete and there was no ideology, at least not for that part, which bounded him. This included ideologies of religion, of social morality and humanism in its present sense. Rather he had embodied or sought to embody in its precise perfectionism humanism in its actual sense.

He entered the college and found it flushed with students who, like him had no idea or a clue where and whom to seek for admission. There were no desks and there were no attendants. He looked around the college, at its reddened walls made of brick stone and its foyer with stone benches extending from the walls and all the sides of the big rectangular column that stood in the middle of the vestibule. He looked around and saw faces turning around and looking at him. He was almost as well dressed as they were but his carriage made him a bellwether among the herds although nobody paid attention to that. He stopped anyone who was near him and asked them if he knew where he could find the bloc of admissions. In reply, they wittily mentioned with a smile that they were as clueless as he was. Aside from the deviation to the main task and a wastage in the form of time, it did give him the incentive of studying the people that studied there were to study there. They were no different than he was in flesh and blood and also in the way they talked. They partook on their search for authority in a nuanced manner such as he began to plan. He caught sight and sound of one man who was talking to someone accompanied by two girls. He went over to him to confer distinctly what he had heard only faintly. He stood close to him but without drawing his notice. The words he had heard faintly were the very words he had heard directly. The words were ‘admission…form…. English honors… where?’ and so he asked him if he knew where the forms for the admission to the particular course were being distributed. He distastefully pointed him to the lady who had previously been talking to the man. He changed his gawk from the man to the lady and he saw the tag purposelessly dropped down upon her elevated bosoms. The tag was pointless because it served nothing-people were still clueless about the procedure and the system while she tackled each student individually. It was like a funnel with a dot for an opening and an elephant trying to sieve through. Still him getting to this lady before anyone else or was his gain and others’ loss. He could see she was still entertaining that man as he walked away and did not pay attention to him. So he tapped on her shoulder lightly and very formally, as a lost child in the mall would to ask directions from a stranger. She looked at him with wrathful eyes as though he had committed some adulterous profanity that was beyond the redemptive powers of punishment. All he saw in his eyes, in turn was placidity and this placidity was so real and contagious that she felt her wrath to be tenuous and the color of her eyes immediately changed and began to water as though she had received purification from some priest. She had to look away in some other direction in order to hide the tears in her eyes and so she turned her eyes on to his document folder and looked at it in an engrossed manner.

“You’re here for admissions, right?” she asked.

“Well, yeah...” he said not speaking the rest of the sentence- what else would I be here for?

“Which course?” she asked in all sweetness and light.

“English honors.” He said.

“I imagine you have met the cutoff?” she questioned again.

“Oh yes, at the bar. I hope that’s not a problem.” Rahil spoke again.

“No, you just have to meet the cutoff, being over is inconsequential. Okay, in that case, purchase your college brochure from the student union office which should cost you two hundred bucks and which should have the admission form in it. Since, you’re English honors, fill the form and take it to the ICT tab.” She mentioned in detail.

“Where is the ICT lab?” he asked.

“It’s on the first floor.” She said, pointing to the stairs.

“Will somebody…be there…How is… I supposed to…?” but before he complete his question, the lady turned his attention to someone else and had completely disregarded him from her scope of interest. He went straight which led him again into the open campus besides the big field with nets on the other end of it and concrete pitches for cricket. He could see people playing on it even on such busy a day. He shifted his attention towards finding the room which was just a few steps ahead. When he got to the counter, a young man with a heavy beard made out of thick stubs of hair popped his head out from the counter.

“Well?” he questioned.

“Yeah, I want….” But before Rahil could complete the sentence, the boy made a gesture with his hands and back inside. Before Rahil could retort himself back and wait however, the bearded boy was back with the brochure in his hand and was waiting for Rahil to complete the transaction. Rahil pulled out his wallet and gave him the money in exchange for the brochure which had the application form in a pouch on the inside of the front cover of the book. He thought it best to take the form with him upstairs and fill it under the guidance of whoever counseled the admission process.

He went upstairs and was guided to the right when he asked the peon sitting besides the stairs on a stool where the ICT room was. He took in that direction and found a white room with big glass doors closing it. He opened and entered the room and was spiritually refreshed by the air conditioned coolness that milled about the whole room. On one side, again separated by a big glass door was the lab with two long lines of desktops and on the other side were two rooms-on of them the administrative block for the technicians and a teaching room quipped with a whiteboard and a projector. He was looking for some kind of sign, or perhaps some person to call him to himself to further the admission procedure. He went close to the lab room on the right side and saw the two girls who had been waiting downstairs with the man who had just went before him. Being sure he had found the right place, he entered the room only to make it more crowded as the two girls were already inside along with a man and a few unimportant individuals who were probably just there to access the computers and had no business of admission. A man sat inside, dressed in a debonair shirt with a French beard that was plum and complete.

“May I help you?” the man asked, abruptly ending his conversation and looking at Rahil in the most pleasing and diplomatic manner.

“Yes sir, I am here for the filling and submission of admission form.” He told the man.

“Ah, yes, can you just please wait for a minute till I am done with this one. It will take only a while.” He asked with an ever so earnest voice.

“Sure, I’ll wait outside, sir.” Rahil replied with the same air of solemnity that began to develop between them. He walked out and closed the glass door behind him. After doing that, he found a chair near the door and he pulled it towards himself, sat himself on it and began reading the college brochure. The first thing that attracted his attention was that the college orientation was just two days away and the college was supposed to start from the next day. It was all too fast for him but such quickness was to a major extent necessary because it did not let fear or terror set in his heart or in his mind about the nature of choice- the kind of terror that previously chased him from Delhi to Kolkata and from there to Port Blair. One is quite right when one says that an idle mind is the devil’s plaything because if God is the deification of our ethics and morality, then devil must be the antithesis of it and at that moment had Rahil subjected this matter to avocation, it would have probably led to him, at a certain point, detesting it because he would be in the middle of an dogmatism that would not normally want to be a part of. It was the unbroken celerity of actions that could well be the reason for his proclivity towards his choice rather than an aversion from it. However there were other several forces in action too. He was touched by the nature of thins that he could be a better part of now than he had been before. He did not know what the reason for that was. When that lady had talked to him or when that man who was sitting inside the lab room at that moment had talked to him, he just felt things connect and it was not some adolescent teenage feeling of belonging due to a relegation he had felt as a an outcome of traveling alone that suddenly even a little intimacy and goodwill unleashed some rainbow inside him that he could melodically represent through a fruity soundtrack. It was nothing like that and just to compare such a deep inward feeling with a stock psychological state would be pure debasement.

“Hello…hey…” the man sitting inside dispersed the two girls and the man with them and called out Rahil who was mulling over the open brochure thinking about the variety of extracurricular activities he could interest himself in as there were so much of them right from dance society to debating society, acting society and spate societies for Indian and Western music. The college has a myriad of activities one could be involved in and the way the brochure presented it all of them seemed to be accomplishing. It took a while before Rahil could break out from his thoughts and take notice of the professor calling him.

“Uh, yeah…yes sir” he called, not sure he meant it as a question or a statement.

“You can come in now. And please bring that register right there with you.” He said to Rahil.

Rahil felt a form of authority instantly take over him but it must not be mistaken for the general fascist for of authority that always enforced itself on him through the expectation of others he came in contact with. This authority was not demanded by anyone but connoted out of Rahil itself than the other man demanding it. It was as if he wanted to gift that man with a certain amount of respect that came under the bracket of accepting an authority. It was what the historical Urdu poets used to grant to their masters under whom they sought tutelage. These students were known as Shahgirds. They served their masters, their teachers and their professors not only by being the receptacle to their thoughts or the mirror of their expressions but also in domestic chores and everyday life.

“Let’s see. You can start y filling this form out and let me first check your transcripts to see if they’re in order.” The professor guided him. He was the head of the Department of English in that college.

He started to fill the form. There were to form to fill, one was the college admission form which was given in the college prospectus and the other was a light green University registration form which was handed to him by the professor. He took at and kept it behind the college form that he was filling. He wrote putting a great deal of pressure on his pen so much so that imprints of writings were left even on the University form as he completed the first one and put it aside. He began to work on the second one only to be intermitted by the professor as he asked:

“I see the transcripts say that you have graduated from high school in two thousand and twelve…so you have taken a gap year?” he asked with calmness in his voice that seemed to Rahil almost permanent.

“Yes sir, I took an academic year out after I graduated from high school to develop a rightful reading habit and also work on writing poetry and fiction. I had an article published on the Hindu and poetry in London Grip magazine.” Rahil answered, feeling like he made an ample case for himself.

“London Grip…I never heard of it before…what is that?” he asked with a change of hands to rest his heavy face.

“It’s an online international London based e-magazine…for poetry.” Rahil replied.

“Oh, nice…so you have interest in literature and…are into writing…Tell me…how…did this interest grow. I mean…what brought you into studying the field of literature?” he asked with a pensive look on his face that struck to Rahil as deeply personal.

“Well, I had an interest in writing ever since I was a child but back then writing was more satirical and humorous and blithesome just to amaze my friends…just non-serious writing.” He could have continued but was held by a fascinated laughter from the professor as though he could relate it to his times in school.

“Well, tell me more.” He asked all efforts made by Rahil to keep it short and precise.

-Man makes history without him knowing it. Man makes history in false consciousness. It was the serfs who wrote the history of the Roman Empire, the soldiers who wrote the history of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. The proletarians, the subalterns- they are the ones who make history but lose their perspectives. The pen is then taken up by the greats. Nothing is as grand as it seems-religion, government, sexuality, social order, states, countries. The basis of existence of every single one of these is economy, but we are too blind to know that. Religion was started by the man to keep the capital restricted to the aristocracy and that was the reason the patricians and the clergy went hand in hand in all civilizations, both Western and Eastern, because the idea of religion kept men slaves to aristocracy, to kingship, but why was religion so important and attractive to people that they had to follow it? Right, man needed answers, answers to the existential world, man needed to know the objective of his life, the purpose of his existence and religion just gave the man those much desired purposes. With that, came a set of ethics that man following that religion ought to follow and hence came religious ethics. Don’t clip your nails in the night. Don’t marry more than one woman. Don’t have pre-marital sex. Don’t consume drugs or alcohol. Always give to the poor. And as a reward, you get to go to temples, you got to worship a God, and what was this God based on? Popular myths of those times, literature that was prevalent in those times- Wow, if I compare that to the modern generation, these people, the people who founded religion, would very much be along the lines of science fiction fanboys who guide their lives in appreciation of Star trek and Star Wars and have a whole set of lifestyle attached to it. However, the only one to profit from this ‘science fiction religion’ are the producers of the movie and the ones holding merchandising rights whereas religion was a much needed state at that time to form a society out of a settlement, form order out of chaos-

This was how Rahil bashed the idea of religion, challenged it again and again. He had started gradually, starting with the classic, Dark Age social structure, going through every aspect of it; Its literature, its culture, its politics, its idea of philosophy among other things, and he was good. He would take frequent trips to Port Blair from R.K Pur where he spent much of his time developing a brain tumor by sitting in front of a laptop and reading the endless eBooks that he knew he downloaded illegally.

Rahil was certainly critical of many things. Days were going by, and in those days, a lot was going by. December had come and Rahil had already read much to boast about. He would often quote Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Gogol Chekhov and Gorky. He felt that Russian writers wrote so boldly and comprehensively, each of their novels stretching to a thousand pages and that one or two lines in their novels, generally more, are worth quoting considering the endlessness of thoughts in their works. He was a little critical of Dickens, of his erstwhile works like Pickwick Papers but he really appreciated the social critique of the industrial revolution on a personal level in his most famous works like Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Hard Times but he was overly appreciative of works of D.H Lawrence, well, due to their nature of sexual boldness and their highly psychological description of social life in the British society that was based all around the sexual encounters of the protagonist and the justification of actions and emotions that follow as completely controlled by sex. He read as much he could read, reading on the works of Ernest Hemingway and Mark Twain that in his opinion gave rise to the whole ‘commercial bestseller’ genre of modern American fiction, and Faulkner, who kept the tradition of post-modernism going on in America. He followed Fitzgerald in his writings of the Jazz age, and compared it to the ‘*On the Road’* by Kerouac and its relentless narrative of his road travels and his sexual adventures with Southern blonde Marylou. He saw the transformation of Jazz as an idea and a society from Fitzgerald’s work to Jazz as a form of writing and a structural technique in Kerouac’s novel and in his description of the ‘Beat generation’. He read and read breathlessly, mindlessly, unfolding, fold by fold what literature really was, a string of ideas. And then he found the book that put an end his entire search for that one transcendental novel that transcends ages. That book was Ulysses by James Joyce, the only book he had bought three copies of, and gave one to his friend and the other two his most favorite schoolteacher so that they felt the same sense of liberation that he felt after reading the book. It was the book that explained all works of literature, where they came from, how they take shape, become fiction. He didn’t stop reading after that though but no amount of Rushdie or no amount of Desai, both Kiran and Anita and no amount of Buck could top the reader’s satisfaction that he got after reading a book like Ulysses. Plays seemed more interesting to him now, Hamlet, that fine piece of play, one of its kind written by Shakespeare that stood out from all of his works that could be studied perfectly under the existentialist watch glass, a philosophical thought of a much later age. *To be or not to be*- That is the existential question, of Being and Nothingness.

Then there was European realist drama, Ibsen and Strindberg. There were others but he was so engrossed on dissecting Ibsen in particular that others did not matter to him. *Ghosts* and *the Wild Duck* were two plays that intrigued him the most and *Enemy of the People* hit him on an individualistic level as the plot of the play was about one man going against the system and using the force of his pen for public appeal. Then there was the theatre of the absurd, Ionesco with its notion of anti-theatre and nouveau theatre, a genre he liked and experimented with in writing.

To sum it up, he had charted the development of literature on his own leaving no aspect of it behind and he did it on his own, self-educated himself in the field of literature. Yet he felt himself wanting. He felt desirous to learn more, to be more contemporarily and he could do that only if he was able to actually indulge himself with a literary culture of some kind, a literary circle that he would actually develop himself to the extent that his thoughts and views would actually matter. But the question was of finding it, and the question was of getting into it. Granted there was much less competition in getting into colleges for the liberal art but if you wanted to get into a really good college, and then it would be good grades, really good grades which he had never cared about. There were reasons to that. Firstly, before the construction of this new self, this metamorphosis, he had never cared about the integration of his art with his future. To put it another way, he had not thought about his future. And now that he thought about it, it was the way the society in which he lived in would never want it to be.

He thought of all the places he could be able to propagate art in and all the while he was thinking of places he could never go to. England, Paris, Holland and then he had the common sense of thinking more locally. One place came to his mind; one place was enough-Delhi. The capital of India, the place of the printing presses, the intellectual capital of India. But going there would need a lot of convincing, all forms of convincing, convincing of the self which was not that hard and convincing of the family which was not that easy.

He was still not sure whether he would go there or not but it was just December and he had another couple of months to think about it. He was just making an initial plan of action. This initial plan of action also included Calcutta and Chennai. He wanted to be with the elite, anywhere but with the elite. It was contradictory, hypocritical even, considering his political and ideological standpoint but then he did not want to compromise something he so painfully created and nurtured because he knew that it this point of his life, he needed an external creeper, an institution not to tutor him but help him compose himself. That was of the essence for him. Things like getting published and creating an intellectual face was something he planned to do later.

But publishing was still something he dedicated his heart and soul to. Just before December, he had sent a work of his to be published in a magazine in London. He had sent many works in many magazines, even the New Yorker but this was the time when he finally got published-it was great deal for him to be published internationally.

This ensured his possibilities as a poet also, among other things. A philosopher is always a poet, but with Rahil it was the question of the poet being the philosopher, of the verses being self-contained with views rather than nonsensical. He honed his skill as a poet by following poets too, ‘*Chamber Music’,* Poe, Keats, Yeats, Dryden, Byron, Auden, Pound, Shelley, Shakespeare the poet, Baudelaire, Frost, Cummings, Ginsberg, Rimbaud, Dickinson, Eliot to name a fraction few. But reading them was not enough for him. He had to do more, he had to be more. And that needed interaction; that needed ideas, not just local but also delocalized, experimental. He needed a conflict. He needed a hurricane.

-and goes…Time comes to all men as it comes to me. I am a man constantly waggling like a small stone inside the tumbler of time. And here I am sitting-

“Well…” the professor paused and added “you’ve filled both forms and now all that is left for you to do is to verify your OBC certificate. Head down to the office on counter number three and certify this photocopy of your certificate from them. I’ll be waiting here for you.” He said and moved silently about his chair, as if changing position of seat.

Rahil stood up, brushed himself a little and walked out of the lab room. As he exited the ICT lab, the hot air around encased him with its overwhelming dryness and heat. He belted down the stairs and went over to the outer campus and to the counter to generate a gust of wind by his movement. He stopped at one counter, the third one as he had been told by the professor and stood in front of it. The counter was grilled and there was an opaque flap on the other end of it with just a small open cavity beneath it. It appeared to Rahil that all the transactions probably occurred from that small cavity. He tried to get a glimpse inside and found it to be empty. He saw two other office staffs sitting on different counters. He went over o one of them and asked him about the certification of his photocopy.

“Where were you told o go?” the man asked sternly.

“Counter number three.” Rahil answered.

“Is this counter number three? Can’t you read? And you’re thinking of going to this college?” The man asked a set of rhetoric questions that were supposed to embarrass Rahil and they were pretty impelling in their job. He felt a mix of embarrassment, resentment, ignominy and anger.

“But nobody’s there in that counter.” Rahil stated with firmness.

“So is that my fault he is not in right now?” he blasted again and faced away as if in disgruntlement.

“Damn it man, so when will he be back?” he muttered under his breath but legitimate enough for the office clerk to hear him.

“You watch your mouth now boy, what we can’t do we can’t do! This college does not run for your whims and fancies.” The clerk retorted furiously. He was to hear that sentence oftener in the days to come.

-If the college, a liberal educational institution does not run for the whims and fancies of the student, to provide him or her the necessary freedom for the cultivation of thoughts, the freedom from the scrutiny of such society that deems them impotent and their associations trifling, freedom for discussion of matters otherwise viewed as either taboo or gibberish, of holding up the notion of a separate student community its own problems and its own trepidations and tribulations, to provide him with the necessary resources, necessary attention, consideration and appraisal for aforesaid activities, then you, my good sir are not fit to hold the position for which you draw your salary now-

After a while of wait, he saw an old man dressed in traditional Indian clothes, a kurta and pajamas came and took his place on counter number. In the time that he was not there, several other students had crowded near the counter to get their approval but Rahil was the first among that line. He passed his photocopy over to the old man who took a glimpse of the photocopy of the OBC certificate and asked for the original. Rahil passed the original from under the counter.

“These don’t look like they’re from here. What kind of an OBC are you?” he asked Rahil.

“Sir, I am a pre-1942 settler in the Andaman and Nicobar Island and among the first of its setting Islanders.” Rahil responded with an air of pride for his historic specificity.

“My my…I heard it’s a nice place. I would very much like to visit them sometime in my lifetime.” The man replied with an old man’s good humor.

“It…it is a nice place. There are beaches to see and…there are… places to visit.” Rahil told the old man.

“Oh nice, how is the weather there? It must be even hotter than this being in the South and all, I guess? I heard its nothing but jungle.” he conversed, flexing about his counter to find the stamp and then again to locate the stamp pad. Having located both, he pressed the stamp once on the inkpad to dab it with ink and then on the photocopy as he heard Rahil speak.

“No, it’s not as hot as ere because the weather there is tropical although humidity is much higher there, but it’s usually a really warm place with an ideal climate and much of it is uninhabited forests.” He replied and by the time he finished, the old man handed him the paper with a friendly smile.

He took it back to the professor who was sitting there waiting for him and asked him what had taken him such a long time. He refrained from mentioning the obvious answer- the tenacity of the administrative staff.

“Okay, so that pretty much concludes the application procedure. You only have to take this form and submit it to the bank below along with the admission slip and then they will hand you the payment slip which is to be your temporary identification card till one is provided to you by the college. Rahil we welcome you on board. Ah, yes there is one thing. You do know about the new structural changes in the syllabus and the… the…you know the four year program?” he asked stopping him for the last time.

“Yes, I am aware of it and I have looked through its syllabus and reading lists of the…four year…the four years…and the multiple exit points, yes.” Rahil said.

“Because I do hope that all of my students complete the four ears of their entire study and leave nothing behind...” He mentioned to Rahil finally letting go of him.

After taking leave from the teacher, he directly went to the bank and in all haste forgot to take out cash from the ATM which was just besides the building of the bank. He went to the front desk and asked them about the submission of the form and the remittance of the fee. They directed him to a large desk on their right. On showing the slip to him, he went to work on his computer and got back to him asking for the admission fee that was mentioned on the slip and asking him whether he would pay by cash or card. He used card to make his payment and after another round of the man with the computer, he finally printed out the payment receipt and tore off the student copy to hand it to Rahil. And with all that done, he was now a student in the University of Delhi. His story was complete and his purpose now could be approximated, if not determined. He walked out of that big metal gate and saw the chauffeur waiting for him.

“So, how did it go?” he asked.

“I got in.” said Rahil.

“Good for you, then. Good news. Congratulations.” Replied the driver again as they got both got into the car at the same time.

When he came back to the guest house, the air of gloom over not getting accommodation at the hostel had completely taken over him and he needed fresh air to feel better and so even on a burning summer afternoon with a temperature of over thirty five, he aimlessly took off from his guest house and walked along the pathway built opposite the big road. His eyes looked at everything disbelievingly especially so when he saw the big hoarding as he walked out of the tunnel made by a flyover above that read ‘join the Indian Army’ thinking to himself amusingly that they surely are such lofty publicity considering the kind of ‘service and protection’ they do. ‘A soldier with a gun is just a terrorist in a uniform with a badge’ he thought to himself roughly. World does not change and issues are not resolved with brute force.

- In their defense, they rant the very same statement: you sleep in your homes comfortably because we are at the borders with guns. Well, the family of a thief sleeps well at night only because he is out robbing other people’s houses-doesn’t make his robbery excusable. Never fall for patriotism. A flag is a cloth a nation is a piece of land. Never let it amount to anything more. When people ask you would you not die for your land and your Nation respectfully reply that for all I have done for it, I say let my Nation die for me. Patriotism is the most manipulative form of indoctrination that turns men and women into zombies holding grudge for each other. Get past that. Our leaders can be deadlier to us than foreign ones. Caligula has proved that, and so has a certain lady who at the brink of her conviction on corruption charges declared a state of emergency and imprisoned dissenters took censorship in her hands and sterilized the population on the auspices of reducing birth rates. Another example booms in the present political context when a while back the social policies of a certain religious fundamentalist backed political party’s Chief Minister in a certain state led to riots and ethnical killing almost kissing the margins of a genocide and even when the personality had continually been in contact with the fundamentalist group’s leading terrorists has now somehow in our political system gained Prime Ministerial candidacy and has been able to generate what is known as a nationally modulated wave of the entire nation’s political inclination…Of course modulated here means artificially maintained. This aforementioned personality has even been quoted to say to a notorious terrorist known for a train bombing the following words: let my time come and we will change things for the better. We here, cannot take better in its objective sunny side up sense because the words come from a twisted fiend so we can only apply the notion of applied ethics here, same as Hitler. And to this governmental disorder we trust our martial army hoping that ‘we would be able to sleep at peace at night’ and that our sons would do a great deal of favor by joining the Armed Forces. We fear of invasions from other territories, form the other Oriental countries, from Western ones and ask ourselves who will save us from US. That question while being important should be subsided more or less by another question: who will save us from us? And to that answer we cannot trust our Armed Forces for they are robots following orders and if they are ordered to march upon our hearts, come what may, they would do it- a pretense to that can be gathered from the anti-insurgent policies of COBRA- who are we to turn to for our defense then and who are we to trust enough to put our heads on their laps and sleep peacefully-

He had turned so many rights and lefts on his way that the whole map had became blurred. Finally he saw a cop standing, his khakis faded from overexposure to sunlight and worn out from constant cleaning and approached him with a question:

“Where is the Sarojini market?”

“Why boy, it’s not far. You just go down this road and then you’ll see some shacks on the right, turn to that and you’ll be inside Sarojini market.” The policeman compliantly directed him.

“Thank you sir”

He began walking down and turned right as he had said. There was the market- It was a celebration for Rahil to just be in that market. He was floating with joy already because it was the mellowed down kind of joy that slowly and slowly started catching up to him. He brushed along the crowd and though others were agitated by his alcoholic walk, he seemed not to care and felt quite good to let himself loose in such a way. He felt the naked flesh of the girls as it touched his in a cold sweaty embrace, though lasting for a short moment and being very short in terms of area of contact. His shoulders felt the mushy muscular curves of the men hidden in their clothes, their bodies broiling in their hot sweat and the steam coming from their bodies owing to the afternoon heat. He paced those bargaining faces of the customers who found it a triumphant victory if they could manage to successfully lower the prices on their purchase only so that they would spend the saved money on more purchases. They walked around with lines of bags hanging right from the joint of their wrists to their shoulders. In summer, it was summer shopping and in winter it was winter shopping and anytime in between, it’s just shopping. Their gloating needs never come to an end. He looked around, tried to saw something that could lure his attention into buying something but nothing interested him. Clothes, shoes and accessories were all the same, be it a rag with holes in it or an Armani, Versace or Vogue because the person inside it is always naked and bare. He shook his head and just walked around torturing his body and his long locks of hair under the sun. Sweat dripped from the tip of the nose of his shook head and left trails for others to follow upon his self-imposed misery. He kept on walking in circles, brainlessly as if something else deep within took possession of him and he could no longer see with his eyes. When people nudged him, he gave them a blank look that they never cared to view and moved forward along their own path. He was celebrating but he was alone in his celebration and there was no person, not even something that he could share his accomplishment with, at least for that time. His eyes caught a girl with a loose top on and with high heeled shoes who was haggling over the price of a white top. The white top seemed nothing peculiar and yet she was so fixed on buying that that she visited the shop three times even though the shopkeeper had refused to sell her on her quoted price. ‘What length some people would go to in order to look nice’ he thought, and she did look nice with brown hair like macramé thrown randomly about her shoulders and her firm back as she trotted with two shopping bags in her hand Her back was wet and visible from her low cut loose top and gleaming with sweat and the hair rested on it macerated in uneven brown curls of thick and thin. Rahil looked at her for some time, at one side of her face, her long Roman nose and her big innocent eyes like that of a cat perfected with smooth eyelashes complimented further with the hair that hung about her face. At each of her attempt from her fingers to put the hair at the back of her ear Rahil grew more observant. It was neither the act of seeing a girl such as her bargaining nor the impulse of seeing a beautiful woman such as herself standing there that captured his attention. The fact was that he had no attention and he seeing her was just an act born out of mutated randomness. There could have been ulterior subconscious longings in his mind of a sexual nature-that he could not deny- but there was not anything insidious or intending that could fall under the grounds of stalking or unhealthy covert tactile sensations.

He felt an ache go through his belly and that was an ache not all people in the world have the resources to satisfy. He looked all over and he could only small food shacks selling snacks that were barely satiable for a meal that he longed to have desperately. Finally he found a small restaurant that was better known for serving North Indian snacks and as he took his seat inside the crowded restaurant, the servant even advised their special Chat which he politely refused and ordered a medium of a cheese pizza instead. The waiter left with order and time passed in waiting while Rahil sad idly in wait for his dish with a singing and stinging stomach. The waiter did not seem to return. Rahil thought it would be better to step outside and call his friend Pooja from whom he had first sought advice to give her the news.

“Hello?”

“Hello. This is Rahil. Am I talking to Pooja?”  
“Yes Rahil, how are you? Tell me, what has become of your college problem?”

“I’ve taken admission in Sri Venkateswara. I heard it’s got quite a reputation still I haven’t met the faculty yet to know if it’s really good or not.”

“Venky is a nice college. It’s an awesome college. But what about joining the colleges in North Campus?”

“I wasn’t actually able to make the cutoffs for that so…”

“No, Venky is good. It’s one of the most prestigious colleges in DU. You’ll find them nice but it’s just that the crowd of South Delhi is really conceited and imperious and they have a way of…like… making people feel pad.” She said with generalized scorn.

“I don’t know. I haven’t met anyone yet so I am not one to make judgments, see. But they did not grant me a hostel accommodation on a bullshit merit basis. As if everything has to be so agonistically challenging…”

“Yeah, DU is like that. I mean there are just literally twenty rooms in a hostel and there are only some colleges that provide hostel facilities. Those that do provide it do so under such a meritorious basis that only those with the highest percentages are granted accommodation.”

“I guess I’d have to start hating Delhi more…”

“Don’t be such a martyr! Half of the student population lives on private paying guest accommodation… I mean there are localities dedicated to students… There’s Patel Chowk… Kamala Nagar market… Patel Chest… Even I don’t live in on campus housing…That’s fine by me.”

“You should learn to dignify yourself then, I guess. I believe the whole Delhi University student community should learn to have a little more dignity and should learn o know better than live like some refugee boarder.”

“Don’t get too excited. It’s not that bad.”

“Yeah, for you it might not be but tell it someone who comes from a part that does not even exist in the Indian mentality and doesn’t even have an identity, much less a contact or a friend. You know I’ve been turned down from three shops and they would not give me a SIM card. Seriously, I’m tired now.”

“Come on, you can get one with your student ID when you get one…”

“That’s right, when…I get one. Now I don’t know how long that going to take.”

“Anyways, you’re looking at it all wrong. Think of the opportunities that have opened up for you here. You can pretty much do anything you want though I would not suggest you going too overboard with extracurricular activities. I made that mistake last year…”

“Come on, you’re a math major. I’m a lit major and so my curricular activity is extracurricular activity and besides… what kind of other activities were you into other than parade to the library?”

“I did theatre for a while; then dropped it. Now I am heading NSS society.”

“What’s that, some kind of cult?”

“It’s the National Social Service…”

“O my goddamn me, you did not! It’s such a phony thing to do. The only social service you can do by being a student is getting into radical politics and taking a protest march to parliament with copies of Communist manifesto in our hands.”

“Politics… you’re into that, seriously? Never make this mistake, especially here in Delhi University. It is a dirty line with no good inside it and everyone involved in it are either rich spoilt kids with hopes of making a political career or a scapegoat for some kingmaker with the same properties… Don’t even think about it.” she blared over the phone with roused spirits.

“I’m not talking about entering politics… I’m talking about…. Liber… ah, never mind... What about theatre? I would like to get involved in that. How do I do it?”

“Well, there’s our professor in Hansraj who has a theatre group and holds plays and skits regularly. He’s from JNU and used a lot of people for the college. He also has a lot of contact with other influential people…. He’s held plays in National School of Drama, Film and Television Institute of India and not to mention our University of Delhi. If you want to get in contact with him, you can head over to North Campus and I’ll try to set up a meeting or something. He is not hesitant to take new people…. Like many other Delhi artists.”

“It sounds really promising. I’ll definitely give it a thought and I’ll try to meet up if I get the chance and if I get over my fear of traveling alone in this city. Okay, I understand I am keeping you long. You take care now… Bye then.”

“Good bye.”

Having talked to someone for a while, Rahil felt a bit relieved. He turned to enter the restaurant and at just that moment his phone rang. It was his brother. He picked it up.

“Hey there Rahil, so what’s the status of your college thing?

“I got in. It was easy; I mean it was not much fuss. I didn’t get a hostel accommodation though.”

“Why, didn’t you tell them that you’re from Andaman and that you have no proper place to live in Delhi?”

“Yes, I did but they just told that they couldn’t because they have a meritorious cutoff list and that most vacancies were already taken by the people already in the first list. Can you believe they just take two people from each course?”

“They take two people from one course? Where do the others go then?”

“They take up private housing mostly, you know, the paying guest accommodation.”

“Yeah, so when are you coming back?”

“The college starts in two days and so I’ll have to take a leave to come back.”

“What are you, crazy? Don’t do that… Don’t take leave on the first days of the college. You’ll fall short on attendance and get into trouble. They’ll probably kick you out too.”

“So what should I do? I hardly have a week’s worth of clothing and nothing else. You’d have to send me all my clothes.”

“I guess so. Let me talk to your mother and then I’ll let you know” the elder brother ended.

He returned into the restaurant to find his seat taken by an urbane hostile couple and the place was brimming with crowd as it was the high time of the afternoon when people had to have lunch. Far in the end however, he saw an old Punjabi couple sitting on the opposite end of the wall so that the seats on the side of the wall were not taken. Rahil took himself there but the way was blocked by the old turbaned Sikh with white beard with shades of still young black hair. On one polite request, the man gave him way although with his long hair drenched in sweat and his t-shirt sticking to his body, he looked like a delinquent mine worker who had finished work. Rahil maintained the fact that he wanted to look that way and be a source of discomfort to people around him. This person, despite that fact treated him with kindness, unlike that hostile urbane couple who were both nude under the veil of civility. Rahil felt a need to draw away that veil and expose their naked bodies in front of everyone for all of them to see but then he estimated by the constitution of the society that if he did that, it would be such that the people would be repulsed by him for having done that instead of the couple for being so shallow and Mephistophelian person. The difference between them and him was at least he did not try to hide his truth with a veil like them.

He took his seat and ordered for a pizza again and even this time they took a great deal of time. Rahil like to wait anyway.

“After a walk in such a steamy day, a place to sit in not bad, eh?” the man asked.

-Steamy…what does it matter? I would wait here even if they had cockroaches crawling on the table and onto my food. I would eat the remnants of little grime they would leave while they crawl away from my meal brushing with their furry feet on my pizza. Why, that I do not know. That man…that urbane hostile man, he takes my seat and doesn’t even look at me and I am so defeated by that fact. I feel like he has beaten me ten times over, mashed me to a pulp, stomped me… trampled me over with his size ten caterpillar boots of his…and I look from under the jagged heavy soles of his boots…that uneven angle…tasting the dust of the Sarojini market on the soles of his boots… a chewed gum here….some piercing pebbles there…he probably would have stepped on some scat…the market is just so full of cats and dogs… resting on my face now…his victory pose…his wife walks over…her face mentions ‘that dog deserves it’. But why do I accept it, bend down a little so that my feet can clean all that the soles of those boot offers and ask for seconds? And then the wife brings her dusty red pump shoes down on my face, smiling as she does so while the man’s feet stomp my hair…keep my face firmly in its position for the lioness to consume. I consume. All that is theirs…my eyes look up naughtily the skirt she’s wearing at the yellow panties… just a yellow line yet enough to make a man’s heart stop at the drop of a hand. An event horizon of celestial proportions and all that is to know about universe that is… rudely, she tramples my face hard, smothers the features of my face with her leathery dominance. I am to be disciplined and taught my place in society. O the sharp end of her shoes as she rubs them along my cheeks. That is not fear… I am not a subject to be dejected like this but then life is not fair and if live is not fair then how should living be any different. Break the rules? Be punished, like I am now. Take it! Take it for you deserve it. My muddy face under complete and glorious neglect has dwarfed me, made me a dehumanized figure… a figure currently flirting bisexually the feet of two young undisputable prince and princess… they pose…they the winners… the achievers… and I the loser… the failure. In front of everyone, they have branded me as a servant, not just of theirs but someone that would go around getting trampled and have his face battered by any person willing to do that to me. It is my job to do that…to go around kissing soles and licking dust from their sandals. But first finish with theirs; please do not stomp on my face as the final gesture. The lady brings her foot down…right on the ridge of my nose…and leaves the room…simultaneously the man…his feet shadowing my face as he pulls it up like some kind of a catapult and…bam…it comes… I swear I could almost taste the sock of the right foot of that gentleman as my lips went through his soles with such sheer force and that is why my lips are salty and wet. Enjoy your meal loser, and he walks away-

“Where have you been? They served the lunch…like an hour ago.” Sunny said to him as he entered the dorm and took a seat on his bed.

“I had lunch… Guess what, I got in.” he said lightly, the heat having absorbed the life out of him.

“Nice, that calls for some kind of a night out.” Sunny mentioned with a smile and a brotherly intimacy.

“Really, you’re a stranger in Delhi…I’m a stranger in Delhi…and you want to spend a night out?”

“Relax man, we’ll be back in time…and I’m not a stranger to Delhi, mind you.”

“Okay, where are you going to take me then?”

“Go to a… movie perhaps?”

“Sure man, but where do we go?” Rahil asked.

“Why man, Connaught place!”

“Ah, there’s nothing cool there, right? Just a bunch of shops, I believe.”

“Yeah, but I would rather be there surfing the streets and having a good time window shopping and watching a movie than to chicken out and sit around and do nothing in the guest house. Come on, let’s shoot.”

“Ah, what the hell!”

They got off, got into a bus and the pus took them to the nearest metro which was the Race Course. This was Rahil’s first time in the Delhi Metro. As the doors opened to get in the Metro, Rahil was deluged by the crowd inside it and whether he would be able to fit or not. Sunny pushed him inside and the doors mechanically closed.

“Take your wallet out and put it in your front pocket…to keep it from the pickpocket” said Sunny, with a penchant for what is known contemporarily as the street smarts.

“You know the problem in the theatrical environment is…….” A voice was heard distinctly by the two of them who turned their heads to view the source of this voice among the other noises in the metro. They saw two men, one of them white as a transparent bag of wheat and the other with common features both dressed in kurtas and jeans talking among themselves scratching their beards and talking with acute intensity.

“The existential crisis is a source to that and what we need to….” retorted the pale white man in the kurta. From their physical attributes they appeared to be nothing more than college students.

“What is the problem with those guys?” Rahil asked to Sunny referring to the two men who broke the noisy indistinctness of the metro by their sharp conversations. Sunny looked at them and found them irritating too. On any other occasion, Rahil would have gone to them and conversed with them, let himself be educated with their ideas and if need be, also educate them with his ideas and they could have had a dialectical form a dialogue but here they were just undesirable and the act that they were trying to put up- it was not that it was not working in favor of them, it was just not working at all. Sunny started to pay close attention to what they were saying.

“Yes, I knew it. You see, they’re actors…like theatre dramatists. You’ll find more of these in DU as you go along, my friend.” He said smilingly as he saw the exasperated face of Rahil on listening to each of their misplaced connotations among the crowds of generality. ‘What do they think this place, France? Go back to your Ivory towers, you vultures because that’s not how you make a society intellectually progressive, by talking about psychological alienation in a coach full of people who think every book is meant to use as a tea stand to put heir cups of tea over’, thought he to himself.

They got out two stations before them and two stations after on Rajiv Chowk and Rahil was impelled by Sunny from behind when the station came. Sunny was one with a rough personality and thoughtful perceptions of right and wrong though he based it a little too much on popular opinion but for a person who strung a pendant of the Hindu God Hanuman questioning ethics was a an admirable giant leap towards something.

Dilemma and disarray continued as both of them walked through the metro. They did know if it was still bright outside. They took the gate opening to central park and now were out under the open sky of the city. It was dark outside and the plundered wealth of the dark was always well hidden in the purse of the night s no stars showed themselves on the polluted black skies of Delhi.

“Where should we go?”

“We should go for a beverage perhaps”

“Café coffee day”

“Lead the way”

They both entered the complex of Connaught place and white walls did not seem white any longer in the darkness. Their bulbous shape was also not quite conspicuous as they would have been during the day and so there was nothing to stroll and look around. The rich kids also probably went home by that time and so there was also no way to find what derisory sense of fashion was now in trend. They walked over from store to store, all joined together to form an endless stretch of quasi-colonial complex and even the masters were same. “How could people still call themselves free?’ he thought to himself and a feeling of suffocation and asphyxiation took over him. He began to walk faster and Sunny started to lag behind.

‘There, you see. Let’s see where this elevator takes us…Café Cová…” Rahil said, trying to revert to constant socialization. They both got into the elevator and then in a matter of seconds the elevator took them to the second floor. Right before the door could open, Rahil could hear loud music playing and the opening of the door threw Rahil and Sunny into a dissonance of darkness and blue light. The odd blue light tingled on their skin and they could feel their hairs rise by its irradiation. They could only see an abstract art of the faces around them and the loud music made it much harder to start comprehending the images. It was more along the lines of a rave bar than a café. For the first few moments, Rahil was stupefied by the sudden flux of environment and lost all motor and sensory coordination. He kept looking around, looking at the faces, at the tables, at the chairs and at the big, almost colossal stretch of counter that endlessly extended on both sides. This was a bar and very chic one by the looks of it.

“Let’s see around.” Rahil mentioned to Sunny who was torn between getting out of it and having a drink there but was unable to do the latter because he checked the prices and they were too exorbitant for him. On asking why they had such a high price when alcohol has a tax included retail price, Sunny replied that that there were two things, first was due to the service tax of the bar and second due to the fact that they served the drinks decoratively and in qualitatively in glasses also regulating with the requests of the customers to have it on ice, or with soda or in cocktail. Rahil was unaware of these things because the only form of intoxication he had committed himself to was the inexpensive ether snuff. Although accompanying fallouts, it was a much better trip in both psychomotor and psychoactive terms.

“You seen enough?” he asked Rahil again as he wandered about and penetrated the inside ends of that lady in blue out of sheer curiosity. The lighting made everything different. The lights sometimes flickered with the song playing and the seating benches were also very deftly and fashionably made with low sitting with cushions so that the guests would feel more comfortable sitting as on a sofa. He walked around till he reached the end of the room where he saw stairways that led him another floor. In this floor, he saw a more festive crowd and the reason as to their merriment could well have been the fact that they were more intoxicated, as they moved about drowsily barely managing to walk and tipsily taking their steps.

“Eh, let’s go then.” Rahil affirmed and descended down the stairs and this time the elder boy Sunny was the one leading him. They got into the elevator and ended up right from where they had started- the streets of Connaught place.

“I guess the most interesting thing was how a small commonly elevator could lead us to such transplanting reality and it was like falling down Alice’s rabbit hole. Let’s go to Café coffee day.” Sunny insisted as the night grew darker. They walked fast and reached one end of the complex where the Café Coffee day was situated on the first floor. They got in and Rahil recorded the woody and predicatively outré. It had an interior design of an old tavern with straws lying over the floor and eccentric furniture. The main counter however stood much ordinarily and on the opposite side of it were placed many long stools similar to a bar. Rahil took one such stool and asked Sunny to go through the menu and check what was feasible enough for both of them while his attention was claimed by a foreigner sitting right next to him scribbling in his leather jacketed diary. He took considerably time in thinking each line as he wrote and was scratching the brown stubs of hair on his long jawed thin and fair face.

“Excuse me, are you a poet?” Rahil asked the man.

“Me…no…I’m…I’m not a poet…” replied the foreigner completing his sentences with broken and tattered English.

“…Just…I saw you writing in your little book and I thought you were…never mind.” He replied.

“No…it’s just for travel…travel accounts, you know…”

“Where are you from then?”

“I’m from Belgium.”

“Oh yeah, didn’t they have like the first labor union there or something…”

“I…I…don’t know….”

“Wait right, that was Poland…Belgium…Belgium is a nice place too. Just travel brought you to Delhi?”

The foreigner nodded.

“There are better places than this, you know, to travel and have a sense of the authentic real India, you know. You should try Kolkata…”

“Yeah, but there is a lot in Delhi to see too”

-Like what the goddamn Marriot? Somebody deliver me from here. Sham…all of this…all of that…is a sham. You should’ve stayed home, man-

“Hey, let’s go. It’s a waste of time here.” Sunny approached Rahil after going through the menu meticulously and asking some questions to the waiter at the counter. With that Rahil rose up from his seat and exchanged final words with him.

“So it’s already nine now, what do you say. I say we go to some backdoor shady shack and have a filling snack for a dinner.” Sunny suggested Rahil but he was too dubious as to a snack would satisfy his raging appetite.

-Hereth starts a Bohemain’s life-

“Yeah sure, why not, and then we will catch that movie you were talking about.” Rahil answered boisterously.

They went to a really different corner of the Connaught place where dirty waters ran on the streets and no cars were parked because there were no streetlights. Sunny and Rahil were positive they had found the right place. They had a club sandwich and a milkshake each and it was so fulfilling that Rahil could barely walk although he was sure that much of the bulkiness was due to the milk rather than the sandwich and they were also favorable to the budget. Next they went to see a movie and although Rahil was against the idea of seeing a Bollywood movie in theatre after the last travesty, he agreed for the intuitive feeling and the grander perspective brought about in a theatre so it was such that he was not there to watch the movie but watch the people watching the movie.

After the movie was finished they thought of getting back to their guest house. On the way, Rahil was stopped by the sight of the Delhi based Coffeehouse which was named the Mohan Singh Coffeehouse. He was not sure whether it was the same British one under the franchise one of which he had already been to in Calcutta. He thought not, speculating on the basis of its interior and Rahil got a very minute view of as the doors once opened and closed. It did not matter to him as they were getting late. Getting to the metro was not difficult as it was only walking distance away and they boarded the metro trivially. It was at the drop that trouble bombed them with horrendous grief. They exited the metro station and stopped at the bus stop in wait of the bus. Minutes passed into an hour and it was close to twelve but still no bus came. Two others were waiting there who assured that one bus was still to come and so they waited there. Meanwhile, Rahil got a call from her mother and on revealing to her that he was still out at night, her tension knew no bounds. She advised her to take a rickshaw but both of them had already spent their cash on food and movie. In between all her nagging and fury she told him that her brother was to come in two days to settle him and would return the next day having settled him. Rahil was not sure how he was to take the news as he was not given enough time so he just expressed a placid approval followed by another serious of wrathful comments from her mother.

“What do you think? Will we get home?” asked Rahil when the time was almost twelve thirty and the two other men managed to get the buses to their respective destinations and only Rahil and Sunny were left out under the well lit bus stop.

“Well, this does it for me! From now on, as God is my witness I swear that I will never go out late night again in this city.” Sunny exclaimed and swore to himself.

-All right then, but what about now? What force is to take us from here and get us to our destination? It’s more than an hour walk from here, he says. Well if nothing is in sight, I do not see what else we can do and besides night is filled with hours…just like day…but darker. Just think of it as waking in a dark room, a room that you are familiar of because terra incognita can have psychological outburst… The hours pass themselves in almost a hurry and I fail to grasp their importance as I am caught in the awkward silences and the meaningless conversations that take place between us. They seem of a different time together. What will ye do? Stare…stop and stoke… the endless road awaits… walk on or wait... the staring succulent wait and keep on the masquerade of conversations, of drama and advertency…. That is not ours to follow…that is not ours to see. We see as far as we can and then somebody else takes it up from there… Nile is the longest river in the world because the pyramids watch over it. The amazons are cut down because the Voodoo doesn’t work… India, well the temples and the mosques and the churches and the Gurudwaras are the reason our population is the largest among the world. The dark night is somehow is a testimony to that…we all live and breathe under it… no matter the rich or the poor, the painter or the thief, the master or the Dhobi…anyone…everyone….So how is it bad for me to spend the night under the open sky make believing that there are skies although I see none… What more is there to do? Walk…Ah, yes. The labor all men have to follow. When the day tolls, who is to run away from it? The tiresome hour long walk to a bed. The idea pleases-

Finally they saw a bus come to their direction and breathing a long sigh of relief and missed not a moment to board the bus. The bus was partly full but hey managed o get a seat and it was a sweet ride to home, or the closest domicile to it.

The night was comatose for then although Sunny did notice an additional bed being made besides Rahil but the other one was so mentally and physically extinguished that he did not even waste a moment to even change his clothes as he found it backbreaking unnecessary effort to undertake on a cool and breezy night so rare after sunny days especially when he had such an allaying sensation go through his body on getting to the guest house after all the visitations of the night, the events of the evening still gyrating in his mind and the pictures assimilating and arranging themselves on his mental horizons. The next day held the promise of the complete opposite for him.

Sunny had to wake up early in the morning to get to his internship on time and hence made haste with everything right from common chores as brushing his teeth to spending time in the shower. He shied away from the shower as the water jetted from the showerhead located almost centrally in the bathroom- they were so hot. As a result, he had a very debilitating morning shower and he felt the aftermath of it as he buttoned his shirt-since they were not cotton, he felt it chafing on his back and chest ruggedly which was to get worse under the sun and he did not know that until after he made his exit into the spotlight of the sun which instead of upholding his presence on the stage threw him into the more mundane lot of the stage.

Rahil woke up and checked the time which asseverated to be around twelve and he justified the cause of his tardiness as he had not completely fell to sleep till around two or three in the morning; he could not confer the exact time but he was sure that the sun had begun to come up before he lost his consciousness completely. His eyes were swollen and they really were a subject of hurt for him and nothing would help his eyes, neither opening nor closing until he went to the bathroom and wetted his eyes over the open tap of the sink and it was fortunately for him that it ran hot war for it felt really relieving to his eyesore. After he was all laved, he went to have a cup of tea to the canteen on the first floor.

“Some time to have a cup of tea on a summer morning…” muttered the waiter noticeably under his breath.

-what are you, Spike Lee, thinking so much about the summer and human psychology during it. Let me have my tea and be in peace, both of us. O my brother, he is coming tomorrow. This is the last time I meet my family member for a very long time. I feel sad for myself… I should…I am all alone… an alien… to me, this culture and its traditions are almost foreign… indiscernible and I am to live under it like the Jews under the rein of the Nazis or like the Dasa Dravidians under the Aryans. There is a power structure here, as everywhere. It’s the ballad of the modern age. I wish I was in Island with my brother but what would I have been doing there…nothing but wasting my life…but is there a point to all that I am doing now? No…but it pleases me. It will please me to learn and discover more about the noble literature left behind us and at some point of time in my life, be able to contribute to it too. The tea... Hot-

Somehow pervaded in his own thoughts, he sat there till the lunchtime and then they served him lunch which was always barely edible. Only on the first day did he get a curry of chicken and he skipped the afternoon lunch of the other day and now it was just a grub of some leafy vegetables.

“Hey boy, where do you live?” an old man sitting on the next table asked him.

“Aberdeen bazaar” he answered.

“Oh is that so?”

Rahil gave him the details.

“You must know my uncle, Rafique.”

“Know him, I used to work with that guy and his name reminds me of old times. Some… times they were. Well, I am here with my daughter and his husband to take a trip to the family house. What about you?” the old man asked.

‘Well, I just took admission in the University of Delhi.” He replied.

“Oh, which college have you got into?” asked another tall man with yellowish skin, square face and a handsome built who later turned out to be the old man’s son in law.

“Um, Sri Venkateswara college”

“Well, its right here, isn’t it?”

“Yes, in South Delhi in Dhaua Kuan”

“I have heard very nice things about the college. It is a very reputed college. You should be glad to be there.” The man replied and the old man smiled gladly in the background.

“I so am” Rahil replied. They were almost done with their lunch and they had especially ordered chicken curry to be made for them. Rahil flared at the waiters internally for having made chicken curry personally for them and he took it upon himself to do something about it.

“Okay then, we’ll meet again.” The old man said as he left the room having completed his lunch. Two half filled bowls of curry just stood on the table along with their dirty plates. Rahil called a waiter and asked him to take the bowl from their table to him. ‘After all, they were finished eating and they used spoons. Want not, waste not’ thought he to himself reasoning with the part of his mind that was hindering him from doing so and thusly overpowering it. The waiter looked at him for a minute as if he expected Rahil to amusingly laugh and say that he was just being humorous and playing a satire on the waiter for not having cleaned the tables soon enough but the seriousness in Rahil’s eyes affirmed his statement and so the waiter took the two bowls and before transferring it over to his table, he tumbled one bowl over another to collect all the curry in one bowl. Rahil had a smile on his face as the waiter placed the bowl in front of him and he began eating with immense gluttony not throwing another glance at the waiter since his purpose had now achieved fruition.

-the college…indelibly resolved…the living…indelibly marred. Whatever goes through is never perfect and a leaf falls on the ground before I can wash my hand and head out. So I stay… that is not my fate…that is not entirely my choice although I do apply myself to that path and set a series of ungovernable and spontaneous actions and reaction to which I am completely indocile and yet it appertains veritably to my consequences. Is that to be called God? Or fate, or anything which we cannot expect or fend for with our scientific and logical defecation? The water is warm. Was….and the towel was soft and the mirror was clear and my face was dark and proud and lost and found and shameless and impertinent. What’s to ragging…hazing…bullying, chivying…harrying, hassling…molesting…chiding, twitting and constant lambasting and objurgating castigation. They’ve made me sign an anti-ragging affidavit as they have surely must have made others do so but who is to see that they…and I…abide by it…follow it. That is the problem with authority: they never come full circle and in their injudiciousness, we are caught-on one side the semicircular ring of burning laws and on the other the mob of bullies waiting for fresh meat. I walk into the toilet and bunch walks behind me and behind them lock the door and I stand scared my courage shattered and the shards crushed as their bodies near me. I drop down on my knees in utter and sheer fright in internal battle and external defeat…in outer dilemma and inner surety of what is to come…Close your eyes and be done with it soon. Some resist, draw back and land kicks punches only to be the receiving end of further more pain for repression of submission because for them it is not so much about the act as it is about the power. They seek to outsmart them but in turn pay for the pomp they put up. Me…I know my place. I am the ideal man…as I am ready to accept oppression through suppression…already on my knees and they tell me what to do and I have no alternative… I am physically blind sighted and so I see nothing but what lies in front and don it; supplication through fellation. Kicks and punches follow that…and then there are sniggering giggles followed by humiliating silence…They have now left the room and I am sleeping kissing the cold tiled foundation alone wondering what a mistake I have done; such a big mistake that I deserve these altercations. I should grow resilient gradually…thought reverberating through my mind ‘what worse can they do me’.... ‘What worse can they do to me’…another thought reverberates… ‘They can kill me’…throw me off a roof somewhere and put to an end the entirety journey, all my experience and all my expressions…gone and I enter another world-that of impression for every expressive moment and insularism for every thought of perception. Good things…come to me… to what end are they even comprehensible much less possible. A thought that I could fathom as everybody could lies fifteen fathoms deep in the arachnoids of my mind and the rest is filled with cosmic chaos. A universe dwells inside my head and our universe rests in the pia mater of another-

Drowned in his own thoughts as to how college would unfold its reality to him and how he would fit in that reality, he opened the door to his dormitory and caught the sight of another stranger that took up the bed beside him.

“Hello…” Rahil said in a friendly manner to attract his attention which was fully devoted to the laptop opened in front on him and resting on his lap as it lit and died in discontinuous intervals of time.

“Oh hi, didn’t realize you stayed here… Good thing to be in company anyways…” he replied. Rahil wanted to make small talk but was not able to. His attention was moved to what this boy was watching in his laptop. He was a fluffy and stout young man who was almost Sunny’s age. His dark skin did not besmirch his stately appearance. He was only dressed in a feeble white tank top and wore boxer shorts that stretched limitedly only till his floccose thighs. His features were very friendly and comforting and he always bore a genuine smile on his face. His eyes always sparkled with life through the square glasses. Nonetheless, he never had any oddity that would bind his image in Rahil’s mind. He remained silent as he continued to study him and everything he had said, studied his accent and his lingo and some would say he went to a great degree of connotation for a common man whom he was o spend only one or two days. As he did not do it intentionally, the powers to stop his gorge was not a matter manipulative or controlled by his hands. He leaned on the bed and threw his head on the pillow.

“So tell me, which college do you study?” Rahil asked.

“PES Mandya but I graduated this year and now I am here to prepare for the GATE exams.” He replied.

Among all the talk and exchange of ideas, smiles and words many things were revealed that Rahil could align himself that they were both mutually appreciative of. It turned out that he was watching a Japanese Anime cartoon which Rahil also liked because of the different and more realistic mannerism with which the characters are usually made and most of them, particularly the famous ones have a very magically realist back stories. The dark big eyes, the stylistic haircut with assembled flock of hair hanging suspended in the most perfect simulation to that of a real person, the simplistic drawing of the nose and other circumferential features like the pout of the lips and the bent of the chin that somewhat reconstitutes the view to a different and a more holistic form where the whole of the character’s face catches our attention. Since the images are in two dimensional animations, the characteristics also inundate our scope of vision. Aside from that, much detailing is done on even the most nebulous images but they do so in two dimension. He was also fond of Hollywood movies like Rahil and like Rahil he had a nourished taste too. He was impressed that the young man had watched so many movies and so they went on talking about them and then he let Rahil go through his collection of movies seeing which Rahil was balled over than someone can have such a similar taste in movies and a classy one as well. Dustin Hoffman’s Death of a Salesman- a play by famous playwright and writer Arthur Miller made into a movie and it was after his play crucible that director Elia Kazan made into a movie. It was the same Kazan who testified against Miller to the House Committee on Un-American Activities after which he was blacklisted by Hollywood. He also found Schindler’s List which to him was not impressive for the reason that any person with the most basic familiarity of Hollywood would cite as a great movie not seeing the farce on which it is built. The technique of the black and white movie is derivative of Scorsese movie Raging Bull and Spielberg further shows his derivative nature again with the movie Catch me if you can also falsely highly regarded due to the cameo role given to Christopher Walken which is a completely formularized trick used two times previously, once by Woody Allen in Annie Hall and at the other instance by Quentin Tarantino in Pulp Fiction. The truth about him is he is only fit for making big budget commercial movies like Jurassic Park, ET and Jaws and ad-lib movies without any subject matter research like Amistad Empire of the Sun, a splendid Ballard novel and further launching brawny caricatured Hollywood muscle heads like Vin Diesel in Saving Private Ryan. It was not that he believed Spielberg to be the most overrated director in Hollywood but before him lay provided copious evidences of his falsified repute and so he was led to believe so. He would not even compare Spielberg to the Coen brothers and certainly not Tarantino and would place him more along the lines of Brian De Palma.

Around evening, Sunny returned and he greeted the new guest by asking his name-something Rahil had not done for some unknown reason. He made it a point for next time to do so. His mane was Sanjay Murthy. He was also from Andaman and on further consultation he also revealed that he knew some of Rahil’s peers- he mentioned a girl whom Rahil knew only barely, Sanjana Yogesh and Sanjay revealed that he had known her as a freshman though in that year that he graduated, she moved to her third semester and completed one year of study and started her second year that spring.

Sunny and Sanjay also got along genially talking about their college days and their plans for the future and Rahil found solace in listening to them. He was as a good a listener as he was a speaker and the norms of the Colin Cherry’s cocktail party problem did not apply to him as he would let meta-narratives while his discourse and not only did that but implored others’ opinion for every one of his own monologue. This provided for a fluidal and non-cohesive free manner of discussion that suited both to the listener who through conversations chooses to remain silent and to the babbler who rants whenever he gets the opportunity to do so.

“You know, between us three he’s the one to make the most apt career choice in the world.” Sunny declared and Rahil smiled and felt awarded at his declaration.

“Exactly, I mean. You’re already an intern and you have to ride metro for almost an hour, work at a construction site in this heat and be the butt of the superiors’ mismanagement and it is only after doing all that it is possible for you to receive a paycheck. It’s the same for me after I pass from my masters probably and during the course it’s the lousy engineering mathematics, thermodynamics, fluid mechanics, material technology and computer aided designing for another three years and with advanced rigor while all he has to do is read books and the best part of it is he likes reading, and writing.” Sanjay said.

“Yeah, but in the end of all that effort at least you get a paycheck but for me, I’ve to study till PhD to get a descend job or else it’s the corporate grindstone where I’ll be going. But then I like the dissipating lifestyle of a freewheeling intellectual especially that of a central university student.” Rahil replied.

“Hmm, sure but you better stay away from the politics here because it’s unforgiving. I only advise judging by the radical devil may care way that you’re going all embittered by the system like the stereotype angry young man,” Sunny interjected and warned Rahil with a much less aplomb mood.

“Well, nobody decides a man’s fate, least of all God; it is a mechanism of gearwheels of psychology, human ethics, logic and external circumstances, time being the most dominant of them.” Rahil replied with a complex answer that was a little over the realm of their friends’ understanding but they took one thing de facto, that he did not believe and almost held spite for God.

“Think you want to o out today?” Sunny asked looking at Sanjay but the question was directed to everyone in the room. Sanjay was quick to nod in approval in order for his subconscious voracity for male camaraderie. Rahil was a little hesitant at first because he had the college orientation to attend the next and he was wary of exhaustion that could follow up with fatigue on the day of the orientation but bit by bit he too started to feel that subconscious camaraderie lurch but that was only one reason why he was inclined partially to go. He also wanted to buy some books to keep his mind from rotting in the batch of tomatoes completely rotten by mainstream culture that he was about to be and to some extent had already been placed in.

“I want to buy some books too. You have GPS right, then let’s find Oxford bookstore in Connaught place. Look it up…” Rahil said.

Sunny clicked through his touch screen phone and looked at it and confirmed it was on Connaught place. He even mentioned a Crossword bookstore to be there. Rahil was not sure which books he had to buy but a bookstore to him was like a candy shop to a kind. He would enter without a choice and walk out with his hand full and while inside he would stand and browse through spellbound looking and looking again at the many titles of the many famous authors. The eternal immortality of the books took over his soul and for a moment as he touched those books and read the back covers, he felt a shred of their immortality permeate him forming a network of thoughts-thoughts the books held, thoughts that he wanted them to hold and the thoughts that were closed inside the many books he could not manage to go through and it were these thoughts, the thoughts of the mystique of what those books promised that haunted him more than the haunting of the thoughts of buying the many books that he left behind.

They took the same route that the two had taken the previous day and left early this time to avert last night’s situation. This time, there was another person with him who was precarious enough to check the time every minute. They left at about five in the afternoon and walked the radial streets of Connaught place an hour later. Now Rahil could see the sprinkle of the Tinsel town with schlocky teenagers walking with a pride like no other as if their bodies were temples of worship and they ornamented and supplicated it in the same spirit. Sanjay was also balled over by the éclat of the people there as they flounced out of their cars with an air of succinct brevity as though their life started and ended with his status and the manner in which they upheld it. To a man of any other class it would seem preposterous but to them it was as necessary as education because just like education, upholding social status is a means of contemplating culture. A middle woman is seen upholding her culture when she covers her head with a cloth in front of her elders or when crossing a religious place and if it is right for the woman to do so for her elders; it was therefore no wrong in them doing so. Everybody has their way of life and that is what makes us more animalistic- that we renounce ourselves as cultured.

-the bookstore, the Oxford bookstore…what’s in a name? Books everywhere, but why do I find more management books- that is what I despise. And self help books: there is an unbent philosophy that contains the wisdom of all self-help books ever written- help yourselves for there is no truth in it. However sadly so, it is books like these that sell much than literary fiction… This can be justified…a society crippled by corporate virus needs crutches to walk, doesn’t it… and then a surprise astonishes us and it is that the crutch itself is corporate. And all we can do is grind our teeth as we come to know that we are made befooled. Here lies the collection literature, right next to travel-those fancy hard paper glossy books like that of a children’s book. A children’s book touch…a children’s book knowledge. Oh, Flaubert’s Parrot… Doctor Zhivago, better keep that one back on the shelf or Mr. Gorky might get angry at me, but between Zhivago and Mother, the latter is a very compelling and truthful read. I may be ideologically bent to say that, but I am still appreciative of Mr. Pasternak for his verity to an antithesis even in such adversity- he couldn’t receive the Nobel, among many others, like Lewis Sinclair but it was his wish not to receive the prize but he did ultimately. Of mice and men…such a tragic and heartfelt book, I can paraphrase:

*Lennie begged, "Le's do it now. Le's get that place now."*

*"Sure, right now. I gotta. We gotta."*

*And George raised the gun and steadied it, and he brought the muzzle of it close to the back of Lennie's head. The hand shook violently, but his face set and his hand steadied. He pulled the trigger. The crash of the shot rolled up the hills and rolled down again. Lennie jarred, and then settled slowly forward to the sand, and he lay without quivering.*

The American dream, ended in one bullet all at the cost of a lynch mob- its more contemporary than it sounds, I feel out some inane reason. History of the world in ten and a half chapters, a great work runs concurrent on many fields. The smell…the fresh rustic feel… Sons and Lovers… Madame Bovary… Anna Karenina… Taras Bulba… The Red Badge of Courage… Portrait of Lady… I wish I could take all of them but no Proust? That’s a shame… Perec too and also no Robbe-Grillet… Guess Indians are yet to be Francophiles-

This was followed by a ritualistic dogtrot through the nightly comfort of the city’s commercial centre like vagrants in search of food and in guard of fiend. They walked with stomachs soaring like the perturbed Kriemhild after the death of her betrothed Siegfried by the hands of Hagen of Troneg.

“It is better to have dinner back at the guest house. I have an important even to go to tomorrow.” Rahil declared and the two nodded in approved. Little did they know what waited for them at the guest house because it was a special night and a special night called for a special menu; the restaurant was to serve chicken curry that night, of course Rahil and the other two were completely unaware of it. Chance showed its manifestation herein more definitively as none had he knowledge of what waited for them.

Only after they reached the guest house, changed into their regular clothes, freshened themselves up, had a little rest, headed down to the canteen and sat themselves down on the table together that a fresh bowl of smoking hot thick and ambrosially appetizing chicken curry was placed before their eyes on the table that they could not turn back. The scent of the fuming steam held within it the authentic fragrance of every Indian spice right from red chili powder to cumin powder that infused together and freed the avocation of nose from the body by giving it its own sustenance and soul. Sanjay and Sunny dipped in with their spoons; Rahil chastised himself- he wanted the smell to pelt him with sensations and his mouth began to flood as the saliva swashed like a whirlpool from his glands. He closed his eyes and immersed his spoon in the bowl sacredly. He lost complete memory of what happened afterwards and only came to when he saw a reflection of his face on the mirror and his hands were soaking wet under the open faucet. ‘All that had passed-was it a sweet dream or a serious reality?’ the thought wafted over and over in his mind. Nothing made sense after that. The way from the canteen to the dorm had changed or he perceived as something different. He could not recognize the people he was talking to although he remembered talking to them. He lost his cognizance or entered a superlative kind of cognizance. He felt with his hands the jaws that had gone numb and only minimal reaction remained in his musculature that covered the jaw-his cheeks, his chin and his lips. That night went in complete disarray of everything, even of his thoughtfulness which was an indivisible and infallible de facto of his mortal as well as moral law. Somehow it was becalmed; it was chained and put to sleep.

He woke up to the blaring bugle and the staccato sound of the former Soviet Union national anthem which was not a result of his ideological overwhelming but a part of his effort to wake up for which he deemed fit a strong voice and the reminiscence of the Great Stalinist Purges that claimed the lives of many rural peasants on which the October Revolution was built. He looked around him and the two others were passed out in sound sleep. He got ready to leave and walked over to the place he knew the bus would be available. The sun was still merciless and minute by minute under the blazing sun he lost his decency as his brushed hair trickled down from behind his ear and over his forehead from palpitation. He was on the verge of making a buffoon out of his fashion had the bus came a couple of moments late. He instantly got in but well before that he understood he was not getting a seat but he did not take it at heart because he knew that the journey to his destination was short.

Perhaps if he thought of his journey as a little lengthier, he would have saved himself a lot trouble because that misjudgment of his threw him into unnecessary toil. His partial knowledge of the route was devoid of the final stop. He had an over bridge as a landmark but he misconstrued his roadway getting off the bus on the first sign of an over bridge and even at this time, it had not hit to his mind that he had much to travel and expected the diversion to the small road leading to the college just at the end of this road. After walking for a great deal of time, he was sure he had dismounted well before he was supposed to and now he had to walk another long stretch of the road. He minded this walk under the bright sunny day just externally because on the inside he enjoyed walking as the fishmongers took their places in the sunlit alcoves between two closely built brick stone buildings and the little shops that had the promise of selling everything right from cigarettes and tobacco products to pens, stationery items and candies. He knew he was going the right way from seeing the steel mileposts hanging above and some standing below at regular intervals until he finally reached the Satya Niketan bus stop which meant that the road leading to the college was much closer and so it was when the road was parted by another road and he stood at a trisection and turned left towards what was known as Benito Juarez road and after a little while stopped in front of the big metal gates and gazed at the parallel bars of steel and thinking of the prison of a world that he was in and thinking that inside there would be freedom, and he walked in.

The people in the crowd inside were all his age or at least looked his age. They dressed the way he dressed, not absolutely the same but along the same commonality. He saw a wide range of people there and that he expected and he walking dead among them and that he expected too. Nobody looked his way as he was not a subject of interest. To any onlooker and passerby, he was just a pervert who looked at their way possibly wanting to impersonate their lives or skin them and use it as an object of paraphilia and this psychological judgment was based on the mere fact that he was alone and though they were educated enough to speculate the fact that solicitude can lead to a case of acquired ethical distortion but it is based on the innate fear to turn the telescope of sagaciousness the other way round to confront themselves with their objectifying measures. The orientation ceremony was convened in the college auditorium which was a separate building behind the main college building and next to the college canteen and between the hostel and the canteen. He walked to the auditorium staring the crowd as he moved past them. He went inside only to be overwhelmed by the vast crowd that had gathered there. The hall was fully occupied and Rahil could find no place to sit. Even the steps on the rearmost end of the hall were occupied by teenage jeans clad derrieres and he was totally unable to find a place among the many plastic chairs that were majestically covered by white cloth in order to make it more presentable and authentic. Through a little constant observation however, he saw empty slots among the wall of teenage students and sought to take a place in one such slot. He squeezed from between inside a row and had to row his way through the ocean of hands and knees that befell on his way and finally rested his back on a seat. On his side, was one thinly skimpy looking student with a complexion of sandpaper whose cheek bones appeared swollen from natural construction-with which he turned to him but before he could question or address him, turned his head back in regard to the person sitting next to him. To his front, sat a girl with her shiny black hair baled in a pony tail parted to one side and in between stood her pert white neck. There was something overpowering about that situation but not in a supposed way- that of being taken over by great bursts of love and passion- it was not that an apparition of something he had gone through before and the memory of last night came creeping into his mind. Nothing was sudden or swift as the general notion stands in literature and in psychology- nothing repressed or regressed surfaced at that moment or at any time after that. The sight that was before him was just like any other form of painting- it was art and there was nothing swanky about it and on the contrary it seemed quite faded and beige compared to the dapperness that surrounded both he and the girl. The attention was not based on a lustful egression but a transcendence of idealistic beauty because it was surely temporary and would descend into fiction at one shrug of head from the girl, and it did descend that way.

Microphones were being adjusted, half an hour extra had passed from the scheduled time and still the function was still in its formative stages. College personnel were coming on and off the stage and there was a greater degree of rollick on stage than among the students who as spectators waited for the Principal of the college to grace them with their presence. In due time the stage was set and the students who were gossiping among themselves now hawked their eyes towards the stage in complete unison and it was the power and effect of their eyes that perpetuated the latter events of the orientation ceremony. To give an informal start to the program, a student who was probably a sophomore appeared on stage and went on about the history of the college and its post-independence liberal roots laid by former President of India Sri S. Radhakrishnan. She went on to catalogue the growth of the college from the late fifties when it was established to its present standing among other colleges in Delhi University and as of itself. Although the manner by which Rahil was privy to that information was through the brochure which he had read closely for nothing was audible all throughout the large auditorium owing to the dysfunction of the microphone which gave rise to loud echoes that eclipsed over the sound that fed the microphone and after certain patient moments from the part of the students who stressed on their hearing auditions grew disinterested under such extenuating circumstances and sacrificed the pursuit for which they were all present there. Nothing but gibberish tided as voice through the entire hall- the gibberish coming from the big speakers and the gibberish coming from the jabbering of the students. Rahil also lost his interest as personalities came and went. The first among them was the college principal the soft cooing voice of whom somewhat audible that the rest of his peers as it was ample in pitch and did not have much amplitude. Rahil was among the few, who paid attention to her as she explained the college rules, regulations, organs and points of accordance and with each new clarity came more doubts- the doubts however were not entertained and legitimately so as it would not have been possible for her to entertain of such a large assembly of students.

-Ceiling…ceiling…skylight…Look at the skylight come like the light from the halo of some seraph... Why o my mind, why do you move back to incongruity as cite it as radicalism? There is falsity in this claim yet under the worldly laws of logic, it stands and not only stands but applies and holds good. The mind is the best escape route. A minute…a moment…a meditation and a muse and amok… Life is as deep as the crests of the mind. With mind we live and in it we die and when our mind sleeps, the body starts to rot…decay… under the grave… for the loved ones to grieve… a token to remember by…a piece of a stone as remembrance and a stretch of ground, that is all we are or that is what we are going to be… No gates of heaven, no flames of hell. No ravens and no swallows. I see a raven, or a crow, it’s difficult to differentiate. Ravens are small, so must be it. A Raven, it sits, perched…frightening eerie, not its form but its presence under such auspices… a start to something…its presence is unwanted. Its beauty, its short jet black body like that of a bat, but with wings like a fluffed pigeon that fell into one of the black open sewer lines and drains from which the black bile that works up the city flows through. That’s the beauty of the city, in its drainpipe veins filled with that black thick liquid that oozes from every opening and the pungent smoke flowing above like the noxious carbon dioxide in the lungs ready to be expelled. This is the beauty of the city and that raven with its wagging tail is a testimony to that beauty, a telltale bird…a songbird with only one song- the ballad of the city. The city is not a piece of land or an unforgiving concrete jungle, not; the concrete is the skeleton of the city that is living, breathing- and though it is breathing out black fumes of smoke and vaporized tar it is breathing still, breathing like a newborn child who shows no form of life other than that breath and accompanied with that breath, a cry. The cacophony of Delhi is also a voice of a person and the economics is its brain, His brain. The cemented structures are its bones, the paint on them, his skin and our flesh is his flesh. Delhi is a dirty, filthy, rotten, crippled, perverted and pathological person but it is a person all the same. A women perhaps like one of those pretentious wretch pretending to be all knowing just because she has a rosary between her fingers or keeps a photo of some God or the other in her living room and so she suddenly has the power to determine and opinionate every single aspect of their sons’, husbands’ or daughters’ life with forcible obstinacy by having them psychologically crippled through her overt emotional burst outs and takes charge of their emotional solemnity castrating their free will like a coiled up jungle lioness. And she does not do so by changing her role in society, as feminists would suggest but accepting that role and excelling it- and then they would criticize the feminists as ‘improper women’. I personally feel for feminists when they are deceived in this order by their own biological kind, more perhaps than when these pretentious wretches pass judgments on feminists but the turn of the world comes when such pretentious wretches out of nothing but their absolute paranoia, their acceptance of the ‘female role’ and out of a libidinal drive aroused in some other man gets violated or raped, the feminists are the ones to first come to aid and file complaints which the wretches would not do because their role in society binds them not to take such bold steps. This is the beauty of a city like Delhi…or any other metropolitan with those overly respected and dearly held middle-class culture that are painted over and over again on the faded canvas of history and time and tradition overlooking the fact that there is a reason that the colors keep fading away. This is the marvel…to be marveled. The Raven has emoted my sorrows and elevated my joys…The Raven is a creature and much as I am yet there is a kind of canonical freedom in him while in me there is just militant slavery. Some would say it is about the ‘truth’ and my slavery lies in my tragedy of being far from that truth because for me to realize my truth I would have to change a complete society. The truth is not in itself but from itself. It is like the Sun, a source guides endless versions of it on which our survival depends and it is impossible to get to the source of truth… We are bound by celestial laws. The Raven knows so much more than I do. Many evolutions and mutations has made possible for him to be so. A journey that started from Archaeopteryx…that little songbird has so many stories similar to ours and so many tales of her own. My belief in the presupposition of fortune and misfortune is evasive, almost null. A world of broken mirrors is what people get when they ruminate on the thoughts of future and its construction in advance. In that spirit, I have nothing to be excited about or anything to fear as long as there are no causes, but I am a freshman- isn’t that cause enough? Probably not, but what is to be considered is the temporary boarding that I am to board for the duration of my stay here. I need a productive place, don’t I? Where I can write, create debate, meditate, cerebrate and demolish the idea of state. This place has to be an oasis, a heaven, a haven for my ideas, postulates and extensions and has to be able to not only support it but promote it-

His eyes fell on another girl, one who arrived later and sat besides the girl with the ponytail and came across to Rahil as her friend. This girl had an almost pale white skin color that was red in some places. In his mind, he began to think to what course the two belonged. As they both seemed well of and their dialogue was also in English and very refined, he believed they were both probably economics students and a mention of Oxford in their talk in reference to their Bodleian and the Great Tom confirmed his contention of them being from private schools and as a rule most private students either joined to study the discipline of Commerce or Economics. English could have been their choice of discipline and he did not rule it out but he did not give it much thought either. The two girls talked mirthfully among each other and they probably knew other people present there too.

“Oh my God, what the hell is she doing here? I thought she took admission in St. Xavier.” The second one with the pale white skin said. Rahil felt a little smile wring on his face at the mention of the name and almost loudly thought to himself ‘been there’. The first one, who sat straight in front of Rahil confirmed. He felt automatically lean front to hear their conversations when he was himself drawn to one by the person sitting next to him.

“So brother, where are you from?” the boy asked.

“I’m…from…uh….Andaman.” Rahil replied hesitatingly as he would now have to draw a map to this ignoramus as he asked him how far it was by train. Rahil chose to answer by random voices to all his queries.

“Which course are you to study?” Rahil asked the boy interrupting him in the middle.

“Oh me, I’m here for B.sc mathematics.” He replied. He had forgot the rule e made for himself of asking people their names on talking to them but this time it was passable as not much talk took place between them except meaningless voices from Rahil’s end and smiles from his and when he smiled, his face broke all laws on anatomical symmetry as it took the shape of a peeled banana with his swollen cheek spread about and his Sun struck nose shining through it like the eatable portion of a peeled banana.

When the orientation ended, Rahil found it to be futile to even attend as nothing good came out of it other than the confirmed fact of his detached alienation. He thought of taking the bus back to the guest house but on enquiring the guard sitting at the college gate found that he would have to change buses and then also walk a little- that to Rahil was a Sisyphean task the same as pushing to big boulder along the hill only to have to push it up again as it slides back down due to his unawareness of his way through the city streets. He settled taking an auto although he found it plumb extravagant to do so. His entry into the guest house dorm was marked by a sharp surprise that left him catatonic and erased all the events he had gone through just now to render his mind blank only for the substance of the surprise to diffuse in his mind like blood in water. His eyes saw but did not broadcast, his feet stood but did not move, his ears heard but did not consecrate and only his hair moved like soundless chimes over his forehead, the perspiration on them dried off by the windy ride he took in the rickshaw.

This state was broken by a tap on his shoulder and a voice that pierced through his catatonia and revived his senses back to life.

“Hey brother, how did everything go at the orientation?” he was asked and it was his brother who was scheduled to arrive that day and Rahil was aware of the fact however he subsided it and had put attending the college ceremony as his primary object. That to say this was the reason of his catatonia-of him being taken over by timeless anxiety and the guilt over not being the first person to receive his brother would be a complete falsity and an unforgiving discord from the correct locus his ebullition. The cause of his catatonia was the person who accompanied his brother and his bare accompaniment was enough to put tremors in Rahil for the very reason of his commercial fetish. When he breathed, the air turned green and when he walked instead of the stomp of the steps the clanks of change money could be heard. For some, he produced the image, or for the most part was a statue of idolatry to be worshipped but for him to accord with his greatness would be similar to worshipping a false God as detesting as idolatry would be to a Pagan or as Pagan rituals and rites would appear to a Christian. For him, he was a paint that came down upon him like a paint of cultural veneer cutting off not just his freedom but with that his life force. Rahil could not see his brother through that paint and was afflicted with temporary blindness. His brother smiled to him, made a gesture with his hands and called him over for an embrace and also asked him to embrace the person he had come with.

“You should have called your Dhruv bhai, why didn’t you?” he asked and Rahil had only to answer with the most unnatural smile that had the bents of Bell’s palsy.

-Oh, why I should have. It was so immoral of me in this world of such stringently positive morality. You keep a smile stretched on you face don’t you, Mr. Dhruv and looking in the mirror you believe that you are happy like the fat man who constricts his hip gluten with his belt and rejoices his thin look being fully aware that the buckle might someday shoot off and people would see your true face..Fat... What have you done for me, sir? A knightly act and that is why I call you sir. Don’t expect anything more from me. I recall the first time I met you… Slide through time-

-The strike is set, the stakes are up… the flames are on the high… it is time or nigh...never will be, ever if not now. Take up now, take off now, pack your bags and go off... break your bleak hibernation and go off, turn to look back only when you have nothing to look back to in the front, is what they say. The dreams of the past have become the aspirations of the future, the tribulations of the present... the past... these dreams... these dreams of future past. Logical, root and ready to witness the bare nakedness of Indian youth in all their hollowness and their foolishness, and in all their intelligence and their sense of pride... false pride, much be the judge of that and see... see... there is nothing to look forward to... wasteland... and you have to make of it what you will. It is a game but there are no players and there is no remote and there is no dice and there are no controllers, the rule of the game... to survive. To survive alone is to survive in the most horrific of hostility for there is never a more eager and stronger enemy, never a more deadlier enemy of a man than his mind and when a man is left alone with his mind, he is put to the ultimate test; right and wrong are tested then, good and evil is tested then, reason and logic is tested then, passion and defeat is tested then, within itself, its richness is tested then and tested is its paucity and in this test, the result is always absurd but the result is always is always accepted. Life and its laws can be quite frustrating sometimes if you let it be and it can be quite ridiculous if you look at it with the objectivity of nothing but yourself. With me, it is the only way I see. I take the bull by its horn as it were and see only the things that carry to me and others I overlook, but I see quite a lot. The passion comes in all cases from a quest into the somewhat known to make it fully known rather than a quest into the unknown, fear comes in cases when the quest is made into the unknown and it can be fear of any kind... fear of all kinds. The wake is now, a wake out of all the things that was, into all the things that will ever be. It is really amusing how future and past are linked to one another and in a way the past shapes up the future and the future mirrors the past... tries its best to. What’s in possession for me, except my soul? My soul is possessed, not possessed in all sense but captured by another entity, the entity of capital and as long as I do not make a capital of my own, my soul is not with me-

-This is the soul-

-It is not something spiritual or metaphysical. It is purely economical. I know that. People have known that since Marx and Engels and Althusser. Well, people those who have heard these names know anyhow. Step by step, I have started to climb out of anonymity into general public and here ends the climb and from here starts the pushing, the pushing to get what you want but not in a competitive sort of way but rather a pushing to make my theories heard, nodded at and deemed right, and celebrated, and perhaps even applied if need be, applied. Of course not for the others, I shall apply them to myself and let others be the judge of it through my conduct.

I am haunted, like the mariner with the goose hung around my neck... I am haunted-

The University of Delhi had announced their cutoff list for each of its thirty or so colleges. It was very high considering they were running an experimental course this year which comprised of four years even for the general sciences and the arts courses and. The reputation of the Delhi University, or better put, the trend of DU was so popular among clueless and conformist teenagers that there was a record submission of admission forms that year which ranged to hundred thousands of admission forms and counting. The first cutoff left little hopes for many; it was so sky-rocketing. No course was available to students with percentages below ninety or at least eighty five, even in off-campus colleges which were much less popular among students.

According to percentage, Rahil also managed to get a college for English literature. It was Zakir Hussain College. He had met one of his friends’ next of kin online who was in the second year of his study. His subject of interest and of pursuit was also English literature. According to his opinion, Zakir Hussain was a pretty good college if you did not have the whole ‘North Campus complex’ whatever that was Rahil thought. It was only later that he found that all the good colleges, St. Stephens, Hindu college, Ramjas and Hansraj among many others, the reputed and distinguished ones belonged to North Campus and so everyone was crazy to go there and so he was also be supposed to be crazy to go there, only he did not have enough percentage to be crazy about going there because he simply could not, but believing is believing is believing. He talked to his mother who immediately confirmed that there was no time to waste and that he had to leave to take admission and that he would come to Port Blair only after taking admission there. He knew he was far beyond disappointment at this stage.

His childish fickle-mindedness was to be put to still now, his mother thought. He was fickle-minded the last time too, in the previous academic cycle when he was even awarded the government seat to study agriculture in a college in Madurai which was supposed to be the main branch of all the agriculture colleges around India and so naturally a more suited option but he had also refused to attend there. He still had the hope of getting into a college in UK he had applied through appropriate scholarships or a better option in India which was unlikely. He also had another choice to pursue media science in a college in Calcutta. He did not choose it either although the field and the course content would kept him quite happy, he knew that neither all that would help him really concentrate and focus on his epistemological and philosophical development nor did he actually like living in a place like Calcutta although it had been under Communist rule for over a decade and had just recently, like other states, rolled over to the grave of indecency and hence was nailed into complete darkness by globalization and corporate culture. He did not like place because he did not like the people although he was never judgmental about them. They struck him on his most uneasy chord and he thought the reason he did not like them was their strict self-supplication. Among the people he had met, he found this innate adherence in them to their culture and not just accepting their culture but also putting it on top in artistic, intellectual and cultural manners and having this prejudice so hard-wired that he concluded every Bengali could be found having it in some or the other level. Granted they were the among the first Asian culture to translate the works of the likes of Moliere in Bengali but the fact that they would boast about it was what made Rahil uneasy. He would also go so far as extending that it is this mutual prejudice between any two, Bengali, this mutual pride about their culture that they would get along right off, without even knowing the first most basic thing about him. But then he found this in all cultures and he despised it in all cultures. It was one of the things which made him think India would be a much better place if there were not any ethnic culture the way it existed in India. They destroyed the individuality of people and gave them a collective defense mechanism which has more pros than cons, like an ethnic clash to begin with. History was to blame, he though, and also social organization, maybe also the functioning of human mind.

Rahil had to hurry if he wanted an admission in Delhi University because the admission would close only in three days after the declaration of the cutoff list counting the day of the declaration of cutoff as day one. It was also all over the news. There were queues that extended as far as the media cameras could cover and farther beyond in almost every college affiliated to DU. He watched on screen as people flooded over the seats making it one less for him and so he booked the next flight Delhi, packed his bags and was ready to be of when there posed one problem, one fundamental problem, that of his stay. He was leaving home for the first time alone and for a big city like Delhi and thus there were obvious concerns from the part of his elders.

‘Where would he stay for the duration of admission?’ they said

‘There is the hotel, the Andaman guest house’ the answer came from within them.

‘How’s he to stay alone there?’ they said

‘He has to do it for the next four year so he might as well get adjusted now.’ Another voice came from within, probably the same.

‘Can he manage it? An absent-minded and forgetful child like him, in a world of his roaming here and there with no concerns of his own, a journey of this proportion, taking the taxi from the airport, making it in the hotel, checking in, then, running from hotel to the college the next day, managing documents and running around for admission and you know how he forgets his documents and all....’ they said.

There was silence. There was no answer after that and Rahil sat in silence too. He never said for himself in these matters and in these crowds; he would just let somebody else talk for him because whatever they asked, the answer was as obvious as the coming of the day and when it was not that way, there was an empty silence like this. His bags were packed and he was more ready to go than ever even if the problem of residence sorted itself out or not. He was not eager, however, not desperate, just ready, steady.

‘Humph, let me talk to my friend about staying over there. It will be much easier for him that way and he would save some dough for later, and there would also be no problem in going to college. My friend has a car and he can easily drive him there and he will also be more than cordial helping him with his admission procedures and all the running during the admissions.’ His brother finally stated. Everybody looked at him with a puzzled eye, not a puzzled look as if the answer was right there on the table and they were just waiting for him to confirm. He did it a little hesitatingly. His brother did not want to press his friend’s arm on that matter. He never liked owing favors to anybody and Rahil thought about it as another way of flow of capital, through social relations where money was immaterial. These are things economists usually overlook but there was this one paper he had read in the anarchist website titled ‘the world of invisible money’ which quite aptly so talked of the same social transactions as the general transaction instead of transactions through money. In the pamphlet, the argument started in a very basic manner from a hypothetical situation if all the banks did not exist and so did the money in them and also the money people had on them. It was not as thorough as Bakunin but it was pretty well written, he thought and then he thought maybe Fourier made a better hypothesis which was and most tragically yet remains unsolved.

“Are you comfortable with the arrangement?” his mother asked him, coaxingly.

“Why shouldn’t be be? It is the best possible arrangement for him.” His brother answered for him.

“The situation seems to present to me that ways....” replied Rahil to his mother.

And so with all the arrangement made, and with the bags packed, he was ready to leave next day. The flight was scheduled late in afternoon by around two and so he would reach Delhi by around five or six.

-Maybe... may well be, the last time I dwell here and soon it just might change. Swinging like in a fairy-tale, a fairly prudent fairy-tale I have been thrown swinging into a chain of events; all chasms opened themselves to me as I chose as I enter... I disappear... about to... Life never takes you wherever you want to be taken, it is like a bus with its own stations... you get on... you get off... you go here... you go there... you like it, you do not. It’s not your fault and its never your fault. Yes, it’s always life’s fault for being that way. That wait at the shop, wait to be driven to the airport seems so long... I linger to reach the other end. The persistence is not in me but in the wait... the persistence of memory, the memory of time, the time of the season, the four seasons, Vivaldi... grand. If ever there was such a thing that people collectively hated, it is waiting, waiting with having nothing to do, just waiting. But souvenirs need to be taken there, and I need to be the carrier... the messenger... the angel incarnate... only not so much. Modesty is a dying art, like pottery. Ah, there is he is, my transport to the transport... there it is, standing in lubing sunshine… Wetting with the ooze of bodily fluids... self... non-dependent but relative... Wave now... Be... yes-

His brother stood in front of the shop with the motorbike between his legs and lifting one leg over the bike, got down from it and approached Rahil with three big chocolate bars and a packet of traditional sweets. He looked at his brother and his brother came to him, opened his bags, packed the sweets and took the bags himself. There was just one small bag that he had with him in which he had just the number of clothes he would want and his things of daily use and so it was a fairly compact suitcase and with that suitcase properly balanced between the brothers in the motorbike, they rode to the airport paying with the thin thread of time that tingled between him and the flight.

They got to the airport and inquired. They found out that the boarding for the flight had already started but they were in time. His brother knew people in the airport and thus he got in as far as the check-in counter of the airport and properly loaded his bags and got him the boarding pass. This was the level of privilege that Rahil, in his daily life, was used to and owing to which people considered him a little spoiled. His brother saw him off till the security room and then it was Rahil all to himself. With nothing in his hand, neither his laptop nor his book, he was pretty much left with nothing else to do rather that walk around and wait for the boarding to begin.

-Blank, are all the thoughts that come to mind but they are still coming without matter, like empty bottles but they still hit against the grater portion of my brain as if someone from the inside... something... is doing that on purpose. Look at those people, each with a destination but to each this journey matters, as much it matters to me. Some journeys are without realization while some are transcendental. Some have so much struggle in them, like an odyssey while some are just a walk to remember, mundane Look at those people, well-dressed, uppity and flashy, most of them are but it is not they themselves who are doing it but the reflection of the views and notions of society in them and does it. In their minds... in our minds... defining ourselves through the opinion of others has become concrete in our minds without any kind of reservation for anyone and never think differently or never let anyone tell you any different... You are what I want you to be... You are what they want you to be. They sit completely unaware of that fact with their faiths intact in their mind, their pyramid of organization, of personal organization which I intend to break, set them free from this slavery... Why be slaves? I ask them. There is no need for that... there is just the need to progress and have pleasure doing it. I am no Epicurean to be thrusting people into the ‘live for yourself’ because social responsibility is such a thing, at least such a thing for a Marxist, but to some extent difference is highly necessary to open a dialogue among the accepted, the traditional and to break that tradition and the greater the divergence, the stronger will be the force of this praxis... and so the mechanism for overthrowing the machinery is always there, never in our course of time, in our course of history did we have to look through it. It is always right there. Man makes history being completely unconscious about it. Oh they started boarding, and oh the long line as if this is a bus with limited seats. This embroils me.. to see people behave this way... line up like ants or something for something they have a sure shot at, through all arithmetic possibilities and probabilistic calculations. They could just sit and go one by one... I would just wait and go when there is no line and I impose that so should others. That was what the Nawabs in erstwhile India did and they are quite known for that. I impose that so should others... But... Thou shalt not mess with free will. I am thought-ridden but I am thought ridden because I am lonely but if I were with somebody, I bet I would still be thought-ridden. Oh, those dames... skin like silk... soft... a couple of girls... two... Why do thoughts break now? Out of shame, is it? Move by my, inches by leg... I am lonely... touch... touch... touch me... We share the same airline although I do not look forward to sitting beside them. I am hopeless. I do not mean that I am hopeless but that I have no hope in me, not that I cannot project hope in others through my deeds or my actions or my ideas, especially my ideas but my ideas are also dark... long... complicated and often one linking to the other and linking to another as long as the candle of my knowledge runs out for everything I read, everything I know seems to be interconnected and that is the reason also... the reason I recall and recollect everything in a lighting... not so fast... still... –

-The line has become sparse. I shall pass now. What clothes have I wore... good enough be my standards. The purple T-shirt is always a regular for me... Purple the color of mystique. The bus, they did not have it in the old days. No they did. They did not have it for the arrivals but they always had it for the departures. A lot has changed since... with time... time has changed too... time really changes... some say to the people that say that time changes it is not really that time changes but the conditions and the situations change and hence it becomes a metaphor for the changing of time however in my opinion time does change... its flavor changes... its scent changes and morphed also is its mood. I may not sound fully sensible and might not be able to back the argument with reasonable logic but it is something I have recorded and one shall try to record too if one has the free time. The second coming... of the bus and it still seems full. Oh, the driver calls me, I wonder what’s the matter? Does he know me? No, he asks me to take a seat beside him. He is pretty amusing as he says that as if he knows me or if not, wants to know me or it might be that I have become too alert because of the onset of travel anxiety, there is such a thing... For me however, it is not. I become especially discharged when it comes to travel. I never prefer travel. Oh, now I figure, it is because I am local that he is being outwardly and friendly-

-Short time, the bus has stopped. The parting is to be done, and here too, they swarm like flies, the imbeciles, the old and the young alike as if there is some poison gas in the bus and the remedy to it is only in the airplane... the imbeciles... they rush out, one behind the behind the other, pushing, jabbing even, as I wait, patiently, this newly developed skill that I contain and that is rarely found among people... patience... When time tolls, I get off too, on the runaway and am guided by the ground staff to the stair that leads to the airplane, that bi metal flying giant. I do not fear it but I just want to... see... it-

-....a man asks for the boarding pass and I show it to him... he cuts off a slip from it, makes the pass useless and lets me go... I see that boarding pass go from usefulness to uselessness... I see it from life to death... things are more when you pay attention to them. A mere boarding pass can tell you about life more than a priest or a guru if you are willing to heed to it... and now, the innards of the plane I see... like getting into a systolic vein of a scientific God... isometric on all sides with seats here and seats there. That familiar smell still prevails... of an aeroplane... now more popularly known as an airplane or simply flight... it evolves like all things...science does evolve and it evolves much faster and I can be the judge of that. My seat, in the middle and are there are no one but me so I must quickly shift to the window seat because. So enthusiastic are the air-hostesses that they gander all over the comfortable craft, playing a deft hand in making it cozy and then I get acquainted to my seat, that fat leathery cushioned foam against my back, against my nape, against my buttocks, against my thighs and my legs dangle on the low, when I want them to... and when I want them to, they rest on the finely carpeted floor, my feet encased in my sandals. They rest, when they want on the carpeted, I pay them no heed so here and there they go about, scratch, scoff and stretch they do and drag themselves through and about, hither and thither-

-Safety instructions now and I must have heard it a thousand times. What’s more to it? The seat belt, the oxygen masks and and the life jackets with the whistle and that’s about it. What’s to save me from catching myself in fire if the turbine that I can get a view from my window should burn, break, thrust into the airship and blast on my chest light me on fire. I see no extinguishers. Probably, they would throw me off board to save other passengers. Be still now, the fight is starting. I should have brought a book or something, at least a journal to record things, events, people. The engine starting... I feel its intensity... the life of the craft and the life that is the life of every life on-board. If anything should happen to the engine, we would be in apocalyptic jeopardy. This is science… within each of its advancements are hidden ten perils that make you curse those advancements. The biggest peril of science came with its biggest advancement which was in the seventeenth century, fully proper that is; the industrial revolution. Well, I should refrain from calling it a revolution because it would not fit that term and it is far to antagonizing to be given the same name as Russian revolution or French revolution or Cuban revolution... Let us call it industrial that-which-shall-not-be-named and with the coming of industrial that-which shall-not-be-named came the worst form of social organization known to man since the Dark Ages which is colonialism. If there was ever a cause for colonial expansion, a need for it, a reason or source, it was none other than industrialization because people required raw goods to for factories so that factories produced finished goods and provided them for the market. Yes... market also arose from industrialization, another evil that led people cite ownership over petty things like labor and grandiloquent things better left unchained like nature. But history and science glorified this advancement just because they bore fruity outcomes.

The sweet glory sprint of the flight on the runway; the moment so glorious, so inspirational, never do we seem to underestimate it. The flight then, casts off, oft with a shrug as if regretting to be on the air but the passengers now have a cold look on their faces, a rather relieved one; for one thing they could now make their own sprint to the toilet. Who feels heavy in a two hour flight? I should feel heavy...I have four hours of this containment to look forward to but am not. The people always eager to get in an airplane...feel its charms...its comforts. Ah, look at those little pieces pieces of lands out of the window..so pristine...a view for peace...bread and peace... the slogan for the Russian revolution... the view... the view...yes...October revolution... and yet how Tolstoy writes about Czar; one generation’s hero becomes the next generation’s villain... Machiavellian... the Prince with all its philosophies and its political strategies for the prince a book for the haves to know how to handle power and *Rules for Radicals*, a book for the have-nots on how to take it, seize it. The view, the islands, scattered and filled with verity I look, disbelieving what I see like I used to disbelieve those science projects of friends...their model houses, small and built on green velvet paper and now the same sight before me lies... the same velvet paper. The more I look the more it seems to be getting away and now it will be away, away into the clouds and the only thing in sight, the blue sky, like an entrée of potato mashed up with white clouds or the white clouds the potato. How high am I, for some reason I do not feel, just a ring in my ears... the eardrums taking the pressure of the height. I travel lightly and therefore have not grown resilience to these travel-related discrepancies. I’m not sea-sick though but them I have taken the sea route more times than I can remember. Ah, the journey of the sea is the ideal journey, not like the journey I have to endure now. They make it so comfortable for the very reason of cloaking the general discomfort people feel in air travel, and that is why airports are so... chic. Why do I use that word even thought I told myself frequently that I would not use it? But it seemed to fit here rightly, the meaning, the sound, the harmony just right-

-The plane is midway and so am I, in my thoughts. I try to recall verses, prose, not of my own but of those written.

*You have heard, of course, of those tiny fish in the rivers of Brazil that attack the unwary swimmer by thousands and with swift little nibbles clean him up in a few minutes, leaving only an immaculate skeleton? Well, that’s what their organization is. “Do you want a good clean life? Like everybody else?” You say yes, of course. How can one say no? “O.K. You’ll be cleaned up. Here’s a job, a family, and organized leisure activities.” And the little teeth attack the flesh, right down to the bone. But I am unjust. I shouldn’t say their organization. It is ours, after all: it’s a question of which will clean up the other.*

-Have a gin now. What does it matter to them? To us? Nothing, we are a crippled generation riding too fas along a dark road thinking that there is tending to us with a light at the end of the tunnel-

-When will it land? When will it land? Be patient... be still... you are soon to be off but now a moment more, a breath long. No, it is yet too far and I have to yet entertain myself more and more with my thoughts, or dreams as I try to get some sleep and exploit the comfort given to us to hide the frenzy. Frenzy of what? Ah, never mind because one thing leads to the other; the questions are answered in riddles and the riddles have to be answered by seeking answers to more questions. It is all a big lie... it is all a big hoax. Heart, be still, be calm for what? No, I shall not sleep even though I have a long journey ahead of me I will not sleep... adamant... this is not my arrogance, however and neither my determination. I do not like to determine in the way the society now defines it to be to be, striving towards your goal... blob of waste. The truth is, we always strive... failure and success is not in our hands and there is no such thing as a thing as failure or success... in a competition it might be but not in reality but now we drift away from reality and since we, meaning they drift away from reality, I am pushed in anti-reality, a state where I am to define to define my own reality in a way. It also does not fall under the context of a hyper-reality, no... it is different. It is when I want to make a meaning of the world but it does not mean. I do not mean to give a particular meaning to reality at all, just that it would seem real but it does not. So, I refuse to admit and give concession to that reality and form my own. Normally, it might be called dementia but even the world we live in is a fog- *All the world’s a stage and we merely players in it-* Shakespeare, a bard beyond his ages and in his words, anti-reality. I would soon write an essay about it... a problem arises... if there is such a thing as an anti-reality, how is it different from alienation in all its literary, psychological and social context? I would say the difference between the two would be in their extent, as alienation can and has become a norm in the current century and its presence in the society has been identified. The other difference lies in a way alienation is a thought or a primary psychological state of being. Anti-reality on the other hand develops from reason and logic, though that logic might be distorted but the people to whom it would seem distorted to the current jurisprudence which follow a different sphere of reality and so it is just that to them it would appear distorted or illogical. The point here being that we can go on to do what we do as we please as long as we please and there would be no consequences to it if we develop a reality strong enough to get ourselves out of a dilemma through strong logic. The role of conditions that arise are also significant to the fabric of anti-reality-

-Oh, the flight has stopped, oh it is only Calcutta now. The flight now waits for the disembarking of passengers whose journey ends here and the boarding of the passengers whose journey starts from here, and now a wait-

After five long hours, the flight landed in the Indira Gandhi international airport and Rahil was completely exhausted by then. He had slept the two hours from Calcutta to Delhi and he was well-off in sleep till the air-hostesses asked him to straighten his seat when they were about to land and so he pressed the button and felt the seat plop back into its upright position and then he lethargically fell back on the upright seat with a paralyzed spine. He could net hear anything and his mind was so distorted that he could not even see properly what lay inches ahead of him. He had never felt such way in his life and he thought he just had a brain vein rupture or an aneurysm for him to be in that state. All the things in the flight seemed hazy to him and he was at his wit’s end and in absolute fright when he was barely able to talk and barely able to move his arms. He was filled with fear, no doubt but he was also filled with intrigue at what had took over him. He was feeling disoriented, even not being able to recall for a little while where he was or how to look about. Gradually he started coming to his senses and his long hair hanging over his his eyes, he gently put to a side and he discovered that he could now move his hands. Vision also came back to him, then and finally the will too, the will to get up and step out in the unknown land.

“Which terminal did it land in, sir?” He asked a person sitting behind him.

“Terminal three” the middle-aged well dressed man with soft white hair said, thinking nothing of it. He was of no significance to the old man.

The man stretched to get off first even though he was behind him thinking he would let him go out of respect for the old man and out of a favor towards the old man for answering his question and since Rahil needed a little time for himself himself, he ultimately did let him go fist although he would usually not. He had a very cynical attitude towards old men no matter how kind or jovial they were. To him, they always seemed spiteful and they seemed unkind, unkind to life as if life for them had already ended and that they had already played a part so long in the course of time that they had nothing to look pread- to but to reminisce on the memories of their youth gone by. He got up and felt his mouth, rubbed his palm all the way from his lips to his chin and felt a little spittle of saliva. He became conscious of what the air-hostesses must have thought of him as they passed him by or when they woke him up to straighten his seat. Then he realized that if they did not have the care of putting a blanket over him while he was asleep out of plain hospitality which they are taught firsthand, they did not have the right to form an opinion of him or judge him by his actions. He had a very aching head that time as he nonchalantly took a walk stuck between a middle-aged woman and a middle-aged man.

He switched on his cell as he was walking down the passage of the airplane instantly came a call from his brother’s friend who came to pick him and where he was supposed to stay. He climbed down the stairs and without haste, patiently got into the bus that took the passengers from the runway strip to the entry of the airport. He entered terminal three and was confounded by the largeness of it. He did not feel it till he got to the baggage claim and stood besides the belt to take his luggage.

He saw the three big palms, each in a different stance decorating the wall like wreaths in a funeral. They sure made the place look good and the place was titanic to look at, he thought and surely very grand to be but he despised grandness; he liked austerity. Still, he appreciated how advanced the airport looked but he also knew the price the adjoining residents of Palam had to pay.

His phone rung and he picked it up. “Yes?” his voice squealed on this end.

“Are you here yet?” the rash voice on the other end asked, the waves of it all over the place.

“Yes” he said again, quite like the echo of the first one, equal in potency and equal in effect and the only difference was the conversion of the question to the answer.

“Do say which terminal?” asked the voice on the other with a high tone of sarcasm.

“Terminal three” Rahil said, already fearing that the stay might not go well.

“Okay, take your bags and wait for me outside the gate. I’ll be there in a bit. You better hurry.” The voice said and hung up.

He could see that the voice on the other end was demanding and he feared that the person in possession of that voice would be too. He never liked demanding people and he always like people who were easy going no matter how careless they were or how much of a collateral damage they caused. He just liked them out of instinct. He waited for his bag on the belt at the same time glancing around the airport ogling everyone irregardless of their gender. He felt that just ogling the girls would be misogynist and disgusting and ogling everyone would be just crazy and weird which he did not mind being. Finally he saw his little red bag coming to him through the mechanical belt in a fixed speed. He took it off when it came near his hand and then he exited the airport and was immediately caught by a strong gush of warm air which was so peculiar of Delhi that time of the month and which confirmed that his stay in Delhi was definitely going to be unpleasant.

He came out and waited and there was no call on his cell phone. He did not like calling and so he waited for a little while more. Finally, his phone rung and it was his brother’s friend. He asked him to come near to an auto rickshaw which he could not see at first but then he found it and walked towards it. He saw a white car parked beside it, he did not care to see which brand it was.

“Are you Dhruv Bhaiya?” he asked to the window of the car as it rolled down. The window rolled down a hand signaled to get in. He thought that the had was meant for shaking but he knew he was deceived as the had rapidly went back into the car and grabbed the steering wheel. Rahil opened the door of the vehicle and got in.

-I wonder whether the plane I just came in was also a vehicle and if it was, nobody seemed to mention it that way...words-

In all haste of getting and in all the tense atmosphere of spastic acquaintance of one another, Rahil had completely forgot to give his salutations to Dhruv Bhaiya and so when he remembered it he uttered a slight and unheard ‘hello’. It was unheard. There were no friendly exchanges or welcomes and there was a very plastic silence in the air. Maybe it was for the fact that his ears were in an unnatural state of pressure for the last five hours or that the door of the car was closed and the windows were rolled up that he felt that.

Then the man spoke. “The last time your sister came to stay with us.” He said it with a plain voice but he could ascertain that it was his way of being merry in a union. “Oh” Rahil said and then smiled. The conversation was not awkward for him but he felt uneasy in talking with such a demanding figure which asserted authority with every single word that came out of his big mouth. He had quite a big mouth for his face which seemed all the more harsh and rough owing to the beard and the mustache that surrounded it.

“Your family hasn’t been out of islands since?” his demanding voice asked.

“Um, he took a trip to UP, Meerut to be exact for a few days and then went to Calcutta.” Rahil said in a shaky voice. His voice seemed to come out of his voice and bang on the car’s window begging to end this ordeal.

“Oh, did you come to Delhi then?” he asked again and Rahil could feel a conversation begin which he obviously did not want.

“Yes, but just for a day and then we stayed for much of our trip there.” Rahil answered.

“What were you doing in Meerut? I don’t suppose you just go to a place like Meerut for recreation?” he asked, his voice demanding an answer of him.

The trip to Meerut brought back suppressed memories in Rahil, nightmares he never wanted to reconstruct. It was even before the previous academic cycle that that he visited the place with his family, his aunts and his brother and he thought he would like the place at first and he would also make the trip to Delhi to visit malls and do some shopping. That was not the enlightened and mature Rahil that now sat in the back of the man’s car emotionally suffering immeasurably.

“We went there for a purchase of gold?” Rahil answered in fragments, this being the first and so the questions, too came in fragments.

“Making purchases of gold in a place like Meerut?” asked the man of Rahil.

“Actually, my brother’s brother-in-law had a marginal gold establishment there and so.....” before he could finish, the man completed the sentence “....went there to do some shopping. I understand. I get it although I am offended your brother didn’t visit me” the man said with a voice so plane and dry that Rahil thought it had to sarcasm and that he did not really mean it.

The way from the airport to his house was a long drive. The house was practically out of Delhi in the national capital region or the NCR in Ghaziabad. During the drive, Rahil did not feel like indulging in the conversation although for the sake of all the hospitality and the effort that he was extending towards him, Rahil had to keep one up no matter how uninterested he was in it and so the blank proses came out of his mouth for each of the questions the man asked him, his mind always was elsewhere seeing the contours of Delhi properly for the very first time. His eyes wildly glanced, pupils juggling about as he glanced, the immense structure of the place.

-the lives, enmeshed so cruelly involuntarily yet so naturally, so many lives and to those lives so many stories, each with its own story seeing looking, believing and living those stories of theirs. Strong and weak, rich and poor, wise and the foolish, the excited and the depressed and looking at all those emotions, so many casts and I am blank...numb, dying for an expression. But then what is this I feel? Remorse, remorse for those who live in difference and those who live with indifference. These are all lives, to each their own and yet they are so much more than just another car or bike on a road or another house passed by. I cannot see them that way; for me it is too painful... the loneliness they must feel, I do... for them. Here I see, yes...I see the manifestation of the human pyramid in all its order and design and people above it and people above it and people above it and the peak. These lives, why do they hurt me and why do I feel so different from it? And why does this difference hurt? I feel for them... I do but they are not miserable, they are just living their lives, the people at the peak too, living their lives, some easily some with difficulty yet those with difficulty cannot feel miserable for their state... if they do, that is they end of them... they have to keep themselves happy and here thusly you find... the rose that grows from concrete...the smile on the face of a beggar as he stands with dirty tattered clothes, his naked feet along with his body twitching from the evening heat... no... the afternoon heat... without a shroud on his head...without a drink for his neck... his parched thirsty throat and his arms stretched and palms open eager for alms... those alms feed his family... those ‘chump change’ as the Americans call it not knowing that it means a family’s meal here in our nation. The Indians have developed a might good word for it too ***‘****chillar****’****...*The sun is still gleaming, why, does it never end in here.

“In the summertime, the sunset here can be as late as seven in evening.” The man driving said in the middle of their conversation which caught his attention.

-calling seven...evening... that is beyond the laws of time. I guess laws of time does change for some cases... and to that respect.. the rules of vernaculars too.. the way it sounds... seven in the evening... it is seven in the morning or seven in the late evening and now its seven in the afternoon. In the first look, Delhi seems a cruel city to me...the roads are so huge...that is cruel... the houses so tall yet so small almost like living in a box cramping up the natural space of humans necessary for living for the sake of money...that is cruel. Not only is it cruel but it is also haunting. My future is here... the four years that build a life afterwards...here. Come now, enough of that fatalism.. your life is ahead of you and with that life is that life’s power... Every life has its power...some use it to make money while some use it to make the world a better place to live but even in doing that, they have an ulterior motive of their own... you would think of them as angels but the face of angel is a mask and there is always a motive behind it...some might be as ludicrous as earning people’s appreciation or like mine... to put my social theories to practical usage. I have stepped in Delhi and have felt it beneath it beneath my feet... the feel of it...yes... the feel of it-

Rahil saw the car drive into one of those thin and tall apartments he was so cynical about and knew doubtlessly that they were in the heart of the petty bourgeoisie. He could not despise it because he had to spend the next few days there along with people he had to maintain contact and he know being spiteful of it would hinder that very bridge he sought to make. He could not decide what to make of it, whether it would end of this line of mark or the other and so decided to leave the matter undecided. The man got out of his car and took him and his bag with him through the driveway and to the elevator and after getting into the elevator, he pressed the number four which automatically meant to him that they were financial force to be reckoned with. Then, as if a veil lifts to reveal a trick of magic, the elevator opened almost amidst drum rolls- Rahil could swear he had heard it- and they got off from the elevator and with livid footsteps, he followed the man and he was led into his house. The humble abode was not the least bit humble. The man looked back at the expression of Rahil as though it was his only source of entertainment but he had no expression on his face other than a straight line between his lips and his pupils moving about like balls on a green snooker table as he looked around. His hands occasionally stretched out fingers to put back his hair which was coming on his face as he crouched and stood; the crouched back a symbol of his exhaustion.

No one was in the living room at that moment but he could hear footsteps approaching him from the kitchen and from one of the rooms, the doors to which he could see sitting right from the sofa in the living room.

“Hello dear, how was the flight?” the woman asked apparently his wife. Her name was Gita, a stout figure of same age as the man with big eyes and he could feel their hugeness as she threw her question on him with them, not changing her glance for anything in the world.

“The flight was exhausting. It was five hours. It stopped once in Calcutta.” Rahil answered with unexpected smartness for which even Dhruv bhai looked at him with an animate expression as to how it arose within him. The conversation then began and Rahil appeared to them quite lively and he could feel that both of them were more or less obliged to have their guest. He could tell by the way they talked to each other that they rarely had guests but he promised to himself that he was not going to be the judge of some odd people who were being so generous and hospitable to him out of social occupancy and that he would reciprocative to them in that manner. Amidst their conversation from one of the rooms, came a fair loosely dressed young girl of around seven or eight with a cute beautiful face and small eyes quite contradictory to her mother, which he gathered from the following reply.

“She’s the daughter, Anya and there’s another young man whom you would soon meet. He is around thirteen but looks rather old for his age.” Geeta ma’am informed. She sat shyly on the armrest of the fluffy bourgeois sofa on which her mother sat and talked elegant but dearly, an odd combination indeed, he thought. He was soon to find out it was not so odd but common in the North.

Their conversation extended for longer than he could fathom and this was among the first triangular conversation wherein he was neither did get exhausted nor felt like dying out of suffocation, but only because he sought to apply himself to it. He accepted he could not expect an intelligent conversation and just a conservation of hereabouts, thereabouts and whereabouts and so he simulated the part that suited best for it-all the answers to the questions and all the right questions to the their effect.

Then from out of the corner of his mind, he recalled that he had brought candy bar for the little girl and sweets for the family and so breaking their conversation he bent forward to open his bag which was by the side of his leg where he dropped it and from it took out the offerings. They exasperatingly insisted on its refusal at first but Rahil too insisted strongly that they should have it and finally the sweets changed hand and the candy bar changed hand, from one thin, slender and hairy hand to another thin, fair slender and hairless hand. In those first moments, he was not very methodical which generally was the case when he someone for the first time and those moments ended when out of reverence, the little daughter took Rahil by the hand and asked him to come outside so she could give him the grand tour of the living complex. He looked at the lady first and then the man as if asking the permission.

“He would be tired now so I suggest now is not a good time, young lady.” Her mother said with a great deal of fairness in her tone. The daughter obviously became petulantly adamant in taking him outside as all young children do when you tell them they cannot have something and push the buttons of their childlike psyche. “If she insists.... and it’s not even sundown by now.” He said and got up, then she tugged him as if he were a stallion and she a jockey and took him out of the house. It bothered him that it was around six and it still seemed like mid-afternoon with the sun mildly but still well imposing its presence. That was the reason Rahil saw no problem in going out and quite the opposite would have happened if he saw it was dusk and the sun was well down. He would just take a rejuvenating bath and hit the mattress. On and off then, he would sleep, sometimes in the total trance of it and sometimes awake but lying with his thoughts.

He and the daughter, Anya took the same way to the elevator, there was no other and he saw her taking them both to the ground floor. He did not care to ask where she was taking her.

-time hindered...time saved...ashen are the effects of time in the summertime yet time prevails unmatched there if not here, it does. Nothing, quite like it, the burning example of all that is objective and an inspiration to all that strives to be objective, objective to themselves...about themselves...the winner nowadays, they say, heed time and the importance of time. I do not. I do not heed anything objective, not even something as objective as time. What is time but the coming and going of the sun... Coming and going of the seasons...they naturally do... It is nature not time that they prevail but this compact world refuses to believe so...this world-

They got to the ground floor and after a little walking through the driveway, they got to a little area where there was a slide and a swing which was her notion of a park, a play field and there was the muddy ground cut between the block of concrete that constituted the floor cut along the expanse of the swing and the slide till the see-saw which caught his attention much later. There were some teenagers gathered there, none to the effect of the slide and the swing but to the effect of each others and they were engaged in a discussion although Rahil would hardly use that word or what was going on. Anya got into the huddle and pulled one spectacled girl from it who was dressed in a T-shirt and cotton pajamas who was a little annoyed, he could see, when Anya pulled her out of the teenage huddle. At first she did not pay any special attention to the figure of a tall young man with long hair dressed in a causal cotton T-shirt and black jeans with a crouched back and with his hands, one of which grabbed Anya and the other managing his own hair to keep it out of his eyes. He was pretty taken aback by that as he did not think it to be the general consciousness of someone who sees a complete stranger in their living area especially someone as vindictive as Rahil who was always world-weary and a renegade when it came to making acquaintance with people but before he could ponder over what he had felt that instant, she raised an eyebrow through her glasses at his direction which he too caught a glimpse of and thought of her as very cute in that gesture and then she asked:

“You’re with Anya, right?”

“Yes” he answered and added “I came to stay with her family for a couple of days till the college admission.”

“Oh, where are you from then?” she asked plainly, the raised eyebrow now back in its position.

“Andaman islands. Have you heard of it?” he asked stammering knowing he would get a negative in answer.

“Not quite...” she said but as she tried to continue her answer, two other boys hawked in and cut in the conversation. She knew them both as residents of the same building and Rahil could make out that she knew them well by the warm conversation the boys and the girl were having, talking to each other simultaneously flashing their phones. All of them were younger than Rahil he was the one playing with the little girl at the swing, swinger her by and by.

“Brother come here for a second” one of the boys asked Rahil. He made a gesture that he was playing with Anya at the swing and before he could complete that gesture, the girl came at a rapid pace, took over Rahil and played with Anya at the swing shoving her forward and with each of her shove, the little girl swung faster and higher and shrill noises of joyful laughter could be heard.

“Hey there, what’s your name?” one of them asked.

“Rahil” He answered.

“Which grade do you go to?” one of them asked again. The boy asking the questions was of a a fair complexion and he too, wearing glasses with white frame, a thin red line cutting through both the legs of the spectacles.

“I’ve passed high school. I am not going to take admission in Delhi University.” Rahil said, not proudly because he was confused whether to be proud about it or not.

“They don’t have engineering there.” The other one said. He was of a dark complexion and of greater build, not of an athletic build but he did have a rigid body for age. He lated told him he was in eighth grade and that he attended Tae-Kwon-Do classes. Then the first one instantly took over.

“Where are you from, then?” he asked, his eyes barely visible from his spectacles even though the glasses were transparent. He thought maybe it was the lighting that made it so.

“Andaman” he answered.

“Oh, so have you come here by train?” the boy asked again. A sharp indiscernible smile broke on Rahil’s face as he heard those words. There was no limit to stupidity or lack of knowledge, he thought, that a man ought to have for them to ask that kind of question. Either he was just playing a prank on him or he really had no idea where Andaman really was and he found out not directly however that later was the case when he let out a loud ‘..ooo’ when he told him that he had come by flight and that you cannot travel by train to or from Andaman and that the reason to that is because Andaman is an island surrounded by the Arabian sea on one end and the Bay of Bengal on the other.

“It must feel good though, traveling by flight?” he asked changing the subject and Rahil thought obviously to hide his sleazy sense of awareness. He did answer for a while and just nodded his head as idiots do because he was in a company of one.

“I once traveled from Amritsar to Delhi by flight. It felt good to float through clouds.” The boy said to him, smiling and rolling back his eyes trying to recall that moment, relive it if he could revive it. You should try five hours of it then, if you liked it so much, he thought, recalling the horrifying experience he had on waking up from his Kafkaesque sleep.

-I am small...small...small but never let anyone tell you that. Ah, it does matter how many people tell you that to your face..behind your back...you are to find it anyhow and you are to live through it. Live through it. I was something where I came from...here...nothing...nothing more than what I loathe the most; what I fear the most to be, just another enmeshed wire in the mesh of lives. No, I have peculiarities of my own and a consciousness of my own. Don’t they do? They do and I am just like them, no different...no matter how much I tell myself...no different... this fear takes over me...this fear captures me...tortures me...this fear has become me. Matter, space, time...all the same like us...to us...us. We are no different yet I am...I was...there I felt differently, here...badly...alone...lonely even in the company of boys, girls, this fine young woman...lonely...and sad...I am not nothing and that is my biggest sorrow; being something...just....something-

They came into the house when it was dark and as soon as he got in, he took out his towel and his soap and went for his much awaited bath. As his naked footsteps felt the cold tiled floors, and stomped on it, one after the other, one leg thrusting the other forward, he was stopped on his tracks by the mother. Rahil did not know what to make of it. He thought she was going to give him slippers or maybe she was eager to ask him something that could not wait until after the bath, something about dinner, what he would eat or what he would like with dinner, dessert, ice-cream but there were no such questions. Her hand grabbed his hand and his hand grabbed the soap case. Silence followed. An unnatural silence followed and the four walls of the room, the portraits hung on it seemed to be melting to him. He could not bear this unnatural gesture, this unnatural silence. Nonetheless, it followed and prevailed from everlasting to everlasting like something inevitable; as absolute as birth and as inevitable as death. He could see her her big eyes blowing up like a puffer-fish with each passing moment. This did not seem natural to him, this moment. Maybe he was thinking about this moment too much and just when he thought of his tendency to think overly, he thought of the thought of thought, it ended like it was never there and voice erupted breaking, as he had imagined, ages of silence.

“Where are you going with that?” the lady of the house pointing to the soap case and before he could say anything and seeing that he was clueless, she added “There’s already a soap in the bathroom. I suppose you do not use a personal soap even in you own home, do you?”

She extended the proverbial sense of the sentence into effective practicality. Its effect was however felt by Rahil and he did feel a lot homely by this gesture and by repeated gestures overtime.

Dinner was to be served soon and the meantime had to be passed, so he went to the room where the little daughter was playing and played with her for a while. He liked dip in the innocence of children and feel their childhood f he had ever lost any. No matter how mature he would appear to himself and to others through his words or gestures, at his heart and in his sub-conscious was the same affinity towards uncertainty among many other things that children have too. He liked to see things set up and then watch them fall. He would also do that sometimes idly with his arguments turning assertions into cases by applying some kind of sense or logic and then using heavy rebuttals bringing his own house down and then questioning the logic more than the case. She was an adorable little thing although her persistence to certain things mildly infuriated him but he would never so out of manners as to scold her about it. He would then use all the knowledge he had on child psychology and mind games and divert her from it by posing some other thing more interesting and better than the previous. After she got bored with board games and other little games she had, she felt like watching a little television. This came as a boon to him as Rahil never was much of a fan to it and so he complied on whatever she needed to watch and he sat alongside her while she watched it which, he made out from her expressions and her ecstatic mood, that not many people in the house had time to do. He would just sit bleached in his thoughts watching those endless streams of pixels light up on the crisp thin screen while his eyes saw farther beyond that.

-A day here and a day there and a day here is a day here; all days are days and nights are nights. Now...night...tomorrow...day... an important one...an important one to get things done; the college admission, yes… Viable, virulent, voracious, vicarious… the day...sleepless…senseless… A stranger walks in...The boy... the same one on the play field…better not wake up…the day tomorrow, the time early and the scenario crowded. If it’s one thing I hate is crowd. You should know. You live in India. You should get adjusted to it. You should also get interested in sleeping with strangers, the prostitutes at the brothels do. Ah, the idea. Ah, the syllable...ah...ah...ah. The next day does not follow, thoughts, immeasurable, consecutive, beaming darting thoughts with no end, no discharge. Discharge it; one by one...one by one...one by one…logic…use reason with each one and then decipher the senseless as if there’s reward at the end...but none. Nosferatu...the sound of sleep is sung ‘side s’me. Eager, hungry sleep, sweet is the taste of it and you can feel it. He feels it. I am hungry. Feed me...feed me-

The next day he woke up very early contrary to is daily itinerary and was lying in the bed with feigned sleep but an alert state. The state was then roused to full alertness by the coming of the man asking him to get up and be ready. He felt that he felt that he would throw tantrums, not get out of the bed but Rahil instantly rose up and made his way for the wash basin in the toilet to brush his teeth.

-the brush churns the paste...incisors to canines to molars to pre-molars once and then again.

*Bubble bubble toil and trouble, scent and incense arise*

*The feet then shake, the hand then quake*

*For all the world suffice*

The sound of the spit hitting the porcelain bowl like the febrile clanking of metal against glass, clank...clank...schpatt...schpattt...clank...clank. The cold water and the feel of it on my face then. I wonder if I can see through water, try it now. Get rid now of the sandman’s endowments, free the nostrils from the clasps of the Tarzan. Wash it off, wash that off. Wash...wash...wash. The entreaty of shallowness is shallowness; shall, has been, was and always will be. Code décor: paramour, hope and passion, love and lust, spawning on every thought, every soirée and beating on the door of the visceral astute animosity as one sees the other visage that is a prelude to it. All is lost and found then, corresponding to expatriation of the ‘will’ out and solicitousness gauges the sideburns of the scanty Tristram Shandy or the scanty sideburns or Tristram Shandy, one way or another, schmooze the news-

The way from the man’s house to the college was less than an hour’s drive which, though mediately far for Rahil, was conferred by the man as very near. The college was in the New Delhi area of New Delhi which seemed a little paradoxical to Rahil as he thought why was a part within the city was given or if not given known as the same name as the city itself and it was exactly not the most prestigious part of Delhi either; that he made out of observation. He saw the man drive his car to a familiar position. It was not a place he had seen in dreams or a recollection out of his memory but he had been there before when his family last visited Meerut and they drove through Delhi one day although that day was too dark and painful for Rahil as he a had a serious case of a heatstroke with headache and stomach ache and fever. The narrative so broke completely into ‘*noveau roman*’ and he could only remember his trip in flashes of places, this flash being one of them.

But the car did not wait in that place for long as he started the car again, drove along a straight road, took a turn and Rahil was then forever thrown at the navigational mercy of the authoritative man. There was no trouble in getting to the college from that point on. They reached the front gate of the college, and he could see from the car was parked the view of the college from above the front gate. The colleges seemed to him gorgeous and an ideal place of study. He thought he would be glad to study in a place like that. So different was it than the only two colleges he had seen and even been to, one the technical college where he studied and the other an arts college he would often go to meet some professors or students. This college was completely different from both of them both in terms of its infrastructural expanse and the flocking crowd that he saw before him all trying to swarm in to get a place of study. This was the admissions for the first cutoff and so expectations and excitement was on the high.

Both of them got out of the car and the man asked him whether he had the certificate folder with him even though he could see the folder in his hand. He had to ask that question out of formality, Rahil speculated- or maybe he asked it with the motive of asking another question if his certificates were all in order and there and so he opened his folder and took a fast glance at the real transcripts and its copies and mentally calculated whether they were adequate for the moment. When he was sure of the fact that they were which took a little time because he was a little slow at mental mathematical calculations. The man inquired in a small cubicle which was made on the side of the gate for an attender where a clerk sat looking after the copies and the real certificates and authorizing the person to go only after properly checking and tallying the originals with the duplicates. Delhi was a city of world-class cons who knew exceptional ways to forging documents and granting access even amid the securest and most clandestine of places, Rahil was to later find out. With the authorized number written on the duplicates, the clerk would also stamp the document with the college name and logo and along with that document, he would give him another paper with instructions on it that guided the student on where to take the forms from and what to do next. Rahil saw that this was going to be a hectic process and his mind started to jangle already as he read about.

He showed the stamped duplicate of his transcript to the guard in the gate dressed in blue and black, SIS security he could see, who gently showed him from one end of the gate to other and then immediately pushed the metal door back to its place to avoid anybody else getting in to aid the students who had already gone. Only one attendant was granted entry with the students because some students would gang up with their friends and after their business done, they would hang about informally and tease and ogle the girls, misguide the students and parents just for the fun of it. Rahil knew that because he was once among that league in some far distant time. There was a long queue between him and the room he was assigned to. He belonged to the category of ‘other backward classes’ since his was among the pre-1942 settler in the Andaman islands that resided there as a part of the first British civil settlement aside from the convicts brought to cellular jail.

He waited in the queue among the many personalities each one different while his relative promised him that he would come right back and wandered off to find more proper information about admissions.

-those lively lively creatures stand in this scalding scalding heat. The one before me, a practicing Muslim, dressed in a plain white tunic with beard, dark and with a Muslim cap on...the purpose of it here...gives...better than my long black, now fiery hair anyways. Look at that typical Delhi youth standing there at the first; I envy his place. Graphic T-shirt on a tight body, and those new brown skin tight jeans that are much in fashion now that those common youth walk about in...those fools... a fool like him, a fool sitting on a golden branch...Kalidasa....Surdasa... I envy his place. The mood is traditional but the soul transitional, transcendental...save his. One goes, one step further I advance one wait less. How would art be in a place like this, the pursuit of it? I need to have the freedom of writing what I write and them to have the stomach for reading what I write and the eye of appreciating it...or judging it though if not basking in its appreciation. I would write about nymphs...yes and man’s appreciation of those nymphs and the cuckoldry of the modern man...the manifestation of cuckoldry since the beginning of their life, the peak of it, in the Indian youth...the biggest cuckolds no matter how much they pose to be ideal...they are cuckolds even in their portrayal as ideal...as chic. They want something they can never have...socially...sexually...sex...Freud and then they are driven to neuroses about it. Some of them are too benign of the Freudian realization, some too malignant...so malignant that they become cancerous to the society, these deviants. They do not become such through the over-realization of the Freudian theory but in their repression of sex as a way of representation of themselves. The theories of Wilhelm Reich suit well for them. They are the Wilhelm Reichs of the society. I am close, just two more and then I will be inside the room. Which is which? Is this college the ideal one for me? Yes it is big and it is much sought after judging from the crowd now but look at these tattered walls and the small rooms and the open courtyard-that is something I like- but many things I do not like about this college. A fear still grips me. This society is not for me. I feel I should run way from it. My feet are tied now, I am thrown in the gauntlet and now there’s nothing much left to do for me than to survive. Still, specter, seraph, spirit, soul...guide me. Out of it. I fear to be here not knowing why so. Not of why I do I feel this fear. That too, but more of why do I have to be here; why am I here? My existence here is unpleasant, discomforting, arousing in me a sense of unsettling unrest that is beyond par. Is it the heart, the mid or the the heart inside the heart, the blood inside the veins or the cells constituting those veins or the atoms inside those cells or the strings that form those atoms... the existence of strings is not proved yet but soon will be. We just do not have the means for it yet. There are twenty six dimensions in the universe, however. I think there are more. Philosophically every subjective reality is a dimension in the objective space-time reality but that is too far-sought. I do not second it. I do. It is Romantic to think that art and science should share a common connection. Maybe in the corporate world. Maybe in the world of the Bugatti or the Harley Davidson or the Burj Khalifa. Ah, so possible in the corporate and the imperialist world. This fear holds on to me. Why. I do not question it. I do not question its sheer persistence. I question its hindrance, hindrance to keep me from something I want. The tendency of compromise sets in again; a skill I was taught by the society, compromise and something, something I cannot seem to get rid of. I would never get rid of it. By now it is ingrained and the best thing to do now is to cultivate it to something good, like a beatnik. I am very wrong, I think in calling them so. Fear still grips, its uneven, dirty and sharp nails still lodged firm into my heart and how I should deliver myself from it. I am going along the path of compromise even though I do not deem it fit to be used here. Still I do. This ache is too much for me to bear. The fear....and the anguish....that comes with it... Heed it! Heed to it! Heat stroke, from standing here too long, heart stroke, from the fear hits me divergently like the cat-o-nine tails. How do I know of it? Porn. Funny vocabulary that brings out, BDSM. Gag, cuffs, kink, sadism, masochism, Juliette, spread-eagled, hogtied, abuse, abject humiliation, penetration, slave, mistress, bull whip, latex, nylons, high heels, face-sitting...corsets...trample... I’m too far off it. Fear still... decapitating, nauseating, tingling, numbing fear accompanied with random ataxia. I do not want to study here. Suddenly. I beg for it. no...no... Please...please...reason with yourself now! It has gone beyond reason. It is words now. Everything is beyond words. Words are what, they have no meaning. So everything is beyond words. Yet fear, this fear is equitable. Fear is never equitable. One self talks to the other...Guide me, o me. I am into the biblical darkness seeking a logical light. I know I cannot find one. But fear now is not of the darkness, it is from Light, the better for worse, the fear for the former and affinity for the latter. The loom of time shall wave all fabric and fold by fold each layer falls on the other, uncut, untamed. Am I an embroidery in this fabric with my prescribed place and a prescribed scope or am I stuck between the folds of the uncut cloth as I came into this world and this cloth cast on me. Only one remain, between and his turn comes fast? Sss... what was the deal with the previous none? Why was he let out so early? Eh, probably had the wrong room. I am in the wrong place. I tell myself this time and again. To whom? Why? Puzzled, I am, shriveled between obstinacy and obstreperousness and the only answer seems to be an obscurantist obviation through an offbeat oddity-

Finally, his turn came at last, he thought. He walked into one of those small rooms, there were three of them lined against one another with tin walls but he got in he saw that the walls inside were something much softer and he could have an easy breath as the room was air conditioned. His stay however was not as extended as he wanted it to be as the middle-aged lady whom he thought of as shrewd did not even once raised her eye from a file that was opened carelessly on her lap and as he walked in, she just asked from him the duplicate, took a look at it and as if about to do something important, gestured him to move aside, lurched forward and sent her eyes in search for the handyman dressed in dark gray who happened to be nearby.

“Send a cup of tea here fast, you lazy old sod and why is this air conditioner not working properly?” she barked at it which sent Rahil out of the room for a moment and in that one moment he backed out of the small room, one boy managed the time to utter in his ear:

“Ma’am is really frisky in the dry Delhi heat. Someone better fix that AC fast and give her juice instead of a tea.”

As if that whisper was a push, he took two steps automatically inside the room and saw the academician make another mark, a sign, he later made out-it was so small and shabby he almost overlooked it as a careless mark from her pen- and gave him directions to where he was supposed to go, still her eye not meting his and fixed to the file with the papers hung unevenly about.

He got out of the room and trying to recall the directions which he had partially forgotten, could only recall the room number where he was supposed to go and fill his application form.

-now, it will happen. I...it will. This is the boon of uncertainty and the prize to the worshipers of chaos get out of all their faith in it... the butterfly effect... Bounty flows my way and I feel it. The heat is getting into my mind. No, it is just the other self talking. Hope...hope..for it. I cannot conceive a life with it. I cannot go back to life without it. One statement negates the other. The purity of thoughts, come hither. Where should I go? That is the question-

As he stood there pondering and glancing about without intent and aimlessly, out of nowhere, the man reappeared.

“What happened?” he asked

“They asked me to go to room number four.” Rahil answered.

“Well then?” and with those words, he changed his position and looked around as to where they supposed to go taking the look that Rahil had on his face for delusion and hence taking the task of finding a way, with a smile of humorless derision. After a walk together, they were supposed to end the college and so the man asked Rahil to go forward. He went in without him and followed a group of student who he supposed were going the same. It was to his great fortune that even through such a faulty method, he ended up in front of the right room because the students were all indeed going to the same room. When he entered the course, a man asked him:

“Which course?”  
“I’m looking for admission. I’m not in any course.” Rahil replied.

The attendant rolled his once, took a havy sigh as though he was about to say something very long and asked again:  
“Which course are you taking admission to?”

He looked at the attendant with a queasy smile and replied:

“English literature, sir.”

The man then directed him to a table where around five students stood such that he had no way of looking what was going on at that table. He waited at the side of the attendant and waited for the table to clear and every time the attendant would look at him asking with silence as an expressionist why he was standing there, he would plaster up that same queasy smile as before and he stopped looking. Finally when one of the student handed over the finished application form to the man sitting at the other end of it, he walked over and filled the empty space.

He was greeted with a big smile from the fair face at the other end of the table.

“We need your best of four subjects.” The professor, probably of English sitting on the other end, the rightful owner to the fair face and big smile asked of him. He handed over the professor his transcripts and let him be the judge of things.

-this is the moment, it shall not falter now. Quiet...listen...feel and then feel happy, sad , good, crazy ecstatic but for now, please. This is not the time. This is not the place. There are two sides of the moon-Mr. Apollo and Mr. Dionysus. One wants it and the other is weary of it. Time shall tell which would prevail, which would fall but in the defeat of any one of them would be a defeat of him for both of them are an integral, inseparable part of me, my mind and my psyche and sooner or later, one shall...will repent the fall of the other... The fall... Amsterdam...Judge-penitent. Hold now, listen to what he says. He is taking quite some time. It was not that way for the other students, checking and cross checking maybe-

“I am afraid you did not meet the cutoff percentage.” The professor said with a blank expression, the smile lost.

“But how? I mean the cutoff percentage was eighty two, right?” Rahil asked flushed with fluttering fear of what had just happened. This was, however, a moment of blankness, a moment of sheer anticipation, wait, for error on his part.

“Yes, eighty two percent and your cutoff comes out to be exactly eighty percent. Here, see for yourself.” The professor said and handed him the duplicate transcript and with it his cell phone on which he calculated it.

‘I damn well will see for myself’ thought Rahil and picked out the best four subjects in which he had the highest percentages, one after the other and then he tapped in those numbers in the calculator. Eighty, the answer came out to be and Rahil stood frozen for a moment, ashen with two of his fingers in one hand clasping the paper and on the other hand the professor’s cell phone.

-which side did win and which one lose? I ask this question because I feel remorse all over-

He was interrupted in the middle, not by anyone other than himself as he handed him his phone and with head dropped down neither in embarrassment nor in disappointment but in doubt as he exited the room and to his relative who was waiting outside for him.

“Is it happened? What happened?” the relative asked eagerly, question after question. Rahil’s eyes met his and he felt a peril take him aback; that peril, that he had just felt was of the defeat of his purpose of coming to Delhi and of all the extension of hospitality he was so exquisitely enjoying was soon to become an unwanted imposition on Rahil’s relatives. Sure there were more cutoff lists to be released, the second, the third, the fourth and if there were leftover seats even fifth and sixth but now he just that feeling that he had which even after constant refutes on part of his family and bitterness on part of his mother, made him take this endeavor all the way to though it was not much physically but it mattered financially and to him, psychologically and he felt the shocks of cultural alienation and alienation people normally feel in big city but in his case heightened beyond his par.

“The cutoff percentage was eighty two. I only fared eighty.” He replied.

“What?” The man asked, his authoritative and demanding figure now overtaking him and with that mood he added in stern voice “Did they change it or what? Didn’t you check before making the long trip from islands to here?”

“I saw it was eighty in the list. I saw it with my own eyes. I do not know how this can happen.” Rahil replied because even he was confused about what had happened although one part of him was celebrating the occurrence of this uncertain event, he did not quite feel the celebration.

“Okay then, let’s check the cutoff again. There should be a list on the wall somewhere.” The man said to him and both of them went looking for it. At the end of some room, and pinned up on a notice board, they saw the list and Rahil saw it had ‘eighty percent’ and so he called his relative over to look it. Both of them had risen their expectation. They thought now it was definitely a mistake on their part. But Rahil promised to himself that he would not do the mistake again and so he carefully checked each and every thing written on the cutoff list.

*Zakir Hussain Evening College*

“What did you find the list? Why, its eighty percent!” the man uttered.

“No, its for the evening batch.” Rahil replied and then pointed his attention towards the name of the college written in big letters.

Rahil could see from the look of his relative that he was growing uneasy and impatient just being there.

“Its no use standing here and sulking here then, I guess. Lets go home and wait for the next cutoff list. Its just two days away.” He said with a lively voice. The man’s voice was always lively and now it was made livelier on the thought of returning home; both of them getting into the car now. Weird thoughts now flushed in Rahil, different and these thoughts kept him silent throughout his journey. He was torn apart from the middle, one side white, the other black.

-What use... still, things are right the way they are. Don’t sulk now. No. All that happens happens for the best. But then you despise fate, don’t you? I despise faith, not uncertainty. Things are right the way they are...Recurrent thoughts. People will be hurt, so let them be hurt. I have been hurt, haven’ I? Blasted by this sudden unrealistic occurrence, out of nowhere-yes, maybe for my own good-but the cruelty of it lies in its surprise. Surprise! Balloons are burst and whistles are blown and people come out from everywhere shake my hands, pat me on the back, some hug me, some even kiss me, I hear bursts and see paper snakes slither about the air. Oh, what is this? Snow spray, white, foam, the shot of it, on the air, on other people’s faces, on me, no...no.. Tete-a-tete and I am surprised-

-Ah, silence-

-The surprise of it is the silence; the consolation of it is the celebration. The absurdity...the silence. Fun is pun is nun is bun is run is gun is sun is dun is tun is jun... Tiredness...awkwardness... I am about to feel a lot more of it. Experience is to be remunerated now and what I know is taught to me, what I do not know is expected of me. Still I shall pay my debt and make my way out of it come what may. The pangs of fear have broken into my skin and its poison now run nigh through my veins and it dictates how am I to think, in the intoxication of it. This intoxication is amusing though...funny. It makes me expectant in the complete darkness of state. I am now hopeful in the purveying of this fear flowing through my veins. It has made me optimistic towards the pessimistic in search of an idealistic light that I was so much wary of. This light is not religious, not ethical, not metaphysical and of course not social, in terms of social flattery. This light is ironical, sourced by deceit. But I do not know of this deceit or I don’t want to. It still sheds a light in a place of darkness and I, like a small, wantonly, weakly insect that I am, allured by it. It is sheer destruction...sure success. It is the price I pay for quenching my thirst with salty water- delusion. Nothing can come by and save me now, no lifeboat, no buoy thrown from the railing of a sea liner not because I have drowned too deep but because I do not wish to be saved, wish to overlook the fact that I am drowning until I have drowned. I am not leaving everything to fate. I am leaving everything to chance. I cross my heart, literally with a dagger piercing through my naked chest and parting flesh like the staff of Moses as I slash forward, and oozing fresh warm drips of blood trickling down my bare chest accumulating and coagulating over my nipples a little and then extending further down, and I hope to die, a child-lik phrase turned chilly in its literal sense. This further proving the fact that nothing is what it seems. One minute more here now, and I will detest my life. But why? Why this fear? This unending sense of impending danger and jamais vu. This is jamais vu, unsafe, unhealthy. Maybe it is resultant to the disappointment that I faced just now, but was not that disappointment previously anticipated. It is true what Zizek says about things we want and our aspirations, dreams that we cannot take it in, in its wholeness. I knew this but I took it for granted. Never aspire. Always live like a mushroom, among it, on decay, on wastelands, on the marsh of human life not among blooming red rose because blooming red roses have thorns unless you are big enough to ride above their stems, and with ‘big’ I mean financial bigness. Jamais Vu, is should avoid...it is a symptom for many terrible ailments, seizures, epilepsy... Dostoevsky had epilepsy. He wrote about them, even. I recall: I I read a reading of a writing of a reading of Dostoevsky’s writing which mentioned the depiction of aura in one of his books but when I read the book, it was simply not there. So much for plagiarism, or maybe I read the plagiarized version of the book, pirated. One can never tell, as long as it is not Oxford or Wordsworth or Arrow or Vintage or Penguin or Rupa or Little Rock or Collins...Even these falter sometimes, hinder with unnecessary texts in between text... in my War and Peace, so lengthy it was and the leather back version...come to think of it, maybe the leather back version might have been a dupe, and a little extra pages read never kills anyway. The heat is turning morbid now. The way from the college to the apartment to the college and now the way back to apartment from college differ in their period of time, the distance might have changed, or the velocity. Speed equals distance upon time, they say and only if it were that simple because even if Fourier algorithm wouldn’t account for the time one would waste in traffic. Patience is a foundation upon which I have built my castle of personality. And this time has allowed me to come to a resolution to prepare an antidote to the fear gushing through my veins. The fear is the antidote, the resolution says. Am I to heed it? Heed it-

The man drove him into the driveway and asked him if he could show himself the way to the house to which Rahil replied that he most certainly would, even though he was not sure if he could. He replied out of his absent-mindedness and his need to exit out of the conversation as he always did when he was in the middle of a meditation. He was a little lost at first but gradually, not taking much time, he found his way to the elevator remembered that they were on the fourth floor. He got to the fourth floor and remembered that their house was at the end of the hall. He rang the bell and waited for the door to open, which was opened by the wife who guided him in silently without asking, and looking that the light of him was near extinguished. He gently put down his folder containing his documents on the glass tea table and sat on the couch before the table with a hard thump quite contrary to the way he put his folder. She just asked him if he would like some tea and he nodded in approval though in his mind it was desperation irrespective of the fact that it was burning hot outside even though it had rained the night before. It was late night that it rained and Rahil was concentrating on his sleep and the next day so much so that he forgot to witness his first rain in Delhi although he heard the shower of the rainfall on the concrete kingdom and smelled the much familiar scent of primeval rain hitting the asphalt floor of the civil Earth. From the kitchen he heard a voice so distorted that he could not even hear it, much less respond to it. He kept his silence and the kitchen kept its silence too. The aunt then came out from the kitchen with the tea and very properly set it on the tea table just precisely next to the folder, bending as she did do and still silent. She took her leave after that and went into the kitchen with indifference. Rahil sat lavishly and sipped on his tea and halfway through his lavishness, he got a phone call which was from his mother.

“Yes, what happened? Have you secured the place?” her mother asked with an expectant voice so typical of Indian mothers. Rahil explained her the whole situation putting great detail and character into his case, tying up all the loose ends as a diplomat does, still his voice varied with breaking hesitation so typical of Indian sons who were so akin to disappointment that they gave rise to a vocal stereotype.

“So, what are you going to do now?” she asked.

“I think I will go to Calcutta at the earliest. As it is, I am awaiting the result of Scottish Church and St. Xavier’s and if I am there, I scour for college still open for admissions. And if all else fails, there’s Calvin.” She said, the last part with disintegrating resignation. And then he added the obvious:

“And then I don’t feel so good here and studying here would just depress me. The city is not to my liking and I feel very...much unrelated here almost as if I’m not even supposed to be here.”

“Yeah, then I would suggest the best would be to go to Calcutta and see there but you have to promise to take admission in Calvin college if you do not get any other college there because then we would be left with no option given that time is running out and soon most of the colleges would be done with their procedures if they haven’t already done so.” She said to him in a consoling and comforting voice.

“Okay then, try to get me to Calcutta as fast as you can. Each moment here in Delhi now at this point is a moment wasted.” He replied and after a few dearly words, she hung up. There was love in those words she spoke and there was love in those words he spoke, more than reason, more than complaint, more than penitence, love and with that love, through that love, they knew each other and understood each other beyond reason and logic.

“Who was that?” the lady asked as she came out of the kitchen and sat beside him. Rahil judged that his work in the kitchen had finished by now and so it was time, for him, to stand for himself over the choice he took or in his defense, the chaos that threw him to this choice, this nemesis. With a coarse voice, Rahil began, very gradually and step by step explaining to her the occurrences of the morning in the college and the unsuccessful attempt after which he sat in front of her burning from the inside with pale fire. She felt that pale fire, more than disappointment or a sense of grudge for his stupidity, she felt that pale fire that ate him up, charred him to emotional paraplegia. She was now a little sorry for him and was very approving of him going to Calcutta as long as the admission was guaranteed.

Even though he knew he could wait for the next cutoff which was just a couple of days ahead, two to be exact, the cutoff to be declared on the second day and admissions would start from that day itself, he could not bear a moment more in that house and in that place. It was as if the strike of every hour of the clock was on his head and eventually it would crack open his scull if he did not leave the place. He pegged the reason to be his complete disgust for the petty bourgeois life that he was now a part of wherein one travels in an air conditioned car with the window rolled up and not see the troubles of the hundreds sweating as they go about their lives packed in buses. It seemed to them that their way was the only way of life and that they had done everything right and so they had the right to live that way and spoil themselves and what was more intolerable to him was, as if all this was not enough, that they would speculate that something must have gone wrong with the lives of those who do not share the same means as them for them to end up that way. They were highly disillusioned by the Darwinian concept of the survival of the fittest. It was this overt superiority which surrounded him in that house and in that apartment complex that abhorred him.

Around late afternoon, when Rahil was done with his lunch and was watching a movie with the older boy who had quite warmed up to him, he got a call from his brother on whose privilege he had gone to Delhi in the first place and hence was justifiable in criticizing Rahil for unwittingly going to Delhi and wasting all the hard-earned cash traveling all the way there, all without any result. It was a very steamy call.

“Why, had you no eyes when you first saw the list?” asked the brother.

“I did. It’s just that....” He took a silent pause purposely because he had no explanation and knew that it was nothing but sheer absent-mindedness of his that got him into this fix.

“That... What? You are not supposed to make travel on a hunch or a supposition. You should have gone there only when you saw you ***name*** on the list. Without seeing your name, how can you understand if there’s any substantial proof that you have a chance in admission? That is Delhi University, not some off-the-village deemed Universities they blooming up nowadays. Now is there any need to be there? A second cutoff or something, I should hope not.” His brother said, with a complete disgust for the idea of him studying in Delhi, made more so now by this cosmic blunder. He, along of the rest of the family had wanted him to study close to him, or better yet study in the arts college in Port Blair and now this served as an example of the kind of rebelliousness one should not have concerning family opinions. Rahil did not like giving in to it but if he wanted to get out of Delhi and fast, he had to grab it like a chameleon grabs a fly with his tongue and that he did.

“I could stay for another cutoff list, but what’s the point? If I didn’t get shortlisted in this list, what’s to say I will surely get shortlisted in the next?” he said to his brother, with mock of doubt of the future.

“Yeah, I agree with that too. You should not be in Delhi, Your mother told me you should be in Calcutta for admissions there so I suggest the sooner it is, the better, tomorrow if possible. Let me make the arrangements and get back to you.” He answered and there was nothing he needed to say in return but heave a sigh of relief. He was absolutely sure that his brother was the best exit strategy that he would get him out no matter what. He confided in his brother for these kinds of things, things of general conformism.

A couple of hours passed by then and Rahil was making himself comfortable on the bed where he slept in the room of the boy with whom he had just finished watching a movie. It was not the kind of movie Rahil was usually see but the kind of movie he would usually dislike and criticize as the fine portrayal of the retardation of Indian youth and the capitalist and materialist takeover of the Indian tradition of cinema, if there ever was one, by the monetary ‘box office’ tradition. He knew his hatred of Indian trend, both historical as well as contemporary came from a pedantic standpoint and it was wrong of him to think of something in such an academic generalization but he could not help it.

-I do not see the point of loving one’s culture when there is, in the present era no need for it. Like all cultures, Indian culture was also one heavily based along the same the lines as Western feudal kingdoms in the Dark Ages where the church and the state were one and the other and seized power over all through defining their sense of ethics, jurisprudence, economical and political groundwork and metaphysical existence much to their own profit and prosperity at the same time ensuring that the citizens do get a small, almost minuscule, piece of the pie. It was this purpose of control of both the macroscopic, that is the community in terms of laws, group worshiping, taxes etc. and microscopic, that is the individual in terms of religious offerings, rituals, ethical doctrines of the state and assigned work occupations, that the God, or in our case, the Dharma and the Rashtra, seemed to excel in manifesting. It was around this power, that is the Dharma and the Rashtra that the whole, so called heritage of India is based which is part of the same brainwashing, indoctrinating cult that far outdated itself in the coming of the Renaissance. A word for word form of spirit of subversive manipulation and dogmatist setting can be seen on closely looking into Kautilya’s Arthshastra. The coming of the Renaissance in India was during the Mogul era was marked with inclusion of another aesthetic field that is the arts in the imperial bracket and the exclusion of religion from it. By the time the Moguls seized power, there was much religious freedom in that the people could now chose their religion of worship. Many people debate the generosity and the liberal spirit of the Moguls for letting their subjects decided their religion but it was the spirit of the era that gave them a freedom to do so. By the coming of the British, the Indians experienced a cultural shock when the Britishers came with a motive of generalizing Indian community through a common imposition of British culture and ideals, especially in terms of language which is evident by drafts such as Macaulay’s Minutes and others. This was the era of colonization which was marked by the onset of industrialization. It was during this time that the Western world went through a complete breakdown of ideals by the coming of branches such as metaphysics and sciences and philosophers such as Nietzsche and Hegel. They started to despise their own culture seeing on what it was and started to create a new discourse on the field. The Church and the state had way back lost their influence and in trying to break free from their traditions and sick of the superiority that the church still held in Europe, a group of Christians, the Protestants broke off from the Roman Catholic Church and landed on Plymouth Rock. This was the first example of how a group of people sought to break off from their traditions and actually did and years later, America became a superpower out of their guile but we are to judge only the origins and not the conclusions, for everywhere there is a bad example when you have a particular way to look. Coming to other forms of community which had complete contempt for their tradition were the French where they were so much dissatisfied with their traditions and renewed by a spirit of innovation and enlightenment that there became not one, not two but five different stages of revolutions in France, also including the Paris commune, but not the 1968 riots. The French took only the constructive elements of their traditions, the arts and left all behind and into the hands of their contemporary intellectuals like Rousseau, Mirabeau and Montesquieu, Fourier, Proudhon and others to define their traditions. A truly counter-traditional takeover was witnessed in the bloom of the twentieth century in Russia which during the time of Lenin was among the bigger part of Europe. The people of the kingdom took over their kingdom and made it a country, or more appropriately, one united state, Soviet Union where after a certain point of time it was seen that all forms of religion would be socially banned or if not banned, frowned upon and it did hold good ad it was prosperous until the better of all things shook the world-war. In that spirit, much later, traditions were also broken in the same way and a new culture formed when China took an example out of Soviet Union and under the Red banner with people uniting not only as citizens but as fighters to fight the imperialist forces of both the Emperor of China and Japan under the leadership of Mao Zedong and pushed the traditionalists to the thin strip of Taiwan and became one of the biggest nations of the face of the Asian continent, and here too, religion too took a back seat and even here it was not practiced socially because the communists, both the Soviets and the Maoists knew that to unite the people you have to uproot them from their cultural groundings and as the old proverb goes, united we stand and as for America, it was just a matter of chance and a desire for counter-culture which was also evident in them during the frustration of the Vietnam war when American youth were unwillingly drafted in a war the whole States knew was unethical and outright phony. So, they turned completely rebellious and in search for peace, as they could not find it anywhere among the tumults of war, turned into themselves and stated self-discovery through travel and consumption and gave rise to the ‘hippie’ beatnik generation and their own brand of social order, sense of fashion, outlook towards the world, their own philosophy and even their own sense of music as a much far-sighted imitation to the Bohemian culture of the art lovers in France who were also non-traditionalists living in self-imposed poverty as an insignia to their disgust for the traditions and this Bohemian culture gave out such artists like Modigliani and Picasso. The hippie generation also had a political theory of pacifism and Utopian socialism and queer and gender quality, abolition of racism which was the reason of their solidarity towards Black Panther movement and the radical theories of Malcolm X as opposed to white-supporting ideals of Martin Luther King. The same way as the Parisian counter-cultural Bohemians were also capable of loud political discourse, the loudest among them being the 1968 cultural riots which was prominently led by Surrealist and Dadaist artists. Even the Nazi regime became strong through a deletion of cultural traditions from its Reich, although they replaced one form of tradition to impose another, that of Christian superiority upon the Jews like the Americas did with the nationalization of their capitalist economy that required them to go to war almost every half a decade to keep their economy growing, ergo Japan, if only as brief as the nuclear bombings, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Iran, Cuba, if only as short as the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile crisis and making a profit to this date through the Cuban trade embargo, cold war with Russia and not to mention their numerous contracted hits all over the world in places ranging from China, Sri Lanka, parts of Naxalbari in India and parts of African third world to name a few and since they have clandestine agency of CIA to put a blanket of ‘classified’ over it, the American people sleep happily in their beds not knowing what their country has been doing or is up to and to this I say, *the greatest trick the devil ever pulled was to convince the world that he didn’t exist.* C’est la vie, mon cher-

By late afternoon, which was around six, the older boy asked him if he could take him around to give a little tour of the place, only the inside of the apartment, the boy said, judging by the time Rahil spent in the house that he did not like going outdoors. Rahil followed Parth who took him to the indoor swimming pool that was just over the driveway. It seemed grand to Rahil but he did not like feeling that way. He called some of his friends with him who later joined the young boy and were more than sociable towards Rahil too. They talked with him in such a causal way that Rahil did not think himself to be superior to them in terms of age. It was not a matter of bonding and a desperation to be in a crowd but Rahil was thrown into the zone of likability of other people, a place that he occupied mostly when he was in a union of that particular age group much due to his grunge thoughts and his radical nature although people with strict conformist views, teenagers in whom the idea of social positivism was hard-wired developed an outright repugnance for him out of the very baseness that comprises social mentality. However, fortunately for him, there were not many teenagers who despised him that way. There were however some teenagers, a part of Parth including who were puzzled as to why he had left engineering which was a much better course to be in just for the reason that it was lucrative, and joined a course like literature. Rahil did not avoid the question but he also never gave straight answers to them, maybe because a part of him was still in doubt as to why he had taken such a bold action that was to shape the rest of his future, for better or for worse. They were sitting on the edge of the swimming pool watching the men and their children swimming wildly in the water and there was so much noise that the casual conversation they were having between them was hardly discernible and Rahil was not sure as to how the others made sense of his words when he had to struggle to hear theirs. It worked quite positively for Rahil because it gave him a leeway to his conversation with the others and so he could give minimal attention to their replies and still seem interested. There was also a multipurpose gym just a little left to the swimming which also had a pool table where he saw two big men, robust and muscular and a petite woman of about mid twenties or thirties, he guessed, you can never tell with those women, dressed in tight and flashy jeans and a red top with a peculiar design and cut which was not mainstream but still looked good on her. The girl caught her attention for a little while as he saw her moving around the table with snooker stick in hand which was just a little shorter than her height. She saw her walk to the right end of the table which was not visible to Rahil from where he was sitting as something was blocking the view. It was neither formidable nor worthy of an effort to walk around in perfect view of the lady and so he submitted back to the casual talk between the young men. There was no girl there, probably because of the disgusting nature of talks they had among themselves, Rahil thought. A little while later, it seemed to start to rain and a further while after that, it really did rain sending Rahil and Parth, along with almost everyone else, running back into apartments.

In the evening the man returned and asked Rahil why he had such an urgency to leave imprecating him about his hastiness and that it had already cost him once. To this, Rahil perfectly explained to him all that he had thought up and said to his mother about the admission in Calcutta and the urgency with which he had to be there. At first, he rashly refused all his affirmations pertaining to the need for a direct and quick action. This was the state of the man till late evening. As the hours passed from early evening to late, the conversation along with the sentiments to it, organically faded off and owing to the summertime glory of the sun which was out till seven thirty and had just gone down, he decided that he would take Rahil along with his family for a little outing and so all of them drove to the nearest mall which was just minutes away from the apartment. Here Rahil found no purpose than to talk to others but the man was busy with his wife and his wife was busy his daughter Anya and so the only other person left to talk was the son, whose name was Parth. He was a very big guy for his age, almost as tall as Rahil and twice his size and he was just fifteen when Rahil was eighteen. The difference in the ages meant nothing between them, an example of how time becomes insignificant in the meticulous details of things or on the total objectivity of it. The first sentence that came from the son’s mouth was:

“You can see who I usually walk with whenever we come here?”

Rahil understood what he meant by that allegorical question. He meant the silence that walks with him and the emptiness that embodies it. There is no end to things things an Indian teenager always feels but never actually has and on much self-thinking he makes this discovery that all this time that he was feeling what he does not have was the pursuit of it and not the attainment. Peace of mind is one of them. They feel, or at least try to feel that if they follow a certain path in life, they get this peace as a rule and if they do not, they are doomed to live an eternal life of frustration and dolefulness when it is the contrary that mostly happens. It was pretty evident in his case and the lines that he followed them with only strengthened his case.

“That is why I never like coming out here with my family.” Parth said, his head shaking about and his eyes barely meeting Rahil’s.

“So you never go to malls?” Rahil asked, direly hoping for for an answer that he does not go to mall which would fill him with satisfaction that there is at least one of many who resist the corporate temptation.

“No, I do go to the malls, but only with friends.” Parth replied animatedly as if going to malls was a necessity as important as waking up in the mornings but he could see the change of voice when he said he went to malls with friends. It was as if he actually did not like going with them and would prefer going out with his family instead. Rahil did not reply to him as he was contemplating all this with silence.

“I like going out with friends but its just that I get to buy a lot when I’m with my father.” Parth added resolving his previously unresolved case about his melancholia to conclude that it was not melancholia in the first place but a desire to buy; greed, to put in rawer words. He looked at Parth and saw him walking about with his feet kicking the air. He was in a world of his own.

“Do you buy a lot of your stuff from the mall?” Rahil asked him uninterestingly just for the sake of keeping up the dialogue.

“No, I buy it from Sarojini market. You get it a lot cheaper there. I go there with my friends a lot” replied Parth and thins time his face grew up like the face of an innocent child on seeing a lighted firecracker, the only one he has, ready to burst. Rahil could not understand this sudden change of mood of his and so pegged it to some repressive feeling or memory he had that was poked through that question of his and the cycle completed through his answer of the question, the psychological cycle, that is. They walked over from one section to another, from the kid’s senction to the food court and then to the stores of different clothing lines and they talked about one thing or another and Rahil retained his passive and analytical role as a conversationalist in most of them while the young boy had newer and more promising tales to tell. He thought he could almost make a book out of what he had been blabbering about and he had to force himself to listen to him although he knew they were talking the most natural talk, the kind every teenager would have with the other, about what is more selling in the market right from cell phones female actresses, the hip talk yet there was a break of cold sweat on Rahil’s forehead as he went about with this most causal talk. Instead of focusing on those distressing and hopeful topics, Rahil thought that he would concentrate on the constructive aspects of the talks rather than the contents of it although the other one involved in the conversation seemed to be brimming with contents and furnished topics successively as one became exhausted and devalued.

After a long sequence of talks, they finally decided to leave the mall and blessed be the wonder, they did not buy a thing. The mall closed the moment they left it behind along with a white shapeless and formless air of smoke as they drove back to the house. When they reached the the house, it was back to their stagnant, toneless, frustrating life; it was not the good kind of stagnancy that Rahil had felt in R.K that helped him construct himself.

-Even as a family, what do they hold common among themselves, aside from a certain pair of characteristic genetic similarity, the misconception of modern science. Look at them, one has dinner on the dining table, the other on the tea table, and the two in their own room, and all in their own time and I in search of lost time; their lost time. This is prosperity, I proclaim! Live, o people greedy of the money of the needy! T’was thus and shall always be; Put thine money in thy purse. This is the curse of the modern life and also the beauty of it and this lifestyle, I can very well deduce, is the reason for the neuroses that I detected in each of their personality. But then, I’m being judgmental about it which I shall not be, because then someone else will also then judgmental be, for me. Then what of the universality that these people talk about...only talk about. There is no universality if there is universe, I believe because then the universe would have its constituents, entities like us who would then want to state our independence and then would want to free ourselves from the hegemony of it, the Gramsci, and so what is to become of the universe then. But then I am thinking of in the Schopenhauer sense. What if we want unity? Isn’t it the reason why the global corporate culture has set in deep in our roots and our children are sent to private schools and Convents more preferably instead of public schools? No, that is because we are opportunists and we want to be better than the next man, so we buy better things, and the better things, or so the opinion says, happens to be made by multinational corporations and the better education happens to be given in the Convent schools. But that is all historic. History of materialism, in the Marxist sense, amassed by the bourgeoisie generations after generations after generations and so now if the better things are produced by the better of people, one shall not be surprised for it is man that makes history and then the history that makes man is a cycle of deeds and kismet. I suppose most of the population tries to be on the better end of the cycle rather than ending it once and for all. Enough of it now; what is to say and who is to be? That I don’t know; that they don’t know either so how are we to make our ends meet. I suppose then the wheel goes on and on, self-substantiating fuel, driving it, we the fuel, helpless before a higher order and it is rather amusing that it is we who are the higher order-

Rahil had no idea even the next day whether he was to leave for Calcutta because there was a neither a ticket confirmation nor a word of intimation, there was just wait. But he still, adhering piously to his routine, woke up late and woke up with a morning sickness. He always woke up with a morning sickness, which was made more so by the fact the sun was boiling outside and he was not in a bed of his own. After freshening up, he just moved round the house, from one to the other, looking for something to do. He did not want to watch the television as it was in the room where the little girl was sleeping and he did not mean to disturb her beauty sleep, beauty from the inside and also of the outside as the little thing, with her brownish hair thrown carelessly about the pillow, strands of it also over her face and her thin little hands bent and cupped inside her stomach which put folds in her pretty white dress which were more of a pleasure to watch than a nuisance.

Seeing the tormented state of his guest, the lady gave her the day’s newspaper to read, which were ten bulky pages of artificial news and so localized that it did not even matter to Rahi. Now it was taking its toll on him, the wait. The steady ticking of a watch in a quiet room crashed like torture against his unshielded brain. As he read through those pages, one after the other, feeling the coarseness of the paper between his fingers looking at the coarseness too, leaving sight of the article he had been reading and saw the perforations at the end of the paper, wondered its purpose and thought of the big rollers and printers that churn out these papers tirelessly before the morning for people like these to enjoy or rather ignore as it lies on their table besides their cup of tea.

His thoughts were interrupted in the middle as the wife gave Rahil his cup of tea for which Rahil gave her a gratuitous smile. It took some time as he took brief and scarce sips of the hot tea with an uneven halo of warmth over it. As if in a cue, the moment he finished his tea, put down the cup and gave a blank look at the painting that effortlessly hung on the wall in front of him devoid of any attention that it so demanded, the daughter had woken up from her sleep, brushed her teeth, had her meal and was ready to eager to play with Rahil who had nothing better to do anyway. He did not like going out for two reasons, one illogical reason being it would depress him seeing the outside world from the context that he was in and second that he would lose his way back owing to his absent-mindedness. He preferred to stay indoors and found one or the other activity no matter how bizarre to keep him occupied.

As is the case with most modern children, she did not prefer to go outside either and was interested in the cartoons screened over the many cartoon channels rather than going outside but what would she do outside? It seemed to him like she had not any friends. He sat besides her as she went about choosing a cartoon of her choice each time asking asking him if it would be okay with him and he would just nod. Occasionally, she would just scan through cartoon channels, stop at one channel randomly and ask him about the cartoon that was going on. Fortunately, Rahil had watched enough cartoon in his childhood days to figure out and she would be very interested in him as he would go about telling the differences between the cartoon were shown in his days and the way they are shown now and the beauty of all of it was that in between the conversation, she would then again become disinterested and scan through channels again as if it were a game for her. It was undoubtedly a game for her, and for him too and a very witty game for both of them which she should indulge herself regularly in, he thought.

This went on till lunchtime around which the brother returned and by the time he returned, Rahil had already had his lunch. After the son had had his lunch, both of them sat in front of his desktop and he showed him his collection of video songs and albums like he was proud. Rahil followed it with hidden disinterest like an atheist goes through a religious ritual under compulsion. Rahil asked him blank from the bleakest corners of his mind, whether he had this video or that, questions that would apparently paint the picture of Rahil having a good time watching his collection. In the afternoon, the man returned with stiff urgency asking from Rahil his identity card which he handed over to him without a second of wasted time. He had realized that the man wanted his identity details to book his tickets to Calcutta. The only problem was that Rahil had never traveled in a train alone before and never wanted to. Train journey totally scared the wits out of him. It was starkly different than a bus journey. For instance, it was more lengthy, almost took a day’s time and he was not used to spending that length of time cramped up in a bed half the normal size and surrounded on all fours by strangers. The thing that terrified him the most about these strangers were the different backgrounds that they came from. The mask of humanity is stripped inch by inch as time passes second by second in a train, he thought. The difference of personalities was more dangerous because then he was thrown into a realm of uncertain possibilities and any person’s tendency in the middle of the travel is always to plan things through right from the start to the end. The sheer time gap and the cultural diversity he would have to encounter were both hindrances to his plan. As much of an anarchist that he was, he still preferred, while traveling, to get in a form of travel and get to the destination but here the case was different because here he would have to go through that enormous span of time in which anything could happen to him. This was one of the reason he despised the idea of culture altogether, just because of the different, and often conflictive mentalities it puts in people. As long as there will be culture, there will not be peace among each other and form him as for everyone else, there would be peril in taking a train for his journey. The only think separating him from the rest of the majority riding the trains who do not share the same sentiment was the lack of awareness of this cultural deceit that he had witnessed and what others failed to conceptualize. There needs to be a unified counter-culture emasculating every form of established tradition and accepted form of culture, be it religious or social for people to be truly unified to each other from the base. There would be a resultant shock of culture to be dealt with, he thought just as the Generation gap that arose in 1960’s America as a result of the counter-cultural revolution but much better came out of it both ideologically and in terms of practical social and ethical values although it was short-lived.

By the evening, the tickets were confirmed and there was much anticipation as to how his journey turns out to be. His brother had insisted to his friend that he book a ticket in one of the premiere railway express for the trip to be a little easy on Rahil although Rahil insisted, both to his brother and his mother that the trip to Calcutta should be via flight. He knew it was a privilege and something he ought not to burden her mother and her family with for they had not the financial capability to aid him with such a luxury. When his mother denied it at first, knowing that further cribbing about it was useless, he accepted it for a fact and braced himself for a day of exhausting journey among unknown terrains and unknown consciousness of human minds in the travelers that he would share his journey with.

He packed his bags which were done easily as he had not unpacked much. Then he got ready since the departure was by seven in the evening and it had already been past five.

-there is no fear of living now, living among the wretchedness of the human condition that persists like an undetected disease among the human society, like some form of halitosis that needs to be pointed out by someone else for them to identify and remedy it. In most cases, they wouldn’t even accept that they are living with a disease and deny all symptoms of it irregardless of how evident they are. Now I don’t have to face the inner guilt of living within a community of disease and not pointing it out. It is an ease, a release but now the final test lies ahead. The test of the culture versus the Antichrist. I consider myself an Antichrist because the society deems me it and incessantly they finger...point at me and say that word as if they are worthy enough to judge me. The different culture come together not as a fine example of Indian sovereignty or secularism but in the worst form of beastly inner hatred of one towards the other and prejudice and bigotry and nepotism based on stupid grounds like state sentiments and religious preference which is preposterous but astutely evident in a train, especially the long route ones-

By six, he was in the car and was ready to be driven to the airport. The sun was still up careless of the hour. The man drove out and then took a few turns here and there, and parked in the middle of the road near a sidewalk where another person got into the car who was supposedly his friend. They talked as he drove and Rahil sat at the back watching through the rolled-up mirror the crippled city that lay in front of him though that opinion of his was based on a highly short stay and no actual physical contact from the city other than through the windows of an apartment.

He still a slight bit of remorse for leaving the city but soon the relief took over the remorse and charge of his emotional quotient. There was relief in leaving the city and there was relief in being free. Yet there was remorse in leaving behind the promises that the city held within itself, the opportunities that he had not yet even discovered, much less achieve. As the car drove by around the prominent parts of Delhi, around Sanchi Stupa, around the Red Fort which all either fell coincidentally on his way or the man purposely drove by them for his sake so that Rahil could enjoy sightseeing. He sat in the car psychologically stirred up on whether to be proud of his capital city for having such tall buildings and such well built massive roads or reproachful for having a complete disregard for its flaming population of middle class struck in between the proud breasts of Delhi like a splinter making a ghastly wound on it filled with vile puss and sores breaking from the skin. Delhi was a dystopia, a place in tatters, a place in flames for him where there was political decadence and social hostility. Delhi was not a place for him; it was a witch with cold breasts that would turn anyone into a block of ice from its embrace and these thoughts rattled in his mind as he passed by every single monumental achievement that boasted the name ‘Delhi’ with all its momentousness. It was not enough for him.

“This is Connaught place. The best brands have their stores here. It is the most fashionable markets in the whole country.” The man turned back to him and said. Sure could be, he said but for him it was just a big circus full of clowns in a dark arena and the clowns, each of them weeping as the mascara in their eyes washed down by their tears to their cheeks along with the white powder on their face as if the comedy in their faces, in their acts, was melting and what lay in the inner level, what the clowns had been trying to hide with all their makeup and all their colorful attire and all their staccato laughs,was revealed. He looked around the place through his window as they drove by it, trying to find if there were offices of any publishing houses but there were not.

“Is this all of Connaught place?” Rahil asked the man driving, feeling himself under duress to ask that question.

“No, its just the outer level. The area is built like concentric circles, one over the other and I think there are three...no maybe just two levels.” The man replied.

-kind of like the circles of hell, and in that case, I bet there are seven. I wonder what sorts of demons roam in these circles of hell and with what purpose do they roam about. I should have taken a look at it. Well, another time perhaps, if never is a time. Delhi, a city where people try to live with the past so dearly, and their thoughts about the future are so shallow yet frantic, that their present is just a fraught and morose state of desolate existence and no human is free of that fate. I am, now but then I was never bound to this and I never shall be, I know that for sure. See now, the airs of the city taking its toll on me. Much ado about nothing. I come and go and that is all for me. Don’t fear of the effect of the air for the windows of the car are rolled up but beware now of the air inside the care too-

They reached New Delhi railway station and Rahil was completely and with petrifaction, taken aback seeing the crowd that went in, out and about the station. To him it seemed untrue and what was more was the chagrined state of the railway station. ‘Each city has a internal contest among them as to who has the better airport in terms of ambiance and structure, but look at the state of the railways regardless of the fact that railway stations are usually more subscribed...’ he thought to himself as a cold sweat of tension broke on his forehead as to how he would get in and find his way to the inside of this moving maze of flesh and bones and the thought of it started to dry his throat.

The man saw his hesitation and tugged him, holding his hand as he moved forward breaking through the crowd that swooshed and whooshed about sometimes pushing Rahil in a helter-skelter. There was something very mechanical in the way the crowd moved around him and he could now vision it now from another window and he saw that as he was walking by them and now as he saw them moving about, there seemed to be a more ubiquitous power present, the divine logos that controlled the way they moved and he could see now that it was not a systemic breakdown but a systematic breakdown that never came to the end and was always present. In this, he had found the answer to the riddle that he was seeking to solve ever since he had planted his foot on the tough airstrip off the Indira Gandhi international airport. The answer was as complicated as the riddle; perhaps there was no answer, just a clue but whatever it was, it changed the way he had looked at things so far and he understood and came to acquiescence with this revelation and another that came with it, a revelation not of some huge theory but of one simple concept and over the course of all his thinking and all his meticulous theorization he could not give a simple name or term to it. But it was very simple.

-We are not humans, we are not thinkers; we are just thoughts. There is no past we can look up to. Thoughts of the past comes by aid of memory like everything that exists has a possibility to be manipulated and can have a divine unseen mechanism molding and guiding and feeding it. This is the solipsism of the present moment-

With that thought he appeared to himself to be vanishing into thin air, first the exterior, then everything that lies inside. Looking at that incessant theatre of social realism, he knew his place was that of an outsider and now that he had seen the bigger picture, he would never be able to think of society or its extensions in the form of social contracts, courtesies and formalities as a habitat to himself or be a part of it in the manner that everybody was, even he when he was unaware of the bigger picture. He was liberated from all of it but this liberation came with pain and this liberation came with knowledge.

Now they stood at the platform and the train had not arrived. They did not look each other in the eyes and each had their own reasons for doing so. Rahil looked about the empty platform and saw an old man with a bald head standing just paces after him.

“We’re gonna have to wait here for a while.” Said the man as Rahil had his sights fixed on the bald old man as a vulture on the sight of a decaying corpse filled with flesh ready to be torn between the bird’s beaks. Rahil, though not looking at him took notice of his advice.

-the worst kind of vice is advice. People should now that-

He walked about a bit and then sat on the flight of stairs that led to the platform on which both of them were. The man was still standing with the luggage beside him staring at the train track with his thousand-yard stare. He was a fierce man, Rahil thought and so that look well suited him. Little wind blew because of the summer even though the time had shifted to late evening and the whole station felt stuffy. After a long wait, the train finally arrived and the other side of the platform that could be seen through the empty tracks was now not visible because of the train and Rahil felt that the train had filled the space of the platform. The train kept moving, although with a tedious pace and they could have easily climbed up on any compartment if they wanted and find their way to their compartment but they chose to wait for the train to stop completely. When it eventually stopped, they got into the train with the man leading and Rahil following not far behind. It did not take much time for the man to find the seat and then they both sat down on his assigned seat. It was the lowermost seat of the three-tier coach.

“Here’s your seat. There’s no need to worry. They’ll provide the food in time, breakfast, lunch and dinner and also snacks. I reckon that by tomorrow afternoon sometime, you should reach Kolkata. If there’s anything, just call me.” The man said and extended his speech on to certain other directives and telling him another twenty times not to worry. Maybe he judged from the worried and nervous face of Rahil that he would find the journey bitter if not given the proper directives as if words could save him from that fate. Rahil, on the other hand could not assert to what degree he meant what he was saying because he completely lacked conviction all through his directives. It was as if a bad actor was reading a script he had just been handed and so Rahil read it as someone just completing his formality and conclude his responsibility with which his dear friend, Rahil’s brother had confided him.

After giving the necessary and not waiting for the train to leave, the man left and he was now alone but the melancholy of it was not despairing for him. He took his seat and sat erect on it looking at the other passengers take their seats and the train slowly got filled with passengers who took their assigned seats after adjusting their baggage beneath the lowermost seat. An old couple then approached him as he took they had the seats opposite to him which they did.

“Excuse me, all our family members have seats to this side and only one seat on the opposite and since you’re alone, I suppose you don’t minding taking the topmost seat.” A lady asked a favor from him.

-the thing is I had an operation. No. My knee hurts. No. Some psychopathic outrages that will make them never want to talk to me again. Look at that old lady, living life on borrowed time, far in debt and she’s asking me to be kind. Be kind to life! Adjusting is not just my forte, you see and you should have made proper reservations before groveling in front of a total stranger about how miserable the state of the railways is that old people have such an inconvenience to travel. The state of railways is such because you let it be! And if you are objected by my inconsiderate refusal, let it be and then treat me that way, with contempt and disregard and eager to rub my face into the dust of humiliation every other chance you get. You should enjoy that more, being bitter at other’s cost and yet you choose to humiliate yourself citing your humiliating indisposition as a reason to ask my pity. Is it duty-bound for me to give you what you want? Surely I would have no problem in taking the topmost seat in that lonely corner just staring at the white roof of the train and with the drapes closed, I disappear…vanish into my own thoughts, something I cannot do sitting here and limiting even something as innate as sleeping hours to their approval. The trick is to put disgust into the other person’s heart for his own miserable affairs so much that they begin to reject themselves on the most cellular level. I get the trick but what’s the point?-

He took his bag and climbed on the top of the opposite tier and as he did so, he was again interrupted by another question from the same lady.

“I hope it is not inconsiderate of me to do so but and it is not an inconvenience for you.”

“Nah” Rahil used the sound as he leaved his breath to take another. He did not grace her with a proper answer. They did not even thank him for it and it seemed that chivalry in the present age was just taken for granted. He should have been inconsiderate and he should have imposed his inconvenience but it was too late for it now. Time, for him did not have much power but this much it did control. ‘Top bunk could be nice’ he thought to himself and he had to. Although it was not generally Rahil’s tendency to see people and form opinions of them extemporarily, he did do so for his bunk mates and his opinion of them was not distinguished but quite the contrary. He saw them as that typical Indian God-fearing and fun-loving family he swore a vendetta against. He did not swear a vendetta against them out of malice but did it more or less for their welfare. All libertines think that way. All despots think that way too.

-Sixteen hours, me my thoughts and a train full of strangers. O, it is about to go off, the train and there’s nobody to see me of. Sad; for a person like me, it should not put me off. Better let your fog of creativity take over. There’s your notepad and pen. Close the drapes…wait, there is darkness…wait, there’s a switch and viola! There’s light. Just listening at those loud crass lyrics dripping with profligate sexual innuendo from its lyrics hidden in the placated voices of those female playback singers makes me think why doesn’t the society stand forward and accept its deviance. Why does it hide its deviance behind the stilted reality of Hindi cinema, the kitschy and vicariously melodramatic vulgarization of the proletarian Indian life? The Indian fictitious reality is not something we desire, but something we want to desire and that want then becomes an object of our thought that shapes our consciousness and we conscientiously form our basic line of expression through that want of reality. In that sense, we do not desire anymore but become our desire and becoming that the social fiction that surrounds us becomes our escapist reality. We lose a level of our psyche due to this nature of our psychic malleability. We are like a fly sitting on a window pane consciously trying to get out. For him, at the moment that he is trapped, there are two realities that confronts him, which they physicists call two separate planes, one in which he is currently trapped that is the railway coach and the other that he sees and tries to break out to that is the space outside the coach. If there was no window and just the walls of the train, there would have been no such confusion for the fly and the reality would not have been split up into two but would have only been the railway coach where he can freely move around. But now the fly is bewildered as to what is preventing him from entering into the realms of nature. To the fly, the space or the substance of the window pane is just an exterior material and inconceivable for his consciousness. The fly is in a state of delirium as he sees reality in a cinematic frame and where he perceives something that is real as moving images. The nature of the window pane is also unique and typical because offers an alternate reality but only as a promise. The fly’s perception of the window pane is nix and hence the fly is vexed by its invisible nature, its nothingness. It is as if there is something that is nothing that exists and exists so powerfully that it can dissect the fly from a completely different reality. Since it is dark outside, it is quite evident that the fly, as we do, perceives light as day and cognitively recognizes it with day while the darker outside which the fly can only see, it perceives as night and it is, obviously night. On another hand, there is also the matter of difference is velocity where the coach, on one hand is moving and he sees it as a stationary reality because the things inside the coach allows him to acknowledge the relative inertia of its reality whereas from this reality and its points of references, the other reality is dynamic so this pane, in that manner is a very mystic transcendental chasm to another world and yet it is void-

-Charm of the elite, or the supposedly elite, all enclosed in this coach. The affliction of staying in their hides is immense and insurmountable. It is not easy for them and not easy for me to witness their uneasiness; they ought to do something about it rather than to bear this malodorously soul-rotting travesty of self-righteousness. How could they, when there is no self and nothing is right? Somehow they are mystified by the existence of a higher power to a stage that they let themselves be constrained in the restrictions of that existence without even questioning their existence in the first place. They like to believe that everything they see they believe but they do not. They only like to believe the things that they can associate themselves to. Ah, the snacks, the soup, the soirée and there you have it- the disillusioned India, the Indian dream of having anything you can if you succeed in competition farting on the face of those behind as you glide past them. They are free to do this yet they cannot eat non-vegetarian diet. Life can be really pesky when you look at things with such close observance-

He watched in closely as the others heartily took their stale meals tearing the packed boxes with anxiousness and having dinner not once complaining about its staleness. The night had already taken over and yet Rahil did not feel like sleeping. Thoughts swerved around his head about every little thing he could think of. There was nothing that went past his mind and how much he wanted to let things go past his mind at that moment without haunting him; they never did and played in his mind in a continuous loop, one after another. ‘How baldy I want to sleep but this bed makes me wish I were in a coffin, that way could at least have proper space to sleep and I would be resting as they say, in peace’, he thought to himself. The berth really bothered him. It was uneasy and a little too small for his height and it was loaded with blanket and linen sheets and hand towels which had to be unpacked and as soon as he unpacked, they fuddled untidily all over the bunk-bed, and it was only with great effort that Rahil could find a way to make room to properly lay his legs and stretch in the muddiness that the white light caused in the uneven darkness. He always found white light eerie, especially in the darkness and especially with strange people around. Not being able to sleep and having an eerie feel surge over him, he climbed down from his top tier and went to the lavatory. It was in a morbid state. The whole place was gleaming yet dull, silver, like the inner end of a dull and used tablespoon. He looked at himself in the mirror and felt dirty. He generally felt that way while traveling.

-wherever you may be, the ease of the toilet is always the same. Lost glance, but you know where to hit. Sometimes you are shy at gazing on your own material as if an alien form resides between your loins. A shake is all you need after the performance is over and thence comes the curtain call. I longed for a longer act but what does time matter as long as the performance was powerful… and fulfilling. Who knocks at my door? A stranger; they all are. Don’t let him in. I have a purpose now, suddenly… ‘Tis to loathe…… ‘Tis to fill others with loathing…. Please don’t judge me by what I do. Judge me by my intention behind doing so. Forbearance is my ammunition and haste is the other man’s enemy-

He went back to his bunk and this time too he was unable to sleep and knowing that it was to be so, he just gave in to his state and rested on his bed with closed eyes and a hyperactive brain till he wasted himself to anesthesia.

He took his time to wake up the next morning well aware that the train would not reach its destination until late afternoon the next day. He woke up around ten in the morning. He did not care to ask around as to when the train would reach its destination. He checked his cell phone which was brimming with missed calls of people who were all in a nervous state of frenzy about the young boy traveling alone in an unknown land. He was supposed to contact his sister who would then take him to the town to his relatives who were to receive them and with whom he was to stay. Ignoring all the calls, he called her.

-And hereth ends the reverie, the travel…the Homeric odyssey… Ezekiel’s enterprise… and ended here, breaking off from all cobwebs of time, all designs of fate standing to prove there is no fate and that no force except that of internal psychological drive are responsible for one’s action. There is nothing external that binds us- and maybe that is why I feel nothing but remorse under contact of ‘the man’. On being near him, I am combusted by the flames of staid… His wry face…his bald head and his pincer-like voice that surrounds me and the hacks me in half and my upper torso flies away like a football while the lower part of my body lifelessly falls to the floor. I cannot share the same room as this man, which is a sure thing as the dawn of sun each day. My emotion for him is not fear; it is not hatred, spite or encumbrance- it is pure resentment and it is not a direct form of resentment of the person but a resentment of the image that the person coincidentally happens to stand for. It is the most perfectly justified form of embitterment and I take it I have justified it to near perfection. Not manly enough…it is the prominence evident in the thinking of people when they come across people…men…who find it difficult to take a proper decision as if women make all wrong choices. Well, they marry men, that’s a start and breed men so we are closer to the truth in the sentence. My brother’s luggage stands there and I do not even lend a hand. That’s unmanliness, or is it? Things that make me immobilize me…freeze me… manly things things…upholdings of a man… a Man, dignified in society for who he is or what he does, a MAN. Embraces are finally over…Respire…the talking should continue uninterrupted…the talking continues-

“Congratulations, Dhruv has told me good things about the college, says that it’s an esteemed one.” His brother said happily with a raised eyebrow.

“Yes it is. One of my cousins attended it. She was a brilliant student and a very modish one too, caters to an elite crowd of students.” Dhruv replied in answer stealing the words and the opportunity from Rahil’s open mouth hooking off the flesh from his carcass through his vulturine beak.

“Oh” was all Rahil said that evening. Sunny and Sanjay soon joined them and it was a foregathering disguised in the cloak of concomitance. They talked to his brother, and Rahil as a subject of talk also came up. They talked highly of his choice and how it suited him and how his intellect would surely break out of him in the pursuit of his degree especially in a city like Delhi where opportunities are in abundance. They did not stop at praising him as a body but deconstructed him in their praise taking up every aspect of his constitution-his moral advancement, his social compatibility, his psychological maturity. Somewhere between all this praise, they made his brother leery of his obtuse bent to the Left and his brother picked up on it with deft speed and warned his younger brother not to get into the muddy waters of college experience and get involved in student politics. The point was again reaffirmed very ferociously-or at least to Rahil it came across as ferocious as the words came out of ‘the man’- that many students get battered, shot at, apprehended and assaulted as muscle power dictates DU student politics.

“Okay, you stay here and I’m going with Dhruv bhai to stay at his house on invitation. We’ll start the search for your residence tomorrow. Do you have college to attend?” his brother asked him.

“Yes, tomorrow is the first day and they will probably prescribe us books then so I guess I ought to attend tomorrow’s class.” He answered his brother.

“Oh yes, you have to attend the first classes and get acquainted and all that. I was not going to take you with us anyway so you go ahead and take your classes.” The brother replied with warmth which was rather paradoxical compared to the curt answer that he gave to Rahil extricating him from what should primarily be his endeavor. And after spending some time with his brother, he elder brother left with his friend as the dusk turned into darkness and there was no sight of the dying sun but as a flashlight that projected the white moon that shone on the black sky and threw its white glow on everything and everybody.

Rahil did not have much to do after he left but eat his dinner in the canteen and beat time until he wished to sleep which was becoming more and more cumbersome because he was unable to catch sleep naturally if he went to bed early and always had to waste himself to sleep till his mind, lush with thoughts and strings of consciousness faded away into barren pastures.

He had college to attend the next day for which he woke up early and dressed himself so as to hide his oddball personality that he knew would alarm others or be a cause of their furor. He dabbed himself with a strong deodorant with fragrance resistant enough to hold to his body even after endless rounds of heavy perspiration. He wanted to be prepared from all angles so as to come off as someone false than what he really was. Likewise, he made it a point not to beguile anybody in false leading too. All that said, he also did not want to be in the obscurity that many people share in the germination of their college life and get into petty friendships and menial relationships- it was not that he would not have friends altogether, he just wanted it to be superfluous if they did not compel his staple cause. He was designed for a higher order or higher anarchy and his purpose was to serve it to fulfillment. He was not fanatical about it although he was in deep introspective captivation of idealistic broad strokes of the bigger picture that he was trying to make. He was always psychologically obsessed with this bigger picture and travailed over facts and logic and natural phenomena that were all divided to spheres. He bade to synthesize it, if not totally in so far as to make a positive universal meaning out of it. He should not be confused, still, as a seeker of truth and should seen more as a seeker of truthfulness as he well aware that there was no absolutism in life and that this law lay especially on the metaphysical aspect of truth so his quest and understanding was not directed towards the thing that is truth but to the experience that is truthfulness.

This time his bus took him to the right place and he dismounted the bus at the Dhaula Kuan bus stop. Another college was situated visibly up the road which was the Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma college prominently known among the students as ARSD College. Rahil moved to the road opposite to ARSD College and took a right and walked under the line of unlined disorganized trees that broke the pavement with their roots and soiled the pavement with their small yellow round fruits that were lying all over the pavement oozing a bluish black gum from their broken and treaded epidermis. Still Rahil was more than grateful for the queue of trees from his way to the college as it broke the brandishing heat. He had reached college exactly in time along with the many that did as well. All of them clogged at the gates like tea-leaves on a sieve held over the cup and like tea, he fluidly flowed into the college after showing the guard his payment slip which served as the identity notification. When he was inside, he wasted no time and went to the notice beard that hung on the walls of the roofed college foyer. There were around three notice boards on each wall and every bulletin had many documents still framed in it. The old cutoff lists were seen on the notice boards as well as the results of the previous years’ students. White papers were everywhere and people were searching in them what they would search in a mirror- a place in the world. Girls and boys alike crowded; the intelligent and the idiots-which you can never tell though from their faces, their attires or sometimes even by their gestures and talks. It is too premature to determine that way about and finalize and make critical observation. Of course such snide glances and thoughts can be means to a good past-time interest but literal analysis of a personality is impossible through such vacuous measurements. Human complexes play a forerunning role in the fallacy of the aforesaid evaluations. All he did was look at them, their attires, their movements, their features and their faces, their eyes, their hair and their skin. All the boys had medium hair which they think of as handsome and different but there was no difference or if ever there was, it was not visible to Rahil and that is why Rahil found it all too demeaning. There was no élan in them for their purpose as if they had no purpose and if they had one it was not worth solidification in their spirits. That was the essentiality of their happiness and his despair. Standing in a crowd of the intelligent and the idiot, he was not able to decide which one was he at the particular moment.

Seeing no force was helpful to aid him to his destination, he preferred it plausible to go to the room assigned to the Department of English which he had a chance to look at on his first visit and so he made his way through the stairs to the end of the first floor. The room was a small one with partitioned desks for faculty members and big leather lounge chairs. He saw a group standing there in a disbanded manner. He hesitated to approach them as they appeared to be busy with each other. It was probably the engagement of acquaintances, one with the other as they tried to find friends in each other. Still there were two or three lonely bodies, both girls and boys that he could go and talk to, not that he was getting impatient and desperately solitary to do so. He was reluctant to approach anyone because he knew that they would contort his mere approach as some type of restive neuroses although the fact also remained that a constant state of silence in which he was could also be recorded as a form of manic-depressive psychosis that would amount to a form of redundancy from their part.

-I feel different. Some people, standing, laughing, changing, blue black and white and green while I stand colorless. Their voices, sharp quartets of a harpsichord, a quintet or a singspiel…yet I am a falsetto and low didgeridoo but in my own world…If only I could be that in theirs… They are conduits ready to combine with each other and enable a channel of ideas flow through them in an equal moral titillation. They are a herd of male and female seep too involved among each other, as goats and does normally do, and fall in complete servility to the shepherd. Italic…blonde…. Soused…Caprice… Nebuchadnezzar…Medea… Nosferatu- eaten away by the vampire culture… Capo di tutti Capi-

A girl whom he was facing shook her head down and after having gained enough jujus moved her heads upwards asked him “English honors?” and he nodded in affirmation after which she immediately hid her face again under the foliage of her black hair. He looked at her with eager for want of further tryst not as a form of interpersonal coppice but just as two members of a peer group and due to this denial such proximity felt discontenting to him and he thought if he were to be a quiescent order. He walked over to the stairs and stood there for some time, still keeping his eyes fixed at the persons standing opposite the department room. Minutes had passed into hours and what was nine o’clock in the morning stretched to half past ten and still there was no sign of a guiding authority. He began to feel very uncomfortable due to the heat and the strenuous wait where his knees and back started to give away as he stood for nearly two hours unable to find a seat. To add to his discomforts, he had come without a breakfast and his abdomen now growled as he felt the need to use the toilet.

-A heat so copious is difficult to cope. A waterfall drips from the bridge of my nose and the nature of it is oceanic. Panic…panic as I take my seat on the throne… Tight gasps…loose…loose… the shower. The pain and then the relief and then pain again… the pertinacious unyielding pain and the discomfort and the katzenjammer of eating. The lies, lies…and what have we here… Faerie…the blazes…the blazes they give me strokes… you don’t need a weatherman to tell which direction the winds are blowing but you do need one to run a profitable mews media channel…The media is what I propel as the winds blow and as the sphincters speak of the troubled times and the troubling ones and the cloth is stained with perspiration…a parturition is in commence and I have to give my all to it… so that the future of my genome can take a place in this immodest earth. The free fall should now be any minute and I am the rake who has stripped all my clothes like the son that I am producing… Born anew unto the world I am with mercy without mercy. Let them label me as a profligate who has thrown his shirt to one side and sits in the glory on a commode… me,the Commodus with glory shining on my skin, oiled naturally and only the touch of the mud is needed to be ready for the battlefield. Door…the door is unlocked… no lock, what kind of a bankrupt college can’t manage to keep locks on toilet stalls… I have a pen and the brain to makeshift lock… for that very reason people have lost their faith in education and only a pilgrim puts himself through such acts of devotion through uncontested benediction although at such a junction it is I who needs a benediction and shall have to fend for it myself. May dead roses have mercy on me and their petals blackened by the malnourishment, adopted from their stems- they pay the price of their beauty. The fourth dimension is not stationary as the three and I slip through it as I do work here. It is as embarrassing for me as it will be for the first guy who comes in and calls my charade but I am welted by global warming and my own inefficaciousness to bear it as others do. I am not ‘others’ and do not what they do. I am the Other. Exeunt... Preparations need to be made for the Indian tradition but the materials required for the proceedings are absent and nowhere to be found. I am in need of them or else the crime scene would be bespattered with blood and entrails. Better get a mop and a broom to mop up the bathtub and then return to my mother in the cellar. Where do I find them though, outside? The water taps outside, they are? I am in a scatological dilemma with no one to help me. What ought to be the fate of such a man in suchlike quandary? A dream state, it really is one. Logics don’t bind. Vision is blurred and distorted and there prevails an extra sensory stimulus, internal in nature popularly known as a sixth sense. Things to do:

1) Very carefully dress yourself in order to seem physically inconspicuous although conditions of auditory concealment are not aught.

2) Walk in such a manner so as to disunite the open-and shut. This should not come with much ardor and the trick lies in the obtrusive overall presentation balance whist carriage.

3) Reach the water tap located on the corridor and fill the pet bottle by dragging the cap of the tap upwards to a point where water egests from the mouth in close proximity of our hand.

4) Fill the bottle to its complete height twice as the gushing water would throw the already filled water out of the mouth of the pet bottle with its pressure.

5) Take the bottle filled with water back into the stall and finish with the proceedings along the intention of the plan.

-I feel illuminated now, illuminated with purity and with satisfaction of completing a bizarre undertaking that has no place for it in the sensible building of college, no. I have done a nonsensical act unbecoming of the college conduct. I am slime but I why should I think that? Any person has got nothing good or productive out of self-spite. I should confess however to achieve some form of absolution but if I am to confess or be guilty of my actions, I would be partial and give more favor to social morality of scientific biology and we as people in a scientific age are not allowed to do that. The waters clean all the sins of the past. The news media is now dispelled. They will now forever be in the depths of human nous…shaping it…changing it… indoctrinating it…binding it… Only the shamanistic leadership can save the humans. Thankfully, we are all out of the scope of that apocalypse. Close calls… the final touch of the mud and the gladiator dunks into the Coliseum… Open doors… loud voices… no prince… no emperor and just serfs… hordes of them…the capability in them to be gladiators is negligible and the willingness more so. No pats on the back…because the back is stained with muddy sweat… no handshakes because they sit too high while I fight on the rink… no roses thrown…they probably forgot… not crowed with wreath because they believe in the socialist heroic. This is now. To contemplate what it would have been had I been slain in the rink? That would have been glum. And the joker falls slipping on a banana peel. Laugh-

He went to the department room and found no one there and his brain instantly began to assemble the truth- that he was left behind while the teacher had already taken the students with him. Rahil was in a state of confusion and horror and for a few moments did nothing but circled and looked around in a reptilian manner. Finally setting his eyes to the staff room, he started to walk in that direction and saw and halted once he had reached the door and the question now lay before him- am I to go inside and ask for the teacher or would it be too bold? After his last flip, nothing would have been bold enough for him and so he opened the door and stormed in but as he did so something caught his fancy. He looked through the glass of the door that he had now pulled to his right and saw the professor that had accompanied him during the admission in one of the three rooms on the far end of the corridor and almost instantaneously his hand let go of the retractable door which found its place back to its closed position and Rahil found his in room one hundred and two. He entered and saw a group of adults clustered on one end of the room near the teacher’s table from where he had entered. The same professor turned towards him and most politely asked him to take his place. He looked across the filled room and took his place at the last bench which was empty as all others were coupled.

“Now having taken you admission here, I believe you are all familiar with the new four year curriculum being implemented this year and you happen to be the first batch of this new academic experience. I know there are a lot of speculations that you can make about the course and about your batch being the experimental hamsters for this course but the fact remains that we are in this together for the duration of four years. Of course there is the multiple exit points were you can leave in two years with the associate degree and after three years with a bachelors degree and only after four years you get the bachelors with honors. We personally would not advise you to leave the course in the interim of the four years because if you leave in, say three years, you will still have the fourth year’s portion of the whole syllabus still left and incomplete even at the completion of your degree. Eh, for example if you study European literature, you will only study European eighteenth century prose and poetry and nineteenth century poetry in the second year. For the next year, you will still have the nineteenth century prose left and so your study of the whole ‘English’ literature will not be complete, of course not to mention the other… other… African literature, Indian writings in English and popular modern literature will also be left behind in the incomplete fourth year of study. I do not believe you should have any problem with studying a course such as literature which is more of an artful avocation than an extraneous field of study. I have personally addressed most of you and some of you are actually into writing and literary pursuits are quite well read. Let me tell you that we are really excited to have you as students and look forward to a great academic year till graduation.”

After his addressing, the professor asked the other members of the faculty to address the students and most of them just made brief short statements as much was set by the Head of the Department. One of the female professors seemed infuriated on being called and took stumping steps, stood opposite the blackboard and introduced herself to the students. Rahil was not able to make out either her name or the source of her indignation as she was insisted by other teachers to give a little more elucidative introduction. She grumbled some words but Rahil did not have the gusto to capture the meaning in her callously thrown words. Rahil thought her to be a counselor or a teacher of the unimportant foundation courses or the platitudinous integrating mind body heart courses while the actual truth was that she was not even assigned to him in the first year.

And after her introduction, the students were excused and allowed to go home and Rahil slipped out of the room in the same lonesome manner that he had done the last time. He was sure all his attempts in a primary conversancy would be completely futile and for the most part he was himself reluctant in gaining another person’s friendship for he began to grow wary of the wrong kind of friendship. The wrong kind of friendship in his sense did not mean a detrimental kind which he could not care less for because already the person that he had become was a form of deteriorated overman a bit like Jesus Christ who believed that all life, no matter how oppressed or dejected and regardless of what sins he had committed in the past was redeemable through him and thus he declared himself ‘the bread of life’. The wrong friend in his wit was the one who would deny his postulates and reject the notion of him being ‘the bread of life’. His beliefs about himself were not prejudices or forms of condescension but a compulsory realization of the power of will and the freedom to be if one accepts a more suited form of righteousness and virtue which he wished upon everyone and so in a manner it was not false to say that he was a God and wanted everyone to be Gods and Goddesses and strip the piecemeal metaphysical understanding that religion offered and take the bull by horns.

This time too he took a rickshaw back to his dormitory and did not find his brother here so he thought to call him and ask him where he was. The brother on receiving the call answered that he looking for a paying guest accommodation and had not yet found a proper one. Rahil reminded him of the peculiar specifications for himself but his brother overlooked them without keenness and non-indulgent about his peccadilloes applying his own puritanical seniority. And so the question of his accommodation was still a question that hung around his neck pervading his thinking and streamlining all his arbitrary thoughts fancying an arrow that made its way cutting through the air for the bull’s eye of complacence but not yet meeting as if the distance was too far but the strength of his thoughts that launched arrow also not dying and the arrow kept charging towards the bulls eye breaking the sonic barrier pullulating through and beyond mid air. He had lunch in the canteen with Sanjay as Sunny was still working and on talking with Sanjay he found out that even he was looking for a place to stay and attend the coaching classes and the problem could have almost solved itself, it would seem to anyone, if they bunked together and that idea did come up in their chat but it was dropped as soon as it was picked up on finding out that Sanjay’s classes were on the West end of the city and he preferred to stay there which was too far for Rahil whose college was in deep South end of the city and still he would have made his mind to locate himself in the West side for the comfort of at least one familiar friend had he known his way through the city and known the connection of the city through its DTC buses.

After the lunch, he watched another film with Sanjay which was based on a book that a struggling writer comes in an old satchel, from the World War era about the bereft love affair of a writer living in Europe who near loses his wife due to his passion for the written word and then publishes as his own. The resultant success attracts the original writer of the story, now an old man who meets with the young writer only to haunt him with one fact: that the writer would never be able to write like the old man. Rahil did not find much of substance within the film other than the well-layered story but being a story of multiple time frames and realities, it could have been more experimental with its construction and it was rather too worked up in terms of drama.

The movie turned afternoon into evening and it was only after watching the complete picture that Rahil headed for the shower and freshened himself up for the rest of the day and since it was a sunny and hot day, he did not mind taking a bath so late. After walking out of the showers and changing into the new clothes that he himself had washed out of the washing powder he had bought from the nearby departmental store, he thought to pass the time until his brother comes by reading a book and so he slipped his fingers into the husky pages of a good book and he liked the grainy feeling of the book as the two fingers of his one hand that clasped the book from under and split it very delicately into two in such a way that not a line of impression was left on the binding line of the book where the title is usually printed. The story of the book was as polished as the exterior design of the book, the structural design so to say and not the cover design as the cover was all black with an illustration that could be seen as a canonical mannerist portrait that seemed to befit the title and the subject matter of the book. He was not a fast reader but he was an avid one and when it came to themes and genres and such matters dictating the selection of books he was a Renaissance man and when he read books he never challenged the book’s content for their importance or appropriateness for the very reason that he was a reader response critic.

By late evening close to sundown his brother returned with such urgency that shook him and rattled him as the brother and his friend entered and asked him to ready his bags as he was checking out of the guest house and moving into his residence. It was still too distorted for Rahil to come to the terror of the accentuation of being independently on his own in an accommodation where he knew no one ad was so culturally separated that the other North Indian conformists would probably take him for a witch or blasphemous Satan and impale his heart and burn him on a stake. These thoughts were so aroused in his mind that he completely forgot the basic essentialities to discuss such as the living conditions and the space of boarding, and arrangements of food. He packed his bags completely in complete unawares of these basic questions devoid of any thoughts and focused on neatly arranging all the clothes inside the bag and being able to close the bags after all the luggage had been put in its place. He was overly joyful, out of no reason, when the bag managed to take his entire luggage as it naturally would for it was the same about of luggage he had brought him in the same bag that he was taking with him now. His teeth were exposed to air for some time as he rejoiced the sound of the closed zipper and its sweet sound echoed in his ears even after the unimportant noise had faded. It was an avoidant defensive mechanism, a form of retention, an escape and although his knowledge of basic psychoanalysis could naturally lead him to this conclusion, it was he who did not want to be led.

Facing the door, he paced towards it and exited the already open door lagging behind the two grown men who had already entered the elevator and were patiently waiting for him The phone numbers between the bachelors, Sanjay, Rahil and Sunny were politely exchanged in case anyone was in need of the other and the final adieu was also said and the only thing left to do now for the remaining two now as Rahil went into the elevator was closing the door behind him and spinning back into the balance of their own lives. He was just like a flower in a garden that was plucked by a naughty little child and although it might seem a travesty, it somehow turns out to be positive as in the grander perception it has brought about no change in the garden and furthermore brought a smile to the face of the child. People always see life as something that they cannot escape but in that case they completely miss the point of life which is not stabilization but fluctuation because though life might not change as a whole but does change in itself and these changes are so drastic and mercurial that they sometime stupefy us with the position which we find ourselves in as a reason to that change. The only reason why we resign ourselves to a dismal conclusion sometime or the other about life is because we are all essentially fundamentalists without an exception and bigots about our prejudices and eventually we become construal fundamentalist in our approach to the wholeness of life and see it only as a highway rather than free space.

Rahil got into the car and the white car drove out into the big Delhi road with all its traffic and beggars and other niggardly drivers such as the man sitting in front of the steering wheel in same car as Rahil. They were driving to the college area because they had found a paying guest accommodation right in front of the college, at least that was what they led him to believe till he witnessed it for himself. The car passed a lot of landmarks Rahil had remembered for his own sake of mental mapping. There were the long series of embassies, passing that there was the Bhikaiji Cama place, passing that, they took a turn and Rail saw the large building of the AIIMS trauma centre with the words glimmering over the tower as a sign board in bright red light some hefty club with a neon flash-sign. Making a little headway after that, his eyes captured the sight of the dust brown large building of the Engineering India limited-the slave market fashioned by the slaves. ‘A cruel thing to say’ Rahil thought to himself, ‘but the truth is always blistering, and right, even more’. It was followed by the Grand Hyatt hotel and Rahil though the good things just keep on coming. Finally, they reached the road which was familiar to Rahil as he caught view of the Gurudwara dome and its alabaster minarets and he was confirmed to have entered the area of Moti Bagh. It was the bigger area comprising of student residential area Satya Niketan, the posh areas Anand Niketan and Shanti Niketan and the musty, overcrowded and infelicitous Mochi Gaon which was a cheap alternative to Satya Niketan and also housed many students but at the risk of dengue, water born diseases, unsanitary condition and congested living space. The car finally turned into Benito Juarez road and Rahil could see his college on the other side and the many cafes and chain restaurants of Satya Niketan on the opposite side. The car then penetrated a narrow lane filled with students with unrecognizable faces and ill disposed attitudes although it was neither unfriendly nor directed towards them or any other object for that matter. The ill disposition seemed to Rahil as their means of entertainment.

‘They had all the right to be ill-disposed’ thought Rahil to himself as the place seemed more of an open-air market than a student residential area. There was no trace of anything becoming of an educational student environment other than the two commercial bookstores on the mouth of the main street and even they sold just the prescribed books and the reference material to the curriculum which Rahil was later to find much to his disappointment and so it was such that it seemed more like a circus fair of lusus naturae with their bodies listlessly moving forwards and backwards on the street with complete lack of intellectual vigor. It was a desolate state of existence that blinded the students there, raped them and violated their academic freedom but it was the freedom that they probably had never tasted and probably will never do if they continued to live in such obnoxious conditions of life. The car broke through the crowd and it was close to sun down but the sun had not yet fully descended into the darker folds of horizon and still threw an autumn auburn-colored light on the car at the autumn of the day, the winter of night eager to take its place. It was not easy to go through the crowd at the rate of speed in which they were going but the man behind the steering wheel knew how to handle herds of cows who strode his way- by way of blaring horns- and horns did blare as the car did speed and it probably caught too much speed as it exceeded the gateway they were supposed to stop at and went into another corner of the colony leaving the actual one behind. They grew confused now as to where the stairs for the PG was and started to commune among themselves about the place they had been to before. Obviously, Rahil could not lend a hand here as he had not the faintest hint of idea where he was and where he was to go. After sleighing back and forth as for the search of a survivor under the white blankets of snow, the white car finally stopped two paces short to a get, the two men got down and started walking to a building, the entrance of which lied dismally in a narrow blind gully. They headed up to the stairs with Rahil following them and halted against a big metal door which was followed by a knock on the door from his brother. The knock in turn was followed by an action: an undressed, well built and burly young man dressed in white torso innerwear and short black boxer shorts.

“Come in…Please do come in. The landlord said you were coming.” He invited them confidently as if he was the owner of the residence. Still being behind the two big frames of his brother and his brother’s friend, he was not able to see his residence properly and since there were no windows on the constricted wall which started with and ended on the borders of the big metal door, the only way to get a sight of the accommodation was to get in from between. As he was just bracing himself to o so, the two men entered the accommodation and moved to opposite ends of the main room like parting curtains leaving Rahil with the sight of the first act of the play. There were no rooms, just bedrooms. The room in which Rahil and his brother were standing was divided into by a thin wall and unified by a doorway which supposedly held a sliding door at some time. The right side of the room, where they were standing had four small beds with four small cupboards besides them and four lockers over them. The room smelled of freshly carpentered wood and a peculiar odor that Rahil was to later find as a characteristic odor of that place. That place was soon to become this place because it was now his place.

There were no tables, chairs or any furniture other than the bed and the cupboards and it struck not only as odd but also as derailing to Rahil’s imagination for this was surely not what he had in mind when he thought of attending a college such as the University of Delhi but it was yet too soon Rahil reach some point of final noesis to deliberately catch his dissatisfaction. For Rahil, in some lofted fraction of his mind, it was still a dream; it was all a dream. It was either a dream or a state of resurrection. It was very normal to think that way as h basis of his thinking was rooted in the fact that it was either a life in Port Blair or here in Delhi and that these both lives simultaneously were impossible and therefore the other state was nonexistent. So Rahil still needed time to portray his reality in his mind and apply his mind to the reality that was set forth him.

The fact still remained though that the place was a square box and there were no windows, no source of natural light or natural air other than the tube lights and the air conditioners and fans. On each end of the housing were two other rooms. While the two semi-divided were quadruple-rooms, each of the private rooms was triple-bed. Rahil was assigned to one such room on the right. It was the first room which was divided by the second room by just an inch. On the other side of the room, was another very convenient and parsimoniously built room along the same line of the door which was separated from the others by a sliding door. The walls o this room were made out of hardened muscovite sheets and not concrete. The housing seemed to reek of carpentered wood but really reeked of stinginess.

This room which seemed of a train coach than a roam was a double bed room and instead of a traditional ceiling fan it had small fan fixed at a corner of the wall above the bed kept on the right. Rahil entered is room and saw that it was barely the size of a closet. When he thought of closet, he was reminded of it and was deigned to find that there were none. ‘Where am I to keep the three bags of my luggage then?’ he thought to himself.

“We booked the one on the left, not the right.” The brother’s friend stated with a loud voice.

“But this boy was here since last day. It was assigned to him even before you.” The burly boy mentioned with a voiced dissention.

“Look, you want to talk to the owner, talk to the owner but either he gets that bed or we’re walking. That’s fair deal!” mentioned Rahil’s brother.

“Okay…okay, let me check.” He said and soon all the occupants gathered around the room. There were not much, probably just six or seven at that time but the whole area was so congested that even if they were minding their businesses in the consequent rooms they seemed to be hurdled up near the room assigned to Rahil, or for that matter both the rooms that were on the right side. The boy called the owner and talked to him. After a little chat with him he was asked to give the phone to the boy who occupied the bed that was assigned to Rahil and then he talked to the owner. His name was Ronel and he was from Nagaland and like all Nagaland, he had Mongoloid features- fair skin, beaded eyes, straight hair, quaint dressing sense, well built muscular body and clarity of heart. He was told by the owner to shift from the right bed to the left bed while the bed on the centre was occupied by a commerce student of ARSD College from Uttar Pradesh who was at the backdrop in this moment of delicate decision. After the nods and the concords, the luggage was moved by Ronel and replaced by Rahil. The lack of closet was compromised by the bed as the bed could be opened up to act as a closet although it could only be used as long term storage because opening the heavy bed each day to change attire was a foolish thing to do. So Rahil unpacked, placed his clothes of daily use in the overhead lockers, then packed the rest and shoved the bags into the bed cum closet. After that, they placed the mattress which seemed more like a block of packing material of a wad of thick stiff sponge than a mattress intended for sleeping and without letting Rahil lend a hand out of generosity, his brother and his friend spread the bed sheet cleanly over it stuffing the sides of the hanging cloth back under the mattress.

“There…Just like a hotel.” His brother mentioned and took back his upper body as there was not enough space to take steps back and marvel over the work he had done with the aid of his stern friend. Following that, he hugged his brother with the fraternal embrace of a brother who was not to see his elder brother for a very long time.

And then they started to go away after exchanges of words that befitted the occasion but were too general even for that ceremonious occasion for Rahil to consider or remember them; still words were words nonetheless and they still meant something and the meaning of those were demanded to be remembered and it was inconsiderate of Rahil to forget them and overlook their utterance. Soon, he was left alone in a room full of boys. Although he wished to remain in silence after that, he was picked up in a conversation by the burly giant who had addressed them.

“My name is Chandan Munjal.” He said with a heavy voice. His face was dark and thick alike his voice and he also had dense stubs of beard. Much of his body was covered with hair although that did not displease Rahil in any manner because he was not one to judge a person by his physical aspects. He was very friendly and had Rahil charmed in minutes by his sense of fraternity by which they became bonded in a matter of seconds. He never hesitated to use a foul mouth, even to appreciate things and that was a sign of his joie de vivre.

Another boy, of the same descent as Chandan- a connection that Rahil made from their dialect and speech- addressed Rahil in the same personal sense as the person before him. His name was Aman Singh and he was an exiguously built man whose frames were stratified by strong and firm musculature quite according to the tendencies of a basketball player. Though Rahil had become quite open to them in some minutes as darkness descended, they had only treated him with their versions of exteriority from their sides. The talking took a turn to a soliloquy when Rahil had mentioned the case of his voluntary exemption from the engineering college.

“How can you leave such an extravagant degree?” asked Aman.

“Come on, you ought to know better. A wise willing mistake is better than a brave foolish decision.” Chandan replied to Aman in defense of Rahil. Their talking was interrupted by a knock on the big metal door. Another boy opened the door, a boy with curly hair, round face and square glasses and he was handed separate packets of food by someone not visible to Rahil as he was standing on the other side of the door. The curly haired boy brought food and kept all the packets on one of the empty beds in the bigger room on the right.

“Go on and have your dinner. Take a packet and a Styrofoam plate and get chugging.” Aman encouraged him and patted on his back. On asking whether or not they were to eat dinner, Chandan replied that they brought their food from someplace else where they served it better. Since it was the first day, Rahil had no option but to eat what was in front on him silently. This was a new day even though it was night and something very pernicious was now neutralized. Though he felt a bit alienated, he pegged the initial confrontation quite proactive for a start. The pure milk-white walls only seemed white and there was nothing noble in living the way did and they way he was about to live except for the fact that they were all together in the closed air of the rooms and the shining whiteness of the walls. He wanted to be a part in their togetherness and although it would not bring Rahil to any eventful success dreaming of which he had landed on the airport of New Delhi or the peace to pursue his work which he was in expectation of, he was sure that he would play a prodigious part in their lives as they lived it together, as he carried their qualms on the promise that one day they would carry his. The days would be different now and he had braced himself for these days. He was equipped with everything but one attribute was missing and it was something that he had possessed not so long ago but had extinguished as he went through a transcendence of his self; now he needed to replenish that channel of loquacity, that plant of collectivity and syndicalism. He was well versed of the cultural constraints, so well as to use it against people constrained by it and now was the opportune moment to cast the dies of liberation. A wall is only made one brick at a time and the book of history and social change is also written one chapter at a time.

-Just another bed in the dormitory…under the white light…never natural… always acerbic…frightening horror of knowing nothing yet the chill of seeing with the eyes that have seen too much. Rocks lingering on the banking tides…transparent, with yellow light simmering from above…below…right…so fast they descend and as they hit the water, they become timeless antiques- a thing of past and something of a portrait than a picture. A picture is a portrait… an ideal picture of something we are looking for…A picture, we see. Night dawns and fact fades…singular- that of everything held dear. Nothing is. Worldly ways are all that count, worldly ways and worldly gestures… the gesticulations of everyday life, they abhor me. The deviation to be normal so that we may matter for we are matter- light us on fire and we ignite, through us off a cliff and see our bodies be the pain and brush on the canvas of the road, shoot us and see the blood break out from our wound. The mind…the mind is just an illusion…a perverted cinema…just showing you images with sounds...the sensations are all that matter and others. Loneliness, insomnia…the weapons of the demented… I...Me…I... who else lives? That is my sorrow…that is my pity… I want to prove but who do I prove it to? All our lives fuse to form a big ladder but that ladder leads nowhere. The object followed by the idea followed by the expression followed by the thought. What is one to another but a stepping stone? The misery of the student is to find…The student is to choose his tools wisely, whether to look, to see, to examine, to deduce, to reduce, to analyze, to philosophize, to generalize, to observe, to record, view… there are so many alternatives but to each its own. A hard-line mind in a feeble body… can there be a drawback ever? I should not think so but then my faculties are faltered by my current composition in totality. There are many ‘what ifs’ and ‘so whats’ around me and they are the conservative kind. The words…meaningless…the sounds…meaningless and I walk among the naked sexuals… not to be confused with the sexists. I have not had the fortune to meet them yet. One night has brought so much promise and unraveled so much surprises that I wonder how many days of this promise and affectation will cower down my resilience. Fret no. Tomorrow is another day, a brighter one. A day with more people…a day with the imps and the trolls of the classroom…I am dust-

**3**

At the start of the new academic year, it is not only the teachers who are betaken by a spirit of infusion with the students through continual interaction. On a free period when anarchy ruled Rahil’s class, three people entered the room. Two of them were girls and one was a boy. They called the attention of the class to themselves and they introduced themselves to be their seniors, or super-seniors. One of them, a short, fair sparkly-eyed flibbertigibbet caught his eyes. He was a model of remarkable beauty. Nothing else about her struck to him as odd, interesting or indulging but the beauty. Her aspen brown hair aroused a question when should have roused an urge. ‘How many girls in this part of the country have brown hair?’ he thought to himself. It was amusing for him to catalogue and he would if her beauty had not so mesmerizingly captivated him. One of them introduced himself to be the editor of the college magazine. Rahil made a note of it. It was the boy who was the editor. The boy with the scraggly beard and an even scragglier hair with dark skin and t-shirt faded like the blue of a dusking horizon. Rahil threw neat sharp looks at his uneven, unkempt face and his cloth satchel, a traditional jhola that lolled on the right side of his hip. They finished their introduction, mentioned a word too meek about the fresher’s gathering and left the room to congregate in the other room opposite to the room that Rahil’s batch, their juniors, occupied.

He saw the boy sitting in the front row. He had often seen him but alas the boy was not able to see him back as he was blind. The curse to not see is cruel but to see a world that has eyes and does not see in hellish and to not do something about it is veritably diabolical. So he neared the plump rotund boy and sat beside him, notifying him of his presence by throwing a hand around his shoulder and asking:

“So, what do you think about the seniors?” Rahil asked.

“They’re nice and all.” He replied.

“I didn’t catch your name, brother.” He asked, probably for the first time since his stay in Delhi.

“oah, Samir.” He replied.

“Okay, Samir. Do you have anything you want to ask them? They’re right in the next room. If you want, I can call them for you. Or if you just want to talk to them…” Rahil, talking, suddenly stopped and awaited his reply.

“Wait. Let me just call them and then you can talk.” Rahil said and lack of any kind of resistance, any pulling on the arm or shouts to let him know that it was alright otherwise, Rahil took his silence for an approval and went over to the other room where the seniors were talking among themselves in the absence of the teacher.

“Um, excuse me. I am sorry to disturb you but there is one who wants to talk to you about college matters and he would be…and I would be…grateful if you can come over and talk to him, you know…clear his doubts.” Rahil said with considerable confidence almost confronting the pretty girl that he had affixed his eyes on. The girl started to get a sense of heightened hint and his mere request seemed to him a coquettish advance which resulted in her growing defensive.

-Don’t worry. I am not the threat to your virginity or your purity, of Angel Incarnate! Please, in my escort bless the damned with your presence and being in your mere presence, he shall be expatriated from his state, if only temporarily. A wise old man once said, to make a blind man see, let him never remove his hands from a woman’s taut bosom and his lips from her soft carnal valleys of her lips. Though I do not ask you of all that; my innocence prisons me from doing so and hence all I do is request the elixir of your company. You look at me with eyes of disbarment and repulsion, please do so. I would judge your character if you would not but come to an understanding, a pleasurable one, a positive one. I do not, in any manner, intend to harm you, although the city’s name is befouled for such actions. Leave me out of it, I say for it is not even my yearning but a man who has God in his debts but God is a stingy taker who never pays what he owes-

She walked to her and Rahil walked behind her. She was accompanied by another senior, a tall turbaned fellow with bear and a thick voice to match for the plush jet-black beard. Fearing that he might offend her, Rahil left the girl and Samir alone along with his escort, daddy longlegs. It also served as a certificate of character for the girl on which she was later to rely upon.

The classes had a promise to something better still but the housing was decadent and corrosive. He was bored by the inedible food that was packed and sent for them and which was initially arranged for them. Abhorred by the continuity of the food, Rahil and some other bunkmates decided to pay off and discontinue the service and buy food of their own. Rahil had not compared the costs and whether it would be economical to do so but his wits were blinded by his palates.

Since then, the lot of them would form a gang at night and head down to the food stall of their mutual preference and each of them would order similar food of their mutual preference with the exception of one or two who were able to afford some delicacy a little better and then they would head back to their PG accommodation and have a feast together. If Rahil did not like the taste of this food too, he certainly liked the way they ate all together like one big similar-sexed family with members all of the same age. He could say it brought back memories of his own past and his dining with his large family but it was not accurate. Discontent in Rahil was compensated by finding some instances of mirth on such occasions. If Rahil was out of occasions, he would form a conversation with a group of three or four and make a whole situation out of which mirth was to be made. In layman’s terms, Rahil tried his heart’s best to be happy and happy he thusly was.

In the days that followed he had also made friends with Samir and was his aide most of the time. It was mutually beneficial for him as he had nothing much to do and spending his time with Samir, he did seem like an angel to him and to others who saw him helping him. One had washed the other and they all boasted of Rahil’s cleanliness.

He was yet to indulge in something serious and really be a part of something bigger. He was enthusiastic to find out about such a variety of college communities and societies such as the Indian and Western dramatics society, the film society, the debating society, the fine arts society, the extra opportunity cell which dealt with community service for the differently-able which Rahil was already doing only the term for it was freelance. The first thought he gave into was joining the dance society which was a tough nut to crack although Rahil was to dance what Nero was for the Roman Patrician. He did it for the fair maiden or the bonny lass or his fair-skinned maiden when he so fortunately had the pleasure of encountering and it was found out by him that she was a part of the college’s choreography cum dance crew. He had put an effort regardless of the success or failure. He had been somewhat flexible in high school and had won much appreciation through his dancing but little accolades. A lot had changed since his graduation from high school, the most radical change being the sudden takeover of complete lethargy in all matters physical. That marked for his first flush of unwillingness that assuaged in his mind about giving it a try which was devoid when he had conceived the idea of doing so. Still, he was not one to easily give up. He concentrated on matters of soundtrack as it was a burning concern, especially for a dancer who lacked the skill to hold the viewer’s attention by the mere finesse of his dance.

Along with that, he also started to backroom deals and lobbying entrances. ‘If not as a dancer, as a musicologist then if they might need such a thing or a light technician…anything would do…just to be near you…’ he thought to himself. His nights went hopeless, dreamless, in taunts of others and in memory of her. He was one step short to an obsession. His obsession however was not just with her but also of being a part of a group, a clique, somewhere he would be wanted and he would belong. This was the case with the majority of undergraduates- they wanted to be a part of some extracurricular activity not taking into consideration the clause whether they were befitting of that activity or not. Rahil was also in breach of a similar form of clause. His mind etched possibilities that his body could not possibly live up to.

Each opportunity that Rahil earned as a free period was utilized in snooping around the college campus in search of people who could help him with his problem of getting into the dance society. He went through the well-built gulley inside the college that swarmed with fresh undergraduates bursting with all forms of vigor save academic vigor. Rahil, among them, stood like stock tied over a scion. He felt dislocated and disheveled. He stood with a newly-made acquaintance of his- Riship. Rahil had impressed many brawny boys in need of a brainy accomplice and so he had tagged along with Rahil to project his smartness but it had only made him seem deranged as Rahil was a wise man in his own mind. They stood near the backend corridor opposite to the sports room and behind the college canteen overlooking an open stretch of land that served as the practice spot for the dance practice of the crew. They stood with each other eyeing the performance of the male members of the crew.

“I suppose you can break that move.” Riship asked Rahil tauntingly.

“I think therefore I am.” Rahil replied, clichéd.

Further conjuration of words were not needed as both of their eyesight converged into one and traveled on to the dancing figures on the green grass shining under the bright sun with the whitewashed brick walls surrounding them and throwing on them patches of sunlight like spotlight on a pianist performing in a concerto.

“Are you thinking of joining a society?” Rahil asked Riship.

“The Beta-house maybe….pursuing a course in an institution is societal enough for me.” He replied. Rahil looked at his tall figure which was no different from his own. They talked to each other with considerable openness and found out that they were more or less neighbors to each other and while Rahil was paying five thousand for an air-conditioned room that was like a bunker, Riship’s room, though void of the perks of a conditioned air was equipped with an air cooler and was much more spacious than Rahil’s accommodation. His accommodation had beds lined with three men’s accommodation between them. They also had a bookshelf each an overhead cabinet bigger and more graceful than that of Rahil’s. One thing that Rahil envied him for was the big cabinet each of them had assigned to them.

“My my, you have a grand house here.” Rahil said mockingly when he strolled around the paying guest accommodation the evening Riship had invited him to his humble abode. He met all the other PG mates of Riship in the same manner as a celebrity meets a group of strange people whom he cannot find a chance to avoid. He smiled towards them and extended his hand first in a manner of generous initiation and an extension of friendliness that is warm and yet all too formal. Then he made more than small talk in matters pertaining mutual interests of which there were many- the dog days of Delhi University, courses, colleges, professors who do not like to be called teachers, interests in sports, interests in other activities and of course when all else failed, there was the talk of girls though Rahil never liked talking about girls in that corny angle. He would write about it, sure and he would and he would talk from such an aspect that would him out to look like a total pervert but he would not talk about it in the general interest other boys take in such a discussion. Another odd personality among the many in Riship’s accommodation caught his eye. This odd personality was a fair skinned young man who was from Mizoram and called himself Emzee.

When Rahil was escorted by Riship to his PG, Emzee was in his room which was a separate room that had the balcony attached to it. The door was locked and Emzee was in the room with earphones plugged in his ears, the diaphragm thumping rhythmically with the rhythm of the music and Rahil asked Riship who occupied the single occupancy room.

“That’s our Emzee. He’s a total Westerner….listens only to rock. He’s your kind of guy, you know. You should have one of your hour-long discussions with him.” Riship said with another upsurge of comic wit.

“Well, I am more into hip-hop, but I’ll have a chat anyway. Is he in our college?” Rahil asked Riship, his question following his glib humor.

“Yes, sociology honors.” Riship answered, doffing his head in a thoughtful and absentminded gesture sensing it was information enough for Rahil to make a mental image out of the person whom he had just theoretically so perfectly constructed but for Rahil, it was not enough. Not that he made an act of perfectionism out of judging people; it was just that he wanted to see this person in person to make an opinion of him and in a way, give him the proverbial fair trial. He, of all people did not believe that the least you can know about a person s by actually interacting with him or her and thought contrarily of it.

Although he was not much enthusiastic about meeting him, and certainly not enthusiastic enough for Rahil to wait besides the door for a chance to meet him, time and nature somehow kept him occupied as he indulged into interactions with other PG mates, went though the book collection of Riship which was not a penny worth of boasting and also talking to Riship about the college and about the course and asked for his views on it which, like his collection of books were not of much worth. Still they were honest and had an honest streak about their delivery. That caught Rahil’s eye and that he appreciated in him. His ways of explaining things was very personal and though in age Rahil was mature than Riship, he was the one who was led and guided by Riship in matters that were artless.

Suddenly the door to the single room opened and Rahil and Riship were supplanted into the company of Emzee. His face had round small eyes and he had a crew cut.

“Hello boys.” He greeted everyone collectively, walking in strides like a panther to a prey.

Rahil threw a curious glance at his direction and nodded.

“You’re also in Venky?” Emzee asked Rahil and he just extended his nodding to answer his question.

“So how do you find Venky?” Rahil asked with an air of unintended pretentiousness.

“It’s a nice college. I’m looking forward to being a part of the college community.” He answered, plugging out the earphones to rid his brain of the music he was just listening to.

“So, what kind of music do you prefer to listen to?” he asked Emzee.

“Pop, rock…This…that…Beatles…sometimes.” Emzee replied.

-Beetles…poseurs….British invasion…Hendrix-noise. John Lennon- killed by an artist…Catcher in the Rye, he suggested everyone to read. Maybe there’s a thing to it. Byrds, Bob Dylan- he should have won that Nobel. They are rock and roll, and Jefferson Airplanes, and Grateful Dead. The metaphysical circus- too much of psychedelic rock in it for my head to take in… the ghetto music, poetry of the streets…hip-hop- Tupac, Eazy-E, Compton, East Coast West Coast music. Music, reality, life, charm, flavor, string, spin, chamberlain-

“Do you wish to audition for the Western Music society?” Rahil asked Emzee.

“You know I would want to, but not alone.” Emzee replied.

“If you are thinking of giving the audition and are going to avoid it for the stupid reason of not having any company, let me make a buffoon of myself and give the auditions with you.” Rahil responded quickly. He felt no remorse or shame in doing a thing he knew he was completely in lack thereof. If a noteworthy talent was to blossom up from the crack of anonymity out of his jeer, then he was quite content in becoming the ragged clown. And so it was decided that Rahil was to be Emzee’s wingman for the music society auditions.

-There is something noble in helping. There is. Like him is I. State. No state. Same wise, likewise. State...estrangement…Closure. Comte. Style- handy; comely, homely…homey… Rap, rock…I am Rock, I aaam….an…..island. Simon and Garfunkel-

Rahil and Riship stood watching the practice, and looked at each other breaking their glances with small dialogues and ending their small dialogues with silent glances. Grown weary of the wait, Rahil needed the time to speed or for the actions to speed up time. He looked Riship right in the face and his eyes again went in quest of someone whom he could stop and enquire about dance crew. He looked at him and then began to descend on the grassy slight hummock on which the dance crew practiced. Paralysis took over his legs as soon as he stood in front of those well-toned abs that they had maintained by working on dance moves and steps that were surely too tough for him to perform and so he was naturally not a compeer.

-Relativity is not natural…neither is quantum physics. Natural, supernatural…modern physics is supernatural, Allah. Monkey is supernatural, is it not? A monkey with a club...Blasphemy! What is? To have statues of monkeys or to raise questions on having statues of monkeys…women bleed blue menstrual blood; that is natural. Look. See. The beauty and the body and the grace of the bodice, tank tops? Yellow, red, dark blue, ink, baby pink, dance colors-

Riship stopped a tall bearded senior going about his way dressed shabbily in a faded t-shirt and jogging pants. ‘Home clothing, it must be’ his fried thought and then added, ‘but then he is not a jatt, I see from his looks.’

“Do you know anything about getting into the dance society?” Riship asked the senior with no idea of the words that came from his mouth. He had no care for the senior and his affiliation with the dance crew. He had judged a book by the cover.

“I am not in the dance society.” The tall senior replied and affirmed Riship’s error.

“Do you want to join the dance society?” the tall senior asked, and Riship pointed to the direction of Rahil whose attention was diverted and divided, infinitesimally into thin air, wisps of I taken in by those taut-bodied dancers.

“He dances?” the senior asked laughingly an added in an answer of his own, saying “doesn’t look like he does.”

Riship smiled in return, not putting the effort of an answer that needed a detailed explanation. They were nonetheless in mutual understanding of the fluke that even Rahil in his heart of hearts knew it was. It simply could not be pursued and Rahil had subconsciously come to terms with it. He stood in appreciation of their art in second-person. The tall senior drooped one of his elongated slender arm such that the palm of it landed on Rahil’s back and caught his attention.

“Well brother. What are you psyched up about?” he said although the senior could very well see that Rahil was not jovial at all. Rahil sensed this contradiction and grew wary of the senior’s attention towards him and felt it to be menial or it could just be, he thought, that it is his simple catchphrase that he uses to greet one and all.

“I am interested in all forms of art and I am thinking…I am trying to get involved in some or the other. I’m not being too selective or anything. How are the communities here, the dance society here, and the music society and the dramatics society?” Rahil asked making the senior the point of intersection of both his attention and his observation.

The senior took a step back at such a sudden assault with questions. The questions were too much for him to follow in completeness of its case. He took some time, scratched his beaded chin which created a noise in the thin silent air that had a glow of a very positive morning that both the senior and Rahil felt, in themselves and also towards each other.

“Now hold on a minute.” He said to take some time o eke some lines out of his consumptive mind and then added “I am in the Hindi dramatics society….” He said but Rahil interrupted him just at that moment.

“Yeah, how is the Western dramatics society?” Rahil asked. Being a student of English honors, he expected to be a part of it and he knew he had the skills to make it into the supposedly selective cult of WMS. He did not know if it was selective or not but he imagined that college communities, especially in the University of Delhi are bound by emulous students trying their spirit’s best to get in and thwart others in their way. Rahil never showed such stark lack of compassion in the face of competition and for him competition was second to compassion.

“No no no no… The actors in WMS are just a bunch of stoners. All they want do is go around with the girls…thinking acting is about. They lack the passion and the sincerity. It has been two years since they last put on a proper show. Our society is way more active than that. Our senior, Arjun bhai has worked with people from the National School of Drama and the Film and Television Institute of India. He is really something. And there is another, Gulshan bhai who was awarded a laptop from the principal of the college…It was an apple Mac book. The WMS people just goof around, do drugs and set a bad example. We have real actors who are passionate about acting and if you are interested, you should really give our auditions a try. The dates are not out yet but the details will be soon put up on the bulletin most probably by the end of this week. Most probably you would have to practice and come, a line of your own for the first round and for the second round, we would give you one.” He laid down all his advices and guidelines in brief.

Rahil had a question to ask him that flung in his mind more primarily and importantly than his concerns about the dramatics society. Actuall, it was the very thought that had kept him captivated the whole day, a thought that he had laid on Riship and it was not concerning the auditions. It was about a transfer of college because it was pointed out by the PG mates to Rahil that in the final cutoff list that was declared, Rahil was graciously shortlisted for admission to Hindu College which was one of the most prestigious colleges in the University of Delhi and was also the oldest.

“You should try out for this college, man. Shoot off and out of here. Hindu is the place to be, I tell you.” Chandan blared with good grace as he jostled himself into the unrealized joy of Rahil who was dubious about the prospective that besieged him in that college. In Sri Venkateswara, he had found an encouraging and sympathetic faculty that was supportive and dexterous, at least to him they were and so now he thought of his college practically better than Hindu. But then he had not tested the faculty of Hindu college and felt a dire need to do s. Things were put to some form of equilibrium when another of his friend, Akshay was shortlisted for admission in Kirori Mal College which was another famed college in the North Campus of the University.

“Let’s go and check it out then, tomorrow.” Akshay said and added “Both of our colleges fall along the same way. I am also confused whether to change college because studying in North Campus is a prestigious deal…”

“I second that.” Rahil interrupted him in the middle.

“But I have grown a liking for our college as well and so now I guess it’s for me as its for you and like you, I’ll go down to the college and meet up with the faculty to see what’s worth what.” Akshay finished his statement.

One of Rahil’s friends from his class had already shifted to Hindu college as he too was shortlisted in the final cutoff but Rahil sipped his cup of tea after much blowing and was not one for rash decisions. He wanted to think things over and he wanted to talk things over, discuss them with a greater authority. Riship had advised against it.

“You have a good thing going here. You have a reputation among the students and the professors have also taken quite a liking towards you. Do you really want to give it all up and go to a college where students are stuffed like cotton in a plumed out Teddy Bear?” Riship asked him in between the class.

-He says it for his own selfish reason. Would not want to lose only friend he has made. Who will he loaf off notes from? Friends are hard to find, harder to make, hardest to maintain. Still he guides me. ‘Make a wise choice’, he says. I will. Ask around. Make a wise choice. Sane choice…sound choice…sound-make a. Prashanth is already gone. Haven’t talked to him since…I ought to go there…. See what the place feels like. Mull thoughts wanted, dead or alive. Better dead than alive. Lively class, dead, brooding their youth…celebrating their naivety. Stormchasers and rainmakers weave fate…Thodol. Better act now, suggest the scenes, the scenarios, and the methods then learn, and then act, spontaneously….method acting. Encourage. Engage. Encore. En Vive…vivacious vivacity-

“I feel more interested in seeing theatre than acting. Do you know any good shows I can catch?” Rahil asked the senior, even now forgetting to ask him his name and upholding the bad habit that he had desperately wanted to shake off.

“Yeah, there are lots. I mean, come in- Its Delhi! It’s the cultural capital of India. Sure Mumbai is the place to be for more commercial scopes of acting but the theatre arts is nowhere more fortified that in the heart of Delhi. In fact, we are going to a performance by Sahitya Academy at Mandi house. Do you want to join us?” the senior asked forwardly. Rahil was blown out of the water by such a friendly display shown by this senior. It was in stark difference of the idea of seniors his friends at engineering college had painted for him.

He had heard stories of the University being notorious for cases of ragging and hazing of juniors by the seniors, and so did mild research, all that could be done, about it. He found that there were anti-ragging cells in the college that worked in condemning ragging cases but then he remembered a dialogue he had with his friend Himesh who was now studying engineering at the National Institute of technology in Durgapur.

It was sometime around September when this conversation had happened, when Himesh was in Port Blair during his spring break. They talked at his house for a little while and then they both walked over from his house to the Marina Park. They passed the mosque that was nearby, as the freshly whitewashed minarets stood tall of the religion prevalent in that area, and then to the road that led to the park. On their way to the park, they passed the fountain which was dry that day, which usually threw jets of waters like a geodesic ball and had small colored spotlights all around it that gave a different color to each side of the flowing fountain. Then they took the road that bent circling the stadium halfway, the Netaji stadium on one side of the road and the Andaman club on the other, and then overlooking the road was a map of India that was crafted on the ground like a big rocky portrait and painted, courtesy of the Public Board of Municipal council. Passing that, they came to the entryway of the park, that looked at them from the other side of the broad road, with the traffic police stall in the middle of the road, standing empty, as the mild light of the dusk dipped like a piece of Rusk into tea.

They sat besides the sea together and talked like old friends were supposed to talk, and that meant talking dirty.

“So you motherfucker, haven’t seen you in a long while? How have you managed to waste that big fucking brain of yours sitting that skinny ass of yours in these islands, man. I mean if that were me, I would have gone overboard.” Himesh said.

“Glad it wasn’t you then, you fucking idiot. I have my substances to keep me afloat. How was your college days, you cheap bastard, huh? Living on college the whole year on just three thousand bucks! By God how much these governments farts waste money on you would-be engineers of the future! Still, I know you got it in the ass by the seniors. The only thing I want to know is whether they used Vaseline or not?” Rahil asked, inquiringly, almost serious, as if he was looking for a reasonable answer.

“Get the fuck out of here, you fag fucking asshole, No! I didn’t. But the ragging was tight, man.” He said ready to share his experiences of being hazed by the seniors.

“So, what did they do to you?” Rahil asked.

“This and that, you know. Sometimes, it is mild and quite fun. One day, they cornered me and one of my friends, from Port Blair, you might know him actually he studied in Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya. Anyways, they caught us, took us to our room and then locked the room from the outside. Then they asked my friend to dance on a sad tune, and dance with a jive, and so it was really funny for him but when it came to me though, they had changed the tune to a fairly jolly one that really helped my dancing. And then this one day, they made all the juniors do successive hour-long commentary on porn and if we laughed or so much as smiled, it would be the death of us and I’m not kidding. I mean they literally had leather belts rounded in their palms ready to welt us if we rebelled.” He stopped for a breath.

“So nothing really deadening happened to your sorry ass, like it getting fucked with a broom handle?” Rahil asked, perplexed by his prosaic choice of words.

“No, but then one day things got really out of hand. This one day, I was just cruising through my hostel block and this Bihari guy gets me with a couple of friends, pulls me by the collar to the side and starts slapping me, you know. No ifs no nothing just wham wham wham and after three slaps, he stops and shoves me on the wall holding my collar. I just blankly look at him and his eyes and he lands another two on my face and then he just leaves. Funny thing tough, he and I were quite causal when met after that.” He said with a cold look on his face, the kind you get after remembering a bad memory. Rahil judged from that look that there was more to the story than he was telling but he didn’t want to scratch the surface in fear that something unexpected might pop out if it cracks. So he sat there silently looking at the small lights lit on the ship that was astray a little distant from the jetty which was at the end of the park.

“So what about you, where have you panned going?” he asked Rahil.

“I haven’t put my finger on it yet, but I think I’ll be going to Delhi, probably DU.” Rahil mentioned, making the first fairly sure proclamation that he might attend DU.

Himesh greeted that answer with a smile first, then asked, “Do you know the kind of ragging that goes around in the North?”

He was somewhat taken aback by the exactness and the boldness of his question. There was surely some relation or the other of Delhi University with ragging because it was the first thing that popped into the mind of this person as the very name of the institution was mentioned. But then his answer was generalized, not specific to Delhi University but to all the colleges in North India. Since he forgot answering Himesh’s question with words and felt too late for it now, he just nodded and changed his gaze, from his friend’s eye to the green grass of the garden on the other side to where they sat.

“And you’re still going there?” he asked.

This time he answered. “It’s good for the arts.” He said, still looking at the green grass, darker than the average color of grass, he noticed.

“And there are also some pretty active anti-ragging cells in the college. I’ve read about them in the college brochures.” He added.

“Ah, that’s a total farce. We have an anti-ragging cell for crying out loud! But I’ll another story of this guy who was from some town in West Bengal. He was ragged by the seniors, and I mean badly and then he went and complained to the professor in-charge of the anti-ragging cell, and got himself locked in his room for a whole day. When he went to complain again, the professor advised to ‘sort this mess among yourselves’ and then he later found out that it was the professor giving his information to the seniors. He wanted to leave the college but then his parents came, saw and they somehow convinced the student to stay. After all, its fucking NIT!” he completed his story, and saw Rahil’s face, expected it to turn to stone at the end of it, grow pale by the terror of it, but it wasn’t.

“Shit happens.” Rahil said averting himself to get into long sociological discourse on a number of ways it could have been prevented.

“Just be careful, man. Calcutta’s bad experience for me but its noting compared to what I heard happens up North. You didn’t get ragged here in Port Blair when you were a student, did you?” asked Himesh.

“They wouldn’t dare.” Rahil answered stylistically thinking at least the students didn’t dare. The teachers though, were another tale.

And now he was standing aside a senior who had invited him to watch theatre with him of his own accord.

-This might be some kind of a scam…maybe to round us off and take us out for a group hazing, something raw…something intense. What? I fear. I do not know…I should be careful. Too trusting maybe I am. Too defenseless…better notify him I am bringing company Still, so innocent he looks. Looks testify he would never do such a thing, and voice like a dove’s peaceful echo. Or a nightingale’s…sparrow’s coo. He cooed and he coos.

“What’s your name, brother?” Riship asked him finally.

“Rohit” the senior answered. Rahil hid his spite for himself at not knowing the answer to that question in advance. Riship and Rahil were pleased to accept his offer and they agreed to meet after the college hours by four in the evening near the Satya Niketan bus stop.

Rahil had to attend only one short class before that. It was a class of Indian literature in English and Anita Desai’s *In Custody* was to be discussed. The teacher was a lady with as much éclat as the capacity to bilk matter in lectures void of scholastic worth and satisfying that void with trivial philosophies. The teacher had not yet started with her part ad was briefing the students about the newly introduced course of integrating mind body and heart. It was a farcical course that had no academic promise and was a waste of the students’ time and energy as all the teacher had the students doing was to reflect on imbecilic topics that were of no concern to literature students. Still she tried to make some good out of it by encouraging the students use the free time to be creative and come up with poetry, prose or other works of their own to deliver in front of the class like slam poetry.

Rahil was called the first to deliver his poetry and he valiantly stepped forward to deliver without hesitation.

*Breed kids, breed pigs, breed bitches and fowls*

*Breed chicken, but O never!*

*Never I tell you breed ambition!*

*Harbor ragamuffins the poorest, lepers and harlots*

*Harbor killers and criminals; open your doors to them*

*But never, never I tell you harbor a dream*

*Because dreams and ambitions destroy you*

*They push you in a vicious struggling life*

*They make blind, think only one thing*

*Having dreams and having ambitions might seem magical*

*But in real life, they will tear you apart*

*In real life, you need to pursue them*

*And that pursuit is hard, that pursuit is long*

*Ambitions demand actions*

*The higher the ambition, the greater must be the action*

*Only a man with courage can do it*

*A man with iron in his heart and firmness between his loins*

*And determination in his mind*

*This man and his ilk is few and far between*

*But when these men dream, by God they dream well!*

*And when they leap towards their ambitions*

*You could swear you saw Cheetahs*

*You could swear you saw passion become a drop and fall from their brows*

*You could see that one way or the other*

*They’re going to achieve their ambition*

*These men will serve as inspirations*

*Their tails will live on as legacies*

*And they will die legends*

*Every one of us is born a dreamer*

*But only a few of us are dreamers.*

“It is a damn good poem.” The teacher said the moment Rahil hinted the end of his poem and gazed towards her to ask her permission to leave his place. The other students clapped for him in appreciation of his poem. The applause was like shouts of bravos though no actual shouts were heard. They had to keep up the decorum of a college classroom.

“A good poem, a little out of tone here and there but were you trying to advice through your poem not to dream?” The teacher critiqued.

-You bet I was. Something to kill the boredom… The class enjoyed it. They coul not have applauded. It was not mandatory for them to do so. Yet they did. There must have been something in me. The poetry… It was true. Wrote I at a bus stop in Port Blair. Waiting for one; how time gratifies. How poetry forces itself out of the poet. The most blessed being on the world…Being to condescending, put a hold to it-

After the college was out, Rahil asked Arnab, in presence of Riship, if he wanted to go to the theatre to catch watch a lay with him. Arnab declined formally and dearly saying he was tired and needed to rest.

“Don’t worry. You and I are people enough.” Riship consoled Rahil.

“Nah, some of PG mates would want to go. It’s not always that they get an opportunity to imbibe some actual culture. I’m sure one or two would be lapping up their tongues show eagerness to come with us.” Rahil replied. He wanted more people to enjoy a slice of what he was about to enjoy. This was the Christ-like benefactor spirit of Rahil’s that kept him in the good graces of others and gradually became the cause of his slowly growing notoriety.

Two of his PG mates, Ranjan, the always smiling civil services aspirant and Ronel, the Boy from Nagaland were happy to attend the theatre with him. And soon before evening the group moved bus stop and waited for Rohit and the other seniors to turn up. The cruel afternoon sun had lessened its torture to some extent but was still flying its colors in the blue seas of the skies. The other boys standing around them gave slight glances to the direction of Rahil’s clique as if in rejection. Rahil said nothing and did nothing and only watched them with an eye that was not visible to them. He them eye a bunch of girls walking to the overpass in front of bus stop in a corny manner. He said nothing and did nothing. Everything self-justified itself and there was divine justice working its way and boiling in vigor in some corner or the other for them, h thought because they believed in their Gods, he despised them, both the lot and the lot of their Gods. Gods are men’s excuse for making irreproachable mistake and partake a cleansing of disastrous measures. Gods, in concise is people’s excuse to worship evil. It was evident to Rahil in the dark eyes are the jeering smile of those local boys dressed in ragged muddy clothes that made Rahil’s heart cringe with disappointment and remorse for them.

-So better off they would be without their Gods, so civilized and beneficial. Be your own God. I am a God. I am Jesus. I am Rama, Krishna, each apostle is my reincarnation, and each one dwells in me and is an inspiration out of me. You are the God and I am the God of Gods. People, however choose to heed stones, let them. Just wait. The only thing coming to people bashing their heads on stones is headaches and brain hemorrhaging. Leap of faith, faith; a necessary evil…an evil-

The attentive eyes of Riship caught the sight of Rohit walking along with three other boys to their direction with haste. They reached and initial introductions were made. Rahil met Arjun and Vishwa both of whom seemed to be jolly good fellows. Rahil met them with reserved quintessence. He was like a spirit, an angel waiting astride the gates of heaven to let their souls pass first. His personality prinked with congeniality, a social formality he would not usually dress up with. Indeed it was the company that made him put on the Sunday best.

He walked beside Rohit with the others lagging behind him. Riship walked along the trails of Arjun and Ronel and Ranjan grouped behind Vishwa. They needed to move to another bus stop in order to board a bus to Mandi house theretofore. Rahil took light steps but his companion seemed to be in much hurry and thus the light steps became rapid prances over the black road like a Napoleonic steed.

“Say Rohit, I have a chance to take admission into Hindu college in the final cutoff list. Do you think I should jump college?” he asked the senior with a personal tone of friendship.

“Hmm” the senior gave a deep thought and then added “I would not recommend that and for rightful reasons…See. Our college is the best in South Campus and its reputation here is undisputed. There, sure Hindu is a good college but you have St. Stephen’s just opposite to it and you have Hansraj down below and so competitively it becomes too hectic….”

Before he could take his point further, Riship’s voice added, coming in breaks from aback: “And Hindu is more known for its faculty in sciences than in arts.”

“But the output of the college in terms of alumni repute is remarkable. Then I guess it’s a case of numbers, Hindu being a big college and all. I mean there are five sections just for undergraduate English and each section have close to seventy students. I guess one or two ought to grow reputed by fate.” Rahil said, although he disbelieved his words.

“Yeah, but they have a nice dramatics society. *Ibtida*… You know Imtiaz Khan…who made the movie Rockstar was a member of the dramatics society there. Wasn’t he, Arjun bhai?” he asked his senior. Arjun was a well-connected person and a person who was passionate about acting.

“He once played the role of King Oedipus.” Rohit boasted on Arjun bhai’s behalf.

-We have that play in our syllabus. He ought to know the dialogues by-heart then. Should be able to recite them from memory….wow…Talk about practical knowledge: Who says there can be no hands-on training in the field of arts? Only science bigots do-

“Here we are. Now we wait for the bus.” Rohit announced to Rahil and the announcement was fairly heard by the crowd that Rahil and Rohit had gathered with them.

“How long would it take for the bus to reach Mandi House from this stop?” Riphip asked Arjun.

“I assume it should take us around half an hour.” Arjun’s puerile sharp voice replied out of lips parted in a smile painting the picture of a happy and bantering face.

“I really think you should stay here at Venky. The college is good and the students are well kept here.” Rohit said again.

“I do like the faculty here. They seem to be quite supportive in all matters, both academic and otherwise.” Rahil comprehended.

“See? It’s not so bad here. It’s good here. It’s really good here. Oh look, the bus. Be ready to hop on and don’t hope to find seats.” Rohit announced again as a green city bus rolled on towards and stopped right at the bus stop with its brakes making a loud and silly purring sound and whirlwind blowing the citizens in and out of the buss in which Rahil and his friends were the ones to get in. There was a shortage of seats to sit on but the space on the floor of the bus was abundant enough for them to stand comfortably. Rahil was surrounded by sensations- the sensation of hot winds blowing in the non air-conditioned bus from the opened windows besides all the seats. He was bound by their appearances, so similar yet so individual and he felt as if in a maze with white walls where you know you when you make a turn for left and right but you always end up surrounded by white walls until you complete the maze. He stood near the door while with his friends Ranjan, Ronel and Rohit while Arjun and Vishwa had managed to score a seat for themselves in the back of the bus. Ranjan stood gripping the metal pole near the conductor’s seat at the start of the row of seats and grinning widely at the inconsistent scenery, once a big dune of sand under a bridge near a construction site, once a planned sentinel of skyscraper, once a growing mass of houses with faded paint and dripping wires, once a big mall with a grand entrance lined on both sides by posters and hoardings, once a haze of people going about their lives, with dark heads, dark eyes, limp bodies and occupied minds. The engine roared inside the bus and inside them as they felt its fuelled vibration on their stomachs and their chests and saw the scenery change around them with the moving of the bus. It was life inside a life and a symphony of sensations. All of them were a part of that symphony irrespective of bodies, of thoughts, of memories or longings- they were all broken into sensations and collectively formed the being of the bus.

This was what took Rahil by terror, the sudden loss of the complete integrated self into a mere sensation among stranger sensations. Around him, none were full; they were just peculiar features or significant rummies. Someone had bright white hair, an old man or a girl, a child with spiral locks of hair dripping down the innocent cheeks of her face or laborer with beat hands and a queer smell coming off from his faded and dusty clothes and through his lips the inebriating smell of a beedi, the only source of tobacco that he can afford. No more of him can be seen, not is personality, nor his life and all that can be known of him are sensations.

“Brace yourself. Get ready. We’ll be off now.” A voice round him said the owner of which Rahil could not surely differentiate being lost in his own thoughts nor did he want to. Inside of him were also constantly changing scenes same as those privileged people with a seat were gazing outside dazed by its far reaching endlessness as they passed one infinite strip and entered into another. Rahil’s scenery was endless too and had no bounds to it.

The bus purred again, like a constipated lioness while feeding its young ones milk and let Rahil and the other cubs sucking on her teats shake off from her body and onto the plains of the forest, the jungle, the concrete jungle.

“Okay boys, it’s just a minute’s walk from here.” Arjun, the supposed leader of the pack, framed with his subversively authoritative voice. The boots then screeched on the pebbly side of the well-built black roads for the cars as there was no proper pavement to walk on. Rahil liked the screech of his sandals on the road and the mud that puffed up with each of his step. He could not view the steps of others with as much of a detail as his own. He wondered if they would even give a moment’s thought to such a thing. The view afar came closer and closer and then passed into the background from a three dimensional yearning into a mere painting, a theatrical set. They had not reached yet but walked along the stage of the theatre of the world. These were the images Rahil had in mind as he walked past the headquarters of the national channel. They crossed Copernicus road and now had the Mandi house theatre on the opposite end of the street with just a crossing away. Nobody was left back as the group crossed the road and now in front of them laid a crowd dying to get in to watch the play but it was fully occupied.

“Let us in. We’ll sit on the floors and watch the play.” A man in the front of the crowd said, dressed in a white shirt that was dimming is color with his sweat and an office leather satchel flinging across his shoulder. He had not a touch of art in him, a rotund, bald-headed white shirt clad person with black boot who bore more resemblance to an office personnel rather than a theatre lover stood there and he surely stood there with passion and burned t get in through the b, his big metal gats and onto the courtyard, and from the courtyard he would then run into the theatre and wave the flag of his conquered victory if only the gates were a little lighter, or the guarded was a little more liberal or he had a larger crowd that shared such a passion as him to storm the metal gates and open it themselves to march into the theatre like rogue lovers of art. No such luck showed for him and for Rahil too who although not with the same passion, but stood there for the very same purpose. Arjun and Vishwa went through the serration of the crowd near the guard to plead him to let them go. Arjun tried to convince them saying that they were students and were studying dramatics on a professional basis but the guard was too principled to fall for such a thing.

After much wait, a man came out of the there who was some kind of a proprietor or a superior who had the charge of entry. He saw the crowd outside and judged it. Seeing the man and his importance, the man in the white shirt drenched with sweat floutingly shouted:

“Seen enough? Now let us in, sir!”

“Ah! Guard! Let this lot in but this is the last batch. We won’t even have sitting space on the stairs leading to the stage after this.” He said with resignation and complete submission to the crowd of theatre aficionados that had gathered to get an entry into the theatre to watch the Sahitya Academy play.

The metal gates opened with delay but the response of the crowd gathered against it was spontaneous and they did not waste a moment’s opportunity to throw their bodies from this end of the gate to the other. Arjun was among the first batch to make the cross and Vishwa held himself back to call Rahil, Rohit and the others. The distortion was too much for the guards to bear and so they started to close the gate immediately as soon as they had started opening it. They had not even opened it fully when they decided to close it overwhelmed by the crowd that seemed so little but the moment it broke out inside seemed to be never-ending. Vishwa now sided with Rohit who had Rahil by the arm and he pulled him with such a force that Rahil lost sight of his PG mates Ronel and Ranjan besides who he thought he was standing for quite a few minutes. He suspected seeing out of the corner of his eye Ranjan trying to sneak inside but according to his scopes Ronel was still missing. It was like a confusing carousel ride for Rahil as one had pulled him from his set coordinates and hauled him through the gate while on the other hand his mind grazed off to find Ronel and his eyes were still conceiving the sight that besieged him as the crowd stormed inside and the outnumbered guard had only the force of his uniform for which they seemed to lose any regard. ‘Population had taken its toll on the greater finer arts too and…corrupted it? Transformed it, maybe…One can never be sure. The turnout is marvelous, tremendous and great but what of honesty?’ he thought to himself.

The force on his hand, that stretched him in space, drew his body to a direction which he did not know, finally died down with audible sigh and a grump at the assent of success after a long and difficult ordeal. He looked around to gather his senses and looked at the hand that loosened its grip on Rahil’s forearm. It was Rohit’s hand and his loosening of grip was followed by his voice asking directly to the crowd “Everyone get in? Arjun bhai?”

“Here” a familiar puerile but responsible sounding voice answered. Rahil did the same role call for his mates.

“Ronel, Ranjan…Riship? Everybody get in?” He asked. His answer was responded by three different voices coming from three different coordinates that seemed to converge on him in a form of dying triangulation, the sound ending with the sight of three familiar faces on either of his side. Seeing that everyone had gained access inside the courtyard leading to the theatre, the group moved into the theatre lobby. Rahil threw one final glance backwards and saw that many of them were not as fortunate as he had been in gaining access into the building and his heart sincerely went out to them. But then it was their fault to come to a show when it had already started; as the old proverb goes- early bird gets the worm.

The lobby of the theatre was grand not only in its appearance but also in its mere presence. They however had no time to stand and bask in the hugeness and the quaint beauty of the lobby so they jogged, almost ran to the direction of the entry into the auditorium. The big doors had to be opened with great muscular strength to which Ronel, Vishwa and Arjun applied themselves while the rest stood to watch and waited to move in. The first ones to gain access were Rahil, Rohit and Ranjan and they took their seats on the thickly red carpeted stairs at the rearmost end of the theatre from where they entered the auditorium. It took a little time for Rahil to get adjusted to the seat that he gave himself while others of his clique still marauded with hunchbacks for a place on the floor to sit. Rahil was for offering them any assistance as he possibly could but it appeared to him that they were in no need for such assistance and so Rahil devoted his time in gamboling with ideas of the order of lightings on the stage and the setup which was made. The setup was minimal as the story depicted in the play was of a poor family of a tosspot father and his son so desolated by poverty that they could not even afford the final cloth to be put over the body of the dead before burying it and so they bury the body without it.

*People living in tenement shacks unprotected by the cold blizzards and a woman coughed violently in a tenor of a poignant voice.*

*Father: Why don’t you die?*

*Son: What betrayal! She who put food on the table the year round is now bedridden and you curse her to death!*

*Father: I cannot bear the look of her suffering.*

*The next morning after that, her body was cold and flies buzzed over her crude dark face and her hung-up stony black eyes. The unborn child had perished inside her womb.*

*The landlord threw three rumpled notes at their direction on hearing the news but did not a word of consolation with it or a look to soothe their grief.*

*The funeral procession was to be intact.*

*Father: We have gathered the necessary wood for her cremation.*

*Son: That we did. Now we need an ordinary grave-cloth to put on her.*

*Father: An insane ritual! What a spoof for those who don’t even have rags with which to fend for the body and now once dead, we clothe her with a brand new grave-cloth and it just burns up as the fires consume it. If only we had the five rupees earlier; then we could have availed medicines.*

*The evening grew. The money was spent on their empty stomachs and they only laughed at this unexpected fortune because ‘the money must have slipped out of our pockets’ was a good enough excuse. As the dark grew dense and the stars brighter, the alcohol became more and more inebriating but it was the air that called to them and not the booze. They escaped the anxiety of everyday life here of all places as the two ate to their heart’s content and gave the rest off to a beggar. That gave them an immense feeling of glory, bliss and everlasting cherishment.*

*Son: She suffered a lot of pain before she died.*

*And he began to cry, both hands over his forehead.*

*And that was the story of the two drunkards and their quest for the funeral ritual of the son’s wife, the two drunkards who danced, frolicked, sang, jumped, hopped, fell, grooved, rose, empathized, acted and finally fell in total insobriety down on the ground.*

*Curtain call*

It touched his heart because everything was perfect- the acting, the pathos, the lighting, the completely packed theatre breathing the same air as he, the intense silence in that dark ambience broken only by the wavering voice of the actors- a voice wavering with pain at the powerless poverty of the protagonists and the dark voice, the dark light that surrounded them; only flashes of red and blue could be seen- the dark colors. The hue was that of macabre but the broad strokes were of sodomy and it helped create a tragedy, an ultimate one that cringed on the heart with its truth and disappointing honesty free from any kind of blissful or human corruption. It was as if there was no human narrator to the story and no characters and it was as if the story itself had taken a role inside itself and became its own character. Rahil looked at the faces of others but could make nothing out of them. Their faces were owned by the actor of the play which was the play itself. It was so powerfully captivating that Rahil could not muster the courage to move his limbs and he too was owned though a master such as that was not just a master but an all-nurturing mother, a bountiful mistress. He was claimed by this omniscient mistress and passions warred inside him. After the Premchand play which they could only watch from the middle, there were two more plays by the same author. Actually, they were theatrical adaptations of his short stories majorly from his works in Hindi. Premchand was a writer who wrote both in Hindi and in Urdu and some of his personal struggles with poverty can be seen in his Urdu stories, one particularly tragic story being ‘*Eidgah*’ about a poor boy living with his mother who gives her three annas as a present before he goes to attend his prayers at the mosque with his friends among whom he is the poorest. After attending his prayer, all his friends spend money in buying toys and one of his friends also buys a sweet from his money that is too expensive for the boy to spend all his money on and so he, an innocent child with a longing for such savory snacks watches his friend gobble up the sweet ball of snack dripping with sugary serum. Finally, his eyes catch sight of the shop of an ironsmith fro where he buys a pair of tongs. The other boys all start to ridicule him for his choice of purchase as they taunt him with their sweets and their toys and cars but the boy keeps his pair of tongs close to his heart letting no one get their hands on it although no shows any wish towards it. One by one, the toys and cars of the other boys start to break or falter due to overuse on their way home from the mosque but the tongs of that boy remain intact and arouse the curiousness of other boys. He keeps his tongs to himself and does not hand it over to them even on their demand and when he reaches his home, he hands it to her mother and says “Now your hands will not burn on turning chapattis on the hot pan.” And hearing this mother bursts to tears and embraces her child by her bosoms.

It had grown late by the time they got out of the auditorium and into the magnificent lobby of that huge theatre. It seemed huge to Rahil as it was the only noteworthy theatre he had seen. Stores on one side of the lobby sold food and beverages to rich ones while they walked out with hidden faces and hungering stomachs. It had been close to nine by the time they got out of the theatre and into the open Delhi roads.

“So, what’s the call? Where do we go from here?” Arjun asked the crowd but his question directed towards Rohit and supposedly it was only he who knew the answer.

“What say you, boys? Do you have time to kill?” Rohit asked Rahil, the glance of his eyes meeting the laser of his.

“As long as we make it home but where do you intend to take us? I mean I can see the India gate from here and it would be nice to go see it close and personal.” Rahil replied.

“What do you say Rohit? The boys want a field trip to India Gate. What’s the harm in that? And don’t worry, we’ll get dinner and we’ll get the bus ride home.” Arjun assured giving Rahil and his group the necessary closure at the same time throwing a cloak of mystery over Rohit, a cloak of mysterious uncertainty or one thing or another. And it soon became clear that the so called field trip to India gate was to be of heavy harm as what seemed to the eyes and the mind like a mile’s walk was an hour’s walk in the materialistic world of road and breezy air on which the legs walked and wore out with fatigue. The sight though never wore out the eyes but on the other hand entreated to view upon it with even more attentiveness and clarity. Beds made out of stretched ropes over a four-beamed Quadra-legged bed laid out and the only blanket the people restfully lying on it needed was given to them- it was the black blanket with the glimmering stars embroidered upon them. Men and women strolled around aimlessly in sparse dispersed crowds out of which some were vendors, hawkers and some were beggars or vagabonds. The straight roads were impeccably clean and free from pits and breakages and the feet of Rahil’s clique seemed to move almost glidingly upon it. They shared words in the same way as they shared scenes around them, shuffled as one looked one way and the other looked another way, both of them sharing the same view but from a parallax.

Finally they reached the huge rectangular arch of India Gate for which the Earth served as the base- the fourth side. The names of those martyred in Cargill were engraved upon it in indiscernibly small fonts. Rahil felt a sense of disbelief overtake him as he tried to read those names. These people sacrificed life for their country, or so they were told and they have names embossed on a memorial to immortalize their names but all it does is give the opportunity to pigeons and swallows to poop on their names than immortalize their personalities. Those who patronize the sacrifice of these martyrs believe that the embossments are mere names and they are rightfully are. Those who have died have died in vain and etching the names on a gateway in the center of the nation’s capital is surely grandiose for propaganda and to create a sense of false glory but it neither justifies their death nor immortalizes it. The families of those sons must feel proud seeing their sons’ names on India Gate but they could have felt even more proud if the sons were right by their side in the making of India Gate. Of course, they would not feel proud themselves as they are now dead and out of existence. War ends in misery, not martyrdom and although the only resemblance between the words is of the alphabetical origin, the words are not to be confused with one another because the latter hints at the immortalization of those who die for their country in a world where nature itself is but a mortal force and thusly the only truth is in the prior as war, the beginnings of it as the end brings naught but misery upon the general populace of humanity. Never can a war be justified and no wars are right no matter what they are born out of- genocide, necessity, poverty, anger and most of all misery. The ends might justify the means to the mob minds but the individual human consciousness is too frail to bear it.

“Why are there no tourists or visitors or….or police?” Ronel asked the seniors as they went over and watched the towering architecture in closeness.

“They’re all deployed on the other side, and heavily set they are! You know the story about last night?” Arjun asked him and Ronel crossed his head in dissent.

“Well, you see this place belonged to the stuntmen bikers before the silence that you now see before you. Soon the need to curb the youthful delinquency showed itself and the police starting to curfew the place to put it out of use for bikers and adventure junkies. But the delinquents were adamant and made use of any opportunity to seize the round road for their daily stunts and whenever the khakis found out about it they hauled their bikes off there and altercation ensued between the khakis and the junkies. At one such altercation as recent as two nights before, a cop threw his cane at an unwilling biker which lodged into the rim of the bike overshooting the engine and shooting the rider off the bike’s leather back onto the asphalt road in a fatal thud and road rash that cost the biker his life. Then last night his buddies and all the other stuntmen of the cities came to protest in remembrance of their buddy slain in vain. The silence even has a story to it and quite a story it is, isn’t it?” Arjun ended.

“See, we are getting close enough now for the fuzz to smell us.” Rohit said as the Rahil, Ronel, Riship, Rohit, Arjun and Vishwa walked closer to the other side of India Gate. There were three uniformed cops, two seated in plastic chairs that they probably brought from themselves and one leaning on the barricades placed on the other side of the road from where the bikers usually entered the area. Their khaki uniforms and the ellipsoidal topped caps were not discernible from a distance where they stood but they changed their position moving ever so close towards them. It was Arjun who was the first to confront them with his presence from the backside and the police, though baffled by his presence there, did not let their emotions surface and take the shape of a brutal questioning.

“Where do you think you’re going boyo?” the policeman asked rather personally tilting his moustache tilting to the ride along with that portion of his face.

“Oh me, I’m just a passing drifter.” He answered with complete innocence.

“Well little one, don’t be driftin’ here, I say. These barricades stading over here are for a reason.” The policeman replied to his rhetoric statement.

“Don’t worry sir. We are a few hundred short of men to start a protest here. Isn’t that why you’re posted here?” Arjun asked with a tint of connivance.

“Well, it’s our job to be around the city.” The policeman replied dodged the trueness of Arjun’s questions.

“I mean here particularly.” He held on to the policeman intent on breaking him down.

“Don’t you have a bus to catch? The lot of you, move!” the policeman finally uttered with the rudeness of police brutality echoing in his voice. Rahil ground his teeth against each other, his chest flushed with adrenaline like that of a buffalo’s ready to lock horns with another male in battle. Then another thought dominated over his anger. It was a thought to recall which he needed tranquility of the night and its acceptance and as soon as the anger loosened its grips and he got the necessary ingredients, his mind was lit by the fire of urgency of finding a bus. It was something that the rash but considerate policeman had mentioned as he too knew the viciousness of the city.

“Where’ll we get the bus from?” Rahil asked, but this time he questioned the well built figure of Vishwa, the all too silent bachelor who walked with in completely different blues.

“Well that depends. Do you want to have dinner or not?” he asked in reply.

‘Of course’ from one side and ‘I’m famished’ from the other cleared all doubts of boarding the bus before dinner but the question was where would they find an open restaurant at this late hour. It had already been well past ten and it was fortunate t their side that the bus stop of the National Archives office was nearby. They stood opposite to the big government building which gave off the scent peculiar to all government office regardless if they are opened or closed. Dust and stocked papers in files-Rahil made out of the scent through his undeniably accurate nose blessed with remarkable olfactory senses.

There was more time to be passed in wait for the bus and so the theatre junkies that they were, the seniors, started to conjure up scenarios and comparables that both refuted and amplified their knowledge at the same time. It was the beauty of a friendly eristic discussion albeit some say that an eristic discussion cannot be friendly for a long time and vice versa. Rahil and his lot had their own arbitrations to discuss. Thoughts that came to their mind suddenly, the spur of the moment things which they blurted out knowing that it cannot be left in idleness as the moment itself was idle as it is. These conversations were dictated more by silence than by words as many paradoxical ends and turns in their dialogues led them to an emptiness of words to put their thoughts into and so consequently it came to a point where one could think for the other even before the other would answer. And that was how they came close to each other. Sometimes people who crib about the inability to make friends do so in completely falsity because all it takes is a dialogue which need not be long. All it needs to be is appropriate. As Rahil had just started to know friends better and friendship better a red city bus purred its way towards them on the invisible black road, rendered invisible by the darkness and only a patch of road lit by the orange-yellow headlights were well visible.

“I’m glad this bus came. It will take us all the way into the JNU campus.” Vishwa said mildly to Arjun.

“So we’re going to JNU campus to eat?” Rahil asked Rohit as he could clearly hear the words of Vishwa and was unsure and shy of coming to complete conclusion all by himself.

“Well yes. JNU campus has a canteen that’s open round the clock and so the problem of our supper is solved indeed. An it’s a nice place too, you’ll see.” He said to Rahil with a tone of budding friendship in which Rahil could confide but he was not sure whether he could confide in this tone of friendship fearlessly. ‘After all, doubt is a psychologically justifiability.’ He thought to himself.

“I hate travelling in these red AC busses. It makes me seem so bourgeois.” Arjun cribbed and Vishwa seated beside him heard him.

-Well, its bourgeoisie. Not quite sure how the term bourgeois came into existence out of it but now it seems to be more in trend. *Pour Marx*, written by Althusser, the man who killed his wife. Entering now the proclaimed last bastion of the Left…Hopes from it, keep them. It’s the first look though so don’t expect. Already seen and heard so much, felt so much. Still not too much or not even much enough…need more. What can I say? Not my fault. Born in the fast-food culture, raised to be a consumer…and so don’t expect me to turn into a commune-dwelling hippie so soon. Hippie, sounds like the tribe. Hopis… Those were Indians, Red Indians; Native Americans. Glad everyone got a seat. Legs are too weary after the walk, and the wait so need to rest them now. Bright lights out of the window, in the outside world...Been there. Struggled… Not many people can say that. Can I say that? Not this fast, I assume. I still need the fullest exposure. Let the city spit on me, suck my marrow till the bones run dry and my effaced skeleton stands without movement, in stillness, like a man undergone lobotomy.; flown over the cuckoo’s nest. Students live here too. What is this place called? “Munirka” the sign reads. So far from the premises of DU yet many live here I see and the tales of many more I have heard. Wasn’t it here that that girl was raped? No, she was raped in a moving bus, and then the body was thrown here. Some controversy that created! Defaced the already downtrodden name of Delhi…Mention not. Obvious, though many would differ- the country’s capital. Mumbai runs the economy. But don’t they have the ultranationalists in Mumbai? Yes. Back to the old argument about the glass half full and the glass half empty. Which will it be? Positivism or negativism? Optimism or pessimism? Pessimism has a point, a logical one in fact- negative times negative is a positive. But them positive times positive is also positive. The world isn’t that simple in the end. Friendships are though, and people. All of them talk, smile, want to be liked, and will like you if you give them the opportunity to. Where is pessimism here? Lies in the deed then… What would they do for you? The air is cool. Comfortable seats and I feel sleepy. The last trip to make and the last place to see, here…It’s just a college like any other and a rather small one. Only for masters and doctorates…Undergraduates are too naïve to study in JNU, but then if you’re for foreign languages then you’re not naïve. Then suddenly you are enlightened. What’s the point? I go to eat. Eat then go. Enough with the historical, sociological and geographical analyses of the joint because in American phraseology, it’s just a joint! Stupid words the Americans put into dictionary. Webster dictionary for Americans and Oxford dictionary for the British; only know Noah Webster by reputation though. Through his dictionaries- no other way to know about him, it isn’t like wrote books or plays or poetry, just books of words. A true book of words and sentences; how is it different from a novel then, a plot. The post-modern novel? They still have a plot, even the anti-novels do. I must read Forster’s *Aspects of the novel*, among one of his first books. A little too old maybe for me…Outdated. Read it still. The bus..The bus…It ascends, the gates to the college open…The bus…The bus…-

The bus moved up into the main campus with one final roar followed by a loud panther-like purr or more like the baritone voice of a puma. Rahil took that they finally made it to Jawaharlal Nehru University with the campus branching inside jungles of irregular mounds and rocky plains to make a peaceful secluded institution of higher education.

-This place made more Marxists than Oxford. Well, lesser pseudo-Marxists. I grant Oxford that. What is that painted on the big stone- SFI? Oh, Student Federation of India, the student body of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the CPI(M). Hopes are raised. Written matter all over the campus. Written slogans-ones that actually make sense and issues taken up by the student unions. Are these the hostels? So many of them- the Sutlej hostel, the Narmada hostel, the Tapi hostel, all the names of rivers…all hostels…O, next-

The bus entered the main campus bus stop and there was little to walk from there. They got down from the bus and felt the packed hotness people normally feel when they come out of an air-conditioned room. The sense now made. The place was well lit and they walked along the right curve of the road which took them nearer and nearer to the canteen they intended to fast at. They walked as one, not as one group but as one person, their selves entwined, their thoughts entwined and entwined their vision. As Rahil saw the small building of the heath centre and the Ronel saw the tennis court on the opposite road, and Arjun saw the black tarred road that led to the canteen and Vishwa saw the numerous people pass by, gents and ladies, all they could see was the completeness of JNU which was so different from the broken individual bits they saw around them. Rahil saw the many calls for protest printed and bulletined on the walls of the centers of education and other faculty buildings.

*Occupy Jhelum hostel….JNUSU protest*

*Call for protest demonstration demanding the increase of scholarship…..JNUSU.*

He did not have the time to stand and read the whole thing but he went through each pamphlet and its matter and the abundance of issues they had on which t protest but then it hit his mind with brute force that the issues are always there, everywhere, here at JNU and also at DU and all it needs is the call and the courage for a protest. Rahil looked at his seniors, wondering what they thought about it and about it in comparison to their own college, their own University and that was when genuflected to the intellectual fervor of JNU. It was not as if the University of Delhi had a shortage of able-minded professors with sensible sense of ethics and ability to reflect upon their characteristics but now it seemed clear to him that DU was an Ivory tower, a lighthouse catching rust and even the brightest minds of the nation being present at DU with all their collective minds would not be able to save it because they lacked the hands to paint upon the rusting lighthouse and all they could do now, the professors, were sing the last praises handed to them by their Gods that vested above like musicians in a sinking ship to sham the scared crowd of students.

And here was the safe ground, the new haven where they could live, they could breathe and keep their bodies dry and think. They could think here and that was all that mattered to these living minds and mind-driven bodies. The only kind of silence that ever made sense to Rahil was the silence that persisted here for it was a silence with a meaning, a silence with a tone of rebellion or the echoes of it. They went to the open canteen and took a seat under the open sky on plastic chairs resting their elbows on plastic tables. Arjun had in his hands the menu and judged the quality of food by their prices and of course Rahil and friends, along with Arjun and his friends looked for the most-meager grub that cost them the least. All the while intelligent conversations could be heard around and close-by a large table was occupied by around eight to ten boys and girls who discussed a topic with escalating igneous chroma. He felt a driving, maddening and impulsive-compulsive need of being a part of that conversation or sharing one quite like it. The seniors could see it on his face.

“There is something in the air that wins you over. I love coming here.” Arjun said with a stylistically winking at other freshmen who missed the point of his statement by a mile. Now they discussed on what to eat and the did I with an garish flamboyance that was too showy and radiated stupidity though at that moment Rahil did not feel while being a part of it, sitting with them cross-legged and both his ankles suspended on the right side of his body, his face resting on the palm of his right hand at perpendiculars with the base of the table and listening to all the sharp voices and the loud noises that came from their table. Rahil felt sensible because he was being a social stupid. A drunkard is always the wise one when he walks on the street sober under the broad daylight of the afternoon.

“We’ll order thalis then. All thalis, I’m sure.” Rohit mentioned with surety as no others had the necessary money to afford anything else. The place was an elixir of mortal thoughts hidden among the jungles different from any other educational institution he had heard about, seen or been to. This place was more than what simply met the eye. It did not have the kind of renegade history that was claimed by Presidency College, Calcutta where radicalism was supported o such an extent that many college professors and their devout students gave up jobs and places at the University to join the peasant revolution ebbing out of Naxalbari and where the intellection towards matters of radicalism was so conscious that even enrolled students and professors on College’s payroll used the student unions, or rather convinced them reasonably to express their solidarity, often by supplying guns made locally inside college premises. JNU did not bear such a harsh strain of radicalism but when it came to issues JNU never took back its step from a righteous path and that is why the walls, doors and windows of the college cannot be looked in terms of bricks and cement.

The order was made very politely by Ronel who went to the canteen with the money he collected from everyone-each one paying their share, and then sauntering over to the canteen with his straight splurging locks waving from side to side and waving it in front of the buzz-cut counter attendant who took the orders as he muttered it to him in his slightly accented tone and then walking back to his seat, catching the stare of some eyes from the other tables. It broke the consistency of their conversation but intensified the intrigue of Rahil’s table. In the slightly moonlit night and sitting in that artificially illumined canteen, Rahil was the only one who felt both at home and inextricably out of place and it was not the nature of his fragmentation that was inextricable but the paradox that came as one saw his alienation along with his homeliness and it did put one in wonder about the exact nature of feelings that went through Rahil. Others though did not seem interested in his internal life and what they were interested though, was the brilliant conversations he was capable to maintain with copious attention to bifurcation and accommodation of the obscure thoughts that came from the mouths of freshmen that he brought with them. Rahil went to altruistic extents to uphold his friends’ standings among the seniors even if it meant the lowering of its own however it never did come to such finality.

The plates came with fresh, hot, smoking and heavenly-smelling food that had without a doubt made its maiden jump from the pan right on to the trays which were now before them. None of them could bear a moment’s wait to attack on their dishes and feast upon them as it were their last. It was the prize of a journey well made and a relationship well-built. Voices of gobbling came from the mouths that lost its recognition as they were all open, and the orifice was so big that it covered the region of the visibility of their faces. The seniors used their nans like paintbrush lapping up the spiced paint from the easel of the tray before them. The simple act of eating now became an act of creation in his eyes, much like the portrait of the Last Supper which became much more than a supper and is now the Christian Eucharist. This supper was soon to be a form of liturgy too for it was liturgical in more than one aspect. It was liturgy for the place where it was convened, and the manner in which it was convened and with the people who became a part of it and under the universal moonlight that served as that holy, divine, sublime glow that no light on Earth or technology of man could simulate.

The supper was also complimented with conversation although the dialogues were not continuous but broken in intervals where they swallowed up the well-chewed potpourri given libation by pure water in an act of sacrament and religious attitude towards the food and the gathering. If there was such a thing as religion which was subconsciously pure and not made out of an intention of preserving egotism or glorifying bigotry, it could be traced to this moment between these few fine young fellows.

After the meal, all rose up at the same time to wash their hands and mouth which was spluttered with curry and now started to sting and burn from inflammatory spices like red chili powder and turmeric. Rahil washed his hands from a drinking water cooler near to which a glass was chained to be used along with it. He followed his washing by wetting his neck with large amounts water gulping it down straight from the glass ceaselessly as a thin trickle of water started to moisten his color and then the rest of his shirt on the way down. By the time, that tiny drop became a line of running water and reached the erogenous point of the tip of his nipples, Rahil had quenched his wild frenzy of a thirst.

“We have to check up on a friend. You guys make yourselves comfortable here for a while. Walk around and have fun. You already like it.” Arjun said and left off with Vishwa, Rohit and Ranjan who wanted to tag along and so Rahit was left with Riship and Ronel.

They walked to the far end of the canteen but then thought it best to be within the limits of the canteen as it would then be hard for the seniors to find them otherwise if they left off grazing around the campus. They walked in circles right there at the open canteen. Rahil felt another surge of thirst but this time bought a juice but only drank it half as the prying pitying eyes of Ronel and Riship demanded his generosity. Out of the corner of his eye, Rahil spotted a young man seated alone eating a bowl of fried rice with a bored look on his face and a sense of displacement over his spotty eyes. Rahil involuntary moved over to him and his mouth uncontrollably asked the words to the stranger, from one stranger to another:

“Is this seat taken?”

A dissenting wave of head came as a reply to his answer followed by the gesture of the hands to have a seat in front of him. Rahil was first to take the seat followed by Riship besides him and Ronel besides the stranger with the fair face, sparkly smile, spunky hair and the spotted eye as if they were his tow threatening minions and he had ordered them to sit in such fashion.

“Which course do you study?” Rahil asked the stranger bluntly.

“I…study French…here.” Replied the stranger sturdily.

“Where did you get your undergraduate degree from?” he asked again, this time with the familiarity he had won by the answer from the first question and so the tense mood grew idle.

“Here…only.” The stranger replied, and then added “Do I know you?”

“No, I’m here for the first time. I was just trying to have a friendly chat, getting to know the place and the people and all.”

“Well, my name is Ranjit.” He said and lunged with a forearm at his direction for him to embrace it with his own hand in a masculine handshake. Rahil mentioned his won name along with the names “Ronel” and “Riship” to him as he accompanied his voice with his finger pointing out each name as he enunciated them.

“Nice…nice, so, do you study here, freshmen here?” Ranjit asked.

“No, we’re from DU. Venkateswara College. We’re new in Delhi. Well, I’m new in Delhi and I wanted to get more involved with the events held here at JNU…the cultural events particularly as I am told they are of high quality and always enlightening.” replied Rahil with more or less a sense of flattery than the words of an impressed attaché.

“Yeah, sure…just let us swap numbers. Give me yours, and I’ll give you a call and you can note mine.” Ranjit said in full compliance and a sense of friendliness that he exfoliated unto Rahil like the blooming of a slow new flower with the miracle of life inside it.

“That’s done. Tell ne more. Tell me about the political unions of the college. The University is pretty active in Left politics, so I’m told.” Rahil asked, barring none of his curiosity behind the civility of chastising his shots of questions on a person he just met and barely knew. It however came out to be that the person was not agitated by his questions either and on the other hand was glad to address his queries with viable and valuable information.

“Well yes, our JNUSU is always at the forefront of any student or non-student general struggle of the masses. Basically we have all popular parties’ student bodies but the most powerful here is the All India Students’ Association.” Ranjit answered.

“Wow, but I heard that the Students’ Federation of India was powerful as the Left student body?” Rahil questioned.

“Well, you see AISA is also a Left body politic and SFI technically lost both its power and support after the diplomatic move of showing support towards the presidency of Sri Pranab Mukherjee that was dissented and protested against by a bunch of renegades within the SFI. As Mr. Mukherhjee was a person of a greater political cant, some individuals felt it unwise to grant presidency to Mr. Mukherjee and deemed it as Bengali nepotism and diplomacy shown by the SFI and for a University that is driven by the laws of revolutionary politics, the SFI lost their revolutionary enchantment and hence lost the latter elections to AISA. They also underwent a split within the party which led to the genesis of the formerly SFI-JNU but since the parent body SFI wanted no affiliations with this party, they had to change their name and finally it came to e known as the Democratic Students’ Front or the DSF. Bold move they pulled if you ask me and they won one seat that year out of sympathy but it was just that one time.” Ranjit explained to them patiently with a keen voice tending perfectly to the keen ears of Rahil.

“So basically the DSF has no parent political boy supporting it right now?” Rahil asked with a cautious voice although the reason for this caution was not known to him. He looked at his face with gentle eyes that were fixated on him and on his lips as each self-explanatory word came out of it and again at his warm eyes, warm with the information that he had told him and eyes that asked for more.

“No, they do not.” Ranjit said.

“But how can that be, you know? How do tend to the financial matters of printing pamphlets or running elections. I mean how the organization is maintained then?” he asked Ranjit feeling sympathetic towards them.

“Charity from the students involved and from the sympathetic teachers, I guess. But I really don’t know so I cannot be sure on that.” Ranjit told.

“So, whose side are you on? Or are you a right-wing sympathizer? Don’t tell me you’re a right-wing sympathizer and don’t tell me you’re politically inert.” Rahil played with him for a while now that he finally brought out a concession on his part.

“I’m neither Right nor Left and I am also not politically inert. The latter is hard to be here.” Ranjit replied to his personal question.

“So, what are you then? You must be an anarchist?” Rahil replied with a question almost laughing but doing so with a tone of certainty and seriousness.

“That word you used- Brilliant! Yeah, you can say that. It’s a nice word. You do know a lot about politics? What do you study?” Ranjit now turned the tables and asked him a question for a change.

“I study undergraduate English.” Rahil replied.

“You know a hell of a lot about politics for a student of English literature.” Ranjit accolade him with both words as well as expression.

“I wanted to ask something pertaining to that too but it’s just a matter of choice that I am asking you as mere consultation, nothing more. Anyways, see I study at Venky but I have been shortlisted for English at Hindu college which is a really prestigious college.” Rahil ended abruptly for the boy to follow.

“That it is, no doubt. But Venky is also among the well reputed colleges of Delhi University.” He replied and his face wore an expression of obviousness.

“Yes, the faculty in our college is quite impressive but you see Hindu is a name people get automatically attracted towards. This is a tough dilemma and an important one, I’m sure you’d feel. I do not know accurately what to do.” He said.

“Both are good colleges. I can vouch for either of them.” He stated rhetorically and non-consequentially and then resorted to silence.

“You know what I should probably do? I was thinking first I would go there and meet with the faculty and see if they are up to my standards, not that I have high standards or anything but I would have to see if I am compatible to them and the vice versa to it.” he answered his own question and Ranjit just sat looking.

“You know, that is the best way and that didn’t even come to my mind. I think you should do that and ten plan accordingly.” Ranjit replied, affirming his chice as there was nothing he could do or wanted to do.

Their conversation was awkwardly hacked off by the seniors who had returned from their visit to their friend’s and now wished to leave as much tine had eloped in the lair of the intellectual Lotus Eaters.

‘Come on, Rahil, do one thing. As I will stay with my friend here tonight, you go off with Arjun. Vishwa will also stay with me here tonight so your lot and Arjun can take a rickshaw from here as it is not that far. Rahil thought it was the most sensible thing to do and hence they walked down to the same road which had led them to the canteen and ended up in front of the same bus stop where they had descended waiting for a passing ricksaw which they hoped would be empty so that it would transport them home. All of them were worn out of the evening’s journey but Rahil. His mind was stimulated to a hyper-state. He knew that the next day was also not going to be a pleasant one for him as the next day he had agreed to go to Hindu with Akshay who also had business in Kirori Mal trying to get admission for mathematics as he too had made the cut like Rahil for Hindu. Riship had also asked to tag along and Rahil thought that an extra aid would not hurt and only help and as if that was not enough he had also phoned Pooja and asked her to be there for the admission procedures as he would be clueless with the details of it and because she knew her ways around North Campus all too well. And so Rahil had made a habit of traveling with a crowd.

The rickshaw finally arrived and in hoped the crowd along with the traveling senior who was the only person who knew the way from the University to Satya Niketan, the dreary and dismal locality where the senior’s home and their PG accommodation was located. The ride to the PG was like descending into darkness as there was no scenery to look around as he sat at the corner. There was nothing to see but the shadows of darkness and darkness itself if one got too bored looking at shadows. Rahil knew that the PG would be the same. It was a bunker with no open windows, no source of air or natural light and only tube light lit and enlivened his room with resembled by its size more to a prison cell than a room for which he paid five thousand.

When they reached Satya Niketan and Rahil parted from Riship on the promise of meeting the next day and along with Ronel and Ranjan walked towards his room, he was fully in knowledge of the fact that the bright night had ended and now he was back from where he had started. They walked through the dark deserted streets with the wind howling behind them and in far distance the road looking at them and mocking his imprisoned life with its endless infinite possibilities and at the sme time scaring him with it.

-O road, you are the muse of the modern poet. Let me be yours and let you be mine. No holds barred, love…love…love… love me and see me love you. The back rugged body of yours I will tread upon ever so gently, my love. Feel my passions on the edifice ready to orgasm on you- this darkness charms me as I look at your ebony face and stare into your ebony eyes, possibilities….possibilities…possibilities so many and yet so far. Too much strength to muster, too much toil to undergo, and what for? What is the reward? Ah, your embrace and your deepness. I penetrate your deepness. Let me…Be yours without wait without end without light in naughty haughty darkness where libertines lurk. Venus in furs…the tantalizing soft touch of it…me, touch. The endless infinite cavern with changing landscapes but a cavern nonetheless; the slavery of freedom is slavery too, look at those blackened depraved graven pits under the eyes of those JNU Marxists; they’ll tell you that. No matter. Sounds matter. Matter, in space and in time but time bends, slows down, as I lie in bed thinking, reversing time to those moments under the starry skies. Shallow moments now become deep thoughts, fond memories missing periods missing grammmmmmmmar missing the science of morphology missing anything and everything that is right but the moment and the truth of that moment or fallacy which I choose to accept as the truth. Maybe it was an illusion that never happened or never happened as I perceive it to have occurred. My illusion still... Shaky hands undress me mine, I yearn for a different skin, different bone, different person, none. Ah, back-crunching back-aching backwardly back-resting bed on which I lay my back, broken- hard. I can never get used to its stiffness. Back stiffens. The night has grown old and hence irritable. Dim the lights and dull the senses, a bright morning awaits. No, wait. The dream in between the realms of reality bygone and the reality to beget and the bowebs of time weaved, unweave, heave finally letting slip the consciousness through it. Moments matter not here, now and only in the hereafter their presence can be detected-

-The white zone, they call it, a zone free from the radiating thoughts of the radioactive mind. The morning has not yet risen but the night has not yet drawn its corpse to the grave and walks among us, a zombie haunting me with my pulpy red past. Notice I didn’t capitalize the ‘R”, something I do even in my thought- mean something. Forgetting remembrance and embracing anonymity. What is tomorrow? Future is. Time. Not yet tomorrow, not yet morning, not yet opened eyes, sleeping mind, sound body, still sound. Sounding? Others. The two. Me, the one on the Leftmost end. Sleeping waking sleeping waking, time dimensions, time. Revulsions, repulsions, the back-stiffening bed and others…The Luna. The nigh is not soothing when you are milking your thoughts. Milk your penis rather. Mental masturbation and all that is, as J.D Salinger says it ‘strictly for the birds’. You do it, it hurts. The first time, always and the second time, your hands wear out. Funny little thing though, mental masturbation; Stirner adopted that with his Ego and its Own, I’m sure. Sleep tight, the morning is tonight. Good me, is it morning already? Alright brush teeth then and go for the Loo, its free and the waters running, the harmony is just poetic. The poetry of everyday life, oh I got to mention in my diary. Nothing scatological though, the browns upset the brown-collars and the brown-nosed. Individual mind is inductive but people are chaotic and we all hae to have friends and so damn our intellect to the fiery depths of the toilet where the Gods and their apostles take holy shit and we use them in our common speech. All that is said is real and hence exists- Perceptions of Ponty, the primal perception. It is like he never said it. People never mention what never comes to mind and what never comes to mind is never created, never conceived and so Gods and heroes are made out of thin air. The wizard of Oz is just an old man behind a screen with his thingamajig and so are institutions behind laws. It is our duty then to break the laws to epistemologically be free. The same clothes, worn thrice a day, in and out, sweaty, a little no much to drag attention but enough to stand in a line with no one sticking to your face because you smell funny and then you have your very own privacy. Nature gave skunk its special scent for some sense. Line ‘em up! Ho, Akshay is getting ready too. Wave to him! Be gentle now. Riship got to pick him up too, my two minions. Oh, how I spurn them around and spin them like a top and they know it all too well but they still spin. They are foolish, I suppose like the Earth that spins around the axis to maintain its existence while the stars bubble and make waves of energy in a nonexistent state. Oh, he’s looking saucy. Well, he is going to North Campus so I guess he wants to look saucy but why look saucy- look academic, what, thick cardigan with elbow patches on a hot summer morning. Ah, I wouldn’t mind appearance if I were the professor- Credence, I would just say. We are walking out, you and me, and Akshay to go to Riship and then we will all board the metro. I hate the metro, always full this time of the hour, the working hours, office goddamn timings when the prisoner proletariat walks the streets their chains fettering and making the music of melancholia as they walk in exact queues to their cubicle existence. They beg for their lives and get little in return regardless of their position, a vagabond or a multi-national corporate manager, they all get little. The job is their patch of identity n the prison house of the world. And into the fresh air:

*Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more; Or close the wall up with our corporate dead.*

*In peace there's nothing so becomes a man*

*As modest stillness and humility*

Ah, I don’t agree with the rest, so what if the great Bard told it? Bards may not make errors, or are barely wrong, but they do err and Shakespeare, the great Bard, has erred. The morning is so bright, the night seems to dim now. Normal surrounds the natural; the deranged cower into its cave but the silhouette of memories does block some of the morning sun-

“What, did you have fun last night?” Akshay asked as they moved out of the narrow gully leading to the staircase of their room and were now onto the broader but still tense Satya Niketan lanes near a cigarette shop waiting for Riship to be seen.

-oh, we did have fun. No use mentioning it to him. He could never understand. His idea of fun is probably the pick-pocks of the cricket bat hitting the cork ball, the damn jockstrap. He is a cultural eunuch, the highlander. Oh, there’s he. Rship, come on Akshay, you know him. Wave to him, you goof! I do too. See? Like this. Yes. He sees, no does not. Oh, yes he does. He is coming. Here starts our journey again and here’s one whole day of classes bunked. Not to worry though, the first college classes start like snail. It’s the end of days that come to bite your derriere like hungry Cheetahs-

-/join #Riship-

-and we move on as the world does, rotate in our fixed axes, revolute in our well defined orbits. The science takes out the complexity of life and hence life itself. Life is complexity life is chaos. Unmanned feet walked the streets, we the only three bodies. Breasts walked juggling upsie-daisy, hands marched in air cutting through it like a fine silver cutlass cuts the soft sticky butter and its residue still on the hairs of the arms, the waxed ones too. Up, we go to the over bridge and fortune finds us from the far end of the road in the form of a green city bus packed with discomfort. Men, women, all ages, sizes and shapes. Get in, squeeze. Ah, all mushy, no sight, only sound and horrible tenuous sensations. Sight all murky, flesh sticking to each other inconsistently in a formalistic public orgy. Sexual sensations die down at this bland grotesque display of clothed flesh acting naked. No life in the bus, no legible life at least. A special note to the conductor to notify us when to get down being closest to AIIMS metro station and then offing to North Campus from there, packed then too in the same asexual castrating public orgy. The day is only nascent and everyday is born anew. The bus stops, the conductor pulls on me, says I must get off here. I confide on Risphip’s suggestion and he nods and so off we jump. Paid in full… We walk down the pedestrian lane to the subway passing the vendors setting up their mobile shops of foods, newspapers, handkerchiefs, pens, keychains, random books, nothing of great importance and other things. Cards of future tellers and sages:

*Save your marriage*

*Improve your sex life*

*Find out if someone has cast black-magic spell on you*

*A tantric spell for job prosperity*

Do people do all that? I hope not? But I guess they do, and now we are back to the old argument about reality being actuality. Sages, the life they live. Some sages confound psychologists with their familiarity and control over the inner self; I guess it’s all just training. If you don’t have anything else to do, thinking about your mind keeps you occupied. The smell of the subway is always putrid but it is known that it houses a quantity of vagabonds in the night. They must be the ones to leave the smell-the life of a nomad. Everyone lives such in one phase of life or the other. Now we come to the turn of the other rod- the metro station in sight. Inside, the cold air breezing from the mechanical air-conditioners; classic thermodynamic laws put to good use, still can’t make the perfect system with hundred percent efficiency. Glad, I made that card last time. Full recharge, but Akshay still needs to buy a token- update, you highlander! Good things Riship keeps things to date. It saves the hassle of standing in queues. Living in a place like Delhi, one must have spent hours, nay, days, standing in queues because people line up for everything. Qs. Now he returns and we press our cards one after the other over the turnstile letting us in, he his token and now we’re in descending own the stairs to the platform. Both sides, on one from Jahangirpuri and the other going to Jahangirpuri, we need the one going there. Look at the screen, wait fortune finds us again. A metro terminating at Vishwavidyalaya, right at the mouth of North Campus and it is less populated than the ones to terminate at Jahangirpuri. It stops in front of us-the doors open-cold air blows romantically from inside the metro as the sight of empty seats grace us and comfort me. Run in, take no prisoners now and take your seat at all costs. Oh, side by side by side we sit, the three of us, the three friends in unstable circumstances, come what may, we sit here. The cold air embraces me with all hr charms and her hands slip in through my clothes massaging my slippery sweaty body with her moist cool hands making love oh so subtly. The cameras invading our privacy cannot invade the privacy of my mind; it runs free and commits adultery. A blissful ride where we make merry with our words only on occasion but what we do the most is enjoy the comfort of our seats, rarely earned. The crowd thickens, the plot does too. The senior citizens and women look with desperate eyes. I won’t budge. Nobody dies of standing. Their eyes and mouth water when we move in our seats in hopes that we would leave our places as they seize the opportunity with their eyes waiting to feast upon it. Their ruddy faces call upon our sympathy and Akshay is the first to break. He stands, gives is seat to a senior citizen and gets a smile in return. Heroic…Heroism of this kind is surely stupidity. Oh, I did not see the blimp of the LED on the line that shows the track of our journey. Only one stop and then the hide is to be exited. Farewell, gentle winds! Your caress lingers over my body under the clothes I wear like the love bites of a mistress who had been all too generous towards my pleasure and satisfaction. The mild ting-tong; we have reached our destination and doors are opened by the machinist servants to the Royalty wage-earners. The imprisoned emperors… Vishwavidyalaya station, probably the only station with a bookstore in it but never will buy from it though, too costly, extra surcharge added for the location. The candy machine is beat. Exits…Fresh air, take a cycle rickshaw. Still no sign of University buildings now, probably later I’d get a glimpse. Financial matters to be settled with the rickshaw puller. Let Riship handle it. Oh, Akshay parts from here as he had to go to Kirori Mal which is the same road from here but bifurcates further ahead. The ride is revealing, the arts faculty passes by and the University Office opposite to it. The first college to be seen is Miranda House. Anita Desai studied here and would not let her daughter make the same mistake so she shipped her daughter to Columbia to those homosexual intellectuals. Don’t be judging now. Ginsberg was a libertine of bisexual interests, or was he a complete queer? Evidences not enough, still his daughter was better off there. The wind is lighter here but it is more populated the air not the place. The place- I can barely see people here probably because I am early or because I am late. There is no telling to it. Absolute negation- is it Hegel or Camus? Absolute for Hegel and negation for Camus and the person sitting next to me is also a literature student. Ask him. Don’t bother. Finally we stop. Oh, call Pooja. I remember she called while I was in the shower. Damn summer has me bathing in the morning, so I bathe in the evening too. I call her. Ringing….ringing…ringing…and she picks up followed by a mutual small talk and then the line is mutually terminating. The conclusion- she is on his way. A complication arises. Do we wait for her at the gates or inside the college? Deduction- had no breakfast, better to have breakfast inside while she is on the way and I will have Riship anyhow. St. Stephen’s and opposite to it, the Hindu college and the rickshaw is stopped by the thin man dressed in white t-shirt and small khaki boxers with worn out faded slippers. We both get down from either side and hand our share of the money. I hand out my share to him and he adds it up with his own and swaps it with the puller in exchange of his services rendered. And so we go in, through the gates unattended by the guards. She must not face any problems getting in. First thing to do: have a breakfast. The canteen where is it. The stroll is relaxing even though my stomach is on fire. The stroll under the shaded road lined by nurtured and loved trees with old barks giving off the scent of smutty wood is really recreational in its bare act. The college is huge and the campus overwhelming. I can study here. I should study here. I will study here. Just a matter of forms to be filled up but wait, my debit card does not work. I believe the Dhruv Bhai can help somehow. He will help for a knightly sir he is. What can I eat here, a hot dog. Ate…now wait. For Pooja. When will she come? The compounded roots of this tree seem a nice place and the view of the campus from here is also fulsome. Better than I hope Venky. I had nice teachers there though, supportive ones, qualified ones. Well, the plan here is to meet and greet the faculty first, discuss with them the prospects of the college and of opportunities offered here. There are bound to be more opportunities here as it is well within reach of the main University campus. We are down to the analytics now. The voice of Riship keeps ringing in my ears.

*Don’t jump vessel…Don’t jump vessel…Don’t desert*

*Professors like you there. You are the best student there. Don’t change college.*

Prashanth did.

*Well, he was a fool.*

No, I will tell you who a fool is: Someone who gives up opportunity to study at Hindu college. His advice is unworthy and so I wait for Pooja. She should be able to guide me. Meanwhile, let’s take a stroll through campus. I see the students are flooding to their respective classes. A familiar face I see among the assortment of unknown faces so who could it be? Only one person I know here-

“Prashanth?” Rahil’s voice called out to him loudly. The familiar face stopped on its tracks at looked at the direction of the voice to meet Rahil’s mellow eyes.

“How is Hindu treating you, brother?” he asked of him.

“The college is great and the faculty here does know a lot. Still there’s too much population here. We have five different sections just for English literature. But still I won’t say it’s bad. It is the perfect place for you. I think you should join but the choice is up to you.”

-Of course the choice is up to me. Regardless of the fact that we live in a mechanistically pre-determined Universe and it is only the consciousness that is free from all servility, I do have the freedom to choose between studying at Hindu and at Venky, thank you. Riship is trying to reprogram my mind somehow by repetitive broadcasting although I believe I am not one to fall for that. My phone is ringing and it is probably the call from Pooja trying to tell me she has reached the college campus and is unable to find me. I receive the phone. No, the guard at the gate has stopped her saying any non-Hindu student is not allowed to pass. I will have to personally walk down there at the gates and accompany her inside though I am a non-Hindu student myself and hence the greater probability is of me being kicked out and so Prashanth accompanies me too. And hence a crowd is made around me. At the gates I find another familiar feminine face along with a body dressed in a saffron kurta waiting to enter to college campus. My fault she could not enter and now it is I who grant her entry. Short questions about mutual well-being followed by obvious answers of approval and now it is time for the ultimate business. She seems flabbergasted at the people I have managed to amass. She is impressed and at the same time she is abashed by it. So she says she has to make it quick and has little time to spare as a cause to her NSS orientation which is due to be convened in a few hours at Hansraj College. She says I have all the help I need and she is not wrong and actually quite right at that but there is always a male line and a female line and the female lines are usually shorter than the male ones. Harper Lee’s *To handle Qs*… We enter into the building of the main campus and finally end our meandering around the green campus lawns. Admissions are to be tackled directly by the respective Heads of Departments locate in the Staff Room and so off we go there. The staff room is like Sistine Chapel, old and huge and boring and full of images that have no relation to Christianity whatsoever. The HOD is a lady of young age, already a queue ahead of her. Many people had come to confirm their admission. It was a prestigious thing to study at Hindu and no one wanted to waste the sacrament of this opportunity and so they lined devoutly, a prize to be won and an accolade to be awarded to each one of them. I was not sure whether I wanted that. Time will tell. Girls work fast. Pooja went over to the girl’s side and collected for me the admission form necessary to be filled and submitted as soon as possible the same day itself. Questions need to be asked and so Pooja called the professor to her side-

“See, I prefer admission in Hindu but I have some questions I need to ask about the faculty and the mode of study if I may be so bold.” Rahil said to the teacher, her eyes made smoky by the dark black mascara underneath them and wearing a flaming red suit that for some reason could not leave Rahil’s attention.

“Well, what do you need to ask? You can talk o be with full comfort.” She addressed him, following her dialogue with a Hindi dialogue to another parent who had came and stood beside Rahil with a query of his own regarding his ward’s admission.

“Well, my prime ambition is to write and frankly I would drop out to write if the college curriculum in some manner restricted me from it….” Rahil spoke but was intermitted by the lady who answered diplomatically:

“Our course is built with a thorough and equal share of reading materials along with writing assignments. I mean you would be expected to write papers from time to time but you would have to read along with it as well.”

-Don’ patronize me. I can read and for our kindest information ***your goddamn course*** is my course too because both our colleges red the same curricula as we are under the same University-

“I understand that. I am a student of literature at Sri Venkateswara College. I mean I’m currently enrolled there as a freshman. I just wanted to be a part of greater activities and I imagined that Hindu being close to the main campus of the University and being a big enough college itself would conduct seminars and other events which would be amiss at the South Campus.” Rahil clarified.

“Yeah I understand but if there are any University seminars, they would happen all through the University and even at South Campus and Venkateswara is also pretty active in holding seminars and other events as well and it is a good and well reputed college. I think that if you are already enrolled there and undecided yet to study here, you should resume your study there because it is as good a college as Hindu.” The teacher reasoned with him.

-the form is in my hand. The time is now. I will be enrolled here. Venky is as good a college as Hindu but it is not Hindu. Does institution really matter? I feel torn apart and need some time to think. Silence does it. Let her resume the dialogue.

“Do one thing, just take the form and fill it as a formality and if you want to change your decision then don’t submit your credentials and mark-sheets. Of course I have already verified them but if you decide to stay, take a photocopy of those documents, attach them with the main application form and submit them to me. I would entertain you some more but you see there’s a queue behind you.”

-ah yes, the Qs. Never put them in peril. God knows the Universe would shatter. Their God knows. The choice is now. Pooja asks me for my original document so she could run ahead to the photocopy shop and make copies of it to bring it back to me. I give it her and I am left with Riship and Prashanth. Riship is constantly bothering me that I am making a wrong choice, an error with unstopping frequency. Maybe I am making an error. The fee also needs to be paid today and my debit card is broke. I am fashioned out of circumstances not to join Hindu. I do not regret it. Still I can. I can call Dhruv Bhai and he will have the money delivered, at least that was what m mother suggested when I mentioned the problem to her. An easy solution… Should I go through all that trouble will it be worth it? Hindu is known for science courses. Rarely is arts commemorated here. No proper alumni for literature, English most aptly can be called a Hindu product. Pooja comes back with the necessary photocopies of the documents. She warns me not to squander this opportunity. She was desperate to get into Hindu and only chose Hansraj because she could not get in. She thrusts her ambitions on me. Her brother studied here and she has respect for him. She associated me with the model of her brother ignoring my sense of individuality. I assure her that I would not lay waste to this lucrative chance but in my mind I am falderal. She has briefed me or at least she feels she has briefed me enough for me to adhere to my choice of studying in Hindu and now she records her wish to leave for her NSS orientation. One final warning as she turns back to face me walking on out of the gate and I look at her jet black hair falling down and cloaking her shoulders and ending at her biceps. She exits and now only a jagged vision of her I can see through the branches of the trees and the bars of the gates that block my vision. Now I am uncertain. Riship still clings to the same dictation while Prashanth has to scoot for his class. Finally I am left with Riship and he is only one I am to depend on to allay my choice and so his endless chanting is bound to influence me. He promises to help me regardless of the choice I make and so I finally take the photocopies along with the filled admission form and got to staff room to submit my application. The lady with the black mascara and the red suit, the HOD of the English department looked me straight in the eyes when I submitted my form to her. That was a look of authority and domination and a look which wished to fetter me in servitude. My decision starts to tremble, shake, shift… She hands to me the printed receipt of the payment lip to be paid in the division of the bank located inside the campus. It was only a matter of calling mother for the money now and so I called her. Uncertainty aroused to be my doom again. Mushroom clouds of the wrong kind of uncertainty bloomed over where I stood on all places and suffocated me with their noxious aesthesis. What is bearable then? Liberate yourself from within instead of finding a liberated utopia for such utopia exists only in the fantastical world. Liberate Venky then, yes. Liberate it with all your heart and soul and might and fury and all your experience and knowledge and gather more if you fall short but never fall short in your attempt. What of Hindu College then? Drop it like a bad habit. Oh that’s too commercial a line but suits the capitalist craved city of Delhi. Head out then, out of these huge green grassy knolls and into the wine cellar walls of Venkateswara College, the college sentimentally fundamentalist enough to have a temple on college premises. They should break it down. But Oxford has cathedrals in its constituent colleges. Break them down too…Free people, free thoughts free mind and free spirits. The verdict in the mind has been spoken and now is the turn to change the fantasy of the mind into reality. Firstly Riship; Oh, look at the smile on that wry Jaat face. He advices to sit here for a few more moments, minutes as this is probably the last time walls of the Hindu college campus would be around me. Sit, speak, the future, there are auditions to turn up in, oh Emzee. I promised to keep him company at the Western Music Society auditions so I will have to audition too. I will probably sing a glorious orchestral socialist song from Les Miserablés. Okay, what else, the Western dramatics too and the Indian one as well but not seriously; just as a favor for Rohit and Arjun. So I have given up Hindu and by my own definition dogmatically I am a fool, an idiot but no worries. Dostoevksy has written a novel about me-

And so he decided to stay in Venatesara and in the South Delhi campus. One of his other reasons that drove him to such a conclusion for which Pooja was later to banish him was the connectivity of the South Campus to JNU as with the discovery of JNU he had discovered a place beyond the pines. He idolized that place and blew it all out of proportions in his mental cogitation and it was the heaven for him or the closest logical thing to it-a utopia. They sat at the end of the campus still inside the college waiting for some sign in the form of a uniformed guard hauling them out and as they sat and waited they talked among themselves randomly.

A sight disturbed the conversation when the ball was on Riship’s part of the court. He was distracted by a rapidly moving girl who shook everyone’s hand with a clique following her. The girl and the clique seemed too bourgeoisie to be gallivanting around the college campus without a purpose and they did not appear to be representing a society or any formal faction. Their trait became clear to Rahil when he was approached by the girl wearing white sneakers on which Riship’s eyes were fixed and who extended a long slender arm towards his direction. Her hair was gartered back in sporty ponytail and she fastidiously wore a dress that supported her quick movements.

“Kusum Khanna, vote for me. NSUI.” She blasted on Rahil’s face with a breath of fresh air coming from her soft small mouth.

Rahil took her hand in his in a formal handshake and not taking much of her time, loosened his grip the very moment and it took not a moment more for her as she lashed sideways onto the next person on her way with her clique following her toned, fit and fair body. A fellow with stylishly colored hair and bearing a handsome face also followed him who gave him a smile when he had shook the hands of the bonny lass in the white sneakers.

“So, the wind of politics has gathered up and what you just witnessed my friend was the student wing of Congress which is NSUI.” Riship explained to him. Rahil knew little of these practical things about politics. He would give a dissertation standing right there about Right and Left politics and the evolution of political theories and thoughts overtime but practically he was a dud. The most important chess pieces of the political chessboard stood before him and politics looked him right in the eye, shook hands with him and gave him a smirk and he just stood there with locked lips.

The subject was gone. It had not yet been time. He thought of different things now.

After a disappointing yet satisfying experience, Rahil headed to his life back-ways. There was no turning back from here. The wheel of life kept on turning without end and now burned with fire and ashes lined the track over which it ran. The trick was to keep the wheel running and not let it fall sideways; to keep leaving lost-lasting tracks of ashes as the burning wheel went.

The next day when Rahil walked through the gates of the college, he was sure he was there to stay and no power of man or of the God created by man could stray him away from it. The next few weeks Rahil wholly dedicated to auditions for different societies. He had applied for the lot of them- fine arts society, equal opportunity cell, English dramatics society, the debating society, the Indian music society- and this was only as a favor to his friend Emzee- and along with that he wanted to be a part of the editorial boards of two separate magazines for purely literary purposes which were the college’s annual magazine and the magazine of the English Literary Association.

But such ambitions did not befit his lifestyle which was disrupted due to sheer lack of self-regards. Money from the home was swiftly spent in paying the rent for which Rahil was very attentive towards the start and hence he would fall short on the money to be spent on his food and other expenses. He only washed his shirts and never ironed and only barely washed his jeans. He would alternate just two shirts for week on end and only wash his clothes once or twice in a month. Same went for his food habits. Being very picky on what to eat, he spent his money, the little that he had, eating in big cafes and when he would be fully scraped off, he would starve the mornings and eat cheap snacks in the evenings. He ate only to survive and the rest was just luxury that he resisted. This state of gastronomic affairs constantly made his stomach fall prey to various forms of disorder; general cramping being the commonest and this feeling would not leave him and would take over him in unexpected times and at unexpected places.

Once at a library when he was engrossed in what he thought was a great book, the finest he had thrown his fingers on since his arrival at the college library, John Galsworthy’s The Family and right in the middle of it came the nature’s call. It was most fortunate to Rahil that his room was only a short run away from his college because he stayed the library after college hours when all the rooms and the floors are locked except the library. He ran to his room and did not even check if the water was running as his pants swooshed down and his thighs smashed and smooched on the cold white porcelain of the Parryware commode. All of the others he lived with were in some way or the other was used to the dismal conditions in which they lived, along with him but he could not, would not and was not able to manage. These were conditions of oppression and outright derangement. He was fighting the demons of his senses living in that packed bunker of a room and his senses had started to harm him. He felt disconnected from the wider world and introverted into a world born out of crude fantasies. He saw everything but recorded only the images needed to construct a part of reality far fletched from the general one. His real life was surrounded by an opiate smoke which he constantly kept around himself to keep from seeing the black tarry waste settled on the streets that he walked and to prevent its rotten smell of putrefaction to get through his nostrils and thusly he justified himself. To those who are oppressed, some form of opium is always necessary and since religion was opium that he had long drawn away from, it seemed to him now that the ideological opium for him was a necessity.

And so he saw oppression and he felt himself infuriated by it while others tolerated it. He would not be the same filth that they were. He would not be the same starving maddening things that they had become with their quiet mind and disquieting rationality. He was looking inside the barrel of the canon the mouth of which many were tied and blasted away. He was determined that he would not share the same fate. He lived not among scholars pursuing an education in or in close proximity to an educational institution, no; he dwelled in the cracks and crevices of New Delhi. He lived among the filth and the dirt settled, clogged in those cracks. Oppression was a pit and he resided among the bottom feeders, scratching on the surface underneath like a bug, like an insect and upon him the weight of not just his but all of their stifling.

He saw desperate men and desperate women but he also saw the lack of desperation in their eyes, those eyes, those pupils that saw the whole world taking pauses to blink but never once glowed and always remained dull, while in conversation, while in feast or supper and especially in sleep-those dead dreams and never once did those eyes show him the spark of life in them. All it showed was conformity. He was riled by the circumstances that were thrashed upon him, problems, one after the other. His being started to rebel and the ethical constraints of his mind started to break off freeing him to the possibilities of all the anger that burned inside of him. Laws did not matter anymore; neither did others’ opinion of him. At this point, all that mattered was ferocity, towards whom he did not know, based on what he did not know but still he could see his ferocity justified and logically sustain the ethical as well as the social constraints of his ordained reality. His state of mind was apocalyptic now in its purest etymology. The word is derived from the Greek ‘apocalyptos’ meaning what is far beyond perhaps in the stretches of space or in the folds of time, nonetheless out of our reach of our world and roughly translated ‘another world’. He was ready to be his own man now and he was ready to influence others with his sense.

And that was the cocoon of conditions in which Rahil appeared for the auditions for most of the societies. The first one was the debate society which was rather spontaneous and serendipitous as he saw the flyer stuck to the bulletin which mentioned the very date on which he stood watching the bulletin but he had an hour to spare before the auditions. The classes were of course over as the initial lectures were doing nothing but building necessary student-teacher platform and context for further discussions about the works of literature prescribed. Besides Rahil never had any grave trouble in following things in class so much that he would abandon extra-curricular activities just to tighten his grip on academia. As such getting into the English debating society held little priority for him but seeing as how he would be able to develop his social skills as well as social group being with the elites of the English debating society still was of promise according to him.

The venue of the audition was the seminar all which was a medium sized room but with a stage and speakers standing at two corners of the air-conditioned room. It contained many rows of seats and Rahil saw most of them occupied by what he made out as contestants all fighting for a spot into the hallowed debating society of Sri Venkateswara College. Rahil opened the huge wooden doors and light fell into the seminar room, the natural light that came from the throne of Helios, as far as the Greek literature served him that outshone the white monochromatic patches coming from those white flashing scepters that were held on its place in the ceiling by its guardian cast. He walked into the room and straight near the stage right in the middle not disturbing yet the hesitant speech of some young neurotic bloke who was perhaps given some topic on religion. Rahil was patted on the back by a warm feeble hand to which he turned and in turn was greeted very formally.

“Hello.” The senior said.

“Oh… Hi. I’m here for the audition and I was wondering if there was…..” Rahil was interrupted in the middle of his sentence by a girl of short stature who thrust a clipboard with a sheet of paper clipped upon it for him to write his name and his phone number on. After completion of that petty formality, Rahil was asked if he was ready to deliver on any topic and on his affirmation, he was given to speak for the topic of reservation in the case of India. He was told to wait outside the seminar hall where a table and a chair were placed and he was advised to jot up matter in the ten minutes of time which was granted. However, he was not interested in jotting matter in his mind was a topic. He gazed out at the flags of three colors that were hoisted up on one side of the field. One was purple which was the color of the college flag and the two others were yellow and pink. He could not gather the purpose of the two other flag and moved to the nature in which they were hoisted up and for some asinine reason it reminded him of Sartre and his idea of bad faith, the correlation of a person’s being to his work. That connected his memory to the knowledge of the historical system of *Varnas* or the system of Indian occupational hierarchies on which the Indian caste system was based. Then he thought of Sartre as the socialist and his association with the anti-war movement in Algiers and his interview with Francis Jeanson. That, he thought to himself, called for a Marxist analysis of post-Indian socio-economic conditions which would reveal Nehru as the pseudo-socialist that he once was. So there was a historical analysis to be done of the caste system initially and it was to be followed by socio-economic analysis of the post-independent economically and culturally depraved India when the reservation system was laid down as a national privilege for the empowerment of the minorities.

He did not write anything down nor did he take a mental note of the things that flashed through his mind as he watched the flags and tried to hear the sound of their beating as they fluttered into the air in far distance. He knew he was ready and so he turned sideways to move his feet from under the table and then another gentleman popped up beside him asking him if he was ready to take his place for the speech. Rahil could not see any reasons not to do so and was escorted by him back into the seminar hall and the door closed behind him. The boy that had been delivering when he had entered was long gone and a girl was now giving her piece to the audience in a very confident manner but still one could hear infirmities in her voice which could be easily deduced to be out of the broken case she was handling a bit poorly. She ended it with a long pause and did not stop to answer the questions that were posed to her as she knew she was eliminated on the spot. Anyone but Rahil could see that the fight was cutthroat because it was intimidating but Rahil was one to be barely intimidated by such pacific potential arraignments of non-legal nature. It would matter little to him perchance it was a legal, or even a legal one. Nothing in him suggested confidence towards his speech and he could not be the judge of himself under such extenuating circumstances. After the girl left it was his turn to take the microphone from her and deliver his case. He took the microphone from her soft hands on the end of which reddish blue nail polish glowed which must have been a prominent color for him to have observed it at such a time. His eyes left the sight of her nail polish and gazed openly at the many faces sitting in front of him, some peevishly looking at him seeing him as the ‘other’ competitor and some genuinely eager to hear him talk. It was for those latter faces that he gathered up words and began to arrange them meaningfully but only one nanosecond before he delivered them. He started his speech and on the midway he remembered one thing he had forgot to ask the adjudicators about- the time limit of his piece. This was soon forgotten as he delved deeper and deeper into the subject matter to extrapolate and rejoinder content from his memory to his narrative as moved forth without a fixed pattern or a cohesive structure although he was not short of matter and in fact he was in abundance of it.

- Marx, I have utmost respect for the man. Marx ist Auschezeichnet. So is the whole of German philosophy right from Feuerbach, down to the Frankfurt school. But Marx- Das Capital, the book that changed my life; what is capital after all? And show should it be counted, and accounted for? A factory owner, who sits at his house all day, a middle man, has the face of earning, doubling his profits at the labor of the scores of employee under him, as they work with the minimum capital awarded to them for their labor in the form of wage. This minimum wage labor goes on enslaving the worker so that he doesn’t own anything, and he doesn’t accumulate enough capital worth owning means of production. The capital, the wage and hence the wage labor is controlled by those who control the means of production; the bourgeoisie. The lands, the same way, controlled by the reach and the capital it withholds is manipulated so that the worker earns minimum wage for his labor. Dickens wrote of it in ‘Hard Times’, ‘David Copperfield’, ‘Oliver Twist’ and any other novel that he wrote that he could force it into; the ill-effects of this so-called age of industrialization. The illogical distribution of power in the name of logic; the irrational attachment to material capital in the name of rationality, and poof, took form the evil of capitalism, and wham! Came the blow of fascism. Fascism in its very literal meaning was ever-present in Hindu mythology as idol worship, in different forms of Protestant Christianity as worship of ‘the true God’. Small wonder why Indians sought to iconize Mahatma Gandhi to free India from British rule. India actually never wanted to be free from British rule; it wanted to appear free from British rule and hang on to the same class structure, the same form of economy and the same style of living. Hence came forth Nehru’s pseudo-socialist reforms which marked the change of hands of means of production from British imperialists to Indian imperialists like Tata and Birla among other filthy rich. Somewhere in the middle were ideologically rich, forgotten radical heroes like Bhagat Sight, Rajguru, M.N Roy and Subhash Chanra Bose who acknowledged the fact that there is no such thing as a bloodless revolution. If there was no bloodshed in the Indian nationalism, it meant that the people actually weren’t free. And they weren’t. Not until the 1960’s when the Communist Party split and decided to go militant and form the Marxist Leninist part which mobilized and armed a group of peasants to fight for their rights in the small village of Naxalbari in West Bengal and hence blood was shed and freedom was won This was the Red wave of Naxalism that spread like wildfire across the most deprived region of India and I am proud of it. It is only aspect of poor India I am proud of. The fact that they are enlightened, endowed by the philosophies of Marx and Lenin-the greats, brave enough to fight for their much deserved rights is something that is more glorious to me that the seventy something worthless years of Indian independence. I denounce Indian independence; philosophically poor, ideologically failed, ethnically mixed-up and totally futile Indian independence. Much to the comfort of Westerners, I am proud to proclaim that India is still a land of snake charmers and naked fakirs. We are all snake charmers and we are all naked fakirs. All the marvels, AIIMS, IITs, the fine Indian IT employees are all snake charmers and I don’t say that with sarcasm, I say that with the truth. The only rich people are in Dantewada, Gadchiroli, Bastar, in areas of Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, in Nandigram, because as long as these people are fighting for their rights, fighting not just against the rich but also against the beliefs of the rich, like capitalism, like fascist right-wing politics, like aristocratic bureaucracy and political oligarchy very evident in the Indian political scenario, they are doing the right thing. These peasants are fighting against a stagnating, rotting generation of permanent cripples, yes cripples. You, you are a cripple, physical and mental. You don’t know right from wrong. You still thing God exists. Well, God is dead, it’s not me its Nietzsche who said that, and humans are God, they are supermen and all we need is the will to power and by God these Naxalites have it. They are more modern, post-modern, even than these AIIMS or IITs could ever aspire to become because the doctor who works in AIIMS or the engineer who slaves off at IIT goes home and bows down his head in front of the same God that isn’t there, switches on his TV and sees the same TV very meticulously channeled and manufactured by the rich as an instrument to get into your minds manufacture your thoughts, feed you their views to an extent that you would naturally think it’s yours and turn you into zombies, rob you of your mental wealth and that is why I say you are poor, don’t mind me saying that; think about it. What is the philosophy of Right Wing politics? Democracy- Why, then do we vote for people rather than directly voting for the laws that govern us like a true Athenian democracy. Is it freedom? Why, then, even if I wanted to, I could not go abroad to study, and that’s a violation of liberty too which is the third pillar of Right Wing politics, well, the French version anyways. Even in France, more revolutions have shaped this so-called democracy like the Great French Revolution and the much less popular Paris Commune and the even less popular 1968 and 2002 cultural riots in Paris which were of Leftist tendencies and varied from Marxism to Maoism, Trotskyism, anarchism and even situationalist. And that is just the gist of a part of what is wrong with the Indian society. Money, that’s what’s wrong, let me burn it, let me disregard it from my life, let me care about enlightenment more than money, not just of myself but also of others so that. Persons, that’s another thing wrong with the society, well that’s a very big wrong thing in the society because society is made up by the people and wrong kind of the people would obviously make the wrong kind of society, but what’s the point of criticizing it, it’s not changing and it will never change. People will change when their ideology changes, ideology will change when they would feel dissociated from the ideology they used to follow and associate to the ideology that would help them change. The problem lies in the acceptance of the people that they are living in the wrong ideology. The State is much to blame for this because government is supposed to provide a total societal structure for its citizens to abide by, rather than just laying down a hefty constitution and going with it as it goes declaring the country ideologically secular. That’s the most laughable group of statements Indian government has ever made. There is no such thing as unity in diversity, there is no such thing as secularism as long as there is a government. For these things to be valid and working the government ought to step down from power and the country should follow what is known as an anarchist consortium. Only when the state sets itself up through anarchism, there is room for individualism, mutual aid, secularism and all that because as long as there is power, there will be division. As long as there’s power, there will also be corruption. Anarchism would also mean the end of corruption because the reason for corruption is order. When there is hierarchy, there is order and this hierarchy is something that has the susceptibility of falling, or faulting, much like a mountain or a pyramid and there is no way that a structure can sustain till eternity. Any structure is bound to get old and be replaced by a new structure. Before the total overthrow of the old structure by the newer one, there is a conflict which results in the overthrow, the natures of the conflict may vary but since the old system is corrupt, it is bound to fall. The new system hence is seemingly incorruptible but it naturally falls to the vice nonetheless. And so we should not hope for order, not hope for structure but for chaos. In cosmology, chaos is the progenitor of cosmos and cosmos forms the universe and thus Universe is born out of chaos, Unbelievable to the illogical, irrational mind with no sense of analytical treatment to a set dogma but very true both in theory and in practice; worship of chaos. Anarchism is also a product of human acceptance of chaos, at least to a political and sociological context. Though seemingly unattainable, many pacifist anarchists or humanist anarchists believe it is achievable through Enlightenment of humanity through progressive, proper education and self-realization of a universal sense of ethics and morality, which is impossible. The Sartrean bad faith is what keeps us going, of course owing also to the present system of economy but what of the ancient system? Feudalism, lands owned by the rich through self-assimilation whiles the others given jobs of farmers on lands though they were dispossessed of it yet they grew on it. Why? Land was their mother, their Goddess. Faith again enslaves us. And hence, the Vaishyas-the merchants, the Kshatrias- the aristocrats, the Brahmins-the clergy became the bourgeoisie while the shudras- the laborers and lowly workers became the proletariat. All due to the psychical construction of a job-based personality which ruined any and all chances of an egalitarian system and what happened after that? Years after that after independence…what? The idiots opened doors for globalization at a time when the country had barely risen from the rubbles of partition and the wars that were to come. Oh, the paranoid Nehru, *his* partition…*his* war. Our patriotism…. Our foolishness... A dying man with a hungry staving stomach can sell his soul for a loaf of bread, what’s a country? That’s an untouchable for you, the starved, the dead and the dying. You have spurned upon them and spat on their garb, now it’s time to buy them a new one. Alleviation from a traumatic for a certain underprivileged section of people is adamant and necessary to make them better and upstanding citizens of same dignity as we share among ourselves. Reservation brings them out of the dark and into the light. I am an OBC and look where I reached with my scores. I could have got into Hindu College and I know I am worth it so you cannot come up with the ‘unworthy being preferred over worthy’ clause. Something done hereditarily generation after generation has a way of percolating into the psyche of human mind and hence is hard to get rid of and so we cannot question the validity for reservation for ages because the historical execration of the underprivileged classes has also been going on for ages and if you think it is not right for you to suffer the pangs of competition for a luxury that your father enjoyed, think of the compunction that they would have felt those who could not differentiate themselves from a particular lowly line of work even if they had the potential to just because their fathers had their jobs forced down upon their throats like a disease that they could not cure. And hence it is the question not only of empowerment of lower classes but the empowerment of lower occupations as well that we need to tackle here. How is a laborer who works fifteen hours a day thrashing stones with a sledgehammer in a hazardous construction site any less worthy of the paycheck pulled by a skilled neurosurgeon whose hands save the most complex human organ? All bankers ever do is sit and write imaginary numbers that exists and is valuable only for the capital attached to it. How is the basic work of sitting and writing any different that a poet’s and in fact a poet has to create thoughts and philosophize about the system and form of objects and subjects while the accountant just conjures it up? The perfect time to remove reservation, finally after all the things I have just said, would be when a street vendor and a stockbroker for a big firm is given the same services and can afford the same luxuries and same goes for comparison between the doctors and the janitors or the engineers and the rag-pickers-

The others looked at him as he ranted on unstoppably losing all track of time. Rahil however was not aware that they showed this expression because of the time he took and thought it had to do more with his subject matter.

“Are you JNU material?” a boy with thin round glasses and long curly hair parted from the center dressed in loose clothes and flannel pants probably house-warmed asked.

He was aghast by the coincidence of the question and wondered if his visit to the institution and its effect on him had been that obvious.

“Well, I have frequented the salon that is JNU for it is the opium of the intellectual mind.” Rahil replied smartly and saw the faces of few others light up with smiles.

Then he added “Oh is there a time limit?”

“Yes, seven minutes.” A girl with dark eyes who stood near him with a smiling face and a charmed expression notified to him.

“And how long have I been going on for?” he answered, completely clueless about the time that he had taken up during his speech although others thought he was showing off very precociously.

“Close to fourteen minutes…” she answered.

“I’m sorry, I really didn’t realize that.” He apologized.

His apology was followed by a question from an adjudicator about his content.

“What do you think of a competition standard for such an ends as you described?” he asked.

“Well, I think I would prefer my model Soviet model of socialism that has been practically tested and found working so accurately and perfectly that it roused the envy of NATO to such a temper that they made their minds to ruin it to the present American snakeandladder economy where you sell your libidinal drives and skills for money and last time I checked the dictionary, that does qualify as a criminal act under the premise of law. And so we are back to the old Mark Twain debate of the ‘terror’ in his ‘An American Yankee in King Arthur’s Court.” He replied.

Nobody asked him anything after that and he was scot-free to walk. He noticed two familiar faces seated on the left side and these were two female faces that he could recall from days of yester. Applauds surrounded him but his attention was capusled by his effort to recall these lively, jovial and beautiful faces he had seen before and in that effort came to him the image of a pert neck he had seen before at the day of the orientation. Standing there, he zoomed in on the neck of one of the bonny lasses and identified the two as one and the same. The other dame was also well identified as she belonged to her class and he could now recall all that although the tools to the revival of his memory now were a little jagged from the applause and the curiosity to finding out the result. Hence, he turned back and asked if he made the cut and they informed him that there was another round the next day on the same time but this time the topic was fixed; it was either for or against the building of a separate state of Telagana to be carved out of Andhra Pradesh. The result, they told him, would be declared based on that performance. Rahil then thought as to what purpose this audition he had just now completed served but then he was not disheartened or disappointed at another possible audition as it gave him something to look forward to and he was sure and certain that he would look forward to it.

There were, however other things to look forward to also. The teacher who had given him the assignment to write random thoughts on a piece of paper was the one taking a foundation course on English which was more or less irrelevant and so she herself doubted her validity as a figure of authority.

Rahil exited the college campus and came back to his bunker of a room but he was only there for a moment or two to fulfill only the necessary chores and then he bolted out of the room and into the free streets as a free man but alas the free man did not know what to do with his free time so he wandered around with a thought about a thought in his mind. It was the first time he had seen his existence as a person strangled onto the stone of anonymity all on his own. This was a person with dreams, ambitions of greatness, the will to pursue his madness and the fire to ignite the torch of his prowess but at the same tie this was a evolving ball of smoke and fire, about and ready to burst and to burst big in a place that was akin to dull lights and anything brighter than the yellow orange flame of the candle to the dwellers of this place was a thing of terror and curiosity. He did not plan things ahead and the thoughts in his mind were of his long one past, a past that did not even exist, and the remnants of his mind dedicated its energy to the same version of a futile future, a future unplanned and unmanned. He was not sure how to cogitate the scheme of things so he just sat outside and dulled all his faculties so that just his conception, his perception remained and eventually his whole afterlife became a series of hazy images or flashes that he could neither believe nor explain and only barely perceive. His life was reduced, or some might say enhanced to a phenomenology.

He died and reincarnated every time his mind recalled his days at Port Blair. He felt an inch of him change and this inch of him was alien to the rest of him but in consequent recollections, more of this alien change came to conquer soon his thoughts about the past were quite forgotten or if not forgotten, not recalled and his focus shifted into coping with the present. His image as a ranting intellectual gained him personages as someone who was really worth a talk or a thought in the barren wasteland of vain conversations and vague gestures. He was forewarned oft about the repercussions of this kind of an appearance by none but his own self which he decided not to pay heed to. He was spinning into megalomania and his ability to keep his boots firmly on to the realms of reality started to waft. It was more like the ground that he stood on began to suddenly liquefy and pull him in with a succulent force like that of a swamp and as he attempted to evade from the fate that awaited him at the bottom of that asphyxiating dark, smutty swamp, he fell deeper and deeper into it and the swamp, like an ogre feasted upon him bit by bit finally consuming him wholly. Form life to death, he trolled and back into life he was regurgitated. Too good a fate to die, he thought to himself as he found himself sitting over a table with a plate of noodles in front of him under the open sky with the cloth of dusk spread over the sky in a lascivious glow that claimed the full attention of Rahil as his hand mechanically rolled the long saucy and spicy strands of noodles on to the fork and lifted itself to his mouth which opened as the sense of his smell alerted him of the position of the food and the fate of the noodles finally ended into the darkness of the closed mouth of Rahil and the churning of the food between his teeth was followed. Rahil looked at the sky, his eyes filled with honesty and innocence knowing that it was the only place to look at with such monolithic emotions and the world under it was to be observed much differently.

He packed the rest of the noodles for his friends in his room as it would serve the dual purpose of making friendly courtesy towards his friend and keeping from wasting the food. He returned to his room and had a small talk with his friend after offering him the pack of noodles which his friend consumed in his room and invited Rahil to sit beside him and share the meal with him. Rahil, having a full stomach declined the offer but still sat with his friend and listened to his chat. This friend was Akshay who was in Venkateswara as Rahil but unlike Rahil, he did not have any particular interest in joining even one of the societies and was primarily interested in making into the college cricket team. He was pretty sure about his place as he had the captain of the cricket team living in a flat above their accommodation and maintained genial relations with him.

The next day at college he classes was menial and mostly built around the trivialities of the text. Lecturers at various points did attempt to construe the theories they were building with the text but did not come to the actual dissection of the text. Some lecturers went as far as the actual reading of the texts in classes which was a point that demanded attention and Rahil gave it appropriate attention. For the most part, Rahil was preoccupied with the auditions of the debating society that followed later that day. Later after the lectures, the seniors again graced the class of their juniors with Rahil still stuck in it and announced that the fresher’s party would be held in two weeks. Nobody was sure as to why the seniors had made the announcement so early and Rahil did not bother to ask about it due to his preoccupation with the debating auditions. His thoughts revolved not around what he would say but how he would say it. He knew the matter was only a scratch away but what really mattered were the clarity and the punctuality of the composition of matter. Composition is the key to any narration be it a speech, an argumentative debate or a novel. Composition as a form of assignment is no different than composition as a mixture of various ingredients in different proportions. The purpose of a composition is always to make sense so that there appears to be a harmonious relationship between consequent sentences till the end of the composition and a proper point or a clause or an argument can be drawn out of it.

The time was nigh for the debate to take place. Rahil jaunted across the campus to the seminar hall which overlooked the wide green fields had oft been to in the short course of his time spent in the city. He made it to the gates of seminar hall and pushed it open to have déjà vu swipe him off his feet all over again. The feeling was intensified as he found the two familiar female faces framed with the face of a male this time and the feeling escalated manifold when he saw the male face with clarity; he could recall that face too. He remembered him from the boring lectures that he took and he deduced instantly though it was not much of a deducting and more of a moment-inflicted conclusion that this lad was in the same class as his. He could even remember his name which was Subrato. The girl who was in the same class as his and Subrato’s, the one that accompanied the girl with the pert neck the previous day was Anisha as he recalled her name to be he was not sure how he caught her name and narrowed it down to the acts of catching it from roll-call to asking her name in a general sense. He looked at their direction but they turned their eyes in another direction as they were completely disinterested in him. ‘That’s the elites for you. It’s never so that the elites are famous and this goes without saying that those who are famous in a college are rarely elites and those who are elites are rarely famous. I guess it’s the classic one percept elite rule that is inherent to the capitalistic mode of society that the once elitist percent never actually reveal their faces. That’s the devil for you.’ He thought to himself as he this time, like before, made his way towards the stage and asked to participate in the auditions. He was asked if he was prepared to speak for the motion of Telangana or against it to which he replied that he could speak on either. It was hard to infer from his perspective if the adjudicators and the conveners were impressed by his confidence or exasperated by his confidence as he concluded mentally that it could be either of the two.

They asked him what he had come prepared for and he said he had come prepared to speak for the motion knowing well it was a white lie. They told him to wait and he waited. The wait was long. At a random point, they decided to take a break and asked a show of hands for those who were for the motion followed by those who were against. The majority of the crowd wanted to speak for the motion and this caused a disruption in the process of the auditions as two students were paired up against one another based on for and against the motion and the paired ones were the first to get the opportunity to speak. It clicked to Rahil that if he changed sides and spoke against the motion, he would automatically be easily paired and for him it would be fair and over soon.

He got up from his sea and waved his arms and made noise to draw attention to himself just a second after the conclusion of the show of hands. One of them looked towards him and he asked:

“Can I change sides now and speak against the motion. I mean I see that a lot of them are speaking for the motion and for me and for you it would be a whole lot easier if I could contribute in making things come to equilibrium.”

“Only if you’re prepared for it because…see we do not want to lose a good candidate over a bad judgment so do this if you are really comfortable in doing this and not for the sake of easing things up.” One of the female adjudicators remarked taking time out and losing her sense of briefness over explanatory though it was spliced perfunctorily.

Seeing his amiability, they paired him with a girl who was to speak for the motion and their turn was to come next. Since his wait was broken and so was his meditation, he actually for once started paying attention to the speech of other people and started to look for loopholes in their argument. In a middle of a speech delivered by a girl unsure of her matter which was built on highly conservative views, Rahil, after she finished her speech raised his hand to ask a question.

“Have you wondered through your entire speech where Hyderabadi biryani originally comes from?”

His question surrounded a few heart laughs which also had a tone of confusion mingled with them and the looks that were on the faces of those seated and the speaker was marked with confusion and a little bit of irritability.

“No, I do not know where Hyderabadi biryani comes from.” She answered with an upturned hand in a gesture of questioning the relevance or the sense of the question itself.

-yes, you would not know where hyderabadi biryani comes from in the context of what you just talked about because it not tagged in Wikipedia to the pages that come into context of what you just talked about. Know, book smarts and street smarts. Fortitudes of a freewheeling intellectual with a stomach hungry for biryani and a mind hungry for knowledge…ah, the good old gold old days that you cannot find about in Wikipedia. Try googling crypto-fascism, proto-capitalism or spit-fiction. See what you and then try to give the ten minute speech you just gave-

She was followed by the group consisting of Rahil and the pretty girl he had never seen on the apparently college campus except on this occasion and knew that he was to follow this shirt, jeans and jacket clad lady with a scarf caringly embracing her neck and teasingly hiding it from the peering vision of Rahil. She had the honor of going first to speak and hence to draw the proverbial first blood.

There was nothing in her speech out of the ordinary and it was clear to Rahil that she did not even do her basic work in going through Wikipedia and basically picked random lines to construct an argument so flimsy that it would be surely torn down if a mosquito breathed too close to it. Here was an open opportunity for Rahil to shred this under-confident, pretty young woman to pieces sending red hot gushing blood from arterial sprays as his canines would dig deep into the seams of her neck with all his brute savagery but then in an instant a feeling of submission took over him at the second sight of this pretty young woman dressed in high heels against which he felt becalmed and powerless and continuing on with such calmness and chastity for power, Rahil went on with his piece after her.

-Let me tell you why I mentioned hyerabadi biryani because as the people before you have drawn the conflict of Telangana to be, it is not a caste-based conflict. It is, like the base of all conflict be it the conflict which led to the partition of India or the present conflict in the parts of Kashmir, or like conflicts in the jungles of Assam and Jharkhand; a political one. Politics yes politics, don’t be alarmed o my darling young ones for I know your minds do not have the necessary ability to stretch to get your minds across this notion but do believe my case offer a case and not an assertion as I follow my argument and fortify my seemingly assertions with the necessary reasoning. Think of the most recent paper you read about Telangana and then think of recent photograph that appeared along with the article. There was a photo of a woman praying with her eyes closed and her palms joined as one, for the State of Telangana and she had on her forehead a red ribbon tied across it. Now this is a classic Right-left conflict to be looked at. The Left in India is dying and it needs thriving. Any ideology when cornered starts to bloom in the worst of places at the worst of times into the worst of conclusions and the only reason there is a separatist movement for Telanagana is for a proper Left representation. Hence there is a need to fight the demons of Right Wing fascism which spreads its propaganda in the name of nationalism and democracy when in truth it is the worst enemy of the true democracy. Think of the Telugu poet Warawara Rao who had been jailed close to forty years on charges of siding with Maoism. This is a man who believes in the freedom of the left and this is a man who also believes in Telangana. Is this a striking coincidence that he believes in both? And was Telangana also one of his charges which he was imprisoned for? Surely…and these are facts enough, true facts, hard facts, factoid, facticity at its most factious, factualness, de facto, factors, factotums…..point of factuality. The hyderabadi biryani is a symbol of social history of Andhra Pradesh. It was run by a Muslim Shah till the British took control and hence has a social diversity of Hindus as well as Muslims and the problem thus cannot be solved by a division. Hand all of it to the Maoists. That will lose some trouble but no on the border division for obvious reasons. I rest my case-

The participants were then to ask questions to one another. The chance was given to Rahil to ask his question first as the girl was the first to deliver her argument. After a hearty speech, Rahil was mentally nullified and believed that he was not in the possession of such power to ask her an ingenious question and so he asked her a pretty common question:

“Do you agree with what I just said that there is a need for a political re-association in the context of ideology and that it would lead to successive conclusions?” he asked her very generally as though the only answer to it was confirmation and no point to its negation could be raised.

“I believe so.” The young lady properly and gracefully fell into his trap without the slightest hint of knowledge that she had conceded to his argument. Another reason she so easily conceded without meeting the eye of conceit with which Rahil asked her the question was hidden in the calm and somber nature in which Rahil asked her the question which at that point of time seemed to her, through the aid of his voice completely out of tone and hence immaterial to the case he was trying to make. In this way, he manipulated her through a mentalist approach making her fall prey to her own dictatorial senses.

He looked at her pretty face that showed no signs of defeat probably because she had not yet accepted the fact though she was not to blame for that. It was classic practical implementation of the game theory where the one who knew of the odds in a better way had better chances of winning that the one that did not but still the situation did not guarantee the victory of one who knew about odds much better. Her face was still placated in being accompanied by a person such as him. After all, she thought, what were the chances of her being paired up with him out of all the other people in the room of which there were many. There was a certain amount of unfairness which she thought had fallen on her part but her face did not reveal that. Rahil looked elsewhere, around and about the crowd, looking at plain faces, dark eyes, different styles of hairs, different colors of clothes, different attires and attributes and he looked at the noisy ones and the silent ones with complete indifference. His attention was drawn by an announcement which requested him to exit the stage as his auditions were over and on enquiring when the results would be declared for his audition, a reply came that he would be informed about the decision and that he would be notified either by a phone call or in person at some other time after the necessary short listing.

His uncertain mind dragged him to the library where peace was to be conquered and then made to war with the rising tides of tumultuous knowledge. He pulled out three random books from three different sections of the library- sociology, history and obviously English respectively and with the three books he climbed down the stairs, entered the big reading room and took possession of one of the chairs on the side of the window. He began reading and then he was emerged in not just the act but the expression and the impression as well. His view of a text was also a feature that kept him engrossed in what he would read for hours on end because he did not see just the text in its perverted isolation; he saw it in the grand harmony of every bit of knowledge that constituted his mind ranging the contemporaneous psychosocial associations to the same links from the time in which the text was written. Then he made several incisions into the texts, comparative, analytical, primordial, basic, adventitious, intrinsic and inherent. Then he went on to work on a theoretical map charted out by various facts followed by the theories that validated those facts and these theories served as a trail on to the next fact. Whatever, in the middle of this interpolation was unnecessary as disposed and only recollected if the lying facts pointed out their significance. His style of reading was very much influenced by his style of thinking, alienated and yet somehow collectivized as though it was a work of chance in spite of the fact that he knew that this chance was self-created.

After dedicating a few hours of his life to the house of abandoned knowledge, he joined the band of the abandoners and headed towards canteen. He had lost track of time inside but did not bother with the useless information of relative concept of time as his mind was already fully laden with knowledge which he was to bear lifelong. Time is but a triviality for the punctual few. He was part of a bigger, better species of men alongside Einstein, Heisenberg, Planck, Minkowsky and many others. He bought a bottle of soft drink and some snacks, a small poor excuse for a lunch as he was a little tight on cash and sat eating the snacks, gorging them like they were the last meals of his life and then downing the whole bottle in one single gulp. He ate like a glutton and did not even notice his friend Arnab sitting in front of him with a tanned dark girl and a group of small boys in faded and tattered cloths and short knickers.

“What are you doing here?” he asked Rahil.

“I just finished my audition and thought I’d come over here and grab a bite to eat.” He said jovially.

“Well, you think you can go over there and eat…” Arnab asked of him, his eyes pointing to the poor desolate kids who looked hungrily at the meal that Rahil was hungrily regaling. He stood up with his plate and his bottle of soft drink, on his plate the broken remains of what he had eaten and some big crumbs still to be eaten. After completing his meal in a secluded place, he decided to join his friend and asking what he was doing but instead of his peer the tanned dark girl replied in answer.

“We are running a program where we teach these young kids and give them basic education. Their fathers work at the construction sites nearby and so they cannot afford proper tuitions so to say. So we teach them the basics that that they need…” she informed Rahil who made out what she had been teaching them by looking at the books lying around and the bent broken handwriting which filled the crumpled pages of the notebook the hands of the children so desperately clasped. It was her idea of a basic education; the education of slavery, he thought to himself. The wrong people try to educate the oppressed proletariat with the wrong means which they term as basic skills. The only thing that is basic and that one needs to survive is life and these unfortunate ones should be taught the reason of their misfortune and not mathematics and sciences because in the end the meditation born out of the many reasons disadvantaged life would drive them to change it whereas the knowledge of mathematics, sciences and languages would only diverge them from really thriving and arising out of their oblivious past if they consider it oblivious at all.

“I want to volunteer but for a different course. You know you should educate them more about life than about these formalities.” Rahil retorted.

“And just exactly what job would you have them doing on the basis of their understanding of life as opposed to these formalities which would lead to better understanding of other more complex formalities eventually gaining them necessary job skills.” Arnab replied to his pervasively crude comment.

“Well in that case one from of slavery would just lead on to another.” With that comment he turned to the kids and asked them “Why do you want to read?” and gained the answer to his question from their dusty, distorted and puzzled faces.

“There is just no end to your arguments, are there?” Arnab replied with pleasing exasperation and the dark lass gave him a cold look. Rahil was all for helping the little kids but he found no way in which he could be of any help to them because the girl took much of the kids’ time with her ‘education’. He wanted no great part in that.

“Count one to ten for me, will you?” he asked one of the boys grabbing him by the arm and sitting beside him with sternness like a figure of authority.

“One…two….three….four….fi…ve…five…six…eight….seven…..eight….ni…nnna….tay” the boy meekly counted.

“You miss the last few numbers. How would you manage to find a job as a receptionist if you don’t know numbers? Don’t let it bother you, though. Think about things. Think about our life. Think about the conditions that your family live in and the working place your father frequents. Ask him if he is happy about his life and yours. See how you live and then compare it with what you see how the people around you live. Then see how people who own cars or shops or restaurants live and think about them. Think what is so different for them that they live in such comfort while you walk about with bare chest. How do you feel about the way you dress or about not being able to play with toys of your choice?” Rahil went on ranting.

“I guess it is okay.” The boy answered.

“That is resignation. Never do that again. Don’t take things for what they are or just because other people tell you that they are right in their place and you are wrong. See for yourself because knowledge is born out of seeing, out of human experience firstly.” Rahil calmed himself relieving a long drawn breath with a short sigh. That gave Arnab a chance to interrupt his sermon.

“Don’t you think it is a little too dark for a kid like him?” he asked Rahil who did not follow through with an answer but rose up from his place and greeted Arnab and the girl with one final smile that symbolized his parting. He dragged the chair out of his way and without saying a word after that, he trotted out of the canteen and back into the college campus towards the college foyer. He exited out through the college gate and crossed the road to enter the known locality of Satya Niketan, his own home. At the mouth of the road close on the side of the small police booth he spotted the seniors from the debating society sitting on the side of the pavement talking among each other. He decided to approach them and ask for results and with hesitant steps, he went up to them. One of them recognized his face and his person and called him:

“Your name is Rahil, right? Some speech you gave man.” He commented and called him into the crowd. He went to them and asked:

“What about my result? Am I selected?”

“You are toh surely selected. Don’t worry about your result. I thought by the competition you just go you should have figured that out by now. You’re some communist I tell you.” Another one from the crowd replied. He had long and thick dark hair flowing down his face like a fountain, silhouetting his eyes which were covered with round glasses and a thin frame. He had a fair complexion and he seemed to be the leader of the group. He looked at his eyes which were locked with mystery, still glowing with life and beauty yet a beauty that could not be felt and life that could not be lived. He seemed a very decent fellow with his calm beatnik style and his loose cotton trousers but there was still an air of demanding superiority in him that Rahil pegged under the difference of age.

“Yes, well I was a former anarchist but seeing as it led me nowhere, I moved into similar doctrines of Far-Left communism. What about you? Do you have any such affiliations.” He asked them with unreserved naïveté.

“Well, we are big-time Leftists.” mentioned the one with the long hair and the beatnik trousers gazing far into the distance as he spoke his words.

“His mother studied at JNU and was active there in politics.” The other bloke answered subsequently, his face dark and Rahil detected a tone of South Indian accent in his voice. On further conversation, it was revealed that he was from Kerala and that he lived in the college hostel, a privilege that Rahil was denied during admissions. His name was Hesiod, like the Greek poet and it was difficult to lose the humor for Rahil apposite to such a name as he had never heard it in the Indian context before. This was a young man who had the characters of his name. The other person and the supposed leader of the crew was Siddharth and he too bore the placid and pacifist characters of his name as well. It was decided somewhere in their long concourse which ranged from ideological discussions about the merits of Leninism and the demerits of Maoism to which Rahil refuted by citing the influence of Mao’s cultural revolution of French intellectuals like Irigaray and Sartre. He saw two of his roommates pass him by making him turn his gaze towards them and once breaking his long conversation as another of his roommate passed him whose face turned backwards to see him and he was appalled by the company of faces with cigarettes in their mouths that Rahil entertained. Rahil for one did not matter the smoking and he did not matter smoking himself although he never fully committed himself to the habit of smoking cigarettes. He was asked once if he smokes or smokes up to which he replied that he sniffs and when asked if he was into narcotics, he replied that he sniffed ether to which they cringed and told him it was heavy stuff to get high with. Another debate followed about whether ether actually gets one high like opiates or marijuana, or just numbs and dulls the senses to create an altered state of consciousness. When he thought that the talk would not end soon, he dropped out from between to return to his room as he started to feel a strong gastronomic urge the kind he was akin to as a result of his disturbed eating habits.

He slid through people and jogged along narrow lanes turned right to the small knee length gate guarding the stairs to his accommodation, turned it open and ascended the fight of concrete dust-ridden stairs. He went straight to his room and into the toilet to relieve himself but he was not at all relieved when he found out that there was acute water shortage due to which even the routine of toilet had to be carried out with judicious and meticulous care.

As the shining sun reverted into the deep folds of the sky and the evening twilight began to descend heavily over the streets of Satya Niketan, Rahil felt a futile need to stay indoors and so with the rest of them inside, Rahil started a brief conversation about life in college and the antics of one another. His conversation was joined by his compatriot Ranjan, Akshay and Mahendra, a young short statured boy who had so much faith in his God Hanuman he could move a mountain in his mind if he prayed to his God. Rahil found him very introvert and deduced it to be a progression of his faith. Rahil hated the fact that people let something as inherent and spiritual as faith take over their outer self which is to exist in a social space free from deep-seated dogmas that the self needs to keep an ethical base.

Rajat was also quite the introvert but he still had a coping mechanism if someone prodded his shy nature. He would retort with sharp rebukes and slangs and Rahil decided that he would be the psychologist to cure this faulty coping mechanism in him.

Rahil and his two minions, Akshay and Ranjan sat on the bed opposite to which Rajat had been sitting and started conversation with short general topics leaping from one to another and then to a different one just to make him comfortable in the act of opening up with the help of words. It was a thoroughly planned operation that Rahil was to perform on Rajat; an operation of the psyche but it was different from an actual operation as the patient would feel much more pain than felt normally in a case of physical amputation or any other form of surgery and the pain would persist and linger as long as the patient refrained from coming to terms with his faults. In that sense, it was less of an operation and more of an interrogation that Rajat would be soon subjected to. Rahil started with a dose of mild anesthesia or a form of drug used by veteran interrogators to keep from going the patient into shock or unconsciousness so that he would bear the full magnitude of the torture. He would not feel the pain yet but have a slight sensation of an impending danger and partially realize the peril of a tidal wave that would soon bank on the uneven cove of his mind. Still his mind felt comfortable and was calm as Rahil began to probe him with questions, cases and started to create a form that was ready to strangle Rajat for his apish ignorance. Rahil also played a key on the harp of mass psychology by placing two friendly figures as adjuring authorities that would preside over the whole informal debate as the informal authority though they would just mimic the reactions of Rahil on a more centralistic and less characteristic manner as they were themselves bemused by Rahil and the impressions of his high-handed thoughts and he served as a figure similar to a Christian missionary who has developed prominent reputation out of his sophistry among the barbaric word and now seeks to further his empire based on the muddled trust the civilized barbarians have towards him. He would use their trust as the mirror for reflection of other species like that of Rajat who somehow had a coping mechanism and an attempt of harshly shoving facts down their throats was needed in order for them to be civilized. The other two friends just nodded along the conversation as the needle of the injection gouged his skin finely without even him noticing it and injecting the drug slowly with the push of the piston that contained the poison.

The poison soon started to bother the other guy and he started to shift and shudder out of failing strength and the terror that gathered up in mind owing to the loss of relative ego at a moment he had not anticipated. It was drinking a punch spiked with LSD and not knowing the drink was adulterated until the very moment the hallucinations take your mind by force and you do not feel liberated or inebriated; you feel terrified and at times terminal. This stage was only rendered possible by the other two external factors who presided between the argument and served as a falsely statute and a gradation for Rajat to measure his ego on.

However, Akshay and Ranjan had their gradation synchronized with the foot pound second standards as opposed to Rajat who came from an area of the meter kilogram second standards. The bottle now was soon to be popped and the orgasmic flow of the champagne was soon to take its natural course.

His conversation was like an unending spiral that sent him in a state of trance-suspension and bit by bit Rahil gained access into the soul of Rajat that guarded all his justification of religion and code of conduct. This was a room that Rahil not only wished to penetrate but also wanted to incinerate and not just in his case but he wanted to incinerate that chamber of the mind that judged between the right and the wrong because no decision or no thought or no act can ever be wrong looking at the grand justification of things. He wanted to see their world torn apart, lit by bright and high flames of fire that charred their ignorant bodies so that they would rise anew from their ashes, brighter and better like a phoenix each time it burns. There were moments in the interim of the speech where Rahil went to such radical measures that even broke the boundaries of the friends that presided over the matter. Some concepts of life that he had mentioned even to them seemed absurd as thought from their respective religious perspective. At no point did Rahil make an attempt to justify his own religion, a religion that was handed over to him by birth not that he actually followed it now when he had the freedom to be a social atheist.

Suddenly he coping mechanism started to rile up and phallic patriarchal slangs were flouted on the face of Rahil by Rajat.

“Look into my eyes and say the same words again. And then tell me, still looking eye to eye the need for using such words. I am not condemning the use of slangs. Hell, I use slangs on a daily basis like a badass motherfucker but I do not use slangs when they make me look like an idiot.” stated Rahil, looking Rahil through the strands of his hair.

The opponent accepting his true stance and admitted that the utterance of the slang by way of his own logic did pose a shadow of idiocy out of the manifold nature that his actual posture contained.

“And you know how easily we are stereotyped as idiots.” Rajan interjected in the middle breaking the long flow that Rahil had so laboriously fashioned out of immaculate and titanic structures of cases made out of simple collection of words.

‘What do you mean by ‘we’?” Rajat asked questioningly.

“You are from Jharkhand which was a part of Bihar previously and still the natives of Jharkhand are known as Biharis. Have you ever felt the stinging whipping end of that term used to mock you and have you ever had a culture that you were born in defamed by others who are better than you just because they were born in a better place? But you cannot fight with them because you do not have the means. They have everything, progress- they have it and we do not. So we cannot speak on that matter. Culture- theirs is a refined and progressive culture while ours is still a culture of backwardness and rapes. Urbanization- most of Indian states have economic capitals while we being larger in area and span still do not have a viable growing city. We have the largest stretch of farms but the farmer is the weakest in our state due to the kind of laws that prevail there and the justice that is served there. Our state is just one big cesspool and everyone coming out is a cockroach, a fiend, a criminal. The gambling fools are rich and the working masses are poor.” Ranjan went on with his elocution passionately until Rahil withheld his long speech.

“Actually that is true in the case of most of the world. And that is because the presence of religion in the modern world.” He said.

“Whatever. I never felt such sectarianism in my life and I never hope to.” Rajat retorted and rebutted the point but the fact contained in that point had lingered in his mind for a moment or two.

In this way, though one would think problems would arise between each other, the problems actually started to subside and gradually wear off like a healing disease and the coordination and mutual understanding and support between each other increased in their dark as well as in their light times. They had common problems and most of these problems arose out of a lack for something-lack of water, lack of food, lack of money, lack of respect, lack of friends, lack of attention and various other deficiencies that led to complaint which they tried to solve by tending to the lacks of each other and so at least the lack of attention and respect were rightly dealt with.

In the days to come Rahil rode full sail over the untiring seas academic rigor as the classes started to grow tense and the subjects grew with the addition of courses like sciences, mathematics and his arch-nemesis- business. These were fields of discipline that were newly introduced into the nouvelle system of the four year program at the cost of diluting the main subjects of English literature from the traditional four papers all through the duration of three years down to two papers in the four years of study so the end result would be twelve papers in the discipline subject but with the addition of an extra year for courses that are optional in the rest of world. But what happens in the rest of the world is butt-ways backwards in India right from politics down to policies in education. But since the rest of the students had the robotic tendency to obey and follow, nobody sought to raise their voice injustice done towards the intellect of the students. Rahil had a cause but something in him did not stir the necessary rebellion that would enable him to openly repudiate the firmness of the administration that the students were also in support of the four year program out of their own will. In the time that he had spent with the college students, with his peers and with the other residents of his accommodation who were practically his roommates, he had assessed the necessary grounds needed to incite them to rebellion against the just cause. He even sensed a discontent relating to the issue among the some of the teachers who openly criticized the randomness and the haste with which the system was launched.

By the time, his involvement with the debating society grew stronger and his Marxist temperaments earned him a wide repute among the elites of the college as well who were thinkers just like him but unlike him they were passive non-actors. Meanwhile, the fire of rebellion inside Rahil was burning brighter and brighter and he felt the need for a release. He discoursed heavily with the teachers on Marxist utopianisms and the possibility of such a utopia citing Leninist Soviet union as an example to which the teacher who taught him the foundation course of Indian history and culture took a feminist stance and took shelter behind the points of sexual politics among the Bolsheviks. Rahil then brought out personalities such as Rosa Luxemburg to her standoffish stance towards the most sacred aspect of communism which was equality. They extended their arguments beyond time in medias res. At one such discussion on the right end of the corridor he was having with the female professor who taught him Indian history and culture, he saw three mature lads coming from the stairs of the far end of the corridor. Their posture was dirty and ragged and so nothing in them was attention seeking at the first glimpse. They moved closer and closer to Rahil and even then he did not pay any attention. Then they suddenly seized the attention of the teacher and laid the bricks of introduction. They were from All India Students Association and they were collecting funds from the teachers for their movement against the four year program from the students. The teacher broke her undivided attention with which she heard Rahil and turned her dark brown and educated eyes towards the people who now stood in frame, their existence unknown to Rahil.

She looked at them and a smile of familiarity came over her face.

“You’re not that big at DU, are you?” she asked.

“We are a small student organization and we are fairly new compared to these party backed student unions but we’re getting there. Still, we have consecutively won all the seats in JNU.” One of them, a boy with an unkempt beard and dark face answered. His beard and his face had a Mexican ethnicity to it.

“Well, you see when I was in JNU, I paid my dues by helping a friend of mine contest the elections and she stood of AISA there and I helped her there.” The teacher said, reluctant to show her generosity.

“Well, you see this is different. We are raising money here for a cause and that cause is the righteous cause of preserving the sanctity of education.” He mentioned with his dark eyes darting at the professor. Still the professor was hesitant about her decision and all that she could afford to give them was best wishes and her part of luck in their struggle. One of them handed Rahil their flier which mentioned some of their accolades on both student-based as well as social issues which included the Delhi rape case and the Muslim minority and Dalit minority witch-hunting cases. Rahil saw that they were a real Marxist cult that was willing to fight for a cause and this cause was none other than the cause of education and a cause that was personal to him as well.

He saw that there was a call for protest in two days but the date of the protest overlapped with the date of the Hindi dramatics society and Rahil though the former to be more constructive and dearer to him than the latter after pondering well enough over both the sides. He was biased towards protesting for two reasons-one being that he was hesitant to audition for the Hindi dramatics society as his Hindi was different from the Hindi used in the Northern terrains and accepted as the generalized version and the other being that appearing for the protest gave him an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. Being a romantic Leftist, he strongly believed that the effort of his thin shoulders would push the gears of change to their places and set in motion the inevitable mechanism that would change the existing flawed and corrupted program and restore the former better system to its place. The other was the justification of his growing notoriety as a well-known rebel and it was the perfect opportunity to cease and create a rebellion. Only he needed more instigators. Firstly he turned to peers from English literature most of who declined his offer although it was not made as one. They were hesitant to go toe to toe with the authority and lacked the ferocious fearlessness that possessed. He saw in them the antic of a domesticate dog or as the revolutionary leader of the Black Power movement Malcolm X would call ‘Uncle Tom negroes’ while they saw in him what Woody Allen describes in his movie as ‘one of those guys with saliva dripping out his mouth who wanders into a cafeteria with a shopping bag, screaming about socialism.’ And they were not wrong on their part at portraying him in that way as the human mind takes from characters only flashes of perception out of which something could be formed leaving out the iceberg of the rest.

He did not mind their insistence to pacifism on his insistence to direct action. Disheartened, he went to his room and asked his roommates if they would accompany him to the protest and be with him with body and mind, present as participants and not just occupants. Chandan, the leader of the band, raised his Neanderthal hand and comforted Rahil that he would gather all of them with him and they would all go and protest and the opportunity was not one to lose and in some manner it was also a result of the constant attempt at conviction made by Rahil to commit them also to the cause of rebellion albeit they were too busy in their catacomb lives to dedicate their abilities to the extent that Rahil sought to dedicate. Ronel had also agreed along with Akshay, Aman, Karan and Rajat who had recently been enlightened and cognitively expanded owing to the unorthodox methods of Rahil.

On mentioning the company to his friend Riship whom he met sometime in the evening before the day of the protest, he changed the topic asking the result of the auditions for the college magazine and how had he fared. The evening air was cool as merciful after the lashings of the tepid hotness of the afternoon and people moved about him in different clothes all of which Rahil loathed, the air, the weather and the people and now only one thing mattered to him and it was revolt. He looked in the eyes of his blissful friend to measure his bliss while the question still hung waiting to be answered.

-On the Edge of Civilization-

I have lived life wrongly. I lived in a world of ecstasy; in a world where people are judged by the clothes they wear. I have lived in a society of bigots; bigots who won’t in any way are willing to admit that they live in a world so befouled by senseless achievements, so stagnated in the filth of what they perceive as sustainable development, in a world so rotten by the decaying corpses of dead aspirations and a world burning in the fire of greed, come about by the loss of faith in the minds of the people and the taking over of money and power in its place. Yes, they have forgotten their Gods, damned their religions and became the instruments of evil. Yet they have cloaked themselves with false imagery of God. They seem to think that they respect God, that the God is the very reason for their existence, and that they bow their heads to show that they fear God’s might but in reality, they bow for naught but their own pleasures, their own self interests. The people in the society bow their heads as a bribe to God to hear their prayers and heed them. They never cease, from their pathetic excuse of a life, to take a moment out, and realize for once, what the ideals of religion truly are. Yes, their lives are pathetic. The people seem to think their lives are too different than the dogs and the beasts that roam the Earth without purpose when in truth they are the dogs, they are the beasts because they have no purpose, because they have let their purpose been taken over by something as imprudent and shallow as money.

I cast myself away from the society, not because I’m too weak for it, but because I’m too strong for it. If I get on my terms with them, they will come to the point of extinction. If I so much as reveal my ideals to them, my way of life to them, my philosophies to them, their heads will eviscerate from their bodies and they will die a painful death. They will watch in horror, as their brain breaks out from their skull, trickles down like red lava from their face and drop by drop meet the ground on which they stand. Their minds will erupt like a volcanic explosion because my knowledge and my intellect is too great a power for them to wield. The society has made itself weak, pregnable to degeneration. They have focused so hard on surviving that they have forgotten the meaning of living. And now it is all that they’re good for, to survive, like rats and cockroaches. They have, against all odds of nature, actually reversed the dogma and took themselves years back on the path to evolution. They did so by enslaving themselves voluntarily under the lust for power, and the craving for what they believe to be happiness. They see happiness in fine houses, hotel dinners, vacations to exotic retreats, clothing of the most fashionable trends, and most of all, to have power over other men. This is what they perceive happiness as, nothing more and nothing less.

Yes, I am a man who wears ordinary clothes no different from a street vendor, a bus driver or a servant but my back is firm and straight in these clothes. Yes, I wear old and worn out sandals on my feet but I walk on my feet with those sandals while the people around me walk on their knees even though they have the most expensive and most exclusive shoes on their feet. But I am as happy in my ordinary clothes and my worn out sandals as any man in a suit and Italian boots will never be. People think just because I threw my future away and I don’t care about power, don’t care about money that I am weak when au contraire I am stronger than the whole society. While the whole society is just a slave to the much bigger system, I mock the system. The system hates me; it despises my freedom and my independence. It wants me to be a slave under him like the rest of the people in the society. That is why it uses society as an instrument to hurt me, to insult me, to besmirch my wise philosophies, to diminish and slay my morale. It uses the people I love the most, people I trust to convince me psychologically that I am weak, that I am going in the wrong direction. Sometimes the system succeeds in breaking me and these are times I feel sad. But my feud with the system is not just a battle; it’s a never ending war. It is never-ending because neither will the system die nor I. My body may wither after some years but it is said that a man actually dies twice. Once is when his soul leaves his body and the other is when his name is said for the last time in the world. The death of the latter kind will never happen to me. I do not care if I fall as long as there is someone else to pick up the flag and keep the fight going on.

The society is a curse on the world, to the other living beings of the world and upon itself. It is so consumed by greed and hedonism that it destroys the world it’s in, the other beings around it and in this manner, they also destroy themselves. This is the world I live in, where right and wrong are just words of mouth. Potentially, the society is starkly wrong. It is everything the dictionary defines as evil and malicious. The people in the society come under the definition of scavengers, who snatch what they can get out of the little miserable lives they have and then die trying to give their sons a better future. They do not know that the only thing they are giving to their sons is a disease, because living in the society, in itself is a disease, a disease of which I am cured. I may suffer from ailments like cough and cold every now and then but I thank heavens that I am free from the disease that plagues all men and women. This is not supposed to be the state. It has become the state because you let it be. You let yourselves be shacked like sub-humans and gave away, your minds away, your thoughts away, your dreams away, your lives away to cross the finish line in the race of life. What, in the end, was the purpose of this race? Why did you choose to run when you could have walked, wandered off and discovered the greener pastures of life, the unknown terrains filled with breathtaking and momentous secrets, mystifying secrets that would have teased the innate thirst for knowledge in humans? What made the society run like animal right from the instant each of them took birth in this world? It’s because society is full of animals. No matter how much it evolves, it will always be animalistic, gory. It will never come to my expectations. The society is so weak because it lives in a contradiction. Mankind thinks they are the most powerful beings on Earth when they are clearly the most degenerative and self-damaging. It is this contradiction that makes mankind so weak. They fail to accept their shortcomings.

From a moment a child is born, he is taught that he can have anything in the world if he wishes so. This promise, which is unconditional to him at the beginning, becomes conditional as he grows. He is promised to have all the pleasures of a fine living if he works hard enough for it. It is in this stage that he starts to compromise on whatever he can get. If not the finest grades, one step down, if not the finest education, one step down. Then, the status quo changes and he is forced to work hard because if he doesn’t, he cannot even get the bare minimum. And after it’s too late, he realizes that he has become just another hamster in a wheel, a wheel which he has to run in for life and after his death, his children will take up his place. He realizes that he is just another cog in the machinery of the system. Yes, you are dominated by the evil of system. But it is not a devil with a face, or even a form. The devil of system is a cipher. We created this demon. We created him by organizing ourselves structurally. We humans lost faith in chaos, forgetting the fact that it was chaos in the first place that created the wonder of Universe and in it our world, Earth. There was no system involved in the creation of universe. It was just a matter of chance. To render this demon to an end, we have to leave everything to chance and stop the madness that the society calls ‘sophistication’. But the society, the civilization or mankind is too engulfed by mindless bliss to understand de facto. We keep guards and appoint ministers to defend humanity but as the old Latin proverb goes Quis Custodiet ipsos custodies meaning who will guard the guards? The problem lies in human obsession with power and it will end when mankind will see power for the last time. This will be the power that decimates mankind leaving no survivors whatsoever.

I am the prophet of mankind. I have made my prophecy and given my solution. It is on their best interest should they choose to prevail or die in their ignorance and vanity. The society has always been vain. It has always made the wrong choice, glorifying the wrong kind of people and giving power to the wrong kind of ideology. Mankind still thinks it is developing, gaining more power, becoming more and more prosperous and happy. I say to the mankind, “Rats, live you bliss for your time is near!” I won’t break the bubble of their unconsciousness for I would seem profoundly rude in doing so. As Dostoevsky said, ‘Let the world go to hell, I’ll have my cup of tea’. I don’t have hopes for the survival of the society. I don’t have fears or care for the calamity that it faces. It has failed to rise to something good and now it will sink into the ground just because it couldn’t adapt itself to the freedom of the skies, it couldn’t adapt and grow wings to save itself from the order of the system. I have. Mankind doesn’t know how to live in freedom. If we are given freedom, we fight among each other and then equivocate for order. We can’t live in both freedom and harmony. For harmony, we need discipline and discipline is an arrested freedom. And an arrested freedom is the worst kind of slavery. And that is what humankind is going through right now. They are enslaved in the worst of forms. They actually think they are free when it is imminent their hands are tied by fate, by order, by discipline. Chaos has no place in their lives. Chaos is how I live. Anarchy is how I live. Anarchy doesn’t mean violence of the highest form. Anarchy means tranquility of the highest form. And when one lives in tranquility, it gives him chance to propagate his true self and enlighten his soul through philosophy, literature, ethics, religion and sociology among other things. These are subjects mankind never chose to invest in deeply. It always used ‘an easy way around’. It used scientific technology for its development without having the right intellect to handle technology. This ignorance proved technology to be a complete blunder rather than a boon.

In my ordinary clothes and old worn out sandals, I shall sit on an old wooden armchair, flex my legs a little, calmly put my hands behind my back and take my place on the edge of the cliff. This is the cliff from which mankind will take the leap. Where? Will it take the leap to an even higher form of intelligence? It would have if mankind showed intelligence in the first place. But all it has shown is tomfoolery. Contrary to what the popular belief is, the world is not cruel, it is mankind that has made the world this way. We have ourselves to blame. You have your society to blame but I don’t. I am cast astray from it. I have been what society would call ‘ambitionless’ because my only goal was to seek knowledge without seeking its fruits. I am also called ‘directionless’ because I fail to see through the eyes of the shackled society. They call me an ‘outlaw’ for I fail to see the point of the endless laws, guidelines and rules that dictate what I have to do and what I don’t have to. They called me ‘deranged’ as I live in a world of my own free from the vice and profligacy of mankind. I am none of those things yet I am all of those things. But what I am or am not is not in question where I stand because I stand at the tip of the cliff. This is the moment of judgment of mankind, the moment of truth. Naturally, humans would choose to lie; even at this stage, as lying is innate in human character. So their judgment is done. This is a not done by a jury and I have no part in it. I am not the judge, the jury, the prosecutor, the appellant or the executioner. If I was anything, I was a partner in crime, when I was lost in the tribe of humanity. But now I have found a way out of it and by doing so, I have saved myself. This is my biography. I am a man standing on the edge of civilization whereas others have taken the leap and have fallen to the endless ever darkening abyss. I have wings of freedom and even though I had no tutor of flight or a launch pad, I have learned to fly and I fly away-

The next day called for action since the very start as the fresh winds of changed ace blew over the city none of which he felt as he slept in his dystopian embryonic bunker. Living in that place was like living in a nightmare of oedipal tragedy. He woke up on time as he had set the alarm for the day and woke up freshly. Since the protest was to start in the middle of the day, he chose to attend his classes that fell under the bracket of the morning schedule and then skip the rest of the classes to participate in the protest. He went to the college and the first lecture was that of the thin stern professor bearing the plastered face of Virginia Woolf. He sat throughout the lecture with thorough patience paying processing each of her word in his own sense in order to memorize the base of her lectures. The text in discussion was the stories of R.K Narayanan who gave to India its very own Tom Sawyer though in a very different way. Still, comparables could be drawn between them if one forced the need and imposed categories of similarity but that would be testing the amicability of literature to its limits. He would not be as brutal to literature to produce his ends as James Joyce or Vladimir Nabokov.

His attention was distracted when his mind conjured these thoughts from the sharp feminine voice that demanded his concentration. He ran the horses of his mind to a different course altogether splicing from the discussion ensuing in the class and escaping into fancy of his mind. The world of the classroom and the professor was still tuned in the same way as before and only the method of look was changed. The air was still unsettling and the ambience was still restless. The professor was still annoying with her insistence on punctuality and producing texts on one’s own in class. Failure to comply would lead to expulsion of the student from the lecture of that day. She castrated both men and women with her stare like the Freudian medusa and took no survivors. It was a long lingering time between the start of her lecture and the finish over which the hands of the clock along with the body melted over a table kept under the bright sun and over the hot melting sand of the endless desert. He did not just see it in a portrait, he felt it- the persistence of memory.

The next period was that of Miss Latha who taught the unimportant foundation course of language, literature and culture. In all the stretch of time and to flow through it, he had overlooked that in fact the professor who gave her lecture before Miss Latha took two periods consecutively which accounted for the extended duration of her visit the repercussions of which he thought to be the madness in his own mind. He looked at the watch and the time asked him to bail from the middle of the class to attend the protest. He asked one of his friends again to accompany him who lived in the hostel and this time he accepted his offer. Another friend wanted to accompany him but did not as it meant bailing out from the middle of an ongoing class, a feat for which he was too feeble. The other friend was resolved and resolute. His name was Abhyuday and he was charmed by the personality that Rahil reflected. He saw in him what he did not see in any other of his peers. Along with the will to do things, he also saw the mature image of a Bohemian philosopher in him. He was an all-knowing wise character for him who surpassed all the faculties that he possessed. Hence, in due time that he spent with Rahil, he was acclimated by his warmth and was used to following him in both wise as well as unwise matters. And thus his company grew by one. Before the act of revolt an act of domestic rebellion awaited them. The teacher started the roll-call in which Rahil and Abhyuday had already marked themselves present. Rahil had thought that he would ask her permission to go for the event and she, being of open mind would permit him without cancelling his name from the attendance sheet.

He asked for time from his friend who stated that it was five minutes to ten. They had to leave now or the bus leaving for the arts faculty in the North Campus which was the venue for the protest. Finally, feeling the need of things tighten his crotch, he stood up from his seat followed by his friend who lagged behind him as he went towards Miss Latha and confronted her with a request.

“Excuse me, ma’am. We want to leave for an event by your permission.” He asked very politely though he sensed the tension that bested the face of the teacher.

“Where exactly are you going? What is this event and is it official?” she asked him with prying dark eyes that pierced all his diplomacy and looked right into his throwing flammable fluid over the embers of his heart burning with rebellion.

“Well, it is a protest event organized by a students’ organization against the four year program.” He stated directly.

“I certainly cannot allow you, as a part of this educational establishment to willingly go and agitate against the very institution which you represent as much as I do as an instructor.” She stated.

“I assert my will to go.” He stated in reply, politely but firmly.

“Then I’ll have to cancel your attendance as you are going of your own accord.” She replied, taking the pen and the attendance sheet thrown to one side of the table back into his hand and searching for the two names, that of his and that of his friend’s to cut off from the attendance list of that day.

“Be so kind as to do what you please.” He muttered underneath his breath while she asked for his roll number which he pointed out very naturally and willingly without a nerve of anger showing on his face. It was not that he was hiding or repressing his anger; there was no anger at all. All he felt that time was a bit disturbed as things came to such an abrupt end. Nevertheless he had his friend who made things all the more comfortable for him and he had more friends to find who would accompany him to the North Campus. He started walking out of the college gate and towards the next college in line which as Ram Lal Anand College where the bus was parked that would take them to North Campus. He saw the bus from which two stranger figures called to him.

“Have you come here to join the protest against FYUP?” He asked the duo who walked like desperado under the heat of the broad sunlight.

“Yes” Abhyuday eked in reply.

“Come aboard then.” He said and Rahil and Abhyuday climbed into the bus with cushion seats but still lacking a few luxuries such as a proper sense of cleanliness. Then the strange figure added “Are any of your friends coming along then?”

He was a very friendly and easily likeably person. On further conversation with him, the two found out that he was a student at the Ram Lal Anand College and was pursuing a degree in journalism and media. His voice was mellowed down and very pleasant even though one could tell that he made no such attempt to do so and he also had a very pleasing smile on his face even when he could clearly see that there were barely seven to eight passengers in the car going for the protest. Their motive was to fill that car.

“If we manage to fill this bus up, we’ll raise the roof off arts campus, I assure you.” He reassured and Rahil was all for it. He felt an angst, in all proper sense of word about the event that lay at hand, and lay close to him , laid by him like a mistress that he owner or who owned him. He sat in the bus thinking about the protest but not actually about his physical presence there. He thought of the loud slogans, the bustle of the people, red flags flying high with banners held across the summer air bodies wet with sweat and agitation. Sitting in the empty bus with his friends staring out of the window thinking about their mundane lives, Rahil painted a picture in his mind that leaped off the canvas of his mind and with animate imagination took the shape of a desire made him restless and obsessively active for action. He saw the faces of his friends and they saw his. Seeing his face, they were lost in the depth of his eyes and only broke the invisible engagement of glances when Rahil got up from his seat to call his roommates who had promised to join him in all their fervor. He got off the bus and crossed the road to stand on the opposite side to the gate of Ram Lal Anand College on the road that overlooked another road which went into the posh Anand Niketan locality.

At first he called he trusted friend Ranjan.

“Hey, where are you? We are waiting for you in front of your college by the gate. When are you coming out?” Rahil asked him cupping his hands over the phone as his ears sweltered being pressed too tightly against the flat touchpad screen of the mobile phone.

“They’re here now. I mean, you’re here now. But I have an important class in just five minutes. So, it’s very hard for me to be able to make it there.” his friend answered and at that sudden moment he was not his friend anymore.

“Hey listen. Get rid of your classes because this is an important deal right here. Are you out of your mind to still be attending classes when we have a live chance in our hands to completely get rid of this stupid system?” He replied with furrowing anger that went in invisible waves from his phone to his friend’s.

“Look, that is all well and fine but this class is important. The teacher…he….he will not take this class if I miss it. Lookit, I really need to go now so…” and he hung up from his side without even finishing his side and Rahil grew so furious that he felt like throwing his phone to the ground and smashing it into a million pieces. He breathed out a deep sigh and the resultant inhalation of fresh breath rejuvenated his composure and with a calm mind, he phoned the other friend Chandan who had so valiantly volunteered for the cause of rightful education.

“Hello” the voice of Chandan blared from the other end confidently.

“Are you coming or not?” Rahil asked quite straightly showing no sequestration.

“That’s a weird question for you to ask as of this moment when I told you yesterday that I would be there with you. So you either doubt your correctness or you doubt my commitment for the latter, I should let you know that I would feel very offended.” Chandan replied with whirring fancy.

“Yes, I doubt your commitment so will you please come here to notify your offense to me physically so that I could rid myself of doubts regarding your promise.” Rahil replied with subtle insult and part black humor.

“Don’t worry. We are at the PG getting ready. The whole bunch is here. We’ll meet you in five.” He said and then hung up.

Rahil was put to a greater level of comfort now knowing that people that he had managed to amass would be by his side doing something that was actually for their own benefit. In this way, he was helping them help themselves.

-this is how changes are made. A human chain that may not share the same intensity for a cause but still determines to dedicate to it. People come and they join hands, just like they do in prayer. Addendum addenda... Soon very soon, a change is going to come and I believe it well enough to strive and leap towards it; stride towards it. It is not a change from one thing to the other. No, it is a need that ought to be satisfied, an urge to be dealt with. This urge stems from the privilege of education that has been ripped apart from our chests as we entered into this fine institute of higher learning. The contract has been breached and now the consequences shall befall the authorities. Stop us with whatever petty barricades you have and we shall break them. Taunt us with the authority of your dirty uniforms sodden with guilt and corruption and we shall spit on it for it reeks with the foul scent of injustice. That which has been going for so long now will change today. In me…possibly also in the space around me but at the primacy of it, in me and I shall watch, observe, immerse, subjectively objectively this flux from one end on to the other. I shall experience it best me in all ways and manner. The cards in our hands are blank but only because the deck has been rigged. So we flung to take yours, because you have cheated us, fooled us, bamboozled us with your antics. It is time for us to harvest the crops you have sown in your land. Who are we but landless laborers doing our menial labor for a daily wage but do not think for one second that we will cut down the field and the harvest that it has gifted and put it at your feet as we take a fifth of it for our hungry hundreds while you and your wife feed on the whole crop. No, we would rather feast upon the crops and satiate our thirst the wine of your blood than award you with our hard efforts just because you possess the power over the lands-

He saw a hand wave from the opposite side of the road where the bus stood which called him there. He crossed the road and went to the smiling boy. His name was Shashi and he had been an activist in the All India Students Association close to a year. There was little he knew about theoretical Marxism which Rahil instantly found out when he began to avoid intelligent conversations of aspects of communism and took to personal accounts of the times he had spent with the mining and the farming communities of various parts of North and Central India and of his work with the laborers which had gained him firsthand experience of the plight of the oppressed. At a point, he admitted that he had o read a lot more about Marxism to gain a much better standing among the association. It was a knowledge that Rahil possessed qualitatively if not quantitatively.

In all his conversation, both of them forgot about the time and it was Shashi who pointed out the fact to Rahil. He immediately phoned his friend Chandan and asked him to arrive near Ram Lal Anand College immediately to which Chandan replied with assurance though there was a tome of reluctance somewhere in between that bothered him and still kept him in the dark about his sincerity.

He stood right by the bus talking to Shashi who shared his experiences with joviality and there was a bond between them that Rahil instantly understood although he could not yet give a name to it. It was something though, something that the master of words had failed to name, the giver of terms or so he thought of himself. He did not lose in his own consciousness as was the case with most of his conversations with his friends. Shashi kept him balanced between the inside and the outside world quite well enough and this was perhaps the first time that Rahil experienced such completeness of the world, within him and around him that he had never felt before in his entire life. The moments bridged the two worlds together. Shashi broke their talk that Rahil enjoyed very much and asked him when the others he had called would arrive. Rahil looked afar both ends of the road and they were nowhere to be seen, nowhere to be traced. He called them again and got the reply from them that they were on their way and so he waited for a longer while.

Finally he saw figures, multiple of guys resembling his roommates and was glad to find that the resemblance was identical. He approached them as they him and then both stopped at a point somewhere in the middle. Rahil pointed towards the bus to which they turned their gaze all at once as if on a cue.

“Travel with royalty, eh? I thought you were going to take us by the metro.” Aman replied satirically punching the beating chest of Rahil ever so gentle affection.

“Let’s raise hell then.” Rahil replied with vibrancy, looking at all of their faces though they did not reciprocate what he felt. He saw this and then his gaze turned to the black road under his feet as he left it behind on his trail towards the bus because that was all that mattered. Even with the guys that Rahil had brought, the bus was only half filled and there was much space left. Shashi and another ragged gentleman who did not introduce himself to Rahil out of some reason tried to convince the students who passed by in and out of the college gate to collocate with them only temporarily to the demonstration as it was for their very cause the ignorant dormant masses refused to cooperate and it was left to the shoulders of these few revolutionaries aboard the bus to light the torch of change that would then illuminate the lives of these dormant masses who had grown so akin to darkness. The other gentleman was by no definition a gentleman and the reference to the person as a gentleman was a mere play at irony as he was more similar to the hobo who had confronted his history teacher during their dialogue.

“All aboard” cried Shashi for the last time as the bus rolled to a start and engine roared to go. Rahil was seated with at the side of his friend from his course while his roommates grouped in pairs and sat at various places in the bus. For them, it was a field trip that brought entertainment only because they looked at it with such imprudence. He saw that the idea of fighting for their rights meant little to them and all that caught their fancy was the trip. He began to grow disillusioned now, not at his presence but at theirs and thought whether bringing them along for an issue that he was so seriously agitated about a grievous mistake. The bus showed them sceneries they had never seen before. In its primal stage it followed the obvious track till hotel Hyatt and then it went into the undiscovered ends of the animate and contaminated concrete jungle. The bus took turns but still led nowhere and kept on traveling. On asking Shashi, he replied that a lot of distance was still to be covered as they crossed the South end of Delhi and went into the older sections of the city.

The bus took a long route of road to a point where getting via the metro would spare them a lot of time but in an event such as this, an appearance was to be made and a boom, a bang and the blowing of the bugle was to be heard. When they reached the constricted roads of the civil lines and by that time close to an hour was spent inside the bus, the metal contraption once again fell slave to the rules of the road and was stuck in a traffic jam. These were minor complicacies and exponents that Rahil had not anticipated in his romantic construction of the grandiose event and the battle of righteousness. He never for once thought that a problem so mundane such as a regular traffic jam could postpone him from his destined crusade in he had to shed blood or draw blood.

Very tardily the bus moved being a part of a much bigger chain of motorized quadrupeds and velocipedes, all of their bodies merged to form one big mechanical anthropoid centipede making its way slowly filled with the trenchant poison of pollution and population in its mandibles. Slowly after passing through the vise of the traffic, certain colleges came to be visible. He first one among them was the Indraprastha College for women. And then for miles on end, no other college was seen or sensed as the college that had the promise of being in vicinity to North Campus was actually farther away from it and there was still, though a little, ground to be covered. The college was however worth attention and the hostel seemed to be lavish from an exterior view. It was either a subconscious craving or a general form of appreciation that Rahil stood watching the college hostel awhile longer than his mates as he never was able to afford one.

-Could it be? No. Could it be? Yes, why could it not? Is not everything in world a thing and if it were not, we wouldn’t be calling it that so there you have it. But this… this is nothing that has ever occurred to my mind. Where do I go from here? To have and to not need is something that simply cannot exist. But where will I stay? The college has not given me a hostel. They have their procedures, they say. They cannot find vacancy for me even though I am from a remote Island, they say, because they have people coming from as far as Mauritius and Dubai, they say. They are not wrong in saying that and maybe they do but what is wrong is doing it; refusing someone who has come, out of his hide with nothing but a bag of clothes and a mind full of ideas, for the sake of an institutional education and that institution should refuse to take his boarding…housing responsibility just because there are no occupancies. An artist who has come to hone his art cannot be in peace for the opportunist wolves prey in the forest of institutionalized educational sphere. They live preying on examinations and the more they score in those examinations, the more blood they consume from the wound of the educational system and we the animals dance around fire and bone the heroes who do so but we do that at the risk of our intelligence. As here I am wounded and here I lay dying. How am I to make do? The promise of a seat when vacant is too far away…too tactful and patronizing… as if a white unicorn is to come from the rainbow to impart me with some Vedic bliss towards Nirvana. I understand you not patting me on my back when I haven’t done anything worth it but you won’t have to be so cruel as to stomp on it with your stilettos, you short little man. At your expense…I shall bear the trials at your expense. I am powerless before you but that will not be for long. That cannot be for long because the rules of power bar it from being so. Power changes hands and is a heavy of dew on the green floors of the leaf bound to fall anywhere with so much complexity acting on it that its path cannot be estimated even by the most sophisticated physical numerical. The act of desertion has taken away my faith and thrown me into the darkness of doubt and for faith I shall fight…I am an instrument of war… but not of battle. I fight with ideas and wield resolutions and my territory is the minds of the people where our whole society is barren. I claim my place there. Competition is good only when there is good competition…but here you have low-browed me, eye-gouged…I feel alone…I feel…you have betrayed my reason-

Finally the real North campus was close in sight, as had been notified by the senior. The locality was known as Vishwavidyalaya but there were several different adjoining areas like Patel Chest, Kamala Nagar, Huxley Bridge and the adjoining large area of GTB Nagar. The bus came rolling to a stop, as it had begun to a start and Shashi asked the students to disembark. Rahil lost all his poise and a conflagration of vigor and passion took over him by force as he landed his right foot first on to solid ground. They had just got off the bus and were on their way towards the protest when Rahil, out of the blue, shouted the slogan “Red Salute!” and everyone turned back and looked at this raving lunatic at the verge of making a fool out of himself if he had not already done so. This was not an ideologically backed movement thought the student Party that had organized the demonstration was of a Marxist-Leninist bent.

Shashi immediately ran towards him to calm him and he whispered into Rahil’s ear that it would all be said and done at an appropriate moment. He neither did weigh the consequences before uttering the slogan nor feared the reverberation caused by the utterance. He was caught up in the moment of flurry or maybe in the flurry of the moment. His senses were partially distorted for an impermanent stretch of time. His face bore a different color, though nobody around was familiar enough with the colors of his faces to notice this brandished change. He marched along with the rest of the band to the place of protest which was at the gate of the Arts faculty of the University of Delhi. The police had blockaded the main entry to the campus which was the shorter route and so Shashi along with the gentleman led their boys through the route that started from the metro and passed the commonwealth stadium, Miranda House, a women’s college affiliated to DU and the proud institution to produce such products as Anita Desai and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the staff quarters of Miranda House. Finally after passing a tea stall the gates of arts faculty greeted the nomadic group with all its promise of a ground for agitation.

Rahil saw no one at first and asked Shashi if they were the only one. Shashi fell into a fog of doubt and hung back from the figure of Rahil as he drew out his cell phone from his pocket to call the other activists who were rounding off the population of the protestors in the North Campus. In that attempt and over the phone, he was notified that they were leading a rally in and through all the colleges of the North Campus that fell within their reach with the exception of the elite ivory tower St. Stephen and were gathering more students spontaneously. This, he instantly corresponded over to Rahil with the relay to the gentleman in the middle. The members of the crowd who stood back and especially his roommates seemed to be clueless and did not bother about the number and the strength of the movement. They were just there for the long drive and to dip their lungs in the fresh air of North Delhi and also possibly to ogle the girls that passed them by.

And then the wave came to sweep Rahil up from his feet while his attention was diverted in rebuking the irksome presence of the passive crowd. His back was turned towards the voice that became figures that became walls that became a tide and came towards Rahil with a gurgling, foaming, bilging, thumping noise. He turned his back and sttod aghast at the sight of the multitude that had gathered in such a short time and his hearing was also impaired by the loud shouts of their slogans

***Fyup down down!***

And the echo came:

***Down down down down!***

***Vice Chancellor for shame!***

***For shame for shame!***

The voice hurled with the power of the spirits that intoned them and flew off to high skies. He watched as bodies as bodies stood writhing together, their sweat carelessly falling on each other rendered by the scalding hotness of the afternoon daylight and the summer weather resembling to those first drops carelessly falling from the darkened monsoon skies. Rahil stood and writhed with them; he sweated with them and wore their sweat. It was a token of pride and honor to wear that sweat. It mattered little among the sheer force that is heart comprehended in completeness at the chanting of the slogans against a rotten system of education. It was a mystical experiences bound by all charms of a mystic ceremony. Even the roommates at this pivotal point could not bottle their feelings with the coping mechanism of avoidance and took to full exhibitionism of their passions each holding either a banner or a signboard or a flag in their hands. The event had was in full swing as the protestors took to the street and sat down in the middle of the street right in front of the office of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Delhi. This was a challenge to supreme authority that hid in their Bastille that had a fate of destruction written upon its walls at the wake of a true revolution and by the looks of things he felt that the revolution now was not far.

They were striving towards their inevitable victory which would give them the much coveted prize of true democracy and unveil the institutional fascism that the university had a code of maintaining. There were hordes of policemen and policewomen in uniforms ready not just with sticks but also equipped with semi-automatic rifles and holstered handguns that Rahil deduced from the blackened edge of the holster close to the tip of the handgun’s barrel or the ‘mouth of the gun’ -as it is generally called- that most of those guns had recently been fired. ‘And what possible need was there to bring rifles to a student peace protest?’ he wondered in question, his mouth filling up with the spit of spite for the excessive force of the law enforcement agencies. One of the protestors and a senior member of AISA saw his intent stare at the police arms and so he took him by the shoulder mildly and brought his bearded face close to him.

“You look worried. You shouldn’t be. The first things they pull out are not the guns, it’s the water cannons and by God they hurt more that the guns.” He stated to Rahil among the cacophony of an ensuing revolt in a rather comedic manner.

“I just feel angry at the sheer brute force they show so proudly hugging their guns like their best pals.” He replied to the bearded face with apt level of sound.

“You are justified to feel angry.” He said and turned away from him leaving Rahil in doubt about his reaction. Meanwhile, the other roommates had grown restless by the state of revolt and took to frenzy and little did Rahil know that he was to be a subject or rather an authority of their growing anxious frenzy.

One of them, Ronel, caught him by the hand while he was shouting slogans standing near a policeman with the very intention to cause irritation. His activity broken by the pull of his roommate, he powerlessly followed the pull which led him to the other roommates. Chandan among them was the first to speak.

“We are very glad that you brought us here but you should know that you are the leader of this cause. No one else shows the kind of dedication you have shown to arrange this and for that you deserve recognition.” Chandan stated formally with admiral characters and his head held high.

Just then, the slogans died down and a series of speeches started and paying close attention to those speeches Rahil found out that the march was not prepared by AISA alone but a joint group known as the All India Left Coordination or the AILC. The first person to give a speech was from the Student’s Federation of India. This incited a flame in Chandan, who looking at Rahil’s face instantly replied.

“You have to go over there and talk. Nobody can do it better than you.” He stated with the frenzy bubbling, now showing in his eyes.

“I am not sure they work that way. I think they already have prepared a list of speakers to….” Rahil was interrupted in the middle as he said his part.

“Damn the lists. You deserve to speak. You are the voice of this issue and the voice of common man itself. Be our voice. I will tear this protest into shreds if they keep you from speaking, I tell you. Let me just go over there and talk to them.” That being said, Chandan left the company of Rahil approached Shashi to ask for the permission for Rahil to speak to the people.

“If he has something to say, we will surely give him a chance. He is very welcome to address the students, his brethren.” Shashi answered and then went over to the senior members to confirm this possibility he had just mentioned so confidently. The senior members also agreed to give him a chance to speak and it was all possible only out of the frenzy that incited the compulsion of Chandan to pay homage to Rahil by giving him an opportunity to speak. There was nothing in it whatsoever for Chsndan and he was not a person who saw well for himself before doing for others. He had the tendency and the tenacity to always do the right thing for people he knew well and people whom he trusted. Rahil trusted him too, barring the moment when he had failed to arrive in the punctual time as mentioned by him but aside from that Chandan was the only person he felt really positive around and it was the company of men like these that made his life living in a curse such as their accommodation a pleasurable experience.

Many people gave their speech but Rahil kept waiting. He was not sure if he would actually get a chance and whenever Chandan asked the AISA people with subtle infuriation as to when would it be his turn to speak, they replied that it would be soon enough.

The crowd began to fade considerably but the speeches went on because everyone loved their glamorous time behind the microphone addressing people but only a handful could do it smartly combining rhetoric with wit.

Finally it was his turn to address the crowd which now consisted of very few people aside from the veteran activists of AISA so he decided to turn his speech onto a slightly different direction. With the microphone in his hand and without a flinch or a flutter of nervousness or fear from crowd, he looked each person present there in the eye.

“Friends, brothers and sisters, a red salute to you for being here against the tyranny of the unjust but we need to realize our true enemies here and a bunch of others people need to set their priorities straight too. Here, I am talking about those uniformed cops who loosely ‘just happen’ to be here with rifles slinging from their sides as if it were a glorious Olympic medal. Let us understand that violence begets violence and misery begets misery. Mr. Policeman and Mrs. Policeman, you try to stop us from asking for our rights and these are rights to a proper education without which the society would cease to function intelligently. We are the youth of this nation, the colors of the tricolor flag. We do not stand here to ask anything for ourselves. We stand here to ask right for you and your children for a day will come when your children will also face the same crisis if the tumor of malformation of syllabus is not operated here. Do you want your children to have cancer? Do you want them to die just like we are dying? How will you go and look into the eyes of your children and pay the school fees of your child’s education knowing what you have done here is destroy the very reason for which you work- to give your children a better future. What future do you see with a third-rate education? Let me tell you that if you stop us here your purpose of life will be disrupted and I am not telling this as some kind of an activist. I am telling you this as I put myself in the shoes of your sons and daughters and in the future they will have for it is the present that is now shaping itself. I want you help me correct it as a mistake of the past from which we shall learn but the happening of which we shall discard from our lives. Do this, misters and that is all I ask of you. That is all our movement, our agitation, our protest is about. We protest for you. We are the ones who crack our skulls against the butt of your clubs, the swing of your canes to protect and sanctify a world in which you live too.” He ended, and though at the beginning he had hit some very high notes, by the end he terminated his speech in a low thoughtful and surmising tone.

Some policemen smiled as he handed the microphone over and this was a smile of acquittal while others stood like statues in an art gallery, expressionless, motionless and even the pupils of their eyes peering elsewhere. As soon as he handed over the microphone, he was taken by many hands. The first hands were that of the senior members of AISA who were quite impressed by his skills both as a people person and also by his extent of knowledge of Marxism though his speech exuded little or none of his knowledge.

They told him to keep in connect as the battle was still to be fought at large. The crowd then disintegrated and Rahil was reunited with his friend and his roommates who congratulated him for his skills as a fiery orator. His mind did not register those compliments as he was still calculating the possibilities of further involvement with AISA. In the members of AISA he found mentors for his ideology and he was sure that they would help cultivate it to yield results. No other activity or circle of friends posed as much a prospect for growth and actualization as AISA. He wanted even the most radical possibilities of revolt. He would throw smoke bombs in his college and post a mock-death video of the vice-chancellor if need be and if they justified however it seemed to him that they would not. They termed these acts as violence, something that they were firmly against and would never engage in. They explained to him in the little conversation that they had with him post-speech that these violent acts were tricks to create terror and threat and mostly used by right-wing student unions and we must abstain from such practices of strong-arming. But Rahil did not see an act such as the deployment of a smoke bomb which would cause anarchy at the most and had almost zero potential to cause actual harm. This was a point that he did not pick up further with his AISA comrades and they parted ways with him. And now that business was over, it was time for a delinquent party or the next thing to it that these vagabond tramps could afford.

They gallivanted to the tea stall nearby and brought refreshments for themselves and drank some glasses of lemonades. Feeling freshened from that, they made up their minds to visit the nearby stadium and marvel at its colossal structure. They entered the gate but were immediately apprehended by a guard presiding over the booth at the entrance who barred them from entering the stadium. They questioned him as to why they were not allowed and the guard replied that classes were conducted for Open University which was not to be disturbed.

“Come on, we will just go and take a quick peek at the stadium.” Aman pleaded.

“The students are having their classes in the lobby and the only way to enter the stadium is through the lobby. Sorry boys but I cannot allow you to go in there. Some other time maybe but not now.” The guard replied.

“That’s a damn shame. I mean it is built on University space and the University students don’t have access here. I really….” He broke out and murmured the words when he was suddenly stopped by Chandan.

“I think you had enough of that during your protest.” He mentioned to him softly and then turned towards toe guard and asked “Say, you would allow us to have water from that there bottle, won’t you?”

“Yeah sure” he said and handed to him a large bottle of water from which he drank greedily and then passed it to Rahil when he asked for it.

“Help yourselves.” He told them as they took turns emptying his bottle and, pointing at a plastic barrel of mineral water, said “We have enough for ourselves here.”

Then they embarked on a metro and made way to AIIMS station. The metro was fully occupied as always so they had to stand throughout the entire trip back to AIIMS metro station. From there, they walked a little distance like a punk gang to the Safdarjung bus stop. After waiting for only a little while, they managed to board a green non-AC bus which was again filled to its capacity and so Rahil along with the others had to stand for another half hour to finally reach the Satya Niketan bus stop and walk back to their accommodation.

Then they disintegrated into their individual life and Rahil thought of other activities he had to tend to. Then he was reminded of the fact that two other auditions were still to be dealt with- one was the English dramatics society and the other was for the editorial board of the English literary Association magazine.

In the evening he received a call from Shashi who asked him to come to the front lane of Satya Niketan. When he reached there, he was greted by Shashi who wore the same attire and the ragged gentleman who introduced himself as Sanatan. He was a well-read and a well-red Marxist who had a glow around himself that was sourced by simplicity. They saw the seriousness and dedication that he showed unlike the others that he had brought and the radical spirit that he embodied. Not only did they see that but they also saw the power he had over the crowd that he had gathered for a cause that only he knew the true value of and they wanted people like him who were good in drawing other people along with them. They knew he was among that category as he shared the same air of popularity. But this popularity was again propelled by his indulgence with Marxist groups and was thus fuelled by his affiliation with AISA. The three walked into the South Campus of the Delhi University and sat over a grassy lawn that overlooked the post office which was a subdivision for the whole locality. There was also the main office of the South Campus from where students made their bus passes which allowed them to travel free of cost in the buses with an initial registration charge of only a hundred forty bucks. Rahil had availed the form from his college but never got to submit the form as some event or the other always caused an interlude. They told him to enforce a denser connection of willing students who need not be ideologically aware but would be reliable as bodies to fill up with in protests and demonstrations and carry out various operations of the organization. Rahil felt at the kernel of importance as he heard them divulge much of their manners of working and bestowed unto him the charges of creating awareness about AISA and its functions. He was given pamphlets of AISA that properly catalogued much of their work as an activist pressure group which made the headlines more than once. With each of the event, a detailed account of their role was also given with great trope. In the end, it was simple; they wanted his company and needed him to be a foot soldier for their cause and he desired to be in that prominent post which meant something objectively and gave some sense and purpose to a world otherwise riddled with nothingness. At least he returned to his empty room with a content heart. He now had the necessary affiliation to be a branded Marxist. He was not at all disappointed with the tide of trends that did not favor the rise of socialist flags as his mind was affixed not just with waving his socialist banner against all odds but also to change the course of the dies of trends in the pursuit of his ideals. He was justified by the correctness of his actions and though they were not popular actions but they were still correct in his eyes as well as in the eyes of those who saw it happen. His repute as an acting communist soon was promoted to a point where he was regarded as the militant student. People who were involved with him now saw him as an allegory of ideals pertaining most of them pertinent to the emancipation of the proletariat.

At the same time, due to his confidence in himself, he also managed to excel in presenting his persona more boldly and flamboyantly as he was reluctant to do before. By embracing activism, he had just become a much simpler person and he knew that standing for ideals does that to people; it metamorphoses them into the very ideals for which they stand.

The next day marked for the first debating session where an actual meeting took place in the duration of time after college and it was around two in the evening when Rahil received a message from Siddharth to meet with the rest of the group at the foyer. He got to the foyer punctually at the time mentioned in the message and Hesiod was the first to greet him with a natural long face although the face, as opposed to the stereotypical image, was happy. The first day marked the basic acquaintance with the dynamics of a debate and a mock debate to put things practically into perspective. They took up an empty classroom and this was the time Rahil started to Sherlock-Holmes the other people who were selected to find a possible common ground for their selection. Rahil could link all of them with each other but there was only one missing link in the chain of the selected body and the missing link was him. All the others had similar characteristics- elite background, a private school education, a sense of delicacy as opposed to his cornucopia and militantly radical attitude that could easily fall into the angry young man stereotype as he was from a small town coming to a big city with dreams in his eyes and meager cash in his pocket and the waves of the big city life and the brightness of the big city lights broke and blinded him and left him stranded and disillusioned. If that was not actually the case, he deduced that they thought it was and so his presence could be understood by two axioms. Either he bested all of them or he was the centre of their mercy which meant symbolically and bestially that either he was a brooding puppy or a raging tiger. He inferred, for all the positive sense in him that they thought of him as the latter and so it was his duty to not let them down or lessen their expectation.

The seniors briefed their students very wisely on the rules of debate. Firstly, they stated the difference between conventional and parliamentary debate as one being conducted with two members in both groups and the other with four members in either groups.

Secondly, they furthered differenced the two forms of debates based on the difference of the nature of speaking and content manufacture. The addressing followed into various technicalities of parliamentary debating and the freshmen were explained the roles. The two sides to any debate were taken by the government and the opposition. The government was always the first to address and the first speaker was known as the prime minister. After the prime minister’s turn, a two minute head-start is given to the leader of the opposition to prepare his rebuttals for the case presented by the government side. The leader of opposition was then followed by the deputy prime minister from the side of the government and was taken over by the deputy leader of opposition. By that time much of the debate would come to a conclusion. Then there would be whips and the government whip would precede the opposition whip. A two minute break would be taken and then an opposition reply speech would be made. This would then be concluded with the government reply speech. The job of the reply speech is to just to summarize the whole extent of debate and bring out the salient features for each of their respective arguments. After having explained the nature of a debate, they then divided us into groups, two freshmen with one senior each. To Rahil, Hesiod assigned himself and so the other lot was consequently paired with Siddharth. The topic was legalization of bestiality and Rahil had the bad fate of falling to the side of the government but Hesiod alerted him with the fact that he had won defending the motion more than once. Another thing that worked in the favor of Rahil was that he was a closet libertine. They were told to part ways and so Hesiod led the others to the foyer and asked them to take seat in a corner. Then he explained certain clauses.

“Look, the point for us to make need not be ethical. We need to win by facts and clauses, not by sentiments. So even if they play on the adjudicators’ sentimental nerve, they cannot give the decision to the opposition as they have to give vivid contentions on their part as to why they threw the decision away to their part. If they give unsatisfactory answers, we have a right to challenge them.” He said and then paused for a moment.

“How do we make a factual case then? How can one justify such a thing as having sex with animals?” a girl asked. Her name was Namritha and she was a fair but dark eyed girl with hair that fell in folds.

“Well, to start off, animals have no feelings. There is not a gauge in the world to measure the feeling of animals so there’s no actual telling that the animal does not enjoy it. And if he does not enjoy the act of coitus, it can always resort to the animalistic instinct of self defense. For example, if we screw a horse from behind, he will surely kick our ribs out of our chest if he does not like to be penetrated.” Hesiod further explained.

“I believe that with horses, the case is more phallic than vaginal. That is why ‘stallion’ is preferred as a masculine term. I think that there are more than one ways to look at it. The first thing is the human desire for pleasure. Think of this: even trees have life, yet we cut off and make furniture out of it, make use of the wood for pure pleasure and comfort. The innate nature of man is to satisfy the drives of pleasure so why chastise it.” Rahil offered his viewpoints during which the others just looked at him blankly.

“Nice one, Rahil” Hesiod remarked. And in this manner, they went back and forth with their case till the time was almost over. Hesiod received a call from Siddharth asking him to bring the others and start the debate. Rahil was given the role of the government prime minister.

# - The Masochist Manifesto-

-We are not the masters of the Universe. We are the slaves. There is no logical means to deter us from our pleasures because we have the means of philosophy, history, literature and other forms of fine arts by our side. We are the scholars and it is from us that scholars are born. We might be hidden but our drives are universal, driving the spirit of the universe to its rightful unending path. We see life through the eyes of an artist and experience it through the senses of a traveler and we are receptive in our sights and adamant in the expression of our senses and in the justification of it. We who are none but we who are many. It is the history of man that brackets our existence, firm and affirmative and we under it are locked heavily and with history comes tradition, culture and with a culture and a society comes laws. We are those who play with it, fiddle with it to the extent that they break and bend. The history of attentiveness is our history because we have been attentive to our tastes, our desires and the plebeian pleasures that bound us. It was no mystery to us even in the Pagan age. The Pagan age, our Golden age, the age when we were the Dionysian, the demented deranged pursuers of pure madness and we starved if we were unable to find it. We had a God assigned to us who justified our rites and we prayed to Him.

This was the Greek era, an era when we were the Bacchantic tribe of pure ferocity, our actions were born out of pure physical desire of the flesh and bones and no psychological complexity or subconscious repressions. We who lived looked at the lives of those who died as outsiders because we cared not for their logos. Their ***logos*** was a farce to us as our rationality was dementia for theirs. They said we had a different race, were of a different species, of a different creed and that we were different from them and thus *they* and *us* was born. Them and us. We had powers they would not even be able to conceive much less possess and our minds were open to any and all kinds of possibilities of the body and the mind that they would not be able to achieve for years. What kind of a God wants his followers to suffer? All Gods. We had no God because our God was the pursuit of our madness, the shamelessness of our actions and so we were the protagonists of the greater theatre of history. Our rites of passages had the basis of mental freedom and were basically rooted in the successful attainment of it through oils, charms, salts and all ingredients of our so called mischief. We were called witches but what happened inside our minds was angelic. Our mind propagated our thoughts and our thoughts propagated our desire, flamed our passions and incinerated all the ethics and laws that the people around us held dear. The existence of humanity had a meaning surely but only through our eyes and all other forms of existence was completely and utterly futile. Our code of life had no intricate conspiracy theories through which diplomacy seeped into our social systems. No, we lived in Utopia and the Utopia was maintained, never destroyed, broken, marred or damaged. The prophecy unravelled that our reign was one for the centuries and so it was. We were the epoch of a civilization that prized its glory in winning war and bringing back the dead as trophies and still we were the ones who were mad. Civilization; that's a vague term in itself to describe the kind of order or society or early social formation through which mankind evolved into the complex animal that it is today. The extent of man's barbarism has only decided the extent of its civility and that may seem paradoxical but still stands true. Starting from the Greek era and onwards down to German Nazism, we have been a social formation born out of instincts of fear, hostility, anxiety, anger, remorse, regret, vengeance, envy, greed, malice, mistrust, betrayal, chauvinism, narcissism and convivial and that is just the tip of the iceberg which forms our so-called civilization.

That is the reason why humans, unlike other forms of animals share an individual consciousness besides collective consciousness because of our mistrust towards each other. If we try to remember the first instances of our life from the moment we were born, we would fail to recall so and the reason for that is the primacy of knowledge. Ours consciousness develops in the world as we err, as we cry and as we commit misdeeds. An infant only sees. He does not have the ability to correlate the images to any form of a memory and hence has no form of history or attachments. He does not know of attachments. He does not know of anything that he can deem necessary or worth remembering. He is not in need of anything. The case is more interesting when the child is its mother's womb. A wombed child is the model of complete bliss. Here I come to the aspect of trust and its repressions. A child in its mother's womb is a captured spirit and but neither does he show fear towards his surrounding nor hostility. It is remarkable to understand at this point the reaction of a child when is freed unto the world by the cutting of the placental cord and it is at that stage that he cries and so accordingly it is freedom that is loathes at that point. But why? That is a question we, at this stage do not answer as we take its cries for granted; the symbol of life, some say while others with some idea of the scientific dogma deem as reflex action. Our minds think differently. We think of the baby in terms of freedom and servility and we conclude that it is in the nurturing prison of her mother's feminine womb that he feels trusting and safe. It is her feminine clasps that convince him of a blissful existence and as he is taken away from that blissful captivity and thrown into a world of uncertainty, the baby dwindles into a dystopian existence and hence the real life is existent for him.

From a phenomenological sense, all human beings are in need of association with a certain form of order either as a master or a slave and that happens in all levels of our consciousness, idealistic as well as materialistic. In real world, our freedom is judged paradoxically by our level of servility and our progress by how much we suffer under the slavery of our master. The instruments that our masters use upon us to provide a form of incentive are ambitions, fantasies about future, aspirations etc. Some humans, when they feel their ambitions being satisfied either shift their ambitions to something higher or become masters but still active participants in the arrangement of the order never actually freeing themselves from it. As they take up the role of masters, it is now their duty to unleash upon their slaves the respective tribulations in a much enhanced manner and this gives birth to competition in real life. Human beings have naturalized competition with such domesticity that they completely overlook the brutal sadism behind it. The critique of this form a society is met in a twofold directive. The first phase deals with the proper rebutting of the logical arguments through sentimental dogma pertaining to religion and theories of economics and once countered on that field, they simply cope behind the reasons of majority against a utopian-minded minority. The second phase deals with the relocation of faith into the followers of the majority ideology once sentimental dogmas have been cited and fear has been raised towards the alien concepts mentioned as alternatives to the establishments. It also includes the confirmation of ideals of the masses through propaganda under which points are maintained thoroughly and rhetorically against the logically armed minority.

The real world is a well-rotting corpse that will never be fully consumed as the insects and the maggots that dwell in it are abhorred by its very existence in that form and so it persists as a form of wasteland for the masses to live without laws. The only laws they make for themselves direct to profit to be eked out from one another. Every basic human right awarded to a person is violated by its very execution as a law. The concept might seem very complex, sometimes vain and difficult to get one's mind around but that is the only sense of the real world. The analysis of the consciousness in the real world is also something interesting to look at and here I move again to the contours of history further ahead on the scale of time from the Greek civilization that has been discussed earlier.

Now we are in the dark ages; order is fully restored and the orders of the church is proclaimed as the final word of God and is acted upon with strictness and anything unsavoury to the tastes of the church is harshly dealt with. In such an age, we find the birth of patriarchy, or if not the birth, the canonization of patriarchy as the complete and supreme form of authority. Womanhood is only as worthy as its vagina while the penis is an object to be worshipped in all its phallic glory. The rule of the papacy marks the creation of the objects and the subjects. In Pagan ideology, Gods were not supreme as Greeks believed the Titans to be of equal strength as that of God and motherly figures like Maya, the goddess of Earth were also figures to be revered not for their purity as a woman as is the case with Virgin Mary but for her strength as the ruler of the Earth and an equally powerful member of the Titans as well. Virgin Mary is the archetype of the objectified female or a female slave to patriarchal thoughts and Jesus Christ, his son becomes the first character suffering the Oedipus complex which makes for his radical personality and his kindness and compassion towards the poor. Christ, in the real world is the figure of a justifiable masochist, a person who offers his flesh and blood as a form of sacrament for religious orgasm. His masochism is accepted and not just accepted but worshipped because it is the masochism born without patriarchy. The legend of Jesus Christ, being born out of a Virgin Mary without the touch of a man in a way is the symbol of the complete dominance of a female over a man who as a result becomes pure and compassionate and thusly Virgin Mary was Christ's mistress. Virgin Mary plays an important role in a part of Christ's young years which are found primarily missing from the Bible. The early years of the Christ as any man's, are the most constructive years of someone's life at a point when he or she is highly influential. Childhood is of great importance in psychology as childhood receptions of things that are outside the logical realms of childhood can lead to unhealthy regressions and development of psychopathic disorders and complexes leading into an unhealthy mental psyche. Christ's compassion and overt kindness can and very well ought to be stemming from some childhood trauma or a form of motherly attachment or sexual exposure that led to his passionate kindness that could almost be regarded as feminine in those times. Our motive here is not to dip any particular religion into the detergent of profanity but to find viable examples of masochistic tendencies and its counterpart in the desert of human reality, as Marxist philosopher and psychoanalyst Slavoĵ Žižek calls it. Libertines have been offended often times by the religious institutions in many differently brutal ways in the Dark Ages and in the ages of Post-Renaissance feudalism and imperialism, burned at stake, castrated in public and other horrendous forms of capital punishment and now finally it is time for the libertines to write back to the church reciprocating the same love they had bestowed upon them.

In the Dark ages prior to the Renaissance, Christ was seen as a form of supreme authority but only under the Catholic dogma. Protestant Church only been asserted at that point and had not truly achieved power. It was only during the Renaissance era and the further migration of the Protestant bloc to America, it was that Protestantism became renowned and hence respected as a separate from of church under the bigger bracket of Christianity. Protestantism explores the deeper theologies of Christ and hence is radical in thought. One could say that under the watch glass of Christianity, Protestants were a similar to libertines flashing their views of religion against the well-established Catholic Church and Protestantism might have been a radical form of liberal religion had it not been for the newer religion that is Islam which bloomed out of primarily political need in Middle-East as the most sane and scientific religion to follow at its time and even beyond its time, its relevance stretching as far as late twentieth century America where Black Muslim movements gave birth to the thoughts of Malcolm X and transformed Cassius Clay into Muhammad Ali. However, falling prey to psychosocial variations of the middle-east and the rivalry with the Israeli Judaism in the Arab spring, Islam became subject to paranoid orthodoxy and the liberal aspects of the religion became more or less obsolete.

Still, religion accounts for ninety percent of the population of the real world and only a portion of real world practice atheism or agnosticism in its full effect. Of those who are atheists, most believe or cling to without belief to the philosophical concept of existentialism which confirms the absence of everything but the Self as the most rudimentary spiritual unit followed by the environment made up by the influential entities of others who we associate with but with a sense of second-person. The freedom exerted by the anticipation of a belief such as existentialism enables people to fulfil or satisfy their most potential libidinal drive which purely serves purposes of pleasure such as sex, hunger, safety etc. Still, that is nearly not enough justification for the conception of a thought marked so deviant and perverted such as masochism.

Art in the era of Renaissance became more and more explicit and erotic with the freedom of expression and no viable form of censorship. It was this freedom that led to an appreciation of portraits such as the raft of medusa, the naked woman and other portraits which displayed full frontal and other forms of nudity. This marked the era of the entry of libertine thoughts firstly into fine arts and then into literature. The first paintings of Titian and Michelangelo boasted of the womanly beauty in all its raw and erotic power but at the same time it sought to aestheticize the nudity into a form of art and they were able to do so with great success. In literature, this was achieved by the father of English language Geoffrey Chaucer whose Canterbury Tales took Ovidian narrative and parodied it with tales of travel and the fornications of the English proletariat.

Questions are often asked as to how one can derive pleasure out of being humiliated or beaten. How can one live with the idea of having committed a form of adultery with multiple partners? Even erotics blame the masochists for the destruction of the sanctity of sex by resorting to paraphillia and fetishes not concerned with sex at all. The answers to all these questions can easily be given through logical explanation of the human everyday psyche but it would probably not fit the standards of rationality that the human mind has set in order to give regard to certain ideals and disregard certain others as irrational. They would think it unnatural and not even lend ears to the claims nor attempt to see the visible links in the argument from one point to the other without making any form of assertions based on bigotry which the opposite side usually tends to have a habit of doing. We, as masochists are primarily fearless because we are scholars at what we do and we right from wrong for us and so no one else has the right to intervene in our established ideology. We, in turn perform the most basic function that the act of coitus complicates which is the enjoyment of the body without conception. Sex complicates pleasure through pregnancy whereas masochism does not. Masochistic sessions are usually non-sexual in nature where a power-play is performed in which act a master or a mistress and his or her slave who is bound to follow orders from the master or the mistress. It is of essence to note that the orders are satisfying to carry because the orders themselves root in fetishism and hence both the master or the mistress and the slave derives equal pleasure as opposed to the act of sex wherein the case of a mutual orgasm is rare as a gem. In most cases, the male ejaculates more easily than the female and becomes flaccid before even the female could have the opportunity of an orgasm by means of an erect male penis. The pleasure of a female ejaculation is increased when the female ejaculation is synchronized with the bobbing of the male member during the ejaculation of the penis but the mathematical probability of such an event is highly out of chance.

Masochism on the other hand provides no such play on chances for pleasure and deepens the moment of pleasure to an infinite extent as deep as the moment. The subjectivity and the rarity of people enjoying masochism is only because of the objectification of the act of coitus as the supreme and the only form of absolute sexual pleasure which is practically a myth because most of the sexual satisfaction is derived from fantasy and chemical euphoria rather than natural timely enjoyment. Aristotle in his metaphysics talks about the divine pleasure that is to be pursued as the only meaningful manner of existence of humans. This was a point among many that led to his fall from the school of thoughts of his predecessor Plato. Metaphysics, along with Poetics was among the later of Aristotle's works and it was in these works that he appeared to have embraced more of the theories of the sophists before the time of Socrates and Plato than his teacher Plato. Eventually, his rebellious philosophies also became the reason for his imprisonment and death. What Aristotle had somehow seen amid the Greek civilization was what Kant tried to defend in his metaphysical ethics which was the very fallacy of ethical doctrine. Both Kant and Plato constructed ethics from a nationalist as well as a collectivist expression and that was the general way that even a socialist liberal like Rousseau had developed his political theory from. Nonetheless, existentialism and the coming of Stirner, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche marked the absolute worship of the will and the ego as opposed to the use of the will for a higher purpose such as that of character construction and nationalism as proposed by Rousseau. In this way by discovering the true potential of the will, Aristotle had placed himself over not only his teacher Plato and his teacher Socrates but also Rousseau, a philosopher who had advantages of scores ages over the Greek philosopher. Aristotle's liberal view of a particularly criticized play of Oedipus Rex also corresponds to his vision and his place among the most brilliant thinkers who also appreciated the nature of the Sophoclean tragedy like Sigmund Freud and Goethe. Aristotle's metaphysics is considered more of a work of rebuke towards the state rather than an actual work of directive guidelines to the branches of metaphysics such as epistemology and ontology. Knowledge, for Aristotle was not cogitation, an expression most associated with Descartes. Descartes, though a rationalist, did compromise some of his most ingenious theories and cloaked it with the belief of the church which corrupted its logical ideals. Aristotle did not make such a mistake although writing a work such as metaphysics, he should have been careful about its repercussions which were not so kind on the philosopher as it turned out as it advocated to a breakdown of the process of cogito itself to the extent of basic metaphysical taxonomy, i.e. to group ideals based on individual thinking irrespective of sentiments of state and the patrician society though it was not mentioned with such clarity. Many contemporaries of Aristotle began to accuse Aristotle of having liberal, almost artistic bias towards philosophy, particularly by later Roman philosophers and social figures such as Cicero although no actual mention of Aristotle's name in Cicero’s essays could be found but the matter spoken by him on many occasions seem to clash heavily with the view that Aristotle endeavoured to build.

The later philosophers such as Kierkegaard often raised religious issues to protest about the fallacies in the dogma of the religious myths. In Fear and Trembling, he makes a most dazzling point about the leap of faith taken by Isaac to sacrifice his own son at the mere word of mouth that God had directed him to do so. Although Kierkegaard later turned to religion and grew tolerable towards it, Fear and Trembling was written at a time when Kierkegaard loathed religious views. Also, the theory of leap of faith is relative to the masochistic tendencies as trust and safety of the slave is always a question hanging over and differentiating a healthy session from a dangerous one. A trustworthy superior, a master or a mistress is always necessary but what is more necessary is for the slave to be in a position psychologically as well as ethically to be able to make a decision of trust and faith without dilemma and be submissive against all ebbing doubts that would lead to rebellion to lay the freedom at the feet of the master and mistress at their disposal and let the master judge the limits and safety to be set to maximise the scope for pleasure. However, given this statement one should not directly compare the leap of faith in the case of religion to the leap of faith taken by a slave in a session as the latter is done in a circumstance where the end results are most rewarding in the real sense whereas in the case of religion, the result of the leap of faith is always a promise to heaven and the only actual effect is one's better acquaintance with his or her inner self better known as the spirituality.

Next came the era of perhaps the first recorded libertine who was Marquis De Sade. A Frenchman, soldier and among the most brilliant thinkers, Sade developed a potential of superhuman proportions and created for him a highly singular case of acquired ethics much like Hannibal Lector in the Silence of the Lambs as he justifies his actions and take pride in their narration and he had all right to do so as the people he killed were only living a half-realized life not different from death. From a fictional point of view, Lector is the perfect alter-ego for Sade although with not such a deadly ulterior motive. Sade, it also should be noted, was quite political about his nature and his presence as a libertine. He associated himself with radical thought and wrote on such matters too. His closest comparison would be Octave Mirabeau, writer of the famous novel Torture Garden and an active participant of French revolution who had the pleasure of being an elected and appointed leader of the National Constituent Assembly at a time. Mirabeau, born of noble birth, always found himself in trouble and despite of his menial physical appearance, managed to get into a lot of controversies concerning women and adultery. Later, frustrated by the French nobility, Mirabeau joined the other side of the revolution and worked as an interlocutor between the people and the monarchy. Finally, he chose the side of the people and though he was accused of deceiving the national constituent assembly, his repute among the common people remained unstirred. He was different that Sade primarily in their positions of power. Sade considered himself as an element of immense superiority and intelligence at the same time had very elitist beliefs and Mirabeau was more of the Bohemian sort with a renegade spirit. It should be noted that both of them had regular brush with the law at their time even though both of them came from a family of means and at those times it was rare for the law persecute wards of aristocratic families. This provides for a conclusion about the legal temper towards masochism.

Masochism as a legal freedom even in consensual cases has always been frowned upon and has never been given the fullest support at representation the way gay and lesbian activism has. While the latter examples have been normalized and accepted to a great civic extent from the debauchery that i once was thought as but aspects of discipline, sadism and masochism is still seen as a psycho-social and sexual perversion and most sadist have even been accused of the label of 'sexual predators'. Repressions of the mind, studied and analyzed have culminated into great forms of art and here we take the modern, or better yet the post-modern turn and discuss the field of art that has been influenced by the hidden repressions of masochism and other forms of libertine desires. Post-modernist art and literature has always been scrutinized and even branded as forms of kitschy and vulgar arts as was the case with the post-modern epic Ulysses by James Joyce which portrays a dominatrix session in the most romantic manner through the subconscious of Bloom, one of the protagonists who emulates the role of Odysseus who is the protagonist of the Greek epic of the same name. The session is seen to convene between Bloom and Belo, who takes a masculine form and does things like riding Bloom and feeding him the leather of his boots. Though not in such an open fashion, we do find such scenes very graphically mentioned in the works of Sacher-masoch as well. In art, we now come to the discussion of Dadaism and surrealism and the artists and painters involved with its canonical representation as a movement. Whenever Surrealism comes to mind, paintings of the Spanish painter Salvador Dali cannot escape the sphere of our recollection through memory. Leading an unorthodox lifestyle, Dali expressed theories of quantum physics and Fourier mathematics in his paintings mystifying any ordinary scene and this ability of his raised the value of his paintings manifold. Trying to find some form a harmony between the logarithmic curve of rhinoceros horns and the spherical curve of cabbages, Dali had once attempted to drive his car on the road with his roof filled with cabbages and rhinoceros horns became an object of obsession for him. Once trying to find the apt ambience for his voice before his lecture at a University, Dali encased his head in a diving helmet and attempted to deliver a two hour lecture at the quarter of which he lost his breath and nearly asphyxiated and his was removed from the diving helmet only through external aid. Dali also follows the lifestyle of a libertine for which his wife Gala served as a mistress. Once the couple confined themselves to a retreat house somewhere in the hearts of the Andalusia for almost a year and only vacated the house when it was burned up and consumed by flames out of some unidentified reasons. This passionate irrationality of Dali is reflected upon his work and from his life. A normally shy youth of his time, young Dali had once got up from his seat at school and criticized the professor for knowing little about the subject that he was teaching and so this suggests a form of duality inside the mind of the artist. Jungian psychoanalysis accounts for this duality in the creative mind, especially those serving the occupations of painters and musicians. Dali however is seen in the complete pursuit of the so called drives even the much feared and repressed death drive, feared by the human psyche but inherently accepted and desired as the finality of life. Dali's obsession with his psyche and the desire to know more about his inner self through liberating his ego turned him a megalomaniac but at the same time enhanced his productivity as an artist to dig deeper into the nature of likeness of the human mind with great certainty and paint images and portraits that had shades of pure absolutism in them.

Much has been said and discussed about the aspects of the so-called 'perversity' in the natural real-life scenarios where such associations and emotions have not only been tolerated but also, as in the case of Dali if not Sade, culturally appreciated. The time has come for us to reveal our faces and the scars that have deepened and remained on it. These scars however are self-inflicted and the look of it in the mirror brings not pain but bliss, pleasure, joy and sexual gratification. These scars remind us of the great love that we have. This love, though it may not be traditional love and may not have a day like the Valentine's Day in the celebration of its emotions, we celebrate it in every moment of every day our infinite lives. Yes, our lives are infinite because we are not humans; we are nymphs, seraphim, cherubim and angels, Gods and Goddesses and we dwell in the stars of the skies. We come to Earth for the sole purpose of debauchery and hence we are deemed debauchees. This is our cross to bear and our seagull to wear around our neck but our lips cannot be silenced. They will moan with pleasure at the orgasmic euphoria of the crack f the whips on our bare sweating flesh and the slippery cold and quaint feel of the leather against our hard, erect throbbing, bobbing, and chancrous members. The eruption of blood from our broken skin salivate our mouth and as the cold air passes through the orifice of the cut skin, the hairs of our arms and legs start to rise as our body falls into a tantalizing fit. Our hands and feet sometimes hogtied, sometimes spread-eagled and sometimes bondaged leaves on our ankles and wrists the marks and the scent of the nylon ropes we cherish even after the ropes are untied and we return to our dull monotonous real lives which to us is but a dystopian illusion. Now, over the tides of time blows the wind of change and the pole of tolerance have fallen asunder. We, the pirates, the outsiders, the barbarians will tear open the glorious bodies of civil society, law and order and antiquity and we will feast upon their innards, drink their blood as red wine and hack their limbs without regret or remorse. We will not fear your accusations for they are null and void by your own definitions of logic. We have had the argument before and will not hear of it again and we will hack your tongue and feed on it instead. It is the opportune moment for the libertines all over the world to unite. We have nothing to embrace but the chains that enslave us. We have a world to win-

By the time the debate had ended, it was clear who had the upper hand. The adjudicators, three of them senior and two of them freshmen asked the others to leave the room as they had a decision to make. The adjudicators were not to converse even among themselves although there was not a hard and fast rule about that. The participants in the debate left the room for the adjudicators and it was just then that Rahil received a call from his AISA activist friend Shashi that he was to have a meeting and that he wanted him to bring some other people as well. The first ones to come in his mind were Siddharth and Hesiod who had both claimed to be ‘big-time Marxists’. He did not ask them outright and waited for the result of the debate although it was not too important for him. Still it was his first debate and there was some curiosity in his mind concerning how he had fared. The adjudicators after a little while of thinking called the participants back to declare the results.

This was the moment of truth for him and the crucible that was to boil all his hard work into a fruited froth. The results were successfully in the favor albeit it was not as successfully in his favor as much as he would have liked. There was a three to two split in favor of Hesiod, Rahil and Namritha. The two that did not give the decision in fvor of Rahil were the undergraduates. They cited the reason that Rahil had been too radical in his standpoint that the epitome of human experience and human perception.

‘Go and read Freud.’ Rahil replied in his thoughts to the opinions of the freshmen and then added to his mental stream ‘eh, what do they know. They would still vote to ban Eric Clapton’s music just because he made the song *cocaine*.’ The seniors gave the victory to Hesiod and his group and one of them cited Rahil as the best speaker. He was pretty pleased at that. One of the other senior adjudicator asked Rahil to prioritize his points during his speech and really structure his points in a better manner as a lack of structure would create a muddle between salient points and auxiliary points. Rahil took the advice with a positive attitude but they also congratulated him for such a mature display of oration in his first attempt.

After all the necessary final briefings, Rahil approached Siddharth and Hesiod with his proposal to have a party meeting.

Hesiod excused himself as he had something important to attend to at the hostel. Siddharth paid attention to what he had to say. He peered at his prematurely senile face made more so by his unkempt beard and his long hair through his round glasses. Many references came to Rahil about his round glasses from John Lennon to Harry Potter but he did not let any of those references surface for fear that it would offend him.

“Have you heard about the commotion related to the FYUP?” Rahil asked his senior.

“Heard? We went there to protest but the VC won’t budge an inch. That damn grumpy old man with a Napoleon complex! We went there before the session with the teachers who staged he protest. We sang songs there and shouted slogans mocking the program and the VC but you can only do so much.” Siddharth replied.

“Well, what have you planned for the future?” Rahil asked him with directness.

“We are still up for a fight. The system has to be removed. I am really glad that I was saved by an ear. I feel sorry for your batch. Things are really messy for you. I mean your system is really messed up.” Siddharth answered.

“Say, there is a meeting now I have to attend with the members of AISA. Would you care to join me and discus the future of our agitation?” Rahil asked. He detected some avoidance from his part which gradually faded away.

“Where is the meet?” Siddharth asked.

“It is at the Satya Niketan Park. You will come, I take it?” Rahil asked hopefully.

“Yeah, you go ahead and meet them first. We’ll be there after a while.” He said and turned his back towards Rahil but with mild affection and a sense of registration which led Rahil to believe that he would surely show up. He went to the park. The way to the park was through the Satya Niketan locality and the stairs to the park was just opposite to his accommodation. He threw an odd glance towards as he ascended the stairs and passed through the gates of the park and saw Shashi along with Sanatan and another figure that Rahil was not particularly familiar with though he recalled that he had seen him at the day of the protest.

“Hey, my name Amit Sangwan and I am also from AISA. It was a hell of a speech you gave yesterday. I have to say I am impressed. But I believe you do understand that this is not even the beginning of the fight.” He explained to Rahil very laboriously.

“I just want to get right through to the end.” He answered.

“Good. Have you brought anybody with you?” Amit asked.

“Yes, I called some of my seniors. They are probably on their way.” Rahil corresponded.

Their conversation among themselves thickened as they talked of how to strengthen the movement. Amit constantly talked of going to the people and developing a sense of total connect with them as one of their won and at the same time instill in them the same sense of rebellion that he was going through.

Somewhere between their conversations, Rahil saw Siddharth and another senior girl who had been the adjudicator to their debate and who gave her decision to the favor of Rahil. Her name was Rita and she was Siddharth’s aide and Rahil rarely saw him without her. He saw the dark face of Amit turn crimson and could not find out the reason behind it. He greeted Siddharth and Rita with great warmth as they joined the circle of the communists with their cigarettes sending uneven fumes of smoke into the transparent air which escaped into a transparency of its own as it made its way to the blue sky.

“So what do you think on the grounds of appeasing the undergraduates?” Siddharth asked Amit.

“We have planned many things ahead but for now we need strong people to set the mood and forward the message of a possible resistance. We have a signature protest lined ahead and then we are also planning a student referendum to validate the quantity of people dissatisfied with the new course structure.” Amit replied and asked with sincerity for a whiff of smoke from their cigarette. Siddharth handed the burning cigarette from the butt end which Amit took with the help of his thumb and index finger carefully trying to drop the extra ash hanging from the burning end of the tobacco cigarette. Then he drew a long smoke-laden breath to nurture his lungs with the zesty boost of the tobacco smoke and then gave it to Rita in the same manner in which he had took it. Rahil saw the whole thing from the perspective of an out felt out of his place interjecting or notifying his point, suggestion or contention in the midst of their convocation.

After a general chat, he saw Siddharth and Rita getting up to leave with a satisfied expression on their faces. Before leaving, both of them, each in their won time, turned back to look at Rahil in the eye and greet him with a smile which was more of a friendly laughter before they parted ways with him.

“How do you know them?” Amit asked him, Shashi and Sanatan standing in the background. Sanatan ha in his hand the cigarette that Rita after smoking with a bit of it still left had given him.

“They are in my debating society.” Rahil answered, rather childishly.

“So you are in the debating society of your college. Not bad for you! But look, here is the thing. There are types of communists- those that are communists in theory and hose that live the life by communist ideals. Living the life with ideals means living with the people, seeing what they see as oppression and agitating them to fight against their oppression citing their vast numbers as their strengths. You have to be one of them in consequence, one of the oppressed, one of the downtrodden and hence you have to feel the weight of oppression over your shoulders as well. To work the masses in to action, you first need to understand what the public mass is made up of and then you will find that it is made up of people, each with different viewpoints and ideologies, some you cannot even convince to change. So your goal must be to attach a cause or an issue to a person rather than an ideology. People who know about our ideology will sympathize with us regardless of our cause because we always have and will stand for the right cause. People like Siddhart and others of your debating society are elitist Marxists- they are ideologues only in theory and would not bring down barricades with the push of their hands because they are not the oppressed and can never put themselves in that place even though they try their level best to. To be an activist means to be active always in terms of unrest at the sorrow of the others and not only from their end but from your end as well. Don’t be dazzled by their brand of communism.” He explained to Rahil the details of the nature of radicalism he was already so familiar with. Had he not experienced oppression firsthand, he would have not even willed to protest like the others and the mere fact that he not only appeared for the protest but was also there for the meeting proved the insuperable fact that he had the perfect blend of theory and practicality in him. He was neither Hegel nor Marx, he was Gramsci.

After finishing his long dialogue with him, he handed him a set of papers which were papers of petition. On the first page was a letter to the President of India stating the illegal constructs of the four year program and the violation of University Grants Commissions or UGC norms of general higher education and the need for a lawful and immediate action. The rest of the five pages were columned with spaces for name, discipline of study, email address and phone number along with the obvious space for signature as it was a signature petition.

“If the pages fall short, just leave the last columned page and get two or three more photocopies of it.” Sanatan advised him.

He needed his head and then he went back to his room. Something was happening in the meantime that Rahil had not begun to anticipate. His much shrouded anonymity was being cast away and he began to grow a subject of both intrigue and discussion among his peers as well as among other students of the college, particularly those in close relations with the English department or the debating society. He was opined to be a haughty yet deeply ruminating person when it came to the issue of student rights. Opinions began to form of him and he grew an overnight repute. This became fairly overt at the day of the fresher’s party which he had genuinely forgot about since no big fuss was made about it. The reason to that could be ascribed to the fact that it was only a departmental gathering and hence was a small-scale event. Two of his friends had already confessed of their unwillingness to attend the party out of their personal malefactions. Even after such a setback, he had affirmed that he would be present at the party to buoy from the sea of graphical life he had recently found himself not waving but drowning. He got in touch with Samir, the Sonny Terry whom he introduced to the seniors wished to attend the function and so he decided that he would go as his maid.

The venue to the event was seminar hall and by the time Rahil and Samir arrived there, the room was somewhat occupied and only the last rows remained unpopulated. The row on the left was occupied mostly by boys and the row opposite to it was occupied primarily by girls and as the boys’ row was completely occupied, Rahil and Samir took refuge in the row occupied by girls. One or two of the girls did throw a bludgeoning look towards Rahil but seeing him accompanied with Samir made Rahil somehow more tolerable. It was high school all over again where the girls were conscious of their bodies around boys and the boys were busy trying to gaze at the uneasy body of the girls taking thorough advantage of this emotional disorientation of the second sex.

Rahil did not mind such discrepancies and though he saw the world through the psychological lenses, he was not a psychologist and hence never once felt the need to diagnose and treat the physiological pathologies of people around him that stemmed from deep or in more than one cases, superficial psychological causes.

It took quite some time for the program to start and the undergraduates had to sit through a whole module of sound tests and microphone adjustments followed by audio-video synchronization for presentations. The first thing presented by the seniors was an audio visual series of photos of professors who consisted of the Department of English of Sri Venkateswara College most of whom did not teach the undergraduate batch. The teachers were themselves not present and so jokes were made on their expense when the senior students started a facade mimicking some of the teachers and one or two were quite brilliant at that.

This was followed by another collage of teachers who had left the college for some reasons known only to the seniors and Rahil saw a promise of a backdrop behind each photo in the collage. After that little cognitive stimulation, the undergraduates were asked to relinquish their seats and step to the front of the room near the stage. The stage was yet largely unoccupied and only the two big speakers took much of the space of the big wooden platform. The seniors at this point reverted to the seats and sat among the first lines while the undergraduates stood in front of them like cattle on display.

“Okay, let’s try some speed dating. We are going to make two lines here.” A senior, perching on her knees over a padded chair said, and the crowd parted into two lines with loud shouts and cheers from both sides. The wavelengths of the voices and their pitch was mashed together indistinctly so that the room was a furnace of bubbling and boiling sound variegated in different parts and sides of the line. The line was mixed in terms of gender and both lines consisted of girls as well as boys. Rahil consequently thought of it much more as a speed social gathering than actual speed dating or perhaps speed dating for bisexuals but then he reminded himself of not reducing the idea of dating into strictly sexual terms and ruining the propensity of it the same way Freud ruined the greatness of psychology.

These were not demons hidden inside his mind but his friends that lounged and dined with him. He did not care of the offense they made to the outward projection of Rahil because he knew they confronted him for the very reason that he could not confront them. The ideas that arose from his sexual curiosity could be easily satiated by a mild exposure the most banal forms of intersexual or parasexual persuations and these were things Rahil guarded himself from in order to keep the libidinal force of the psyche dammed up in order to reserve the drive that doomed all men- the perversion of love. If it was anything that Rahil was terrified, petrified of, it was love in all its pure passions and wanting. He would rather be an object of hate than an object of love born out of sexual needs. He was not a pacifist when it came to satisfying sexual needs and did not abstain from adultery but still there was a fringe of personality in him that did not fit well with the idea of arrested form of satisfaction such as being in love. To him, it was a perversion as being at the bottom of another man’s anus kissing it with puckered lips to sexually stimulate him. Love, for him was pure deviance from the instincts of the sexual drives and hence he felt that dating was an activity that somehow needed a deep Freudian analysis although he had grown weary of Freudian psychology and was planning to move on to Lacan.

Through all the mindless chatter, the speed dating somehow started and Rahil saw in front of him a girl he did not know. He could not hear the question that she had asked and he knew that she could not hear the reply that he did not hear her question and the call came to change places and hence they parted with each other on completely different pages. The next one to meet Rahil was a boy from his class. A thin guy with glasses and a buck tooth, he seemed to Rahil like a very benevolent character until his eyes met the eyes of the buck-toothed character that were up to the eyebrows with arrogance. Rahil instantly felt that an introduction and a proper disposition towards him were not worthwhile.

“What kind of movies do you watch?” Rahil asked Rahmat, the buck toothed person.

“I watch war movies mostly. Born on the Fourth of July, Saving Private Ryan was a great movie.” He replied.

-I can’t stand it. Not only does he like war movie but he also like Spielberg movie. Why don’t you start genocide of all the real film lovers of the country with it, Holden Caulfield? War movies, what good are they? Show you only one side of the battle, except if it is actually a really good movie like Catch-22. Not better than the book though-

The next three to interact with Rahil were all girls one of whom Rahil knew as his stalker who accompanied the girl with the pert neck. She introduced herself but Rahil already knew her name.

“Smrithi right?” he asked.

“Don’t say that as if you don’t know.” The girl said with scintillating confidence.

“What do you think of as a winning character?” Rahil again asked.

“It would be confidence. And I know I have plenty.” She replied, as if she had an opening to his mind. It was either that or reading too many self-help books. He looked at her eye through the glasses she wore which were quite traditional rectangular thin framed glasses. There was nothing outstanding in the girl that marked her confidence. She stood sloppily, her legs unevenly shifting her weight from one leg to the other, and her arms drooping down devoid of energy like the last leaf on the tree in mid autumn. Yet her body wholly had a fundamental indivisible wave of energy that could not be differentiated. Perhaps it was the wave of elitism but he could only make inferences. Their conversation ended as they finally put an end to this absurd train of bodies giving out the steam of meaningless conversations leading up to practically nothing.

The speed dating, or whatever unnamed gesture it was, finally ended on a good note as there was a lot to cherish. Next was a small garrulous play where each undergraduate was to ascend the stage and say the most random thing about themselves. Rahil was game for it. He did not want to seem precipitous with his answer as the rest of them tried to invent arbitration as if it was such an alien abstraction. For them it probably was because they led such subservient, ordered and structured life that sheer creativity of randomness had to be imported into consciousness by means of association. When it was his turn, he climbed to the platform and got to the microphone and grabbing it by his right hand, he brought it close to his pursed lips ready to speak:

“I have already written two novels and I can speak a little German.”

“Hail Hitler!” shouted a girl from the front row raising her arms and hooting.

“Wait, a communist speaking German?” Siddharth, who was a third year student of the same discipline asked in a humorous astonishment.

“German philosophy.” Rahil answered. Others came up with answer quite entertaining and some students also revealed their fetishes to certain objects. Eventually, the event turned out to be less loathsome than he had thought and it took a turn for the interesting when the seniors started asserting their randomness in the same way the juniors had stated theirs. The loquacious seniors who knew the ways of the rich language did it well by a far extent than the new lost generation. The efflorescence of the however was the finality of the event when burgers and sweets were distributed s meals and the seniors even gave those who asked for seconds on which case Rahil asked for thirds.

In the end, Rahil returned to his room fairly happy but the opulence of a time well spent with a well-off company was now a past and his present was marked by a nightmarish ghoulish existence in a gulag which drove him closer and closer to his madness but at the same time towards the realization of his shadow as well. All was permitted inside the four walls of that place of doom. The time in his accommodation was as dreary as the time in the college was lively. Even a minute in that godforsaken place for him seemed like an era. Things were made easier only by the company he kept. Ronel had procured from his brother who lived in the same locality a guitar on which he often played tunes he knew and when Rahil became eager to learn, he taught him some basic tunes like ‘smoke on the water’ and the musical octave. Rahil was quick to catch up on it but he liked listening to Ronel play music on his guitar rather than make a mockery out of the art of music by trying himself. He still played some basic notes when he felt like plucking on the strings but it was not at all in the same league as Ronel. Meanwhile, the others also shared the musical merriment that Ronel had bestowed upon each of them equally and so a faint ray of hope supported by friendship and naïve gaiety broke out from the darkness of their dismal existence.

However, it was not to last long as with the coming of his brother, Ronel planned to relocate with his brother as it would be much economical for him that way and the move was to happen in a couple of days. From this experience of his friend which was albeit more or less in the same frame of time, Rahil apperceived from it imaginations of his own as if it were a past event. He moved through time, slipped through it, slid through it, perceiving it abnormally not with the purview of an ordinary man. His past and his future were riled with excesses of thought such that his present lay disturbed, distorted before him, after him, over him and around him. He was in a haze of hovering space-time continuum. Past and future were just spliced parts of a reel of film waiting on the table under the red light of the developing studio waiting to be integrated. It did not matter which piece was first and which was last. The sense of time was stripped in order for other things to make sense. He sat brooding with his friends with a newspaper in hand but paying little attention to it. His attention, all of it was devoured by his own need to clear out from that place and that need was amplified by the action of Ronel who was to do the very same in a matter of days. He had already started spending his nights with his brother there and his part of the room had become less of sleeping pad and more of a storage bin for his belongings. He contravened the destitute laws of the housing which clearly stated that he who lived there had no right going to another place to spend the night. Yet there were no guards to impel the rules, there were just fractured final adolescents who were all too familiar with themselves to impose such a strict regime.

-‘The battle of the spirit with the senses is the gospel of modern man’ rightly said by Sacher-Masoch. We suffer because we believe and we believe because we are weak. People wearisome of this fact refuse to believe it and find themselves looking into a void, then revert back. A few mighty heroic idiots undertake this void at the cost of falling in it and losing their preponderance of personality. What in the end do they gain? No-

In course of due time, fruits bore on the barren minds of the men living in the barracks of the army of darkness and these were fruits of solution. Ranjan and two other friends suggested Rahil that they would skip the payment of the rent of the coming month as they would shift to a new flat. Rahil in turn asked if they had looked for a flat and they answered that they were in search for a gemütlich flat which was also reasonable in price and since there were four of them, they would split the rent four ways.

Things began to brighten in the college as well. Rahil began to gain a well-earned repute, something that was unexampled in the batches before him. Seniors of different discipline approached him out of their own extension of will in all earnestness bequeathing a chat with him on various matters. As if Rahil already did not know, some of his peers pointed out the attention he was garnering and stated him as a ‘famous face in the college’.

Much of that had to do with the variety of activities that Rahil was involved in. His teacher Miss Seena had advised the magazine editorial board that he be enlisted in it as he deserved a spot with the mental provisions that he had adequately showed to the members of the editorial board he possessed.

The lectures were interesting on the fringe as usual and it was not the wholesome lectures that were interesting and stimulating but the ideas that leaked from some points of theoretical infractions as was always the case with any lecture concerning the discipline of arts. It is not the study of a rigid system of doctrines like sciences or engineering where there is less information and more chicanery. Study of arts did not entail building a skyscraper; it gave way to building a castle of the Gothic School or the Baroque. However it was rarely taught that way under the plebian education system of India and especially of his college although the professors made the best effort to create a place where the students could roam free on the pathways of possibilities and take shelter into the hut of ideas to evade the storm o platitude that blew regularly over them. The mornings became a little more tolerable as the monsoon season neared and it was almost possible to maintain the composure of the classroom without falling prey to the excessive heat that melted the body like a roll of paper in water. Between the classes, he received a massage he was able to read only after the commencement of the lecture. He opened the message which flashed on his screen.

**Meeting of the editorial board at12:30 near the audi lawns. Be there, sharp.**

This could only mean one thing and Rahil was no fool to ponder over the thought. He was selected for the editorial board and at half-past twelve he had to attend the first meeting at the auditorium lawn. But he recalled his daily debating sessions which interceded with this meeting. For a moment, he was dissevered into two; one part thought about the meeting and all its infinite possibilities and impossibilities and the other of his collocated position in the debating society and the responsibilities that came with it.

He took this quandary over to the college canteen where he was in the company of Samir and sat with him under the open sky as they took sips of bottled beverage in involuntary uniformity.

“Say Rahil, I was thinking… Will you come with me to the staff room? I have to talk to a professor about my books.” He answered.

“All right, let’s go now then.” Rahil replied and seeing that he had already finished his bottle of aerated beverage, he took him by the hand and helped him with his way to the staff room and waited there with his friend. While with his friend, he saw the professor engaged in a chat with the parents of a student aspiring for an entry into the prestigious gates that had so suddenly changed for Rahil from a sight to sore eyes to the sore to the sight of the eyes. He saw the parents plead for the entry of the child into the course that he and Samir were studying.

“With your percentages, I believe there’s nothing we can do.” The professor replied with an apologetic voice.

“But most of the colleges have already closed their admissions on account of full occupancy of seats. Please understand our situation.” The parent replied.

“Sir, you should try for Delhi College of Arts and Commerce as it has a very prestigious faculty for English as well as journalism. It still has a great many seats left. I know because I checked the cutoff list only yesterday.” Rahil answered to his prayers becoming a God the spirituality of whom was not set in their heart yet they took the leap of faith and trusted in him.

“Lad, do you know that for certain. Where exactly is this Delhi College of arts and….” The father asked.

“Commerce” Rahil completed and further added “It’s quite close to Sarojini market. I reckon it falls on the way.”

“Yes, that college is quite good and I would recommend the English faculty of that college highly.” The professor remarked.

“Yes I surely will. But there is no chance here, I mean?” the father made one last attempt to which the professor shook his head in dismissal and the family walked out wearing dissatisfied expressions on their faces.

Samir approached the professor next and the purpose of his meeting with the professor was to enquire whether the audio books for the course were available in the college library. The professor replied that he did not know and that he would find out and intimate him soon enough about it and then added that it would be better if he started looking for the audio books online in the meantime. This was also exactly suggested by Rahil when Samir had mentioned this point to him and he was also willing to sit with him through the process of finding out the book over the internet in the school’s computer lab.

Samir gave in to his suggestion and Rahil accompanied him to the computer laboratory and started searching for the books online Much to the joy of the two, they actually found most of the books and were able to download them in due time. Rahil looked at the right lower corner of the computer which showed the time along with the date in a thin meek font and he saw that the time was quarter to twelve already and he had only fifteen minutes left before his meeting. Samir insisted that he walk him to the hostel which was adjacent to the auditorium and so Rahil was glad that he could be of service to his friend. As they walked together, they talked of the many prospects of college parties and having fun in the college time and at the same time helping each other out with studies. Samir found in Rahil a true friend, one that did not bother him like the others but was always there for him at a time of need. Rahil pretty much treated him with the rural efficacy that he treated everyone with and was unaware that it had such a hypnotic effect on him.

After dropping him off at the college gate, Rahil almost dashed towards the auditorium lawn as he had seen the few members of the editorial board squat cross-legged over the grassy knoll on his way to the boys’ hostel. He came back and saw all of them present and he was the last. With heaving breaths and drooping shoulders, he stood looking down upon the rest of them with an unbroken stony gaze, the sun shining over his head and making it difficult for the seniors to take a look at his face.

“Rahil, you have finally found the time to join us. Sit down. We did not start yet so you needn’t worry. Let me take this time out to say that we are really proud to have you on board with us and we really feel special, like really…” the leader of the group replied, with his bourgeois face shining with the remnant salts of the face wash he had used that morning trying to keep the summer heat from blackening his face. He was dressed in a short kurta and had unattended long curly hair dropping and flowing at the same time. He was one of those posing hippies Rahil had caught a sight of more than once who had barely been down the rabbit’s hole of drug experimentation and already found themselves under the grip of substance abuse. One thing was inexorably clear that here as anywhere it was the reputation that had preceded the humble personage named Rahil. He did not feel inflated at the moment with his reputation being made among the elites who themselves led lives like a spider’s cobweb. The meeting started with the discussion of the works of each member who gave their submission. On that basis, two groups were divided- the basic editorial crew whose names would be featured along with their respective articles or works as well as on the first page as a member of the editorial group while the second group consisted of contributors and writers who had the sole purpose of contribution of works and had little hold or say on the nature of editing and omission and inclusion of works to be published in the college magazine. Most of the members of the editorial board of the college belonged to the discipline of English literature and these members came from the creamy portions of the class. Three from his batch were included in the editorial board as well and while it could be suspected that they had lobbied or maybe the whole editorial board was subject to the most horrible cases of lobbying, Rahil was selected solely based on his work and partly by the reputation of a battler of ideals. He also saw Smrithi and the girl with the pert pretty neck whose name turned out to be Alisha. Along with them, there were two other boys from his class, Manu and Sharan. The two girls and the two boys seemed to know each other pretty well and Rahil was the only one who knew nobody; in the crowd of familiar faces, his was the only face unknown and it did not become a subject of curiosity but that of neglect. It was sure at this point that lobbying was the general criteria for the editorial board and elites had a reservation for themselves. But if looked from another perspective, he was the one who was present there on the basis of a reservation. It did not turn out to be such a bad thing in the end as it would sound to the ears of one whose flesh shivers of fury at the mere mention of the word corruption s only the best turned out to be present there.

It came as a twist to Rahil when Alisha was not listed in the editorial board but as a writer because she had submitted her work after the deadline for those who wished to be on the editorial board. It pained the seniors, especially the transcendental hippie editor to see her not included because she was a good writer and a much better manager which explained her choosing a discipline such as economics to major in. They came around discussing the works of the people on the editorial board and the reason for selecting them. Sharan was selected for his absolutely humorous piece and the statement made Rahil remember the time when he used to write humorous articles and poetry to be delivered at school.

“I know the grammar is wrong. I wrote this piece when I was barely out of school.” Sharan remarked at a short criticism from another senior girl who was also in the editorial board on grammatical errors. On the other hand, Smrithi was awarded with mild consolation for her poetry of moving and flashing images which were more nihilistic than symbolic. When it came to the critique of his work, cheery glances were thrown at his direction but the words did not match the mood.

“Your piece was really moving. I mean what can I say? You have so much rage against the system that I think you should calm the hell down. It was really intense and scary the way you portrayed the skull bursting and bleeding to the ground and the thing with the children and compromise. It was a good four pages long so it was good.” The editor said without leaving the index of his eyesight, his face embossed with an all-too-subtle smile on his face showing that he was carried away with his reputation and the work only mattered little to him.

This, on some level offended Rahil on the premise that they did not take Rahil or who he was and was caught up in a cooked-up stereotype that Rahil had begun to embody most perfectly.

“Now after all our meetings and before leaving, we ask all of you to tell what has been going on with you recently just to end the meeting in a familiar note.” The hippie said.

‘What is this, a group therapy session’ thought Rahil to himself.

When he was asked, he gave random but cryptic replies like “I’m moving because Satya Niketan is trying to kill me…”

“What is it, sending little ninjas through your roof? How is it trying to kill you?” Sharan asked, an extension of the same ole American humor he was born into and so akin to.

“No, it is just that the pollution, the clogged drain and the black filth….And I am also involved in a moment to rescind the implementation of the Four Year Program.” Rahil replied.

“Isn’t it too late? I mean it has already been implemented and the admissions are nearly finished. I highly doubt that at this point the University would take such drastic measures as the annulment of a whole program.” Smrithi answered.

“And it is actually good that we are to be taught to fields of discipline, a minor and a major like they do in American colleges.” Sharan answered with brightening enthusiasm.

-And wasn’t I right? Yes-

“No it is actually giving you a hard blow to your main discipline courses. The minor courses are just a fad and cannot be implemented in the same scale as a proper field of discipline. In the end, it will be reduced to another heap of academic load just like this year’s foundation courses.” Alisha answered coming to Rahil’s firmament.

“But I still think it’s too late.” Smrithi repeated the statement again that among the crowd of students of the University who were under this system had started to sound more like a cliché.

“Well, better late than never and on that anecdote enough about me.” Rahil answered knowing that the conversation had titled from his personal account to a discourse open to wider subjective opinions. But none said a word more afterwards and they all parte separate ways. Rahil, checked his mobile for any messages from the debating society and was somewhat billowed to see that there were none which meant that the society had decided not to conduct any sessions that day.

He walked back towards the college library for a moment completely oblivious as to why he was doing so. On entering the college building, he stood at the college foyer befuddled by two choices-either to go to the cafeteria to have a hearty lunch that he never had or to go to the library to satiate his mental hunger. Finally, his mind under the influence of his body chose the former model of working and his deft steps covered in a fairly trodden sandal took him to the cafeteria. He took a place which was not problematic to procure at this hour of the day when students were leaving for their homes. Rahil did not have a home, he had a hell but the fires burned inside his stomach. He looked at the menu and ordered something hearty heedless to its taste or its likeness for Rahil. He just wanted to fill his stomach with grub. He took rice and curry which was abhorrent to him as it was a vegetarian meal and a pathetic one at that. But what would seem pathetic to Rahil at any other moment and would seem to Rahil as something he would never touch his lips to, now became coercion under duress. Rahil had to eat it and on the surface he disliked this helplessness as he seized the dish in front of him but his internal force could not reject it and so Rahil shifted his senses towards the positive aspects of the food- its bright color, its spicy smell and imagined devouring just these characteristics of the food and not the bland, almost bitter taste, the drab texture of it inside the mouth and the mucilaginous vegetables that seemed to come out of a man’s nose and straight into his curry.

After finishing his meal, he went to the library straightaway for some reading. It was half past two by the time he reached there and the library would close by four. In the two hours that he had to spend in the library, he was able to spend only one. He took a book on post modernity by Terry Eagleton from the sociology section. He was somewhat puzzled to find this book in that section as he reckoned it to find in the literature section. He went down to the lower floors where the reading room was and sat there solitarily. Only a handful of people were present at that late hour in the library and these were all hostel dwellers. The room was in lugubrious silence more relative to a cemetery in the night than a library. In library, one can notice the sounds of hushing silence which had a tone to it, the slight sifting of the turning of pages, the uneasy tweaks of the leg under the table and the changing of position of the other readers which made a sound of the clothed body rubbing against the wooden chair and the naked elbow and the palm against the mica-plated table. These supposed sounds that can be usually heard in the library were dead there and thus Rahil knew the meaning of the word ‘dead silence’. It was in dead silence, then, that he started to dissolve himself in the omniscience of the super-supposable theories as his bearing was lost in the endless tunnel which promised a bright light at the end of it. The quest of this light led him pages after pages into the theories but he could not grasp the fact that he was going deeper into the folds of his own episteme. And so like the temple is for the pious, the library for him became a place for transcendence, a place of worship but his subject f worship was rather an object and the object was none other than the illusion in the mirror that looked at Rahil as he looked at it. His lost mind was found by his body when a sudden urge took over him.

This was the short cringe he was very familiar with and he thought of it s almost an instinctual behavior of the body. His stomach started to disagree with him and it broke him from all his mental meditation. His oppressed body had started turning into an oppressed soul and he began to feel depraved at the futility of his state. He had to, so he did close the book, left it on the table for others to squander over though he knew that none would and started walking back to his room and out of the college campus.

It was only in the evening by five that he was properly able to take a bath as the water came only then. His life and his being had a course of sodomy of which he was always on the receiving end in these few days as his work in Delhi intensified and he was involved with the elites and the éclat. He saw them and he saw himself and he knew that they were completely alien to the concept of pain and suffering that he was in. He had to time his bowels according to the availability of water and had back spasms from sleeping on the hard-bed. He also suffered from severe sleep deprivation as those who lived in the same room as him had their classes from twelve in the afternoon while his first class started from nine in the morning. As a result, they would be up till late night and listen to music as he tried to sleep. There was a lot of love lost between Karan and he because of their separate ways of living. This rift between the two often shoved thoughts into Rahil’s mind to change his room and he gave it serious consideration once or twice. This was the time he thought about moving with Ranjan and began looking at flats but with repetitive failures.

At around six in the evening, when Rahil saw that everyone was inside the PG, Rahil asked them to congregate in the main room and said:

“Look friends, I know that you were all very supportive to march with me at the protest against FYUP but the war does not end there. There is only to move forward from there. What I am to ask you now is no great favor but a small one. These are the signature protest papers against the four year program and I need to you sign them along with filling the rest of the details. These letters will go to the President of India who is the Visitor to Delhi University and holds power over these matters. We need to make our point and we need to do it with fervidness. Here, fill these up not for be but yourself.”

Chandan took the paper from his hand and signed along with filling the necessary credentials that were asked in the paper and said “Geez Rahil, you didn’t have to make a speech out of it.”

Following him each of them signed the document with apathy and in a cloud of their own unverifiable mirth.

-Redefined faith in renovated benefaction. It is the day, the next and the peace beholds me with all its warring duality. Calls from the wild and the domesticated wilderness and wild bears in clothed figures are scarier than thinning beasts walking with downed eyes on the black road. Today is the day of celebration yet for me it is the day of celibacy. Today is the day for festiveness and festivity yet for me this day forebodes the distorted evils of bygone days remembered in a dismal state. I can anticipate nothing and I can recall nothing. I am stuck in a time capsule, buried, waiting to be dug out decades later by the young ones of an era anew. Here, as always, I will be the stranger and yet the centre of their attention. I see as they see me as I see them as they see them. It is the day of Eid, the Islamic day of celebration yet here I sit festooning the words of Homer with my words as I make notes on Odysseus’ quest through the lair of Lady Circe who turned men into pigs and locked them in her pen. Only Odysseus was the one to evade this fate. I see people everyday turn into pigs in the name of religion; I try to stop them from doing so, just like the heroic Odysseus by the figureless lady Circe which in this case is Lady Faith, Virgin Mary. And here I am, rebuked no more heroic that Odysseus after Horkheimer and Adorno reduced him to a salesman. Ho, a snoring voice; a perverse fantasy of the sleepless mind. The body shivers, not with cold but from heat. Turn the air conditioner on then. No, let it be and besides, the bill goes too high. No use of these ratings. The government tries to steal from me my hard earned money. I know that because I’m in DU- a prestigious University, a central University, no a state University and it just so happens to be a capital state. Not my fault. Foucault’s pendulum hangs over me- Michael or Léon, I do not know. ‘Go pray’ the friends and relatives say and I say ‘praise the Lord and pass the potions.’ My head is taken up by an unabated stinging singe. There is no window to look from and freshen up the soul. The soul is held just like the body but unlike the body the soul wishes to roam free. Oh, how a great a day would be, when from my body my soul shall rise free. Poetry born out of poverty, out of misery, out of desolation- a desolation row … a student should not live like that. No one should live like that. But students especially- I come from remoteness, a place that is untraceable in the smoke and sound of Delhi. I have given my consent to uphold the status of the College by my conduct but what has it done for me. One needs to look at society through the inner self and in words hastily put should ‘break the barriers between the microscopic and the microscopic, the qualitative and the quantitative’, and seek to somehow combine the two fields vision and then eventually through an individualist’s perspective should define the society and the materialistic physical reality that one lives in. This should be the aim of education for individuals who seek to live in or formulate in an ideal society. It does not demand the highest form of knowledge, directly that is to say of the arts, mathematics and the sciences. On the other hand, there should be an effort to selectively pick from above spheres of education so as to direct oneself to individuated enlightenment. One’s aim should be to cater to one’s own intellectual growth and not generalized knowledge. The unrest of student life starts from here and offshoots into physical factors then. A student should be, but is not a part of any social contract. His responsibility is not borne by anyone and yet he is to be responsible to a myriad of faculties. He is to be responsible of upholding the name of the institution where his studies the failure to do which would inevitably lead to his expulsion on grounds of indiscipline. He is responsible for the parents and the family on various grounds of both present and the future. For the present, he is supposed to be a student of considerable commendation worthy of his abilities that the family expects of him. For the future, he is responsible for the successful completion of his degree with a proper distinction. However, in many cases, this responsibility is marred by many other causes and hence falls out of the range of responsibility over which the student has grip. Although, in natural terms, the failure to attain a proper distinction is, in all cases, seen as a fault of the student and he is subjected to according utilitarian end. The other factors that blemish his case of study is not seen because of the complete neglect and the lack of the student to uphold his cause which is in turn a result of lack of a formal body willing to take responsibility of the learning student. He is also to keep himself healthy without any aid the failure of which could be fatal to the student and also cloud other responsibilities like deteriorate his capability to learn. He is also expected to keep his finances intact and in order out f what little money the family sends the student. His family, being distant from him, is not in a position to take these responsibilities that he had never before taken on his behalf and hence is reduced to the status of a mere third party. Consequently, all they can do in this matter is to provide the ward raw capital support. It is then the concern of the student to make do with it, use it efficiently for meals, books and additional variable purposes. The student is also responsible for the company he keeps because in many ways it reflects his own persona. This fact is unattended b the University though it should not be so y the powers vested in the University as a place of higher learning, academic excellence and proper intellectual development. This is one among the many unwritten and superfluous duty that falls on the institution which they are to compensate by all the means that enable them to call their institution a Central university, they fail to comprehend. The fact is more dismal and shady in the case of such elite Universities like the University of Delhi and the University of Calcutta where the students helplessly, hopelessly and cluelessly suffer the blunt end of reversion in the form of privatization of the most basic amenities, lodging and food included that ought to be a courtesy to be met by the University administration but they refrain from taking that responsibilities even though they charge a fee from the students. In accordance to the laws of economics, taking fee is a form of transaction which ascertains certain amounts of obligation to both parties involved in transaction. Fee surcharges such as student welfare fee and development fee should meet its necessitation in forms of welfare for students and also development in the same vein; alas, they are not as the bureaucratic ink of these institutions gives them the leeway to overlook the basic responsibilities that come with every potential student. Thus, the affect of a University, a place of premiere education and an institution of learning and development is reduced to a student hangout place and a library filled with books and people who have read these books- the professors. In any Central University, very little power is shared by the general body of professors and it has dropped down or one could say elevated to such drastic scales that they no longer have a say in the structure of the course. The bulk of this power of shaping education for the students is shared by the philistines who form the administrative body headed by the Principal where a teacher is reduced to a voice in classroom that has to wait in lines in front of the office for the most menial things like class-appointments, notices and paycheck. The university space ought to be much more it simply cannot be that if they lack the basic necessities and are unable to provide them. A student therefore finds himself or herself in a perplexed situation about the extent of indulgence to be bestowed upon the institution and witnessing the treatment of disposition by the University, they gradually they begin to lose their seriousness for their study and also for their university space- the latter is more prone than the former. This is not the case with Western Universities such as Harvard, Oxford etc where he students are provided along with their study, an environment that compliments that study and take the obligation to preserve that environment for the mental stimulation of the student. Hence a student of English at oxford finds himself around other great students and various activities and societies that are worth their salts as they are built specifically by students who have passion and are products, or more precisely offspring of a nurtured and formidably constructed environment where duties and obligation that befall them with the intake of every student are met with deliberate respect. Hence, what they offer to their students is a maturity in dialectical learning process free from dogmatically framed institutionalizations whereas their Eastern or Indian counterparts meet the same obligation hiding behind traditionalist dogmas and centralization of institutional power at the hands of administration and treating the students not with maturity of ideas and acceptance of their realities but with naivety. This nature of detachment throws he student into an abyss of his or her won misery without the comfort of any external source for which he or she can hold no one or no power accountable but the circumstances exist in free form which are nevertheless created by the inactivity of institution. To top that, privatization in the most rudimentary levels then leads to a mafia of underground activities to which the ignorant and structurally suspended student falls prey for the very reason that he or she is not bound or protected by any force although many force are acted upon him or her originating from the very fact that he or she is a student. This form of entropy is the source of yet another trouble to be borne by the student along with the aforesaid case of infliction-

In the next few days, Rahil was solely preoccupied with his political promises and went from person to person to get their signatures down on the paper for the protest. Many willing signatures came but a few, almost none really did volunteer for the purpose and no matter how entreatingly Rahil asked them not matter how close to them the issue was, at the very mention of a political act they felt repulsed and turned the other way. Rahil was not one to lose hope so easily and he resumed his crusade individually. The act of taking signatures itself did not take many members as one stroll around every table in the college cafeteria furnished him with around thirty to fifty signatures. But it was a little humiliating when people turned him down. In those cases, Rahil fell into debate with them and only left them when they asked him to leave rather rudely with an exasperated spirit. He himself did not know at what point he had turned such radical that he missed classes, skipped lectures, dropped the social gatherings undergraduates so cling to in order to get into a clique no matter what their status was- as long as they were in, it was all good. In his case however, it was the clique that followed him. Though he was a man alone, he had no shortage of people to go to and he was more widely known than any undergraduate student on the campus. The funny thing was that he had achieved such a status without joining any sports team and the only society he regularly associated with was the debating society which consisted of practically non-existent elites.

At one such signature protest, he was introduced by one of his friends from debate society to Amitabh, a kurta clad, thin figure with collar-length straight black hair. He walked with lazy steps and had dreamy eyes like that of a person always looking at a far distance. He approached him and talking in very personal and peculiar voice.

“Hey, you’re Rahil. Nice thing you’re doing, this activism. My name is Amitabh and I am in the panel of the DU beat newspaper. I believe you have not yet come about it?” he said.

“Oh no, I have come across more than once. I know about it and I wanted to get involved with it.” Rahil answered him, building up his confidence although it was true that he had come across the newspaper on several occasions. It also pleased him that a journalist of some sorts approached him on his own accord.

Even as the two spoke, Rahil could see that there were two other girls who wanted desperately to speak to him. He was a magnet that way and it was all explainable in Rahil’s mind. He could see that Amitabh wanted to talk to him at great length and that the girls were keeping him to talk from him with their unreasonable agglutination.

Rahil took leave from Amitabh to which both of them were disappointed as a call came on Rahil’s cell phone. He pulled it out from his pocket and saw that it was from Amit who asked him to come to Satya Niketan for a little talk. It was a bright morning and Rahil had again skipped his class that day in order to fill his last page of the signature sheet. In all his haste and excitement, he had completely forgotten to take a photocopy of the last page so that he could add more pages to it. He saw that the girls with Amitabh had talked to him for a little while and feeling that they were treated by Amitabh in a dodging manner, left earlier than they had intended though they did it on a good note. He had turned back and started walking and it was then that Rahil called to him and asked whether he would like to come with him to meet his comrades who were real communists and longtime activists. Amitabh hopped towards him and they walked side by side outside the college campus as the sun proudly shined though its brightness was somewhat dimmed by the coming clouds of the monsoon which were not that far now.

Though many people contend that communism is a vice and that the general population of India was striving forward towards development in a capitalist sense through rigid concepts of competition and survival of the fittest, it was mostly the mentality of the middle-class and particularly the middle-class that had not yet come in contact with the urban elite. The urban elite were closed Marxists as they saw communism more along the lines of a trend than a form of pure ideology, an ism. They were the kind of communists who wore kurtas no doubt, but their kurtas had cost five thousand dollars and brought from fab-India. They sat on cornerstones built over the pavements looking with dull indignity at the roads like bums or tramps but then they walked into their air conditioned braded cars after having their ‘Marxist moments’. He was neither judging them nor stereotyping them but was merely seeing things for what they were. Irrespective of how he saw things, there was an idealistic belief in him that even the coffeehouse communists had an inherent sense of praxis in them because they needed something or some form of a movement to associate to when time beckoned them with the eternal question “What do you believe in?”

“So have you read the German ideology by Marx?” Rahil asked Amitabh with brightness in his eyes that came with the mention of anything epistemological.

“I have basically not read many Marxists. I am basically not an inherent leftist. I believe in activism because it gets things done and I am a huge fan of the Beatles. They were partly communists and so I try to…kind of live their lifestyle.” Amitabh briefly explained.

Rahil gave an unusual laugh which was followed by a very toned, sweet and handsome chuckle of Amitabh that put things into perspective.

“You’re not joking?” Rahil asked him.

“No… It’s hard for me to put in words but let’s just say basically that I cannot miss my coffee at Starbucks and my Belgian shots at Café Coffee Day.” He replied.

‘And that is why he is famous with the ladies.’ Rahil thought to himself.

They finally met Amit and Rahil introduced Amitabh to him only as an editor of the DU beat and not the Leftist that he had claimed to be. Rahil saw the two of them getting along for a little while in which Amit was giving the other one an ideological talk, something that made Amitabh run away at that very instant. He measured his fair distance away from them so that he would not have to meet the dark eyes of the newspaper editor who begged for mercy as a prisoner does when he is about to be guillotined. Amit asked him to write more with a somewhat subaltern pen and use language and subject matter that was not just elitist. Rahil could see that Amitabh did not take kindly o his respect and in reply, he turned his head and frowned through his deep thick brows the other way.

Wearily they both talked to each other and this weariness was brought on by Rahil who foolishly sought to increase the circle of activists in the University. He was on the prowl to create a separate radically leftist student union free from the right wing centrism of the Delhi University Student Union which was rotten as the Indian democratic system itself. To create that, he mixed all the ingredients he had in his hands in a hastily boiled broth. The result was the effusion of froth from the boiling pot and the potion for that time remained incomplete. Rahil however listened to them with laconic questions and answers which were sparse and both preceded as well as succeeded with blanks of silence. After few more minutes of talk, Amitabh let the two hard-liners for freedom alone and walked along the road that led to his own personal utopia studded with numinous psychedelic ideals of ‘imagining all the people living life in peace.’

“Some company you keep. Where do you find these characters and goofs?” Amit asked Rahil with such seriousness to which Rahil felt that a smart comment would be out of bonds.

“I thought he would be serious.” He replied, finally coming up with some sort of a reply.

“Look, I’ve told you a dozen times. *These* people are never serious. They think they are serious and they appear to be serious but they can never be serious. He who has not tasted the soup cannot tell if the salt is right just by looking at a cookbook. Try to understand the dynamics of it. That is why I keep advising you to refrain from giving an ideological preaching which will attract only these kinds of flies.” The serious man replied and Rahil met his glance asking for forgiveness. For a minute Rahil felt a sadistic joy in his glance as he saw Amit meekly but then in a poof of a moment that particular state was lost and he did not give much thought to it. They parted on a good note. Then next thing Amit did was close down on Rahil and again give his speech on theory and oppression and he had heard that speech so many times that he had a developed a certain amount of resistance to it. But he did feel the cool gist of it as he too came in the category of the oppressed and no matter how elite a company he kept he did go home to a myriad of his own problems of basic necessities and suppressed wants. After their talked distilled, Rahil handed him the completed signature papers and Amit’s sore dark eyes that were tired from all the traveling in the crowded metros and buses grew lighted at the sight of the hundreds of signatures that showed solidarity to their movement.

“It’s very nice! Exemplary! Think if only we could convert all of these signatures into proper masses who would hit the streets and agitate. Think of how it could change not just the course but the whole system.” Amit said, his eyes lit by an ideological fire, the fire that burned in all men, in some as ambition, in some as religion or faith, in some as lust or passion but in him as the harnessed an dammed up energy of the wave that would soon overflow its barriers and change all that needs to be changed and cast out all that needs to be cast out. He looked up with a last upturned stare as if to ask whether there was something else to talk about.

“What have we planned ahead?” Rahil asked him. He turned towards him at the mention of the word ‘we’ in that sentence that depicted perfectly his level of involvement with the student organization. At that moment Amit knew that Rahil was his for the taking.

“Come to the meeting tomorrow at North Campus. Things will be discussed there concerning the matter at hand. You will get to meet some other senior members as well.” He said and started walking towards the bus stop to board a bus to the nearest metro station. He was humble in his action yet strong in his outlook.

Rahil walked back to his own room and spent the whole evening and the consecutive night locked up inside. To his joy, the next day was Tuesday which was holiday for him. He sought to take his trip alone but he was contacted by Shashi that day along with three others of his college was going to attend the meeting. He tagged along with them and traveled in a bus that led them straight to North Campus. Though the metro would have been faster, this made for a much cheaper means of travel and a much concretized one as well. By the time they reached North Campus, Shashi started getting calls from Amit and the other members of the Party asking him to hurry up and join the meeting as soon as possible. Shashi, Rahil and the three others walked to the arts faculty and on reaching thee, Shashi called Amit and asked where the meeting took place. They directed him to a room inside the arts faculty in the branch of the political sciences department. The infrastructure of most of the North Campus was archaic but it was well-maintained. There were arched entrances and high standing columns made out of sandy bricks that were whitewashed only externally. Rahil saw them only with a passing view as he was on his way to his destination.

There was a small classroom where the meeting had already started There was a small crowd most of whom seemed uninterested and topics idly among the concerned members of the group. Rahil went inside surrounded y the South Campus clique. They sat in a group; the nucleus to that group was Shashi and Rahil was the electron most loosely bound to it and sat in a corner of the backmost seat. The meeting, that Rahil thought had begun, had not yet even started and what followed their entrance was a tradition. A book was passed to them in which they had to sign in their names with their colleges and their respective phone numbers. This was a form of roll-call for them and to identify those present. By the time the book came to Rahil, the page that was opened was filled to the bottom and only the little white segment outside the margin was left. Instead of turning and writing on the other page, Rahil signed his name on that white space and passed on the book to a handsome air, almost pale guy with brown hair like a foreigner, medallion, denim shirt, denim jeans, leather armlet and whatnot and an expression to top all that up who did the favor for him, the favor of turning the page and filling the other page with his own name. He caught Rahil’s attention in an odd way and so Rahil leaned over to see his name and college. “Salim Ali” was his name that he wrote in that paper followed by his signature and he studied in Zakir Hussein College. That college brought back memories too.

It was followed by a calling out of names and college in an informal fashion just so that everybody knew everybody even if it was on a basic level.

“All right, now that we are all finished with the formalities, let’s discuss the topics at hand. We have our AISA Delhi University Unit President Veda Prakash who wants to brief you all a little on the nature of our protest and its roots and origins and also give you some facts on how we are currently tackling the issue.” A boy said, standing from his seat in front of the room along with three with others, one of whom was Amit and the other was a short sure girl whom he later found out to be Natasha. The firm president stood his ground and talked and talked of the cause from its nascent stages. He talked of the many specifications that the DU administration failed keep which made the four year program by law illegal. He spoke with the angst of a true leader whom everyone had to follow not out of compulsion or some instinctual force that was out of bounds of reason or rationality but the virtue of reasonableness and rationality. His speech seemed to be a proclamation from the highest spheres of human sanity and not the subjective case of human sanity which differed from culture to culture and from one age to another but the objective obvious sanity that all men adhered to. This led to his speech sounding too idealist and utopian but the fact that it gave rise to a whole movement which had propelled to such great measure was a mark on its realistic ability as well.

His voice suffered variations, his tone grew from dull monotonous to foaming rhetoric but he never once moved from his position and all the animation that one could see, feel or hear was only internal as if felt in the form of an out of body experience. He gargled out facts with his tongue on fire. They had already pleaded the case to Supreme Court where it was fought with all legal aid, lawyers and whatnot. His face was ashen all through the speech, bearded, heavy, thin and plain. His shape was bent his ideals were not. Rahil had not imagined that he would be in the company of such extraordinary men. They were a mark apart from all else he had ever had the pleasure of meeting, his friends in Port Blair, his friends in Delhi, his professors, his school teachers in Port Blair, his principal in Port Blair, his principal in Deli whom he had only the diluted opportunity to see in the orientation program. It was all a thing of past. Rahil sat there listening to the poesies which were not quite that but to him it was no different than Shelley or Keats or Shakespearean sonnets about love and the veneration of age. He saw literature begin from a point where there was nothing to write to and this man, like a God descended from heaven gave them ideas. Time was not invented as of then and universe was all blank and dark and unmanned and unearthed. Only he was to be looked up to and not he as a person or a God because for Rahil, he was a God of himself; no, this man standing there was the entity that could not be understood in the absolute sense and if he could be understood, all the facts and the mysteries of the universe would be understood and all the philosophical complexities of the absolute could be understood. He was the point of everything in that distanced, solipsistic moment of that particular present and no further. But that present moment lasted and stretched to every second and breath that that particular present was constituted of.

His speech ended on an abrupt note but it did not, by any way lessen the impact it had on Rahil. Rahil was practically dazed by his ideas that he had brilliantly put forward all through his speech. He went back and sat in a chair among the other senior members. Then suggestions from the students sitting there were asked regarding the actions to be taken on this matter. There were very few volunteers willing to give their thoughts. Rahil saw the opportunity of time and gave his suggestion, trying not to make a big speech of it.

“I personally think we are at a point in our struggle where we are facing a veiled authority whose brutality is not visible to us yet ineluctably felt. You say there is a shortage of manpower but I see all the manpower we need whenever I turn my eyes towards JNU. So, I believe the time calls for popular violence of some form not in a manner of intimidation but an attempt to antagonize the authority. We need to take some militant measures to make sure that the future of our university is safe. I know this will put us in a position of jeopardy but I do not see it as a point of alienation as long as we have a right cause on our side. After all, a minority with the right ideas is not a minority.” Rahil said, gulping after the final words, making the words sound final.

“The idea of violence is always bad even if it is a case of popular violence. This is not the way we do things here. Agitation is necessary to peacefully appease the masses into action. Direct action in many ways limits their involvement and torments the cause with the risk of its dissociation from the general public. You speak of the significance of the cause as a point of attachment but as soon as they see things turn messy, they would turn to the authorities, in this case the college administration for some stability. After all, they are undergraduate students. This is not Paris where the students have a liberated sense of right and wrong. And as for the involvement of JNU, they are doing the best they can with us. That being said, they have many issues of their own and with their elections coming up soon, I hardly believe they will be of much help to us. Besides that, our issues are something with which we will have to get the people studying in our University on our side ourselves. That is a task exclusively for us to do.” Natasha explained to him with some detail, being aided with words by another person sitting beside her.

The meeting finally ended and all the people were making their way out. Most of them knew each other and were indulging each other in gratifications of handshakes and dearly embraces. Rahil was taken by his South Campus clique headed by Shashi and they huddled around him with smiles plastered on their faces about the question he had posed. The others took him in seclusion and explained to him that there is a certain degree of moderation required even for those going down to the road of rebellion in order to be pragmatic. One of them, Mohan, a tall, well-built, wavy haired and abundantly bearded fellow pursing his doctoral degree asked him if he had read Lenin’s One Step Forward Two Steps Back to which Rahil replied that he had not. He resolved that he would as soon as he went back to his accommodation. He would download a copy from the Marxist Internet Archive and read it. ‘Probably, I may find it in my college library’ thought he to himself. His seriousness regarding the ideology and regarding the cause was concretized to such a measure that even the others knew he would stand the test of time and toil. He was readily taken to be one of their own and with the bash of his youth he was even more vigorous in his determination. He was given three big bunches of pamphlets to distribute and create an air for the organization. He took it all whole heartedly though it was too heavy for him to be traveling around with. Shashi helped with the load till the metro station, and helped him board the metro along with the big bunch of freshly printed pamphlets still warm and the ink on it still giving off a specific scent. On boarding the metro, he immediately placed the load on the floor and sat by its side. He was so exhausted by the task of brining the load from Arts Campus that he felt a burning need in his muscles to sit down albeit it was frowned upon by the metro authorities. He folded himself under his arms and saw nobody also letting nobody see him. It had barely been a month or two since he came to Delhi and he had become a bum in the eyes of the others who saw this ragged young man with long hair, sweaty back, folded wrists over his shook head and his faded jeans.

Whence the metro stopped at AIIMS metro station thence stood the task of taking that big heavy pile of pamphlets to his destination. He disembarked the metro the highest degree of difficulty he had felt in his life so far and by the time he got to the bus station, the weight of that pile of flyers seemed to him like a ton and his whole body was writhing in sweat, his muscles bilging spasmodically and his face dripping with hot sweat blackened by the urban ball of dust and pollution. The only bus that was in sight was a rickety small bus of the oldest kind, a metal moribund box with a motor and seeing no options in bound, Rahil got on it with his shoulders rising and falling like the highest waves of ocean as he loaded the bus with his weight and the weight of the bunch of paper. The only thing that was soothing along the bus ride was the immutable twilight of dusk, a precursor to a beautiful and majestic night with all its mystical fantasies that one can only live in a world of dreams or of dreary longing for sleep with dispensed senses. He saw the sights passing by scantily light in a color that seemed o him burning purple and the sound of the objects, the locomotives and the people zipping past him. For a moment, he was relieved from his earthly pain but the suffering of it still lingered along with a strange feeling of lonesomeness. The big question hung around him: Why was he here? The bus was almost empty and filled only by a few empty faces, expressionless, lifeless futureless that clasped the bars of the window with their beaten hands desiring to be one with the ever growing glamour of the city. Alas, all they had coming to them was just another anonymous end of day in their small homes. Knowing all this threw Rahil in great discomfort. His pain was nothing compared to theirs for their pains were elongated, stretched by the experience of their age. At least, he was discovering great truths and experimenting with it. All they had was a chance to live their lives completely with guaranteed anonymity. Then the bodily pain was starting to come back to Rahil as he saw his destination nearing. It was hard for him to see in the dark. He saw a familiar landmark that he was nearing to, an overpass followed by a pavement. He immediately neared the exit of the bus and as the bus roared to a stop, he dismounted it and looked forward with a leaning glance, his hand resting on the big bundle of flyers that now stood n the pavement.

To his horror, he saw that the sights were completely different. He remembered passing the Hyatt Hotel before getting off from the bus. ‘Then how am I led astray from my path?’ he wondered in complete desolation of the growing night and the defeat that he was to carry the load all the way to his accommodation from such far distance. He took a deep breath to remove all grief from his senses. He did not mind the air growing dark nor did he feel the biological phenomenon of his body sweating which wetted him all over. Relief had come but there was still a long way to go. He lifted the weight to his right shoulder and bent his back a little to displace the effect of the weight accordingly like a skilled laborer. He looked around and saw unfamiliar sights in the midst of constantly familiar landmarks. There was a lot of walking to do. He took up his load walking from one bus stop and measuring the distance to the other, which seemed conquerable in sight but actually forewent from his sights. His two worlds- the one he saw and the one that he was in, did not match with each other. It was as if an illusion of him existed in that world in which he walked, a mere mirror image of that was just a reflection of the Real Rahil. People perceived his reflection as his person and the actual Rahil was latent in an elsewhere parallel universe. He walked along the pavement of one vast road. A thing came to his mind. It was the ‘Travelogue on Indian Terrains’- a book he had proposed to write about his travel from his hometown to Delhi, and Kolkata and Chennai where he had once been. The lines came clearly to the pages of his memory.

-They say Delhi is a city that never sleeps. Why would they? They got the sundown at eight in the night!-

-Delhi is a city that never sleeps, yet Delhi is a city that’s always sleeping-

-More than ten exquisite cars in a square mile on South Delhi, but not a single political poster in square kilometers-

-Staring through the glassed corner from a bourgeois South Delhi café, my eyes start to venture for ‘Dilli’, the land of the poets and the abode of the Bohemian intellectuals-

-Delhi is a place only of outward beauty and of inner wretchedness, personal malevolence and emotional sorrow deep-seated and hardwired in anyone or anything that has lived and breathed in the polluted, dark, gloomy, and outright foul air effervescing from the harrowed asphalt ground like fumes of repugnance from the sulfurous red walls of hell-

-The emotional detachment the place gives you is insurmountable; it leaves you aghast as you watch the wide, ever-widening roads on all four sides zapping with fast cars, each of them as expensive as lacking in care for the human form that walks along the pavement, or tries to cross the road, and even on a zebra crossing finds no solace-

Resounding in his snippets of wisdom, he walked along the dim road momentarily brightened by the freezing traffic at certain moments on a red signal. Now he could see familiar shop under the partial glaze of a clabber of lights in the nearby Gurudwara hanging from its corners of its minarets. He knew he was now bound for home or the closest thing to it- a roof under his head. He was not thankful for it but he had to make-do with it. Here he could see the students sitting and hear their all too familiar pitter-patter. He saw the enclosure which was the Satya Niketa bus stop and turned rightwards from it to enter the road opposite to which stood his campus. He looked his campus which appeared eerie in the dark- empty and lifeless, somnambulistic silence. Now he came down to the alleyway which led to his PG and walked towards the stair, climbing it, opening the door and dashing towards his room, the weight on his shoulders giving him one last push under the Earth before he finally un-shouldered the heavy pile, the bottom of which was soiled with mud and his sweat that had formed between his shoulders and the pile along his grueling odyssey. After doing so, he fell onto the mattress which was an unjust name befitting its nature till he felt the need to get up and take a bath which was no sooner. In a frantic pace then, he sat down with a book in his hand that he had issued from his college library and put the silence of his mind from exhaustion which was seldom into good use. He was manically reading ‘The Dialectics of Enlightenment’ by the Frankfurt School philosophers Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer for its ingenious critique of the hero Odysseus. After a night that that exhaustive both physically as well as mentally, the next few days seemed to be modus lacunae.

In the subsequent days, another society revealed its auditions; this was the English dramatics society for which Rahil had already given his name. Later that day after college, Rahil was walking from the campus on the road that led to the auditorium and stopped near the botanical garden to enter the garden though the sight was not much to look at. The names of the plants were all wrong and mixed up. He sat in the tranquil peace of the garden for almost an hour as he had nothing else to do. He despised walking that putrid road that led to his PG and wanted to avoid it as much as possible. He would never get used to it. In the garden, he sat on a bed under a shed and watched a few workmen do regular mending jobs around the small garden after which they sat on the far corner of the bench where a table was kept and broke bread with each other talking about the day’s work and the work that was to follow and with that they talked of causal family matter and general topics. Rahil felt a complete transparency between himself and the people who unknowingly accompanied him. He was nothing to them except a person and they probably did not even see him sitting in that corner and looking with an unbroken stare towards the veered rows of potted plants with red, green and brownishgreen leaves.

After spending an hour or so there, he rose up to walk out of the college but something in his soul ticked him to walk in the opposite direction towards the auditorium and the college hostel of which he had not been a part to walk on the greener side of the grass, videlicet. As he neared the building of the boys’ hostel, he saw, seated under the shade of a tree in the soft grassy ground, Arjun squatted with his friend and automatically waved o him with a sound to catch his attention. Arjun instantly saw him and gestured him to come to him for a little chat. He went and saw that seated on the green grass further away from Arjun and his friend was another friend of Arjun with whom he was having an interesting conversation.

“How now Rahil, what are you doing marauding about the college after its closing time?” Arjun asked him.

“I was just passing the time. You gotta do whatever you gotta do to pass the time, right?” he replied with a full smile.

“But you’re a celebrity now, a political sensation and with the elections coming near, you must be busy.”

“No, Delhi University elections are the least bit of my concern. Besides, I don’t believe that elections are the way to go for a proper progression of a society. To a great extent, elections fragment a mass of people from direct involvement into the decision of government making.”

Here, Arjun’s friend hopped in:

“Well, that is the Marxist way but in India even the Marxists have gone for parliamentary representation and taken the bureaucratic course.” He said.

“Yes, but in doing so, they have alienated the bulk of labor and farmer population. Though there is a need to create a vanguard party with a unionist approach for the fortification of worker rights, it is still not feasible to do it in the parliamentary tradition with a capitalist economy.” Rahil replied.

“That’s what the Naxalite rebels are doing, trying to rid India of its capitalist economy, more or less.”

“More or less…”

“You know what I think” Arjun’s friend said and then added “there ought to be a proper amalgamation between the two ideologies; one cannot work alone without the aid of the other.”

“Well, it did not work out for India so well.” Rahil replied.

“Nothing works in India except poverty, corruption, greed and middle-class mob mindedness.” Arjun replied and then added “Well, you know seeing how the election is almost on us and all, I want you meet someone. This is Krishna.”

He gestured to the boy wearing the white shirt sitting at a distance from him and smiled when his name was mentioned. He closed in on the group and extended his right hand towards Rahil. He shook Krishna’s ebony hand and shook it. He, like Arjun’s friend lived in the hostel. Rahil knew that Krishna, like Arjun was politically colligated. He saw in his eyes, a well-natured man who wanted to be in politics not because he wanted power but he was somehow out of hypnotic attraction or a play of circumstances caught in it and now that he was entangled in it, an affinity had grown in him towards the bondages that held him circumstantially. It was kind of a situational Stockholm syndrome. He met him and this was first among a series of meetings that were to follow between Rahil and Krishna. Seeing as how their talk reached a final end, Rahil asked leave from the rest of the group and went back to his PG.

The wind blew hard and it meant that the monsoon beckoned and was only a day or two away from granting the hot grounds its generous showers. The evening came down much too early and around six there was darkness. Nature had started to regain its constancy over the man-made Delhi. Rahil stayed in his room and talked with his friends about moving out. They had started searching apartments and other flats to live. They had confirmed many flats with reasonable rents and were trying to narrow it down to one. Rahil was intent in moving but he was involved in so many activities that he always ended up outside the circle of his friends who had the intent to move out. Even later that night as the group planned among themselves to go look at another flat, Rahil sat with his mobile phone checking his emails. Out of the many spam emails and unnecessary notifications and alerts, one message caught his attention concerning the English dramatics society and this was a list of five monologues out of which the participants had to memorize, stand and deliver only one.

“Are you coming or not?” Ranjan asked. He was the first one to become pregnant with the idea of moving out even before moving out, probably because out of all rooms, his room was the worst. It was a very small room without a toilet. It was like a Japanese room with sliding doors isinglass walls on the same side of the door while the other three walls were concrete. There was barely enough room to properly insert a fan in the ceiling and the only two sources of air were a small rotating fan that could only provide for the person on the right side of the room and the air-conditioner which was too expensive to be turned on for more than an hour.

“I cannot come. I have to memorize these lines for my audition tomorrow.” Rahil replied.

“You always do that, man. Be with us or be at the peril of being left out.” Neeraj mentioned from the back. It was an assault, a direct intimidation.

“How can you say that, man? Look, at me!” Rahil grabbed his wrists and turned Neeraj to his direction. Neeraj had on an expression of befuddlement and Rahil could see that he took little offense of this act.

“No, he’s right, Neeraj. You shouldn’t say these things. We are to stay together and these petty things should not come between us.” Ranjan said, taking the role of the Voice of Reason.

They left without him as he picked the dialogue he was going to enact. There were five dialogues in all, and two of them were from Tarantino movies. Rahil hose the one from the movie Pulp Fiction delivered by Samuel Jackson in the final scene of the movie. He had seen the movie many times and always came close to memorizing the dialogue but never could get the words quite perfectly right. He jumbled words in such a way that the harmony remained the same but some phrases fell out of meaning due to its misplaced position. This time he had to get it right. He saw some edification was made in the dialogue, the curses were removed and the grammar was rebuilt to make it a soliloquy. He was not going to follow all that. He gave close reading to the text, broke it down into various parts trying to get into its fundamentals. He was creating an automatism, an intuition which would debar the positing wall between acting and being. For that, he needed the sense in its assent. He looked for it both externally in the order of things and in the bents of the body the harmony of which would create the true act rather than ‘acting’ an as well as the internally at the collective unconscious that would automatically correspond to the inner mind or the soul of the very writer itself who wrote it for the character. In that way, he was drinking the water straight from the source and getting rid of the rusty pipes that befouled the pure purge of water.

Suddenly his stomach churned alerting him that he was in need of supper. He uprooted himself from the bed on which he forever sat and went for his drawer to take his wallet out of it and glance over the cash he had left. He looked at the cash. There was a lot so he did not fret. The night came fast and suddenly the door opened. It was the landlord asking for the month’s rent. Rahil had the cash in his wallet so he gave him the cash. Now he was financially bankrupt as the card his mother had given him did not work. She sent her the new card which was on the way but it would still take two days’ time to get to him. He only had around ten rupees in his wallet out of which he was to survive for two days. He went down from his room on the street looking for cheap food. Just like that he was on the street and nothing was close in sight. He had to have something nutritious or he thought he would fall ill. The first thing that came to his mind was glucose biscuits but seeing as how they were sweet, he dropped the option looking for other savory snacks. Finally he narrowed it down to something that was cheap and nutritious though it was not standard. He went to a peanut stall and bought peanuts worth five rupees which was given to him in a medium sized cone of paper. He ate it with judiciousness and then returned to his room. This followed for the next two days till the ATM card finally arrived. His half-filled stomach was kept him from a sound sleep and it was a hard night that followed the next morning.

The next morning was easy for him to cope with in terms of gastric desires as he satiated his stomach with a cup of tea at the college canteen. He had prepared much for this day as there was much to be done this day. He had to attend his debating society sessions just after his audition for the English Dramatics Society. It was also in the college seminar hall. He went in and sat in the first just like he had done for the debating society audition.

It was like the scene was all set for him to act and he had to do nothing about it. His turn came first in accord that he was able to perform and able to perform he was most brightly. A void came to him as he assembled the moments of the scene on the stage.

-My phone becomes my gun. I just don’t dig on swine, that’s all… Pigs are filthy animals. I don’t eat filthy animals. Pigs sleep and group in shit. That’s a filthy animal. I ain’t gonn’ eat… How about a dog? A dog eats its own feces. I don’t eat dog either. Yea, but do you consider a dog to be a filthy animal? I wouldn’t go so far as to call a dog a filthy animal but they’re definitely dirty but a dog’s got personality. Personality goes a long way. Assumed by that rationale, if a pig had a better personality, he’d cease to be a filthy animal, is that true? Well, we’ ad to be talkin’ about one charming motherfucking pig….. If my answers frighten you Vincent, then you should cease asking scary questions….. Let’s get to the point. What am I/ Where am I? Up. U.P. Say, bitch, be cool! Tell that fuckin’ bitch to chill! Chill that fucking bitch out! Chill! Alright now then, be on point, on guard. Sit, on a chair. Pull ne if there isn’t one already. Seated be it. Deep breaths put you in a hotel on a sunny L.A morning, or afternoon maybe. Do you read the bible, Ringo? I say, with dark eyes not serious, casual, stunned and dazed after witnessing a divine intervention and the occurrence of a transitional period. Well, there’s this passage I got memorized, Ezekiel twentyfiveseventeen…. The path of the righteous man is beset on all sides by the inequities of the selfish and the tyranny of evil men. Blessed is he who in the name of the Charity and Goodwill shepherds the weak through the valley of darkness for he is truly his brothers’ keeper and the finder of lost children. And I will strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger those who attempt to poison and destroy my brothers, and you will know I am the Lord when I lay my vengeance upon you. I’ve been sayin’ that shit fo’ years. And if you heard it, that meant yo’ ass. I neva gave much thought to what it meant. I just thought it was a cold-blooded shit to say to a motherfucker b’fo I popped a cap in ‘is ass. But I saw some shit that’s more than make me think twice. Shift position, mildly, still easy. See, now I’m thinkin’, gulp, maybe it means you’re the evil man an’ I’m the righteous man and mista’ nine millimeter here, point to the mobile gun only with an eye, he’s the shepherd protecting my righteous ass in the valley of darkness. Or it could mean, squint eye, you’re the righteous man, point at the crowd, mildly, and I’m the shepherd and it’s the world that’s evil and selfish. Now I’d like that…but that shit ain’t the truth. Draw mild breath, hu… the truth is…you’re…the wea-k…and I’m the tyranny….of evil men. Draw closer to the audience, be seated still lean towards them. But I’m tryin’ Ringo, I’m tryin’ re-al hard…to be the shepherd. Silence, the gun clicks as the hammer turns back. Go-

For a moment, Rahil had lost himself finding who, what how and where he was only later, after his performance. There was a silence, followed by a loud applause. The silence was well-deserved, the applause seemed bawdy. A good actor takes leave in complete silence as though nothing at all had happened. Theatrics is for the showy He thought he muddled phrases again and spoke in a murmur but the low tone was needed for better delivery. He walked out of the hall confused whether he had given a deserving performance or not. This was followed after a while by the debating session. The undergraduates were briefed about a college-hosted tournament that was going to be held sometime next week. A lot of preparations were to be made. The undergraduates had to be prepared for the tournament which meant they had to be educated about all the debatable topics in different spheres- ethics and morality, economics, international relations, historical time-set debates and various other fields.

The undergraduates were taken to the bigger classrooms which were usually assigned to commerce classes as they were a batch of great numbers. The classroom was like a lecture hall. Though there were few students, the seniors chose this room for better presentation on their part. Here they got the juniors acquainted about the technicalities of debating. The first among then was the definition challenge which was a case for the opposition to come up with on grounds when the government, in a parliamentary debate either narrows the scope of the debate in favor of the motion to such an extent that there is no proper opposition case left to make which is called squirreling or in the case when the government hides behind a tautology, a statement or a case that is undisputed. The seniors, Siddharth among them stated that there were more instances of squirreling in definition challenges and instances of a tautology based definition challenges were rare. Next they moved to assigning students in batches concerning different topics. Rahil was assigned international relations just for kicks. The seniors knew that there was a lot he knew about the international matters and concerns, about Syrian conflict, about NSA and its enmity with Edward Snowden, about Arab Spring, about the various aspects of US commerce that he had so efficaciously borrowed from his readings of Chomsky but the problem with him was that he was a heavyweight critic of Americanism and capitalism itself. His aspect was wholly socialist and he saw no middle grounds to the resolution of conflicts between the state and the citizen and only saw a revolution as the means to put an end to all political and socioeconomic vice.

“The Delhi University debating circuit, in the end, is not a machine. They are people, people with proclivities towards things, with opinions and bents. So in any case don’t go against the current because if the match would draw close, they would give the final decision to the team of that followed the line of thought to their liking. So if we take the case of Naxalbari…Rahil, say I propose of a peaceful appeasement of the rebels through government policies rather than operation Greenhunt and other military tactics. What opposition can you give me?” Siddharth asked Rahil, leaning over the table set for the lecturer while Rahil along with two other members of his group sat on the first bench.

“Well, the Naxalies are more than driven by necessity at this stage. I’d say they are politically or better yet ideologically invested in their cause. They would not back down until their cause, which is the cause of the common man is resolved and settled and a certain form, if not total, of equality is restored.” Rahil replied.

“Okay…Okay. But consider this, behind their ideology and their cause or whatever, there is an underlying need. As you say, an equality. If we can warrant that for the Naxalites, perchance there is a means of peaceful coexistence without struggle.” Siddharh tried to resolve.

Rahil saw his attempt in trying to create a middle-ground for the case which, at first, he deplored and threw his back to his seat.

“The very idea of Naxalite organization and when I say organization I do not mean a group but a means to organize living, the very root of their guerilla traditionalism is based on struggle. And there is no alternative in either the redistribution land system or the reservation system or the rural employment guarantee schemes or the unemployment allowance scheme that has had viable impact on rural discontent and so where the very fundamentals, the bricks and cement of this method of peaceful coexistence that you so highly speak of?” Rahil questioned in return.

“See, then even the Maoist entity is void of a proper alternative to the existing system. If they had, our current system would not be in effect and they would not be branded by the media and the police and even by the general ignorant population as terrorists. But if effective measures are taken up to cope with the need of rebellion, not in the sense to curb the need but to appease the need, would not then the very rebellion be peacefully resolved?” He asked Rahil. It was a question that haunted Rahil and though he knew the answer the correct answer to this question, he kept it to himself for lack of proof.

“Oh yes, no it will.” Rahil replied.

“See, there you have it. There are many Indian political and social issues as well that you need to prepare yourselves up with just like this Naxalite issue.” Siddharth said proudly, having the confidence of a job well done. They were dismissed afterwards but out of the bond grown between the members of the debating society, they thought to meet again at the subway restaurant that was just on the opposite side of the college.

‘The perks of studying in an urban city University…’ Rahil wondered thoughtfully.

All of the others went in with surety in their faces and confidence in their breasts but Rahil fluttered, like a goose flits about with rapid gasps of breath, about to be slaughtered. The thought, propagating to action was seized him unconsciously. It was as if he was made known of a terminal illness with which he was ailing. It was like a draught of a pint of raw ether that he used to consume in his idle days in Port Blair and the similar sensation betook him, swooped him off his feet, the similar distaste and the disinterest in the surrounded environment, the similar swirl of scenery. He was with a crowd that huddled around many seats joining them in a union to keep things in discussion but the nature of discussion was general and casual.

They thought to play party games in which Rahil, though reluctantly, was an active participant however the activeness or the participation could have been feigned. Nevertheless, they believed that he was having a great time and he led himself to believe that he was having a great time. They spent a good two hours and most of them ordered something or the other but not all. Rahil could not order because he had only twenty rupees in his wallet and was well aware of this fact. The union ended when they took themselves out of the franchise restaurant and onto the street from where they had entered, and then for Rahil it was like a moment that just never happened. It could have been a void, an imagination born out of fancy or a dream space that Rahil could easily negate. There were no actual evidences for Rahil that could put him at the scene with complete accuracy. Of course, there was the company of Rahil who were with them also on the sidewalk but they could be false and Rahil could refuse to believe their subjective visions and opinions or simply they could be talked to into forgetting about all of what happened inside that Subway restaurant. Of course, if all else failed, there was mass hypnosis.

In the pavement, all else except Rahil and Hesiod were woebegone and homesick and so they headed back home for other social inunctions which were out of custom for Rahil and Hesiod because Hesiod lived in the college hostel and had selective friends while Rahil wanted to run away from the only roof he had over his head in a strange city which pointed towards a sociopathic tendency from the perspective of the bourgeoisie science of psychiatry.

-For the rich, it is sessions and for the poor, it is bouts of madness. The rich prize their insanity by calling eccentricity and for the poor, the very same becomes madness…Tells you everything there is to know about cross-cultural differences-

“Say, let’s take a walk.” Hesiod said to Rahil and they both walk along the road opposite to college. The locality was well-known to Rahil and Hesiod as a box is well known to a cat that dwells in it. But unlike the cat, the acquaintance did not domesticate them and in turn made them wilder and on that note they were alike. Hesiod posed around as a Marxist and the people did grant him the status of a Marxist thinker which was an emotional trophy for him. Rahil could see from his conversations that he had a very big ego he was trying to build and work highly towards its preservation. So far Rahil saw him not as the hypocrite everybody had claimed that he was. They talked of books and Rahil found out that he was well-read for his discipline of study which was history. At the conclusion of their talk, Rahil saw the promise of a friendship between the two which was deeper than the general familiarity they had as members of the same group. This sense of deepness he did not share with his members at the student Party or even among his roommates. He could see that Hesiod traced the same line of thought as followed by him and he felt highly of that. Hesiod was the beacon of illumination for Rahil whose light of life was dimming with each tide of time as it wafted over Rahil with its thunderous might and roaring sound.

They promised each other for another private meet which was highly doable as they lived in close proximity. However the act of a meeting required time and it was a resource that Rahil, being involved in so many endeavors, had little to offer to Hesiod. There was no rest or period of stagnancy for him as something or the other always involved him and he had more than two or three things to tend to in one day.

In the evening, Rahil accompanied his friends from his PG and went to see the apartments and the flats. They finalized none of the flats they saw that day as the ones they saw were too exorbitant for them and the one apartment that was cheap was only one-room apartment and it had water and electricity problems which were serious enough for the landlord to have mentioned it which is not the usual play of landlords.

In the night Rahil received a call from his friends at AISA saying that they needed to meet him at the South Campus by the evening. This meeting was concerned with the referendum that was planned by the group and it was fixed with a date. Time had come for proper action and it was time for Rahil to choose sides and stick to it. It was not as determining for him as it may sound but there was an underlying path that Rahil would walk on and he would not be able to return to the crossroads from where he started.

The next morning the rainfall descending upon the soaring Earth and it was a relief for all that was life. It rained as heavily as ever almost fulfilling the bounty it had kept the concrete lands from. Rahil was locked up in his and would miss his college on that day because the rain had flooded the streets and all the blackbile from the drains had come on to the street and mixed along with the rainwater.

The sky grew dark and the wind blew the rainwater slantways, so hard it came blowing that the umbrellas on the roads folded and broke under the influence of the heavy wind. Rahil could skip the day as the lectures did not affect him that much but missing the day would mean spending the remainder of time locked up in his abominable accommodation where sending more than four or five conscious hours was contagious and so he thought to make a go for it. He clothed his bare upper torso with a greyblack checked shirt and replaced his shorts with jeans the tip of which he folded till his shins to keep from getting it wet by the flooding waters on the street. He wore his sandals and made a dash from his accommodation towards the college. The rain fell straight and true and the raindrops were thick and luscious like the lips of an aged harlot. It took him only seconds exposed to that rain to be fully drenched and soaking wet. Yet, he did not give up. The waters under his feet foamed and bilged, black and brown and he leapfrogged from one dry space to another until there was none left and then he let his feet be soaked in that fumigating putrescent water and ran towards the college gate. It had turned so dark that it became hard to see the road ahead. It was night in the midst of day but Rahil was not sad or phased about it and on the contrary seemed very happy. The summer hath endeth thusly and the monsoon betook the reign of season.

He did not mind his soaking wet clothes as he sat in on a corner in the college foyer drying his clothes by squeezing the water out of them. One of the professors of the English department caught him in the act and smiled at him as she was ripping wet too but not as much as him as she had an umbrella for protection. He rested awhile there being well aware that the first lecture of the day had already started and that the teacher would probably no let him enter on account of his sullied punctuality.

After waiting and regaining the least bit of presentation, he made towards the upper floors and found the lecture had already started. He raised his hand near the doorway of the classroom very politely to catch the attention of the professor who saw the student and gestured him to take a seat inside her class. She was teaching Odysseus from a very Indian point of view, comparing it with Ramayana.

“The key essence of both the texts is the same, but in the case of our Indian text, its reality is not just taken for granted; it is insured. Why should it not? It is a sacred text…something that the Homeric texts are not, much thanks to the coming of Christianity and the end of paganism. But the reason that Odysseus is still seen as a text of great importance comes from its very mythical nature, and not its realism. And I think that should also be the case with Ramayana. I mean, how can one, in the modern world could even conceive the idea of a monkey man much less revere it? Let us take a deeper reading of such things. Where did Ram meet Hanuman and his so called *Vanar-sena*- near the South of India? Now the historical tradition of the Hindu Arya Samaj is well-known with its varna system that is the system of caste-based organization and the taking of slaves in the form of Dasas. Now these Dasas are the Dravidians that inhabited the region of South India where Ram constituted his *Vanar-sena*. Note that the monkey brigade was very much faithful to the Ram without any particular reason. He was not even white to be racially revered as the pure blooded Aryan. Laxman on the other hand, was white, Ram was ebony. If we look at this association between Ram and Hanuman, the only dialectics that come to play here are the master-slave dialectics. Let us also bring the early Darwinian interpretations of advancement here. From a Darwinian standpoint, who are apes? They are species less evolved from humans. Dravidians existed in that primitive way out of which the Aryan race was born and the association of love and reverence that we see between Hanuman and Ram is actually based on aggressiveness and hostility. Ram or his society for the most part had overmastered the *Vanar-sena* and as the texts are written by the Brahmins, the obvious nature of oppression becomes oblivious. Both Freud’s and Darwin’s accounts for such a reading. To quote Lacan, ‘The preeminence of aggressiveness in our civilization would already be sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that it is usually confused in everyday morality with the virtue of strength. Many such examples lay for wide interpretations of the text very cleverly hidden inside these misleading tenets and these exist for the very reason for the general public to be appreciative of it. Think what the concept of ‘*Niyojana*’ would mean to a child wherein a noblewoman who cannot conceive a child is given a sacred fruit by a monk after which she bears a child without the touch of a man. To a child, that would seem a well enough doctrine of truth, a form of magical realism but logistically that is of course impossible. To shroud the dirty bare secrets of coitus from another man, a story is them produced to satiate the primitive mind. That is what myth motifs are about.” The teacher continued with her incisive lectures on the Indian counterparts of myth motifs that had not yet been the subject of Western thoughts.

After two subsequent lectures, Rahil accompanied his friends Riship and Samir to the lunch. He preferred to go alone but seeing as how he had not a penny on him to spend on the lunch, he grubbed it from his friends who were happy enough to do him the favor. The sun had regained its lost position atop the blue skies hued with white clouds but with a sense of defeat and darkness. Once a winner, a victor over the course of day and night, he stood now over the world with a blackened face. The rainfall lessened to a drizzle and only fell momentarily. After the meal, Samir asked Rahil to accompany him to the library to talk to the librarian about the issue of audio books for him which the college was to receive from the North Campus library. On talking with the librarian, they found out that the North Campus library had not provided the college library with any books. This meant that that Samir had to travel all the way to North Campus in order to enquire about the issuing of audio-books for his term. He asked Rahil if he would be able to accompany him to North Campus tomorrow. He thought about it and the first thing that came to his mind was the referendum that was about to be held and the effort and time it would take for him as he did not know how big actually would this referendum be. Still, he promised Samir to be in front of the college hostel in the morning if he had time. Samir and Rahil found Abhyuday on their way to the class and Samir asked him where he was going.

“I’m going to the hostel, man.” Abhyuday replied.

“Take me with you. I forgot the text for the next class.” Samir asked of Abhyduay and took him by the hand. From here they parted and Rahil was left alone without purpose. He walked around the college campus as a ghost, met one or two people he knew, shook hands with them and made light conversation as they were on their way to the class.

It was a nice day to be free, to not exist and to be taken away as the sun shone but dearly and a scant damp light entered the college building from the foyer. Rahil went at sat at the foyer knowing nothing from nothing. He sat there with a lost perception of everything. He willed not to attend the next class and sat looking around at the various other characters seated there. Some in groups, some in doublets, some in trios but all of them with a purpose, a position compared to which he was a speck of dust blowing down a never-ending ever-eternal world. He sat looking at nature from between the two concrete walls standing parallel to each other. The nature was a breathtaking sight, the senseless grace of the eternally graceful, a prophetic poet and a poetic prophet foretelling the mood, whims and fancy of a chaotic universe.

He saw two students enter from the campus entrance and walk towards his direction but paid no close attention to them. It was not as if they were undeserving of his attention; he was too lost to pay attention to anything.

“Are you Rahil?” the boy asked him. The duo was that of a boy and a girl, both handsome in their features. On hearing these words, Rahil found out himself and recalled that the boy wearing the blackish grey checkered shirt with workman’s fold over the sleeves and blue jeans which were still yet was indeed his very self.

“Yes.” He answered, and that was all he could answer.

“Well, this is Karthick from the English dramatics society. I have come here to tell you that you made the cut for the dramatics society and that the second round of the auditions would commence from tomorrow in front of the auditorium. Come there by about two. Okay? Again, congratulations.” He gave the good news to Rahil.

He looked at his eyes and moaned as if it took a great deal of effort to be present there, then nodded his head and smiled. He was not expecting such a turn of events. He could barely handle is Party affiliations with the debating society and now he had dramatics society to attend too. But as of then, all these concerns did not interest him as after the boy and the girl went away, he was lost again till the bell rang marking for the commencement of the lecture. He unwillingly moved from his place and got up o attend the lecture which was on Indian literature and as the professor put it, on ‘Anita Desai’s gem of a novel’ although Rahil highly begged to differ. It was a bloated, constipated bladder dysfunction which was in need of a literary procedure. It was a slander on all that was and still is Urdu poetry.

After the class, Rahil received a text from a member of debating society of a session that was to take place. His name was Rahul and he was a very slaphappy character with a joviality that was always entertaining and seldom irritating. Since that was the concluding lecture of the day and was followed only by a meaningless integrating mind, body, heart class, Rahil thought it better to bolt out of the class and on to discussing greater truths with lesser characters. This time, the topic in debate was the abolition of all private property and Rahil was placed on the side of the government. He was pretty happy about the topic that he received and seeing the happiness on his face, the seniors attached a note, an appendix to his case and stated:

“Rahil, we know you have read Capital and Leninist texts but just try to keep to the level of debate so that others can be an active participant also and please do not take it to a level where the opposition has no idea what you are talking about.”

“If he does that, I’ll motion for definition challenge.” Rahul replied, as he was on the side of the opposition.

“Don’t worry. I’ll try to keep the argument on plain grounds. But still, historical materialism is a concept we have to bring up in our case.” Rahil defended.

“I agree, but explain it properly and don’t leave it open-ended.” The senior replied.

One of the seniors, Siddharth received and tended to it while the other seniors talked to Rahil about the debate in general et alia. Rahil saw Siddharth end his phone call and turn towards him.

“You are wanted.” He said to Rahil.

“Wait, what?” Rahil asked full of doubt.

“Some people want to see you at the China Bowl Restaurant. They’re from JNU. You know where that is, right, the restaurant?” Siddharth, the tall Greek, asked him again just to make sure.

“I think I know. It’s around the corner. Don’t worry. I’ll find it. Just tell me who to meet down there?” He asked again, not asking the purpose for once.

“You’ll find Nikitia ma’am there. She’s a professor in our department. I assume you know her?” Siddharth asked again.

“I think I know her.” Rahil replied.

“Finish the session and then leave.” Siddharth marked, and now all the interest in debate for him was lost and the purpose of the very meeting took over. He wondered of his significance in all this. All this new sudden information swirled in his mind and he was astonished with his involvement in this.

The groups now were sent to different room to discuss their topics and he could give them than the little fragmented brainstorm he had and it was all too abstract for his teammates to grasp. The only credit he could give them was in making numbers. After their little discussion among their group followed the debate which went menially for Rahil as the seniors had restricted him from going further astray from the topic even on grounds that needed to be constructed to construe their cause and due to that embargo only a moderate analysis was made possible which again suffered a terrible setback as the matter thawed after Rahil had said his peace. The blame for that was actually to fall upon other members for not extrapolating his ideas but in the turn of events he was blamed for giving open-ended statements. He foresaw all these conclusions as he gave away his part.

“All right, well one. Now go go go…” Siddharth motioned, clapping his hands suggesting Rahil to make haste and be on his way.

Rahil exited from the college and walked on the pavement on the other side of the college besides the string of shops and franchise restaurants till finally he came to a halt near China Bowl restaurant. Perhaps it was the air or perhaps it was his damp clothes that were damp in the morning but over the course of time dried up over his body and made it cold, so much so that he let out a big wheezy sneeze sending a misty spray of visible spit around his face. He inserted his hands in his pocket and looked for handkerchief which was not there so he used his finger to cozy his nose while he took short interrupted sniffs to regain the composure of breath. There was an irritable uneasy sensation in his nose which he needed to get rid of so his finger remained over the blade of his nose as he pushed the door and entered the dimly lit room. The yellow lights created a mellow environment but they were too dim for a restaurant. He took only a nanosecond to examine the features of the place and subsequently looked at the table nearest to him and snatched a napkin from the stand placed on the empty table adroitly before anyone could notice. Then he marched to the far end of the small restaurant and it took him only three or four short steps to a full lap and back to where he stood. He looked around and there were only two groups huddled around different tables. For a moment, Rahil stood and hesitated wondering which one it could be and how to approach them. Then he perfectly found a place mathematically at the midpoint between both the tables on the imaginary straight line that joined the two tables in the shortest distance, or displacement so to say along a definite vector. Standing there, he looked at the bigger crowd though his gesture was somewhat leaning towards the other table, proclaimed in a low tone “Nikita ma’am?” in the form of a question.

“Yes…here.” A female voice came, aged and sharp yet firm and directional from the more populated table and Rahil knew where to go. He went and stood towards the table feeling the mutual coolness of his partially wet clothes, wet with both the water and his sweat and it felt a breeze fresher than the air of the air conditioner that ran in the place. It was the coolness of sweat that was fresh, a reprisal after hard toil.

“You know, that other day we were talking about the direct influence this system of our year program will have on the system of education. They are trying to take the system prevalent in foreign universities but they got it all wrong.” A lady seated on the corner of the table said and a long string of conversation continued in the entire time of which he stood in front of the table listening to the ‘big people’ talk about their ‘little problems’ and Rahil, at that moment knew that it was not little anymore. Even if there was low participation on the part of the students, the general population that is to say there was a thorough backing of the movement on more mature grounds and had reached a point of an indeterminate modus infinitivus.

“Oh, I was so engrossed in the conversation that I forgot to ask you to sit, I’m sorry. You shouldn’t have to wait for our permission.” The professor who had called him, asked him to sit down but the arrangement of the able was full. Rahil pulled a chair from opposite table and jammed it abruptly in the between the chairs of the man who sat at the right of the empty chair and a lady with dark eyes wearing a short kurta. The professor sat opposite to him as he took his seat rather willingly. He felt a great sense of assemblage go through his body. He felt that all of his activities of whatsoever nature, political, social, literary did not apprehend him from is path but like shifting wheels of a gear put a greater machination into action that was unlocked only by his panache for things and his caliber.

Rahil admitted on his part that he too was so mesmerized by the discussion that he was at a loss of words when he was asked to take his seat.

“What do you think about the movement? It is yet to gather some wind but that is a job that you students must lead.” The professor mentioned.

“There is a coalescing resistance from the first year but most of them are so naïve as to believe all the propaganda fed to them by the administration about the research orientation and the honors roll. And plus, they hide behind notions of ‘if *they* introduced it, it must be right.’ I must say, at the risk of being outwardly that we are dealing with a population of saps.” He replied holding no reservations for the company in which he was kept at that moment. He was seizing and direct. All he said was well-received owing to the reason that it was well-said. He did not feel beleaguered by the personages at the table. He seemed to foretell what they were trying to impose but very smartly divulged something of an entirely different concept as that point was already well disposed if only in a presupposed fashion. This was a rather precocious thing to do to assume one has made the necessary associations correlating to a complete case and then move on to the next but it was allowed with freedom and that table and he found it the only mode of talking in that table. After a few brief pointers, Rahil started making bolder assertions about the further course of actions.

“We need to make sure the stronghold of the administration on the mind-frame of the students is decentralized. We should think about physical rebellion by means of Molotov and smoke bombs.” He established and then looked at the faces of the professors and the educationists present there around the table.

“This point… certainly cannot be taken up for long” said the man, scratching his beard and making a squeamish face, and added “With such act, I am afraid the students would fail to identify themselves as such. Then, instead of creating a discontent for the administration, it would fortify administration as the big brother to protect the students from such violent acts. However smoke bombs and propaganda techniques cannot be actually called violence by the administration, it would take not a moment for the administration to instill a sense of loss of confidence and take what little control the students have and become absolute masters. So, here we are faced with a twofold and complex situation where doing something is as bad as doing nothing. The main thing that remains is to create discontent among the students if there isn’t already. I mean how can one stand this kind of a floozy curriculum? Doesn’t your curriculum concerns you with only a fraction of Ovid’s Metamorphoses and in the subsequent year you will be directed only to read a selection of pages from Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice. Whatever can you make of that?”

The man made his point sharply and garnered the attention of everyone including Rahil. He went on asked him “What else are you reading in the first year?”

“Homer’s Odyssey….” Rahil answered and was about to name a few more titles before he was interjected again by the man. “I used to teach there and as long as I have taught, they never introduced Greek literature in the first year. I imagine it should be quite difficult.”

Here he diverged from his opinions and answered “Actually, Homer is quite a good reading. In the scheme of things, one endeavor they have attempted to make is to arrange the course on a chronological basis for the students to trace the proper evolution of literature through history. Though I would not say it is the most proper way to go, I would still say that nothing can be more ideal for comparative studies between the trends of post-modernist narratives, Odyssey’s fluid and flexible time-set makes it an invaluable asset in the pedestal of modern world literature.”

The professor nodded his head in admission, appreciation and satisfaction and that point became just about the concluding moments of the day’s meeting. Rahil parted his leave and it was not long after he left the premises of the restaurant for an idle walk that he was summoned by the senior members of AISA at the South Campus gate for an important discussion. He went there and the time was about five in the evening; Rahil was exhausted from his daily routine yet he did not wish for it all to end in one sigh of fatigue. He was doing it all for a cause. He was following a dream; better housing facilities for the studies, better food for the students at the behest of the University and proper representation and treatment of students inside the college as well as outside it.

Rahil entered the South Campus and saw seated on the grassy knoll Amit with Shashi and Sanatan who were talking among themselves when suddenly they saw the tall thinly figure of Rahil behind them and they all turned to him forthwith.

“Good of you to grace us with your presence. I thought you weren’t going to come. It happens to most of the fresh activists. They tend to lose their fresh vigor overtime and just give up.” Amit mocked with a hint of a smile looking at the late hour at which Rahil presented himself.

“Well, you can count me in till kingdom come. I’m not one to lose faith so easily. There’s a few explosions left still in me.” He replied with a broadened chest and a valiant expression.

“That’s all we needed to hear. On a separate note…” Sanatan, taking the role of the moderator between two kindred spirits, Amit and Rahil, intervened and decided to change the matter from blame banter to something that was of prime importance. The hint or the cue for the change of topic was well taken up by Amit who stopped in between his conversation and looked at Sanatan with blank dark eyes trying to interpret his shrouded words with a pellucid clarity.

“On a separate note….the referendum is going to be held in a week. Normally, we do not plan an event with such advance but we need to create a widespread awareness of such a spectacle for the students to at least come and voice their opinions against the program if they do not plan on engaging directly with the authorities through means of protests. At least in this way, we get the supposed numbers down to paper and figures and have the advantage of a solid surveyed fact in our later measures.” Amit said.

“Will it make a real change?” Rahil asked in a tone that resonated with irritability.

“It will if we get enough number on our side.” Amit replied promptly.

“Okay, so what do you want me to do now?” Rahil asked again obeying the same pattern of tone as before.

“I want you to spread the word, as it were. Here is some paper propaganda for the referendum. These are model ballot papers on which there will be two boxes to choose from marked ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to the FYUP. The model ballot papers also have the date and time mentioned on them. See the plan till the referendum is to spread the word and build a small group in your college willing to volunteer to conduct the process of referendum. On the day of the referendum, ballot boxes will be put up in front of every college as it opens and the referendum will commence. Here the volunteers will be needed to conduct the process of referendum and make sure it runs smoothly. In your college, we need at least ten people excluding you who would be willing to switch from time to time and man the ballot boxes from the stat of the college till two or three in the afternoon.” Amit explained in a very detailed manner.

“I suppose I can manage ten people.” Rahil stated with little hesitation though he doubted it highly in his mind. He started to mentally calculate the people he knew and the task was not easy as it had been such a short time spent with them that he barely even knew their names and that added to his own inability to compute data mathematically made him quite confused to retort to the demands of a workforce of ten.

“I like it, you know. You have a tint of the revolutionary in you and it’s not just about the issue that you’re concerned here. You know what I’m thinking? I think I’m going to run you for the University elections, what say you?” Amit said in the presence of two open-mouthed mannequins for that was all Shashi and Sanatan were reduced to as they heard Amit say the words. Amit was thinking of making Rahil contest the Delhi University Student Union election which was lovingly referred to as DUSU. Rahil thought little of it and that moment and pegged that statement along with the others coming from his mouth as lank verses from a frivolous tongue.

-It is the time when I should be less involved in politics for I have no stomach for bullets; nobody has. Everybody advices me against it but you know what they say- the worst form of vice is advice. But the violence, I feel limp for it…What if I am cornered in the dark alley and a blade wielding goombah approaches me with the intention of giving me a Glasgow smile? Nobody has to go through that. What is it that I am afraid of? Let’s ante up: I am alone here and the hoes of my parents are doted upon me. We make our own choices and we stick to it but our choices do take us on certain paths and then let lose in a world free from our control. I am thinking about not losing myself in this world. Should that concern me right now, I wonder? He must mean all that in jest, maybe. What’s the harm in going for the run anyways? I don’t have high hopes for winning not if I do not have an army of strong-arms. At least, that’s the way things work here I assume from hear-tell. So this does not mean that I would be intimidated in any way from a second or a third party with conflicting interests. If I lose its life and if I win, I’ll topple over the system of education for the welfare of student and the emancipation of student rights. And that’s not life? No, that’s utopia. What is the main concern here? To be in a better place because no student in the world should go through the visitations that we be through, ‘tis only fair. Iron hands clasp the iron hammer. All shall be made from it and by I and all wrong designs it shall quell. The more the number of hands, the better will be our effect but our effect will be visible still. We are few but we are dexterous in our approach. So once more unto the breaches…. The trenches for the war beckons- day in and day out... We fight…we breathe and if we lose, we die. Everything changes and what remains of it is only the process. The world is a tirade against our ideals. It will challenge us so. Gather up men and cast the sail… we have an east wind coming. Men and women come together now or forever fall asunder, be slain by the saber of the mighty unless mighty you shall claim to be. Might in strength comes to us by virtue of our numbers and the experience through our nightmares. All that remains now is to wake up-

The next few days were spent in a complete truancy of classes and Rahil saw more of the college lawns, corners, corridors and other hangout places in that stint of time than his professors or his peers. His job was simple- to brief every coming potential student about the referendum which was going to be conducted in a week. He went into empty classrooms and stirred up students with fiery speeches. There were times when he would be driven out by other students for lack of enthusiasm on their part and Rahil would imperatively counter with statements. There was no admittance of defeat for him even though he was on it individually and apart from his point of view, most of them saw it as an uphill battle in which his position was assailable. He ventured doggo from his professors and his classmates who would eventually, like a twittering bird follow up the word inevitably to the professors. It was important that even though the fact that he had been skipping classes could not be hidden from the faculty on account of daily roll call, he tried best to keep political motive of his nonattendance enshrouded well from the clear.

In two or three days, Rahil had called for help on two or three his friends. Two of them, Riship and Abhyuday were from his course and there was his roommate Ranjan whom he had smuggled through the back entrance which did not particularly belonged to the college and was part of the car entrance for staff housing located behind the college campus. The three distributed fliers like a machine on the promise that Rahil would tend to all of their assignments and homework to which he humbly agreed as there was no power like manpower. Ranjan stayed with them till twelve in the afternoon and then left on account of important classes that he made very clear was impossible to flunk. Riship went to the canteen to distribute fliers while Rahil went to the science section to address classes and hand out pamphlets. Rahil ended up with a big class full of chemistry students. He saw that there was a teacher attending the class and Abhyuday saw it and advised Rahil against entering the class and asking for a moment from the teacher to brief the students about the referendum but Rahil was not in a mood to accept his advices not even t a point when they were less of an advice and more of loud protestation accompanied with shrugging and tugging of hands.

“Sir, may I have a moment of your time?” Rahil asked, on entering the class.

“Yes?” the teacher asked, turning towards Rahil and treating him with a smile on his wrinkled fair and old face.

“Sir, I need to speak the class about something. It’s much more of an announcement that I needed to make concerning an event that is to be convened in this week.” Rahil answered circuitously. The teacher stood for a moment and looked at Rahil and Rahil stood in his place frozen for an action from the teacher’s behalf. Seeing as how there was no action from his part, he reflexively took it for a grant and approached the platform on which the teacher stood to give lectures. The teacher taken aback by the brash move made by Rahil but did not say anything except gasping. It was only after Rahil had asserted his dominance over the classroom and became the centre of attention to the tens of students sitting there in silence affront him, had the professor thought it best to declare “The pulpit is yours for the taking” with a tone of the sarcastic in it.

“Friends, students….as you might now, we are faced with a tragic crisis now over which we have little control. We live and breathe not as students pursuing the noble virtue of education and of seeking knowledge but as rats in a lab upon which mere experiment is being conducted. Our future is being tampered with and it is happening without our will. I know you must be pretty disinclined to protest on more than one occasions but this addressing does not call for a protest. I just want you to listen to me carefully with all your consciousness and heart because we need to be careful at what the administration throws at us. We have been promised many things among which were choices in the foundation course but now among the eleven foundation courses, we are to study five foundation courses in the first semester and six in the second semester and they are all mandatory. Furthermore, we were promised laptops by the university under the newly implemented four year program which we haven’t even seen. Only God is a witness to the funds that might have been sanctioned for the provision of laptops to each student. These are the promises that were made on the part of the administration that has now, just in the first three months of the course been broken and in consequence, we have been betrayed. I say now with much safety that the promises on which you root deeply, such as the promise of research orientation at the end of third year and the validation of the diploma and the associate degree awarded under the multiple exit point scheme is but a promise in vain and dangerous to trust. In the name of the so-called necessary foundation courses, they teach us nothing but rudimentary facts more befitting a student group of a middle school than students pursuing a graduation degree. This is not only an understatement of our hard voyage through the tie of skyrocketing cutoff percentages but also an insult to our intellect. I would go so far as to saying it is more of an abuse than an insult and an abuse of such kind to such a majority of population demands a retaliation in some form or the other. So my fellow students I ask you o raise your voice against the injustices you have been experiencing in the University and appeal against the implementation of FYUP. Our student organization AISA is conducting a referendum sometime next week the date of which is printed on the flier handed to you. All you have to do is vote for or against the four year undergraduate program in the ballot paper which we will provide and then post it into the ballot boxes which will be present in front of your college from morning till evening. This is your chance to redeem what is rightfully yours and redeem it with dignity. I do not ask you out of any of my personal reasons because obviously there are none. I only wish to lead you to a fight that we have to be a part of on the very grounds that we are students and we owe to those who were once students of this university and to those who will, in the future, be a part of this university. Please be a part of this as this will directly affect the future of our degree.” Rahil was about to finish with his monologue when a student from the back interrupted him with a question.

“What’s the use of all this? I mean the course has been already officially implemented. I mean, you and I are standing here, aren’t we? How can you change what’s already in process?” he asked.

“See, the course has not become concrete just because it has gained an acceptance stamp from the University. The courses were applied to this year rather controversially and in complete haste and if you would read the news, you would find that many intellectuals and professors inside the University are against this program. The whole teachers’ union has oftentimes protested against it. So the fact that you and I are standing here means nothing in concrete and nothing is official. Just because something is in process does not automatically make it right. We are making an effort here, a strong one, to better our odds at a better future. We need a better education system than this because we, as students of DU, deserve no less. There is no need for ‘there’s nothing to be done’ defeatist attitude here because that is what opportunities are for, to turn the odds to our side and the next week’s referendum is a chance to do just that.” He answered and left the whole class silenced and loud applause followed his long answer.

This was the only riveting display of fine reception that Rahil had seen all day. In the rest of the classes, the students were so garrulous among themselves that they failed to pay even a haystack’s weight worth of attention to him. The girls passed comments over and around the rows of benches filled with colorless people wearing colorful clothes about the sweating orator with long hair and a faded voice. His voice gradually grew husky and course over three or four speeches as he was meant to keep a strong and firm voice that demanded attention from careless asinine students. His animadverts often did not go well with science students who saw a lot of promise in the fourth year in which a research experience was promised to them like the promise of a guarantee at a successful car deal in which t is only after you purchase the car you find out much to your disappointment and dismay that the whole idea was nothing but pure dupery.

-But you have to give it to the science students. I mean, the whole idea is to preserve a sense of dupery that is science. Atoms, gravity, schemes, con schemes, nothing that the eye can see, just like god, spirits, ghosts. Science is the modern religion, nothing less and certainly nothing more. Just spiritual and to the vacuous, rational satisfaction… What good is chemotherapy to treat cancer when the patient just looks like a walking corpse and wishes death upon itself? And that is why their mentality is such; conforming to anything that makes, to their ousted minds, sense. They are good for nothing but the proposition of a prostitute, a floozy with stocking-clad feet dangling from the sides of a tenement whorehouse that is their workspace. It is not easy to look for a whorehouse these days, just look for the words ‘inc.’ or ‘pvt. Ltd.’-

Rahil was so bogged down in the science block that day that by the time the bell for the last period rang and Rahil managed to reach the college foyer, there was no trace of Riship whom he had intended to meet after he finished distributing pamphlets in the cafeteria. Abhyduay had also disembarked midway from his voyage along with Rahil as he had to go for lunch at the hostel canteen and did not care to join him afterwards. Then Rahil received a message which called him to room number six on the ground floor for the meeting of the debating society. He thought to not appear for the day’s meet but then changed his mind and went anyways.

The others were gaga over the debating tournament they were to host; as for Rahil, other greater things interested and demanded more of him than topics that he could only tackle theoretically and with an alienated gathering of facts. Still, he knew it was important and were it not for the little bit of mental conditioning he had with the debating society of his college, he would have gone completely haywire and would certainly be reduced to one of those lousy student politicians with the least bit of judgment for the better. Also, being a part of the ‘DebSoc’ as they called them, he was pretty well placed among the college éclat. This position served him as a vantage point for his personage as seen from the otherness and certainly gave him a hype, at least among the group of those who knew of his presence with the debating society and these groups included his classmates, though not all of it and his roommates. There was no session to be held because the seniors wanted to debrief the students about the tournament.

“Each of us has to cough up five hundred bucks for the event…for the prize money. There would be various prizes up for grabs. Aside from the prize money to the team that wins, there will be prizes for best adjudicator as well as best speaker of the tournament. So five hundred bucks apiece should just about cut it. See to it that all of you tend to it. All right, now we move to other matters. We have a very compulsory session tomorrow. The seniors that have passed out from our college are going to come back for one session and to talk about the various tactics relating to their expertise. After the session, Hesiod asked Rahil as well as Rahul to come with him, Siddharth and the girl, Rita. They walked out of the campus and sat on a cornerstone huddling into a group of bums after buying cigarettes from a cigarette shack inside one of the lanes of the infamous Satya Niketan. After a while Siddharth parted with group taking Rita with him and Hesiod was left with Rahil and two seniors more tagged along with him. One of them was an economics student named Richie who could not stop yapping about the seasons of a television show ‘Breaking Bad’ and its lead character ‘Jesse’. He and Rahil had a stirring debate while walking on the sidewalk whether the actor possessed greater acting abilities than Steve Buscemi from the television series ‘Boardwalk Empire’ and the debate went on to compare the qualities of the two shows. In terms of visual presentment and cinematography, Boardwalk Empire was unstirred as the much better show between the two however on the basis of story and acting as a premise, the two differed widely and at times agreed that each television series had its own differences and to compare them on the same scale would be unfair.

“But then both have a similar backdrop of illegality and the construction of a naturalist mode of story that encompasses their criminal dealings. Granted, in the case of Boardwalk Empire, the era is different and there is too much actual history and politics involved for it to be just a fiction and be experimental and a form of pure entertainment, even Breaking bad had moments of factualness that needs to be maintained for the mood to be somber and hence the presentation can be read as formal even if not appropriate.” Rahil commented to swindle the topic back into discussion and thaw it out of the stalemate. They ended up at the foot of a restaurant which served Southern food and it just so happened that another of Hesiod’s acquaintance, less of an acquaintance and more of a dear friend and a fellow hostel dweller happened to pass by and meet Hesiod. Hesiod introduced Rahil to his female friend and Rahil appeared to be glad to make acquaintance.

“Hey, let’s have a little chow here. I’m craving Southern meal. Hey, you joining us?” Hesiod asked Rahil while the three others tagged along without his asking.

“Yeah, sure…It’s not like I have a lot to do.” He answered and walked with him up the stairs of the main lobby which was small and congested and into the restaurant which was on the first floor and seemed like a bird’s nest for a sniper for taking out targets coming out of the college at the drop of a hat. He sat with them with a smile. If it would have been a few days back, he would not have had the financial ability to accept the offer but now that he had received his ATM card which was handed to him two days ago by one of his roommates, Aman after he came back to the room from the college, he was now able to pay for his meal. To top it off, the bank account was laden with cash to pay the rent of the month in advance in which Rahil decided to cut in as he would not give the rent to his landlord but move to a much cheaper place that would save him extra cash and save him from the misery of living in a dark and dank gulag.

Being flush and straight with cash, he still ordered the cheapest item on the menu as they were all so expensive. He loathed sitting there with Hesiod and his friends in disguise who had this mask of civility on which scared Rahil. He did not wish upon himself such horrific alienation that Hesiod was going through to keep such a dismal and dour company. He could sense the internal brooding soul of Hesiod trying to keep afloat in his body maintained by the subconscious vanity with which he made his hair and paid close attention to the way his sleeves were artificially folded to look natural and the crumples on his trousers which were made not out of carelessness but out of the desire to appear carefree. Rahil was unsettled by this illusion and did not plan to have any part in it. He wanted to shatter the glass of the first floor of the restaurant and haul himself from the ledge of the broken corner onto the pavement with a loud thud and the end of life if this was the life he was to live. An average person would not see anything wrong in being what Hesiod or Richie was but he saw it as an abomination and a sort of disconnect.

He who is free is bound only by the constrictions he applied on himself. The statement lays law to every form and fixture of freedom. They parted on a good note though and Hesiod promised of another meet like this one. Hesiod found it especially comforting with Rahil on this particular occasion because it was informal and more centered on recreation and that was exactly the reason why Rahil found it drab and dismal.

Another shocking news awaited Rahil at the room where he appeared only after six in the evening. Ranjan and Neeraj had already found a great room with an affordable price and were ready to move in and all they needed was extolment from Rahil in the form of the first month’s rent plus expenses for the household products such as the mattress. Finally after months of mental stress, he reached that bright levitating liberating light at the end of the tunnel. The pure ecstasy that ran through his veins felt unbelievable to him and he thought he was sick of some ailment. He pinned this ailment with the stomach that had been concerning him ever since his arrival in Delhi. He said that they would move the next day and that Rahil was welcome over to the new place anytime he was all packed, sorted and ready to move. Ranjan even bestowed upon him the promise of a courtesy of manpower to help him carry his luggage from the PG to the rented room. They pressed Rahil to take a look at the new place before moving in formally and officially but Rahil evaded the necessity on account of being engaged heavily in a bunch of other more important and more indulging matter. The total cost of the rent and the additional expenses amounted to about three thousand rupees and Rahil had around seven thousand rupees in bank account; five thousand five hundred was the rent for the current PG and the rest was the pocket money for the month which also included money for the meals that he had to take outside in shady restaurants and shacks as all they had in the name of a kitchen was a stove in a small corner where on a wall the water purifier was pitched.

Following that, Rahil decided to part from the elite company of the debating society who were on their wantonly walk towards café coffee day to which Rahil shuddered at the thought. When Rahil reached his room, it was about seven in the evening but the sun was still going down. Rahil had managed to get used to the time frame f the North where the sun went down only after eight. It was beneficial for him as it gave him more time under the sun that that is what any laborer or a bohemian posing as a laborer dreams about. He took a stroll through Satya Niketan before coming to a halt near a tea stall where he thought to have a cup of tea and ordered it. As the tea was being prepared, he saw Riship walking into the lane with a friend of his by his side and called to him when he felt he was near to him. On hearing Rahil’s voice, Riship stopped and looked towards the tea stall and when he saw Rahil standing there, he walked towards him and shook hands with him.

“Meet my friend, Prabhat. He’s just like you…a lot into English movies. I just thought the two of you ought to know each other better.” Rahil shook hands with him as well and they got into a pretty interesting conversation that left Riship standing and watching at them giving thought to his role in all of this.

“Brother, your tea is ready.” The young boy making tea in his tea stall called out to Rahil and he extended his hand to receive the cup. The conversation got even more interesting for Rahil as they talked about movies and he sipped on his tea but it left Riship all alone. He could see that Riship was in a hurry to reach some place and it meant by extension that Prabhat was too and so he cut his sentences short and finally concluded their dialogue. As he walked to the room, he received a call from Ranjan and so he picked it up.

“Hey man, listen. You have to move out of your PG as soon as possible because we are going to need the rent from you. When are you really thinking of moving in? Wait. Are you really thinking of moving in?” Ranjan asked in a flurry of excitement and confusion.

“Yes, I am. I’ll pay you the rent and shift my things but I need your help, brother. Come over to the PG as soon as possible and I’ll wait for you there. After we shift my things, I will pay you my rent and we will be officially done. He went to his room and then called Ranjan.

“Ranjan, I’m in my PG. You better hurry here and help me with my goods.” Rahil asked him and he replied that he would be there as soon as he could. After a few short minutes, he arrived and hurriedly took his bed sheets, placed all of his clothes that was unpacked and still kept in his cupboard and rolled the bed sheet into a pile that he very easily lifted to aid him while another roommate of his roommate helped him with one of his suitcases leaving Rahil with two bags to carry from his PG to the room. The way to the room was led by narrow dark alleyways which scared Rahil. He felt lonely and detached from civil life as he wandered through the unnamed unseen alleyways feeling he had made an error in judgment to relocate from his PG and that pain burned through his chest and into his very soul. He had unknowingly lunged into a fire that he had wrought for himself. The mere standardization with the fact of relocating did not entail overcoming, coping or getting grasps over these inherent fears of his which more less were fashioned out of meaningless symbolisms. He was the spectator of the theatre of random emotions. There was pain, pity, guilt, remorse, repentance and out of all these grew a sense of fear and alienation that caught Rahil unawares.

The room was an apartment on the third floor and Rahil was breathing heavily by the time he got to the room which had no door. He was perplexed as to why they would take a room with no door and he raised the question at the minute of his entry.

“Come on, man. Quit bickering on the details. See this here’s the hall. Nothing that important is going to be here anyways so what’s the big deal, huh? Those two are the rooms. There is a little dining table here with some chairs and we have a little…sort of a bookshelf in our room. The two doors have locks and here are your sets of keys, and that’s what matters.” Ranjan replied in a hush tone of annoyance.

“Where is the toilet?” Rahil asked.

“See that way leading to the balcony? Follow that way and the bathroom will be on your right.” Ranjan said to him, in a clear neutral tone.

“Good…good. So, this is the place I will stay at. Why not? It’s great. It’s certainly an upgrade from that dust bin of a paying accommodation, I tell you.” Rahil answered, his voice trying to console his disconcerted soul. He continually felt a dire urge to spin off and run away someplace else. Alas, he could not. He had to spend the night there. He had to spend the remainder of his day there. But there was one last chance, if only he chose it.

“Here’s the rent, man.” Rahil said, picking out from his wallet fifteen hundred rupees and giving it to Ranjan. And with that the deal was sealed; there was no going back form thence. Rahil spent the night there with great unease and it was at that night that something inside of him changed, died, metamorphosed. Rahil woke up to the next morning anew. The night was undesirably warm and due to that fact Rahil was quenched ad in want of drinking water. The drinking water came twice a day through a tap from which Ranjan and the others had collected the water into a mini sized plastic barrel. Rahil held the heavy barrel with one hand and attempted to pour liquid into his bottle which he effectively did with only a little amount of spillage. Then he walked out of his wrecked dream of a home and on to the streets where thought he belonged more strongly than compare to his new apartment. The street awaited him with its stench and he had to travel again through the narrow alleyways and constricted unnamed lanes which reminded him of the fact that most people, including him was wary of being disclosed to themselves.

The kind of life that Rahil had been living in Delhi this entire time was a disgrace. He had nowhere to go but move upwards in the histogram of the coming events from thereon. The burden of every catching event seemed to increase him in zeal and enthusiasm and he became a powerhouse of moves and movements in the coming days. Three days were left before the big referendum and Rahil thought to hit other colleges of the South Campus as well. In the morning he tagged with Shashi and his roommate Ranjan to their college, Ram Lal Anand. The college seemed to him a little bigger in expansion than his own but the crowd was much less refined. The crowds seemed to be in a stir of their own now with the coming of the elections. There were signs of developing grouping and nepotism which Rahil felt strongly as an inherent instinct without even being a part of the community of that college. He gained entrance in the college through a backroom argument with the watchmen and falsely convincing under the pretense of creating awareness of a legitimate event organized by the debating circuit of the University of Delhi. There was no chance of the guards letting Rahil in otherwise though Ranjan and Shashi, being students of that very college would not have to deal with the problem.

After successfully getting in, Ranjan called one of his friends from his history class to add one to the clique for greater resources and bigger work party. Initially they started working through the students lurking around the square college corridor at the same time looking to classes full with students but without a teacher to address and inform. Rahil was with Johnny, Ranjan’s friend from history class while Shashi and Ranjan looked for unattended classes. After a little searching, they did not find any classes but Shashi did find his bearded friend Sanatan who willingly volunteered and swore to draw out teachers from the classes if that made for effective class addressing.

This he did but not with the fatality of driving out teachers while they were teaching topics and chapters to the students. He asked teachers very gently and with great affection but he did hold on to his insistence of taking over on every occasion when the teacher blatantly refused to let Rahil and his associates inform the class about referendum. Shashi and Sanatan had different ways and the digression between them, both in behavioral terms and in their outlook showed quite naturally. Shashi was more modern and less Marxist. He aimed at a more political disposition and did employ the tactics usually taken up by the student union of right-wing parties such as Congress and BJP of shouting slogans relating to the date of referendum and throwing pamphlets with a flagrant display. He had a bug of the popular culture in him and though he was positive, always smiling and gentle in his outlook and got along well with others, some features of his personality made him more of a liability than an asset. He was immensely drawn by big statures and not by intelligent thoughts. On the other hand, Sanatan was cold and calculating. His outlook was so deep that one look in his eyes would not suffice for a look into his soul. He was the most practical Marxist and it was a shame that AISA thought of this fine sage of a young man, a saint of a young man as a mere foot soldier. He was still pretty well-reputed among the members of AISA and he was ordained with the rightful amount of credibility that he deserved. They did get to address many classes and did receive a lot of popular support and positive response from the part of the students, so much so that Rahil and Shashi started to feel good about themselves and what they were doing.

It was hard work and demanded the drudge and the steep skills of salesmanship. By the time the session ended, Rahil had completely lost his energy and the only force that dragged his lifeless body from the College to his room was the promise of a bath and a sleep and both of them were well provided for when he reached his room. Now the bed did not seem too hard or too small because the body was too weak and the mind was too heated. At a point sometime about four in the evening he was called by Siddharth who asked him why he had missed the daily session an on divulging the truth to the senior, the voice of the senior twigged with a tone of sympathy and followed up with the answer to carry on with his work. Rahil, for one was glad to hear that he had abated him somewhat from his debating responsibilities.

The next day Rahil skipped all his classes for the day again to do a campaign but this time the venue became Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College or ARSD College. This college had a crowd similar to that of Ram Lal Anand and the happenings of the day were also more or less along the similar strain. The only physical difference from last time was that he was alone and had no company and the fact that he wore fresh new clothes and threw the ones he wore the day before in the pile of clothes that were waiting to be cleaned. Maybe it was the fact that he was alone and did not have too many distractions or maybe it was the repetition due to which he was able to cover more ground in lesser time. He addressed close to ten classes and talked to students lurking around the corridors and the campus knolls as he swung in search of classes to address. At around one in the afternoon under the broad harsh sunlight that beamed right over his head, he decided that he had done sufficient work in the college and there was little more to do. So he took it upon himself out of his own free will to attend the classes that were between one and three. There were only two classes left which were both taken by the same teacher so there was no room was skipping one lecture and attending the next as she would take it simultaneously.

He pulled out his cell phone struggling to get it out from his tight jeans pocket to look at the time and he realized that he was a couple of minutes late for the class; he rushed to the classroom but found that the teacher had already entered and would now accuse him for lack of punctuality.

“Oh, so it’s you Rahil. Why are you late?” she asked.

“I was out of campus, ma’am.” He replied with decency diffused in his voice.

“Out where? When you knew there was a class about to commence and you already knew the time from the time table?” she stared at him with daring eyes and confronted him.

“I’m sorry ma’am. I have been busy with extracurricular activities a lot.” He answered maintaining his composure although it grew harder for him by the second.

“Ah, that I do see, and you’ve been missing classes too, all for you *extra-curricular* activities. What are your extra-curricular activities, please explain to the class and me as well.” She replied and signified Rahil to speak about his present engagements and to be honest about it.

“I am working on the protest movement to rescind the four year program.” He replied.

“Ah, okay. But do you have to sacrifice all your academic cogency for activism. I mean, when I was your age, studying in college, I was involved in a lot of activist movements myself but I never had to compromise with my studies for that because I managed to juggle them successfully. You should too.” She lectured him thus and further on conservation of time and preservation of academia and Rahil pretended he understood her completely and thoroughly.

“Neoliberal bourgeois vegan hippies always get time to protest and be in association with the intellectual canon. We fight battles from the trenches, yell war cries of slogans on the front line.” He thought to himself and clenched his fists.

Then she asked him to take a seat inside the class and he took the front seat after which the teacher asked all of them to produce their texts which was *In Custody* by Anita Desai. Rahil felt for it with his right hand in his bag but was unable to find it and so he panicked. He knew outright that the teacher would dismiss him from the class and he would have another day’s absence under his name. The teacher proceeded with the roll call before she started with the lecture. When she called out his roll number and he answered, she turned her dark and geriatric gaze on him and found him without a book.

“Where is your book, Rahil?” she asked calmly but with a voice that was lapping with threat and intimidation.

“I…uh…forgot it, ma’am.” He replied. It was just not his lucky day.

“How careless and irresponsible can you be? Half of the days you are not even present and when you show up, you are without your text. Do you have any interest in literature at all or are you just here for the politics. You are a good boy and an intelligent one also and I have no doubt about it. You have real talent for your discipline but you lack the effort needed to keep your work on track. That is it. I want you out of here. You are dismissed from my class.” She ranted with a foaming mouth and he felt knifed at every one of her words. Still, he insisted, begged even that she let him remain in her class so that he could attend her lecture but she was firm and adamant with her commandment and finally Rahil had to cower to her unrelenting firmness.

-A writer is the only person who has the world in his pocket and the knowledge of every soul in his eye but nothing to show for-

He went out of the class and spent the rest of time in the crowded college canteen thinking about matters that never really substantiated. Suddenly the thought of referendum surged into his mind and he remembered that it was the very next day and he was wasting time idly so he got up from his seat and wandered around with fliers which were always readily packed in his backpack along with the pamphlets for AISA. He approached different groups clustered at various benches at the open canteen. Some of them said “sure”, some of them said “not interested”, some balked, and some fidgeted at his long haired, sweaty, compulsive, ghastly presence. To the lattermost, it was a restlessness born out of seeing the dystopian vision of a dream turned nightmare with such clarity. They lived in their own world consisted of pubs in Noida, deluxe flats in Gurgaon and hangout places and restaurants in Hauz Khas village.

These people knew nothing of the lives outside of resorts and water parks. And for them, Rahil was not a creature of humanity but that of human filth and they gave him a stare that rightly befitted it. But instead of taking offense to it, he found pleasure in the sadistic way they humiliated him with their gaze. To him, the reaction of these very few people was the reaction the very society in which he was living. His very society saw him as an outcast and so it was only in the company of other outcasts where Rahil found solace.

He called Sanatan and asked if there was the slightest possibility of a meeting and he stated that it was the most probable thing to do on the eve of such a grand event. He called him right away to the South Campus gate and when Rahil got there, he found Shashi, Sanatan and Amit resting on the grassy lawns near the front entrance. They started to give a complete account of the manner in which the whole event was planned. Towards the end of their debriefing which took the shape of a discussion owing to constant and incisive questions about the discrepancies that were bound to happen, Amit asked him “Do you have a laptop we can use for filming?” to which Rahil answered in reversal.

“Well, can you arrange it from somewhere?” Amit asked him again, to which Rahil replied that he could only try but tell nothing for certain. They followed with the discussion of a few more details and finally they parted leave from one another and Rahil went walking back o his room. In his room, he prepared for the next day. He asked all his roommates to be on call whenever he needed them. There was a mutual understanding between them not because of the idea of removing the four year program but because of the respect that they had for Rahil and his whole struggle that they saw grow and blossom in front of their eyes. While they were talking, Ranjan mentioned, only as a footnote that they were ready to move in to the other room along with the two others. He did not pay much attention to what his friend said as his mind was caught in contemplating the chances of the next day. His sleep was discontinued and nervous in anticipation. He changed sides, looked into darkness with open eyes, heard the hush voices in the quiet of the night, the voices of his own breath heaving and puffing and the soft rustling voice as his shirt slid from time to time against the bed sheet and made an almost inaudible sound that Rahil heard with complete clarity. Such was his disquiet of the night.

The next day he woke up early and got ready for what he knew would be agog. He clothed himself in his war garments and made resolute decision to skip all the classes for the day. He arrived at the gate of the college and saw a heavy man standing beside a familiar figure. He closed in on the two and discovered the familiar figure to be Amit who introduced Rahil to the big husky unfamiliar figure. His name was Abdul and he was from Jamia Milliah College. He had a very nonchalant wave about him and had an air of confidence about him that was undeniable. He stood there with a banner that Amit was helping hip put up across the gates of the college.

Only minutes after Rahil had arrived on the scene and the initial greetings and salutations were made, as if in a formal letter, the matter came straight to the subject when a uniformed cop who was posted as the guard of the college showed up and asked for the banner to be pulled down. To his indecent, impolite and insensitive query, Abdul did not care to answer with words and went on with his work. The question that was raised on the presupposed power of ‘the uniform’ instantly infuriated the cop and he went over to Abdul with a thudding march and grabbed him by his collar. Abdul was baffled at his violent altercation as he did no such thing that called for such a violent use of force. He pulled on his collar and then shrugged him off displacing Abdul’s centre of gravity and disorienting him almost to a fall.

“There will be no such thing here. Get these things out of here!” He barked at the students pointing to the banner and the table which was brought and set up by Shashi and Sanatan right at the moment when the confrontation took place. The cop did not just stop at physically abusing the child. He went and kicked the table which made it fall over renouncing all the effort that the two students had put to set the table upright. A supposed peaceful process turned into a standoff when Abdul was enraged by the actions of the cop and had to be suppressed by Amit and Rahil when he walked in the direction of the standing cop with the intention of exacting his revenge.

Still, there was an event to deal with which was met with great success at the North Campus of the University and even at Ram Lal Anand College where Sashi had already made the arrangement for everything ranging from ballot boxes and ballot papers to men handling the process of voting. Only in Venkateswara College, the authorities took a fascist stand and halted the process. All the activists, including Rahil were cornered and did not have any means to conduct the referendum now. They were at their wit’s end when thought struck Rahil that he felt he had to share with Amit and Abdul as Sanatan and Shashi had already gone to their college to tend to their referendum. They were replaced by two other students Amit had called; one was from South East Asian University and the other was not currently studying anywhere.

This was a battle to be fought now but Rahil had no grounds; he had to hide among trenches like the NVA fighting the imperialist American forces. Who would win was a historically obvious.

“Let me do one thing. Let me and the boys go inside with the ballot papers and take polls on them without tearing them away from the pad. It would be much easier to work around the authorities that way.” He said and came to the farther end of the corner with others following him to a position from where they were not visible to the cops. Amit agreed and then filled Rahil’s bag with all the pads of ballot paper that he had. After that, he along with the other two boys quietly entered the college and then planned their way to be as efficient and widespread in collecting ballots as humanly possible. Since they did not know the design of pathways around the college properly, they felt the need for Rahil to stay with them was unimpeachable. This adversely affected the manpower as it was centralized and could not be channelized properly. Amit, sitting outside and knowing well of this, he called his friend Ashim who was a member of the All India Students Federation which was the oldest student political body in India and asked him to meet Rahil in the college.

Just after that call, Rahil received a call from Ashim asking him to meet on the pathway that connected the college to the canteen. Rahil and his communist clique walked to canteen getting ballot papers checked from every student in the way. All of them voted against the four year program and were glad to have their opinions recorded in this form. Still it was an arduous task for Rahil and Ashim to pull doing for which they both divided into two separate duos and covered separate parts of the college. This was the only case of decentralized mobilization in the whole process of referendum across all the colleges of Delhi University. Some college of course, like the elitist St. Stephens was not even a part of this extended effort from the part of the students. In the North Campus colleges before noon, police showed up and disbarred the process of referendum and used official force to clamp down the peaceful student campaign by throwing away ballot boxes, at times even seizing them and asking students indecently to disperse often at the butt of their canes. Minutes later, barricades were set up before college gates and scores of armed officials wearing vests and slinging semi automatic rifles swarmed over much of the North Campus. The student organization somehow managed to avail the seized ballot boxes from police custody and by noon every student unit of AISA was mobilized to carry out clandestine polling using ballot pads directly and the referendum was furthered in the same fashion as Rahil had invented the process to convene.

Meanwhile, Rahil roamed around corridors and was hesitant to address classrooms knowing the fact that a classroom filled with students would be easier and more in terms of quantity of votes. He was dithered because he had heard the news about the North Campus and the visitation of police that wrung out the whole process. Here Rahil realized what the inner fears of man were. Fear is something that for him came thence momentarily but with the effacing of the fear came the dilemma which the fear left as an aftermath. It was this dilemma and not the actual fear itself that held him back. He knew that mere courage would not be enough to overcome the dilemma sourced by fear. If it were sheer fear, it would have been overcome by mere instigation of courage but to use courage in his current position would have been stupidity, or so he thought and he hesitated.

His hesitation only lasted moments and he resumed his resolution to address classes not because he applied courage but because he did a logical analysis of the situation which led to an outcome which was most feasible and so he took it as a viable enough option. In this he spent the better part of an hour and finally when he made the decision to address the class, the bell rang which, instead of being ill-starred was actually beneficial for him on a certain level as now he did not had to insist the teacher to give him chance to speak his matter and so he, accompanied by the student of Southeast Asian University entered the class. The bigger task for them was now to get the attention of the restless class bubbling with youthful exuberance after a drab lecture and since it was the sciences block, Rahil knew that students were no gentlemen of nature. Somehow after managing a major amount of attention, Rahil began to talk to them about the four year program but they felt jeopardized by the fact of reverting it back to three years as they were students of electronics which was a basic sciences course but under the four year program, it was absurdly, without a change in syllabus, change in faculty or change in laboratory infrastructure was granted the status of a technical course. This move was made by the administration to make the four year program more concordant with the science students and the plan sure worked its charms. He tried with all his might of words to persuade or at least get them to the grasps of reality but they preferred to live in the vaults of their own ideas.

The next addressed needed some importunity from his part towards the teacher but it proved fruitful as students were of botany and were fervently against the extra foundation courses which were loaded on the already strenuous course of botany. Rahil received a very positive reaction and three of his ballot pads were now completely filled. Amit had given him a gradation of twenty pads to fill by himself and twenty pads by Ashim and there were around two hundred papers in each pad. There were probably not as many students as Amit wanted signatures. With that, he also mentioned that the votes were to be legitimately gotten and not fraudulently made and Rahil was also of the same ethical standards and any deviation room the planned method would also not sit well with him. He consecutively addressed three more classrooms but none had the same success ratio as the botany class. Some students were as hesitant to sign as if it was death warrant while some thought that being apolitical and not signing and voting and rather passing comments and jeering laughter at those who made real effort to a democratic direct action was ‘cool’ and the ‘hip thing to do’.

This raged Rahil but it was not the push that threw him off his sane track. He concentrated on the job at hand and went from one class to another. Having completed the classes of the sciences block, Rahil now moved to humanities block and in fact he was walking to the block that contained classrooms where his classes took place. On his way, he was met with Nikita ma’am.

“How do you do, Rahil?” she asked him, smiling.

“Well ma’am. I am conducting this referendum against the FYUP and we have had a massive response upon it, more precisely against it.” He replied.

“Why that’s wonderful. Keep up the good work. I’ll tell you what. Why don’t you swing by room 206 right after this period as it will be my class and you can take votes from my class then?” she asked him.

“That would be a great favor to me if you did, ma’am.” Rahil replied.

“It’s okay Rahil. More power to you.” She replied and they both went their separate ways. In this manner, he had a booked classroom filled with votes waiting for him at the next period so he thought this opportunity called for a little break from the work he had been doing so far.

He took his friend with him to the canteen and they both had a light meal after which Rahil checked the time and found that it was still a half hour more before the period was over and feeling that they were well relaxed, they started to walk around the canteen hovering over groups of students asking them for votes on referendum. This was also met with great success although it was a heavy undertaking. When the bell rang, Rahil was ready to spring to room 206 for the classroom filled with students and the teacher waiting for his entry to collect the votes.

“Wait, first let the teacher get in and the students settle. Let’s work here a little while more and then we’ll go to that room.” His friend mentioned. Rahil thought it for the better and started to wander around the campus again with a semi-purpose. After a while when they both made sure that everyone sitting in the canteen had signed the ballots, they both consented to take the trip to room 206 which was just around the corner of the canteen. He went in and found the teacher sitting on her chair stooped over a text from the fifteenth century and the students with arbitrary moods. The teacher looked at him standing under the doorway and gestured him to come inside.

“Ah, yes.” She said, nodding her head like a fiction character from a Beat Generation novel. Then Rahil made the introductory speech which the teacher revisited to make it short and sweet. That was followed by his friend going around with the ballot pad taking votes from every one of the students and not one student missed or did not care to vote. All of them voted. All this time, the professor engaged Rahil in a short conversation about the number of votes gathered and about the further plan. Rahil stated that the final counting was to be done at the arts faculty of the North Campus to which the teacher told Rahil that she will try to be there for the counting.

After the collection of the votes in that class, she took the initiative herself to take Rahil and his friend to another class which was in the same block just two classrooms after hers. She called to the professor and told him to please let him convene the process of taking votes in his class as well and he felt democratically obligated to do so. His friend, along with him took votes from the students while the two teachers stood and talked in one corner of the room. After taking the poll, they exited from the classroom with Nikita ma’am and then Rahil took his leave from her feeling that she had gone out of her way to do more for him than what was asked of her and he knew that people, especially in the urban cities generally seldom do that. Rahil checked the time and it was close to two now so he waited for the call from Amit before ending the referendum completely. However, his frequency of approaching students to fill ballots had been greatly decreased by now and his fast loquacious pace turned into soft, dismissed gallivants.

At about an hour later, close to three in the afternoon he received a call from Amit asking him to end the process and leaving the college premises to take all the ballots to North Campus. Evidently on the account of the fascist setback encountered by the students, the student groups of AISA from different colleges of the North Campus had joined forces and prepared for a protest demonstration march against the police authorities and the college authorities, namely the principals of the respective colleges who alerted the police and pulled special strings to make sure that the referendum was quelled. In some colleges, all the first year students were gathered into their college auditoriums by the principal on account of bogus matters related to foundation courses just to make sure that the first year student body in the college would be indisposed to vote on the referendum as they somehow received the tip that a mobilized version of referendum had penetrated the upstanding walls the principals had intended to set for their colleges.

There was a tantamount of tension and turmoil in the air but it was as of yet suppressed and only felt in undertones. Rahil saw that his friend, after they had made their way out of college insisted to leave for some private matters and told him that he would not e able to attend the counting and the demonstration. There was nothing much Rahil could do to change his decision. While he was busy talking to his friend, he heard a distant voice call to him but was unable to find the source of it. He looked around and saw cars parked, people moving about and nobody looking at his direction or approaching towards him. He resumed his chat with his friend and was now in his final words when he turned again to make sure that the distinctive call from the distant voice was nothing but urban cacophony. Just as he was about to make sure, he saw a body move towards him and it took another look to confirm that it was indeed Shashi. He came and embraced Rahil as war emissaries of the same legion often do before or after war.

“Come Rahil. Let’s go to the North Campus.” Shashi declared and both of them walked to a taxicab standing on the opposite end of the street. He got into it and so a person sitting on the front seat.

“Rahil, meet our comrade from JNU. His name is Shanto. He was a professor of English in your college awhile back.” Shahsi introduced him to the stately plump figure of the man, dark in tan with frowzy hair and stubs for a beard. His eyes were covered with thin square glasses.

“Hello, Rahil is it?” he asked with a very thin voice becalmed with a serene expression over his face that made him appear more scholarly.

“Hello sir. I am glad to make your acquaintance. If I may ask, why did you leave professorship in our college?” he asked as the cab rolled off throwing dust and smoke behind him and driving in an ant’s pace being stuck at every turn due to high traffic during afternoon hours.

Their conversation continued and Shanto sir asked Rahil how his time in the college was being spent and how the college crowd was. Rahil answered him telling obvious things but gave him additional information about his involvement in the debating society. Shanto sir felt very happy about that and asked if Nikita ma’am would preside over the counting of ballots and Rahil replied that he was not really sure though she had mentioned to him the fact that she would try to reach arts campus and this fact Rahil plied onto Shanto sir. Stuck in traffic and in the midst of honking horns, Shanto sir called Nikita ma’am and asked her if she would be able to come. The lady replied that all likeliness was towards the contrary. Shanto sir knew Nikita ma’am from his days in JNU and also as a fellow professor from his days in the college. Now he had to pursue his doctoral studies for which he thought to resume his studies in JNU. Shashi had pulled the ballot box from the trunk of the cab and had placed it onto his lap and all the way through the drive Rahil had to tear off the ballot from the pads, fold them neatly or not so neatly and put them into the ballot boxes so that the counting could be done in a proper manner. It took them an hour to reach the arts campus where they found that the counting of the ballots had already started. Different colleges had different tables and over them the ballot boxes of their respective colleges. The mood there was festive with blaring sounds of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ as the students counted the numbers of the ‘yeses’ and ‘no’s’. The students counting the ballots raised their hands with the wave of their voice at each yell, at each yawp.

It was as if for the first time the authorities and the administration were put to trial and with evidence, data and witnesses conducted a persecution upon them. Rahil felt as if the first trunk of order was being uprooted from the free liberated lands of the free and the home of the brave, in reality, and the leaves of the scriptures on the tree of order now withered into the blowing air like the dust. Rahil soon had his own table brought along the circle of the jury that read aloud the ayes and the nays. It was a glorious moment for Rahil to just be a part of this grand historic moment and the gravity with which the moment suspended him swept him off his feet. He was tired from the drive, sweaty from being entrapped close to an hour in traffic in between two burly men who were sweating themselves, exhausted from the continual addressing of classes and persuasion for votes and his legs were turned to stone from orbiting the campus almost ten times that day but he was still intact and with a gleam of joy, happiness and ecstatic euphoria gushing through his veins he took his place and yelled out the ballots while Shashi did the counting and Sanatan the tally. Many people gathered and even the people passing through the arts campus felt the inherent desire to stop and gaze at the gem of an event that was being put to display for the world to witness.

-The great crowd jostles while I –yes- crowd gives a ruffled applause to every one of the ballot in affirmation. A family dispensed, suspended immaterial if such mutualism existed between humanity. What is a disaster? A disaster is irrefutable. It is not a bad occurrence, just an occurrence…blank…we fill the empty space…connect the dots…one with the other…make meaning out a potentially meaningless world through the tools of our associationism. Hoi Polloi serving a great purpose and still the ill will are on them. Everything is clear when we come to the semiotic understanding of the world. La-di-da-di and Keats how are they different? The Weathermen brought disaster with the goal of bringing revolution. Was that disaster? We can only tell for certain because we want to. Nothing certain is actually certain. Here’s a little something like this, hit it. Lexicography is not certain so how can language be certain. Laws change with time, so how can we be certain of law. Drinking alcohol was once banned and now they celebrate Oktoberfest in US. What we are doing is creating disaster. And we are right by it. Disaster ought to be created. They ought to be delivered. Disaster cuts down representation. You can vote for a mayor who promises to start a new program to help the homeless, or you can squat unused buildings and open them up as free housing for anyone in need. You can write your Congressman, asking him to oppose a law that would allow corporations to cut down old-growth forests-but if they still pass that law, you can go to the forests and stop the cutting by sitting in trees, blockading roads, and monkey-wrenching machinery. Read that somewhere. The quickest way to the top is to turn the world upside down. Revolution is, after all a reversal. But there is a psychological substance to all of this and all of that which is undeniable. Is that also an atomism or an inference from an atomism? Those that do not know, do not see but those that see, are they we? Colors are not really colors but a single light bent on a different angle. That’s what science tells us. And that is why the sky is blue and that is why scientists are religious. Descartes, Newton. Newton, the Calvinist. Religion is an archetype of science and maybe that is why both Descartes and Newton just had to conjugate with religion. Newton had more books on humanistic learning than he had on science. Either that or he was a secret member of the Illuminati; at least that’s what Dan Brown says to the mainstream readership. Desirous of such great cause is everyone; for me it is the chant that is like the fiery breath of a dragon over which I ride zooming through the soft white wisps of clouds and the ever so still gentle blue skies. It is the grand emporium of sheathed penises, hardened, erect with brute excitation and manic sexual energy. The imitation is futile, only the exaltation is possible, so exult-

Finally the polls ended and the result brought out a great hush of joy and a loud cheer that roared through the campus regardless of the time, place, police posting or the resentment of the bureaucratic elite. It was declared that the total participation of the referendum was about eleven thousand five hundred and the number of votes against the program was about ten thousand while hundred votes were invalid. So in estimation, around ninety one percent of the students had voted against FYUP and most of it was just in the first few hours. The elucidation of this referendum was so well that the result left many baffled at the effectiveness of such a small political body such as AISA to garner such a multitude of attention and after much hurdles placed at their path. Rahil was asked by Ved Prakash and Shanto to stay back with the others as there was also supposed to be news coverage about the referendum for which the members of the AISA thought the presence of a person like Rahil necessary.

“Rahil, prepare yourself for news feature. You are going live on a news channel to talk about the FYUP.” Amit said, coming over to him. At first, Rahil did not believe him because there were no signs of a television crew or news van. Rahil paid little attention to him and changed the topic of discussion to matters pertaining to the future of the struggle. As they talked to each other, Amit saw someone approach him from the corner of his eye. He was not sure who he was but it seemed to him that Amit knew him all too well.

“Rahil, I want you to meet Mr. Prakash. He had been my mentor since before I was of your age and he is a wonderful and the most respectable person and that I have faith about. You can ask him anything about ideals and praxis to him.” Amit told Rahil who shook his hand. Amit then turned and walked towards the other members leaving Rahil alone with Mr. Prakash and Rahil felt more or less mired in the situation.

He looked at his face and it was beaten by age and a struggling life and he could see flashes of tentativeness of thought. He could see his internal unsettlement that was common among many socialists who wanted liberation too soon. Rahil had also felt this riling oftentimes but comparing his naïve riling to the thoughtful brooding of Mr. Prakash was not decent. Much of Rahil’s seditiousness came out of pure understanding of societal construct and even that analyzed by tools left by Marx in the German ideology and thesis of Feuerbach but for Mr. Prakash, it was born out of relentless fieldwork that added a pragmatic touch to his philosophies. Rahil really felt undermined by his presence and could not muster up enough ground for himself to talk to this legacy of a man sitting in front of him.

“Do you have a teaching position in DU?” Rahil asked.

“Yeah, I am a professor of history at the Department of History in Delhi University.”

The man answered shortly.

“So, you do not teach undergraduates?” Rahil asked again.

“No, I do not. I used to but no longer, seeing as how they get dumber every year.” He replied.

“Did you get your degree from JNU, sir?” Rahil asked.

“Only my doctoral degree, I did.” He answered in reply, fearing the branding of his personality as a JNU stereotype.

“Rahil, we want you here.” Ved Prakash, the president of AISA, Delhi University called him and Rahil took leave from what seemed to him as a doubly open-ended conversation.

He went over to them and found out that there really was a television channel covering the referendum and he was to be a part of the panel of students and teachers representing the side of the referendum or to be blunt about it, representing AISA. This was something Rahil looked forward to not knowing its subtle underlying complications and obligations. He was to be on live TV in a half hour and so Amit, Ved Prakash and Shanto sir, all prepped him up with different bits and pieces of information that had to be given spontaneously. Nothing they said seemed new to Rahil but the trick then was not to understand and get a grasp of the information they gave but to repeat it on camera. Rahil diligently took advice from them and made mental notes and meanwhile out of the corner of his eye, he saw the news van arrive and a lady exit from it. She was the correspondent and apparently knew much of the teachers and senior students present there. Lurking around, Rahil also saw the other ones from JNU Rahil had previously met with when he had a short meeting his professor Nikita. They were also somewhat acquainted with the reporter. Rahil could see that the reporter was swanky in her outlook and was none the same as the people present there. She met with Shanto sir who then showed her the teachers and the students to be interviewed out of which Rahil was one too. There were three students and two teachers from whom opinions were wanted.

“Would you be comfortable in Hindi or English for Q and A?” she asked him.

“I would prefer English, thank you.” Rahil replied.

“Okay then, take a seat here and look at me, not at the camera. The rules are simple, no ill remarks, no defamations or direct accusations. Secondly, keep track of time while handling questions and don’t eat into other peoples’ time. Lastly, when you talk, I want you to lean to the microphone in my hand and speak clearly. Okay, we’ll start in a few.” She sat him next to a teacher of the University and gave him clear instructions. She was on cue from the network and the camera was looking at her with cameraman throwing various signs that were senseless to people outside of journalistic line of work. After a small while of wait, she started:

“Hello and welcome, you’re watching the social network. Now, what better way to live a democracy than to hear the voices of the people and that’s exactly happened across Delhi University today when more than twenty colleges have held a referendum on the FYUP or the four year undergraduate program which many say was very hurriedly introduced and serves no purpose at all. The number of people who voted no was more than ten thousand people. Remember this is a fairly significant fraction of the fifty thousand students who had to accept FYUP as a part of their curriculum starting July and that’s what we discuss on the social network today, who’s afraid of the referendum? All right, so one of the students, who actually voted against FYUP, we’ve got with us Rahil from Sri Venkateswara College…uh, Rahil, very quickly…tell me why...you joined college this year, Delhi University, this year… you’re from Andaman Nicobar Islands, why did you vote against the FYUP?”

“Well, the course of the FYUP itself, the fourth year is highly unnecessary and it’s wholly based on the implementation of the foundation courses for the first and second year.” Rahil replied.

“So, what is the problem with the foundation courses?” the swanky reporter cross-questioned.

“The foundation course has been very elementary. It has been preposterously elementary. You see the… every aspect of the foundation courses has been implemented just to impede us and there has been massive dissolution due to that from the discipline courses that we are supposed to study.” He replied to answer her question.

“So you’re thinking basically it’s a waste of time?” the reporter summarized the short explanation in an even shorter question trying to tie the present up in a nice bow in the manner that mass media usually does.

“Yes” was all that Rahil could say after this point.

Then she turned to the other panelists and asked the question in favor of rescinding FYUP to a member of the Delhi University board of education. He was a classic stereotype of a Kafkaesque bureaucrat with his spectacled eyes, big husky figure which did not even came close to account for the massive authority that he held. He was dodgy in his answers using tools of language paradox. On asking comments on the FYUP, the fat man answered laughingly “See first thing I’d like to know, you just asked me and invited that there is a discussion on the referendum. May I know the organization which has organized this referendum because so far as the discussion on the FYUP is concerned, we are not here for the discussion on the FYUP? This is what I had been conveyed through you and your people, that this referendum is here and the result will be out and you please be there if you can.”

Nevertheless, his slimy speech fooled no one in that public arena and they desired an answer from him. Just as he tried his sidestepping again, flashes of voices in the form of cries of slogans were heard from the back.

***FYUP down down***

Here the news reporter was deluged from the cry of slogans in which one voice shouted the slogan and the ocean of several voice choired with an oceanic assonance. The newsreel probably ended there and there was nobody whom Rahil told or intimated about his television appearance. The crowd after the news van disappeared began to grow thinner as the students too gradually faded off into the setting sun and Rahil was left with the veterans of AISA who talked among themselves as Rahil sat among them listening.

It was here that Amit mentioned again to Rahil about his intention to run Rahil for the Delhi University student union elections. It was now that Rahil came to the conclusion that Amit was actually serious. Rahil did not know how to react to his proposition and kept silence whenever he brought up the matter.

-Do I value my life enough to give in to Western commodity and Western learning? Or do I value them more? I live. Do I value my life enough to overlook my ailment, my mortal garb and still give in to unwanted compulsions, deriding needs? What do I live for? I live to see. Only? No, to perceive and to receive, to feel. The question then is do I value these feelings enough? Are they not superficial? Life is a continuous tensed string and a climax is like a not, a simple play on the tension to make symphony. Do I feel scared when left alone stranded? Or do I feel scared in a crowd where everyone knows me and expects something of me? These are the uncanny truths of life. I do not feel the need to walk around with a cell phone. I need to sit and think but can I sit and think and submit to this inactivity completely? Must I not do? My incompleteness to see makes me a subject of substance abuse. I never knew the way of time travel before a mental stimulation through preparations. I was never sure of such a method and to me it seemed placebo. But now I have broken the very constructs of the universe- time and space. It is a mutation, an evolution or a divergence that occurred to me on all levels- physical, in the sense of body orientation and balance, gravity and forces, biological, meaning the way in which the sensations actually receive more even at the presence of lesser stimuli. But many would say that it was my altogether phenomenological consciousness that changed the most and all the changes that were physical, chemical biological were only proven to me by my own subjective manner of sense change. Concurrence of thought all at the same station of superego or consciousness is usually the most common, especially for me. This leads to complex and multi-tabular thinking; instead of mutually aligned thoughts, my sense is changed most fundamentally by the perception of time and sensory defections to create a more crude thought process. Here, as always, mind is enlarged to a greater bracket of thought reception, not thought perception. The cogs of my mind dissemble assort themselves along the starting line and race each other in a frenzy of wild fancy and exhilaration. My time in this world is not limited. I am only bound by my ability to perceive. I can be omniscient if I chose to be but it is too much truth and effort to handle, to cope. What is my role is as a political activist now? What happened at the end? Yes, we talked. The communists talked of a progressive dictatorship of the proletariat and how to fight and quell the fascist forces that dwell around us hidden behind veils. After then was the time to talk of practice and how to bring this change about. FYUP was talked about here. Printed materials were handed down to me. These are still in my bag. Post cards- to be signed by the students with remarks about the FYUP, hundreds, hundreds of them and I in my boasting moment, accepted about three hundred. And now I am reluctant to fill them. This has nothing to do with shyness because I am not shy anyways. Shyness is a virtue, or a vice, never seemed to bother me in my early days. The question here is of simple arithmetic. What are the odds that I would be able to fill five hundred postcards, all of them to be filled by the first-year students under FYUP in a matter of two days? I started yesterday, filled twenty in my PG though I do not live there anymore now. Now I’m traveling on a past beaten trail, so its fare thee well. And now I sit here in between a lecture waiting for it to end so that I can continue my crusade against the bigger fascist forces that hind behind veils and an obvious devil that has systemized the Machiavellian principle of FYUP-

His bag was filled with pamphlets and postcards to be handed out and filled respectively and there was ample time to do so as he had only foundation courses. He would have attended the foundation courses but knowing well that the courses were that of business studies and mathematics he thought it better to flunk them instead and carry on with more important work. He walked to the canteen and ordered a cup of tea which he drank sitting under a tree and examining the crowd he was about to approach and merge with during his socio-political act. After finishing his tea, he stood up and took out from his bag a fat bunch of postcards to be filled by the people present there and one by one he addressed groups clustered around various tables and started having short but engaging conversations with them. The entire task of persuading them to fill the postcards, even if broken down into elementary steps was tiresome and obviating. He had to become more and achieve that point of human advancement that Nietzsche talked about in his works in order to bring his efforts to fruition. The whole deed took a lot of time and since he was alone, he was faced with complete dejection in a lot of cases. He still did not lose and wandered around the canteen with a load of postcards in his hand and the resolution to fill them and empty his hand in turn.

It took him three hours to finally complete filling his fair, or perhaps unfair, share of postcards and he was more or less astonished by the successful completion of the deed. His will, for the first time was fully resolved and it was more easily done than he had hoped. This brought an instant air of optimism about him with which he walked back to the canteen counter to order for himself another cup of tea and this cup of tea along with the one that he had became his lunch for the day. His hunger was only for ideas and not physical.

Having nothing else to do for the day, he resorted to plebian affairs and joined the farcical debating society for their sessions. Here he found a completely different realm of activity as the students in the debating society, Rahul and the others were preparing full sail for the tournament which was to be hosted by their college and which marked as the flagship tournament for others in the debating season. This was an activity in which Rahil had little interest but it was not that he had complete disregard for it. It was just that there was so much in ascension around him that had to do with such big matters, such great issues that form relativist point of view it seemed of unimportance.

Here a possibility of different concepts of infinities and different concepts of time confronted him. Difference in fates, or the closest thing to it was always there as there were some laws that governed the debating society collectively but Rahil, being an anarchist by virtue or by vice in his conduct and his thinking though not in his outlook, was free from these collective laws. It did not mean that he was free from all laws; laws did exist for him but not in that particular realm, in that particular field of reality. It was belittling to others and the others in the society felt it but not as immediately as would count for a violation of law. For them, Rahil bending, if not breaking an existing code of law superficially established for all the members was to a great extent legitimate. This was not out of the fact that, like a hero by his virtue, he overcame their moral boundaries. He was more like a tragic hero whom everyone related to as a sign of misery with each coming step and so they made amends in their own ways seeing the deteriorating example of the tragic hero.

He did not debate in this particular session but adjudicated over a debate which was dry, ignominious, disgraceful and morose. It was something he had no qualms to attend to but only did out of his own free will. Here he showed that true free will can only be exerted through a mishap of circumstances where the hero always falls. As long as the hero stays in his place, the path is predestined and free will is an illusion. It is only at that sudden instance of descent wherein free will is actually honest and true. When his turn came to speak, he was at a loss of words not out of his own stupidity but out of the stupidity of the debate that had influenced him. He sat on the teacher’s table with the crowd looking at him desperately for an answer in the minute of silence that he took to contemplate his thoughts and words.

“The debate was not intellectually stimulating enough for me.” An instant after he said that, the participants and other members of the society present there were bowled over by his reply. It was true and it was honest though it was a conjecture. It was as if in that one moment he created a fact out of synthesis of not just the two arguments but also of the de-contextualized nature of the debate if he considered each point made by each side independently. It was a truism that nobody could deny. However, being in the debating society, people need their reasons although if he was ever engaged in such a debate, he would definitely find solace in that one point made by anyone else. Arguments are inherent qualities of confused minds and so each must have their fair share; from each according to his own abilities to each according to his own needs, the fair share. Further responsibilities of clarity and matter-pitching were however not taken by him as the other students who debated grudged him for having stated such a high-handed remark. They were sure he lacked the proper explanation behind what they thought was just his abstract expression although it was very clear to them if they had the brain mater to put it into the context in which the debate was conducted. But on the other hand, being as they were, a discovery of such kind would be too harrowing a discord for them. They needed time-a year or so- to come to the maturity to understand a single statement that he had made because for them the statement itself was a futurist work of art but the point of crisis was that the only Italian art these people understood was ‘The Godfather’.

The rest of the adjudicators spent their time in justifying the absurd and finding sense in the nonsensical without taking help either from absurdism or from semiotics. He had an entertaining time hearing them speak and justify what is unjustifiable and uphold something that is lost in the infinite pit of unreason.

After properly finishing the feedback from the other two adjudicators, Rahil along with Siddharth and Rahul and the caravan of the whole debating society moved out of college and into the foaming nostrils of the devil that is Satya Niketan. Rahil started his journey from there, after having a small recreational chat with the rest to his room but on his way was interrupted by a phone call from Shashi who called him in front of the Ram Lal Anand College to hand him the postcards. How he got know that the postcards were all filled by Rahil in such short time was unknown to the mental faculties of Rahil. He retraced his steps from the inner lanes of Satya and paced towards the opposite end of the college where the auto-rickshaws stood. On reaching there, he took a shared rickshaw to Ram Lal Anand which was only a few minutes ride. The rickshaw charged him ten rupees for that and after paying the rickshaw driver, Rahil looked around for some trace of Shashi. He found Sanatan instead but it was the other way round in that he felt a hand grip his right shoulder which turned out to be his. They exchanged initial courtesies as comrades often do ideologically and then Rahil handed him a fat bunch of gartered postcards which brought a glow upon the eyes of Sanatan. This was the glow of Rahil’s efforts affecting not just Sanatan but the organization as a whole.

“Indeed you are the right choice.” Sanatan muttered underneath his breath and Rahil could not make out anything from his words.

“All right, now that the initial phase is done, what we do is we lead a protest rally at North Campus which will be centered on taking these postcards and making sure that the Delhi University Vice Chancellor not only accepts it but comments upon it. This is how we build pressure upon the administration, upon the system. It is through agitation and agitation only that the masses will be involved in a progressive struggle. It is something that you cannot achieve by throwing a bomb. I think the rally will be tomorrow but I am not properly aware as of now. However, don’t guess by my lack of knowledge that the event is a small one. This is a big event in which you are expected to address because you have a long way to go from here. So be prepared.” Santan completed his soliloquy and Rahil did not interrupt even once. Rahil was awed by the sight and sound of the turning of the bigger cogs. Though the cogs may be rusted, cobwebbed and dusty, the mere fact that they moved proved to Rahil that they had not lost the capability to bring about an activity on a larger scale. Suddenly, as if under the influence of a prepared drug, his perception grew vivid in all terms in that he saw more, felt more and experienced being part of something much bigger than himself although the things that had already happened throughout his life led him to believe that there were not many things that were bigger than him. What stood in front of him was not a statue of some fascist order or totalitarian regime but was the shadow of his own frame of body- that of a student magnified tenfold times. He was poetic in his exaggeration but the time indeed was poetic and romantic even though there were spheres of looming evils around him which trickled very delicately along his flesh. He only felt the trickling of these evils physically because his mind was totally submitted to the idea of something big happening. It was something he was ready to lose his sleep for, something that he was ready to live for, to die for, to breathe for and to stop breathing for.

A recollection of a whole imagery of past events then gathered in his mind from the time he raised his first clenched fist for students’ rights to the time he heard Sanatan’s gibberish just an hour before in front the college. He walked around Satya, his mind caught up with the visions of the event that was about to dawn which he romanticized and over-thought all out of proportion. He could not return to the confined existence of his room now; he needed some place bigger to be and what better place than the Roman Coliseum of the grotesque and the arabesque that is Satya Niketan.

The strangeness of the place completely eloped from his mind and what remained inside it was the sheer anticipation of the event. Here, not as always, he lost all his anarchist tendencies of freedom of mind and liberation from the sense of time and he actually started to plan for the event and how they were to go about it. In this phase, he called about a dozen AISA activists all of whom were just in the process of event management. Rahil automatically thought he was one step ahead from them. This brought out disturbing thought in his mind which was perpetuated by paranoia.

‘What if the event were to be postponed? Would I be able to bear another day’s weight when the hours themselves have taken a maddening toll upon me?’ he thought, and then covered his face with both his hands as if making an attempt to hide from the outside world knowing but not acting on the fact that it is the inside world that leads to such maniacal aberration. He was imbued in his own personal convalescence and lost all sense of time. He sat in one place for hours on end. When he felt that he was gaining attention from others, he stood up from his place, bought a cup of coffee from a nearby coffee stall and then sat to resume is convalescence. The time of redemption finally came in the form of a text message from Amit which said that the rally was going to take place the next day. This was a celebration in itself for Rahil and the mood created by the news was enough to ward off the evil spirits in the form of paranoid thoughts from his mind. After all, what is ghost but the disease of the mind, the ghost of the mind?

He leaped out from his place and was free from the disease-ridden corpse of his mind. He was a working-class hero now. He was somebody to be. And with a dash of wild thoughts in his mind, he turned around looking for places to go but could find none.

-But tomorrow I have…. A place to go…the end of this miserable cycle of hopelessness and spite ends now, not in the hereafter because the here is here and now, or perhaps the next day. O mind, control thee! Thou art moving too fast. Becalm me, oh now the thought of going back, sleeping an endless sleep or not sleeping at all, the place haunts me now. Please give me some kind of an apocalypse, but no. Then what about tomorrow? The chance to be something big; the chance- to overcome the confinements of man and his limitations, the chance to proclaim to the world with arms open wide and wind blowing hard through my long hair, is tomorrow. The frustration is not here now, but it casts its shadow upon me. My distress holds high in its presence, higher than my ambitions, higher than my passion, but then distress is also a passion so how can it go from within. It always is. It always will be-

With nothing to do, nowhere to go, he went back to his room early in the evening at about six just to preempt his coming thoughts with a nice long conversation. There was no other way he could see. He used a very general tone of conversation and kept the matters trivial. This was something they appreciated and this was something they did not expect from him. Rahil, for them was a figure who was too preachy and pedantic. Thus, he was impossible to have a mild conversation with. This provided with some basis for bonding. This bonding was starkly different from the kind they underwent when they were not roommates but rats under the same white sinking ship. Now they had more ground and knew each other more personally.

With just about nothing else left to do after a long and tiring conversation which for Rahil, due to all its triviality most of which he was alien to, he was gruesomely tired and in need of corrective rest. On top of that, he had to save his strength for the next day and so with the conversation finally coming to an end, he went to the cooler which he had individually occupied, he lied on the mattress and fell to a blank sleep.

There were no dreams that graced his long lethargic sleep. He slept like a baby with no intellect to recollect. Every night he lost himself and every morning he found himself. It was not his circumstances that affected his dreams; it was his own capability to not see them. He had a lifestyle which was fast and gyrated from one endless spiral into another but never did the two spirals merge together. The theory of it is very complex and inexplicable and it would take more than the knowledge of present experimental psychology or neurosciences to understand the phenomenon that occurred in the absence of a rapid eye movement which is said to be scientific reason and evidence of dreams. An inherent imagery is produced in such an occurrence that only the closed eye can see. This is from the science books. What, however, science cannot explain is the memory attached to the dreams and the revelations of greater truths and levels of consciousnesses at the time of dreaming. Through brain-mapping procedures, one can only get to a conclusion that it is a play on certain stimuli through an internal operant. Science has only been able to prove it through technology now and Freud had come up with this theory of dream response in the early twentieth century without any such technology or prior knowledge. This just goes to show the deepness of the realms of human mind and the human thought process and also the necessity for an introspective philosophy that is negated by the presence of science.

The next day, right from the start was a daze. Rahil was on the street even without the surety on whether he had brushed his teeth. As his feet unwaveringly walked through the hard, tough, black feet, he could feel the winds of change blow by his torso and this made his walking faster and more determined.

The next day, he managed time to attend two lectures by two pseudo-intellectual professors both of whom had little problems with the way the course was run and would do little to change it. This was not the manner in which in which academicians are supposed to behave. They should understand the responsibility upon their shoulders as they, along with the student population form the working classes of the university space and when the autonomy of the working classes is challenged and challenged so tyrannically it is their duty to act. They cannot just sit and mull over the fact that the course structure is bad and criticize it in their coffeehouse conversation. They are the forces who are to rise against it and lead the greater student population. This is the reason of the lost consciousness and the de-politicization of academic environment that enables institutions like the TTD to construct temples inside the free and secular college campuses. This is the kind of attitude, both among the teachers and the students that ought to be shunned and criticized. Great persons are driven by greater ideals, great masses are driven by greater ideologies all of which fall acutely short in the current university space. This is the crisis of the Indian University. Gone are the days of the Naxalbari struggle where colleges like JNU, Jadavpur, Calcutta University and even Stephens were emptied out and students actively joined the peasant struggle and organized the masses, built popular support and with their radical behavior changed the way students looked at events concerning the greater part of the society. Gone are the days when radical students in St. Stephens used to write phrases like ‘*Naxalbari will prevail’* and ‘*Chairman Mao is our only Chairman*’ on the classroom and church walls of their college. Gone are the days when professors supported the separatist struggle for Kashmir and the armed peasant struggles of Tebhanga and spoke very bravely of it no matter what the topic is. They would de-contextualize the text in Marxist terms and speak of the oppressed and of their oppressions. Nietzsche and Bentham had no place in their lectures but only to scorn at sarcastically. Text like Dickens’ Hard Times was read with disgust towards industrialization as a helping tool for colonial expansionism by professors of English and Weber was discredited for his crypto-capitalistic notions by professors of sociology. Since then, the world has changed a lot and Rahil lived in different times. It was a time ridden with the disease of didacticism, of decadence in proper student-teacher interaction, of decadence in creative learning. It was a time plagued by professionalism of higher education where people swarmed to the placement cells for jobs in corporate firms and formed technocratic societies like music society and debating society which were ridden with the malpractices of stratification, extreme exclusivity and technocracy. The reason the students cited for not being able to come to protests were majorly that they were a part of these wretched societies. The sad part of this involvement was that these societies did not do much to incite proper cultivation for the skill on which these societies were based and only honed its constituent members into racing horses to win prizes for their respective societies. You could sit and have a conversation with a person from Western music society and find out, much to your own dismay that he knows absolutely nothing about the history of rock and roll, let alone the history of Western music. If you were to ask what songs they preferred to sing, you would find that ninety nine percent of the songs were less of songs and more of commodities with the sole intent to make music that would top the billboard and do nothing whatsoever to contribute to the larger social movement of music.

The dreary lecture about the facade heroics of Odysseus ended and was followed by the question of free will versus destiny in the case of Sophocles. The two lectures were thought were thought-provoking and that was what the bulk of the mindless class apart from Rahil wanted; to be caught in an endless web woven completely by thoughts and paradoxes but no action. Rahil wanted action He wanted to be what he read about. He wanted to thwart himself into constant altercations with the Big Other and bring it down and not just accept the fact of its mere discovery which the others accepted thinking that they know something overly great, omniscient and significant. This is what, then, the intellectuals and professors make good use ofand weave even mo intricate theories and theses which catch the student who has the capability to both think and act into a solipsism o pure thought. The world should be rid of such intellectuals. More intellectuals ought to be like Lenin and Che Guevara, like Charu Majumder, like Marx and more students like Rahil. His thirst for action grew with every new theory he learned and filled him with the test of whether he would be able to put it to practicality. Every form of a perspective he read from Lacan drove him to be more involved socially and then analyze the people around to him to put the theory of Ècrits to the test. That is how one learns fully; by implementing not what he has already learnt but what he is seeking to learn. Our willingness to learn is not bound by our capacity to learn; it is bound by the capacity of the society to teach us. Who are we but the extensions of society? Lost souls in Plato’s cave of three-dimensional bodies; Hobbes celebrates the individuality of man but implies the limits of human advancement with things like greed and natural instinct of self-inflation. These are not our fragments but fragments of society in us and for the most part, they are blatant lies.

After the two lectures, he took off from college and started his journey bound for North Campus. He had some postcards with him in his bag and he traveled through the crwded, overcrowded DTC green bus without a ticket and then the metro for which he had a card. It took him close to an hour to reach the place and by the time he got to arts faculty, the procession was ready to go. There was a mob of protesters, some with placards and some with red flags having the black letters of ‘AISA’ proudly embossed upon it as it shone beautifully under the bright yellow sun. They started from the road from the arts faculty which was fully occupied then by the students who had come to protest and show their angst against the four year program. They chanted slogans and raised their fists as each slogan was said.

***Inqualab zindabad!***

***Zindabad zindabad!***

***Hum apna adhikaar maangte!***

***Nahi kisi se bheekh mangte!***

***FYUP down down!***

***Down down down down!***

The slogans were sharp, crude and powerful but the most powerful tool for Rahil was the feeling f the strong collective just at being present there that it gave him. For him, though he had never been to a club or a pub, it seemed better than all that because here they were all truly there for one sole purpose and driven to achieve it. They were crusaders and this was their crusade. They were fighters and this was their fight. Nothing else, nobody else mattered, not even the vice-chancellor of the esteemed Delhi University where only a selective few had the fortune of studying. At this point, even the selectivity and the fact that each one of them present there were elites just by the virtue of being present there also mattered no more. The only thing that mattered was to show the administration, the fascist and tyrannical administration what the true power of students was and what potential each student had was far greater united than standing divided no mattered how wealthy or how rich the student may be as long as he is alone or not part of the student social collective. The demonstration, that is, the masses of parading students moved from one college to another, taking up men on the way, seeking new comrades to come join the struggle and the flag from their hands into their own. The entire time the activists moved around the college the slogans did not stop and at times even Rahil felt the need to master a few slogans and then lead on. This was a true show of power not the kind of show of power the right-wing does by hiring goons and shouting meaningless slogans like ‘Bande mataram’ which made no sense especially for them because they are ones with their cocks hanging out as they rape the framework of the government, the legislature, the judiciary, even more so the executive and most of all the innocent and ignorant countrymen. What right do they have to shout such slogans when all they have done is make new instruments of exploitations and institutionalize them over and over again at the cost of the minorities and the oppressed classes? These are the questions that should burn a whole inside each citizen of the nation but alas when darkness looms about and people sleep, they do not sleep, they die. We are a nation of dead people and the only difference between the rich dead and the poor dead is that the rich are buried in individual marked graves whereas the poor are subjected to the morbid humiliation of mass graves.

And the dead did look at Rahil and his nasty lot with stony eyes, laden with the ignorance of the world, eyes that have so long seen the darkness of the underworld that the light that they walked with either blinded them or scared them. To the others, these were either rogues or saints and they were both of those; they were none of those. From Hindu on to Ramjas and from Ramjas to Kirori Mal, they marched. They marched into Hansraj and then into College of Business studies. Students of each college witnessed a historic display of freedom, a historic display of power and the beauty and the grace all exploded and the gods and the angles all came to bear the sight because they were the gods then, they were they angels then. No person, in the present or in the future, as they look upon this past moment can ever deny them of these glories and merits.

The battalion of students halted in front of the arts faculty, a good lot of them and refreshed themselves with yet another round of slogans demanding the rollback of the four year program. Their voices were heard sky high and their cries shook the very ground they stood on, and it was supposed to, destined to be this way. When the social fabric alters even for the better, people on it topple too. The agitation was long and not brief. Somewhere in the middle of this agitation, Ved Prakash came forward to address the agathering and stated his demands thusly:

“We had recently conducted a referendum that the administration refuses to believe under the pretense that it was a movement backed by a political party. They need a reason to hide behind because let me tell you though the referendum was backed by a party, as they call it, the ones conducting it were card holding students of this university and the ones involved in the voting process of the referendum were also card holding members of the university and its respective colleges. This is the bare fact and this is the truth. Those eleven thousand votes were not backed by any political party. That, people, is a fact and we have involved far too greatly, the media has been involved far too greatly to know the greater truth. And this postcard protest also stands as a testimony to that. We have been able to fill more than ten thousand postcards by students with their remarks that they were unable to convey through in the process of referendum. Some of these comments we will read aloud. One has written ‘FYUP is a hoax and a lie and we don’t want the university to be run by lies’ and another has written ‘Student mandate stands against FYUP yet the four year program stands’. Yet another has written ‘The fourth year is a burden on us students who stay outside Delhi in rented rooms and paying guest accommodations. It should be dealt with at once’. This has come from random students across DU, from Hindu to Ram Lal, from Satyawati to Venkateswara and we thank the students for voicing their opinions so boldly and bravely. We have barricaded the entrance of the Vice Chancellor’s office with the agenda to have a dialogue with him. We demand that they send out their administration people to receive the postcards and also receive a delegation from among the students to talk to the officials and discuss the issue of the four year program with them. This is what we demand from them and this barricade of students and this protest will not heed until our demands are fully met.”

With this Ved ended his address and another round of slogans were chanted as though a mass ritual was being performed. Rahil was also actively participating in shouting slogans but the bulk of his mind remained occupied looking and analyzing the uniformed cops, hordes of them standing with their hands gripping their sticks tightly as if they were getting ready to squash down the protest with their brute force. Still they held their fire within and no action was seen on their part. They certainly looked stirred and were feeling the wrath of the students bubbling within and as a consequence to their own inability, they felt more and more catatonic. This made their internal stature bitter and impersonal towards the students who they could not bear to look at even with a false corner of their eyes. To them these students, Rahil including, were vandals who missed classes to join protests and make a base for their political career. To them it was this precise class of vagabond students who destroyed the reputation of the hallowed grounds of the University of Delhi. IT was a shameful mentality to cultivate but not only was it their mentality but it was also the general mentality among the mainstream masses.

In the middle of the protest, Rahil was made aware of the fact that the authorities have arrived to whom the bunch of postcards would be handed over and since he was in charge of collecting the postcards from Venky, he would be the one to address the crowd and hand over the bunch of postcards to them. Amit handed the bunch of postcards from Venkateswara College after saying these few words and added to the short list of words that he would call him to the back of the addressing compound right before his turn.

This was not a big thing for Rahil as he was not easily scared of big crowd. On the contrary, a part of him was actually incentivized by this opportunity of addressing the mass of protestors. Rahil was not a complete extrovert, at least his personality profile did not say so, but he still had flashes of being the bigger person by casting an even bigger shadow. There was a fault however in the case of Rahil, that he himself knew little about or only vaguely noticed. While speaking to a mob, a couple or even an individual person in a personal manner, he spoke with clarity developing an argument and casting a web of information that pleased both the listener and Rahil himself. In the case of large crowd, such an interaction was not possible as the whole ambit is usually overcrowded with immediate rousing rhetoric and comments of conflagration.

As this internal conflict was much less known to Rahil himself, he had little objection in playing his part as directed by the free masters. When Amit asked him to step up, he was officially announced to the crowd and he stepped in front of the already set up microphone ready to deliver his speech.

“Friends” he said and then added further “We are all gathered here out a very special necessity and a very immediate one as well. Now is no time to slack up but to intensify our struggle. Our masters stand here, our makers, the shapers, the forgers of our destiny who introduced the incredulous Four Year Undergraduate Program, and we have just one question to ask you. Why? Why did you choose to play with the future of hundreds, with the future of thousands with your humbug of a program and the minute the first criticism arose, you answered that ‘it was indeed too late’. Well we are here to tell you that ‘too late’ is never. We demand the rollback of FYUP, we have been demanding it and we will demand so in the future until this tyrannical show of power is slashed down from its bare roots. Friends, again I thank you all present here today and again thank you for heartily participating in the postcard signing. Being alone in a college like Venkateswara, I myself had a hard time trying to fill out all the postcards prescribed to me. But when I took upon myself this daunting task, I found that it was a rather easy task because there was a general consensus against FYUP thing I had to do was approach them. And I say this not as a fiction but as a form of personal experience. It happened! But it is such a shame that the institution should let this façade go on.”

Echoes of ‘shame’ roared and resonated through the crowd of protestors and demonstrators.

“Pray, my dear friends let me talk on for these moments of complete clarity and democracy are few and a far between. Let me hand this bunch of postcards signed and remarked by the bold soldiers who fight battles everyday and hand it to the esquires who create the circumstances for these battles. To these warlords, I now hand over the verdict of the valiant.”

With that he completed his grandiose statement that made him more or less a rock star protestor though it was not quite the image he was aiming at. This was the outcome of the internal conflict that was mentioned earlier; in its pragmatism. The ends were not quite as he had expected though they were not unfavorable altogether. He still knew well that this kind of a persona that he built for himself led him to a completely different path that he was reluctant to walk through. Immediately after he had parted from the addressing space, Amit, with his two big arms hung warmly over Rahil and congratulated him for a speech well delivered.

“You are going o be our DUSU candidate. Be ready for it, comrade. It is something that is wanted of you and it is something that you deserve.” He mentioned with great delight that sparkled in his beady rebellious eyes.

DUSU was short for Delhi University Students’ Union which was practically the most defunct union in the whole of the state. Never once had the union raised its voice against the injustices done to students, whether it be on the grounds of official harassment, whether it be on the ground of gender harassment or whether it be on the grounds of racial discrimination, never once had the student union even showed solidarity with the progressive associations fighting against the aforesaid injustices. The only thing the Delhi University Students’ Union was good at were throwing parties during the festival season which was from January to early March and that is all the information needed for the educated and t intelligent to deduce what kind of a ‘group’ it was for one feels that the word ‘union’ would itself be tarnished if mentioned in this respect.

The two parties that headed the national political context, that is, Congress and BJP were the two parties whose student wings got elected over and over again in the past few years. Although the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyartthi Parsihad claims to be the student wing of the RSS but still they did not shy off from using Modi slogans of ‘***All Hail Modi***’ and Modi posters in their election campaign that year which was just before the general assembly elections. This was a pivotal point in the history of student politics because every year the student politics of the University decided the way of politics in the greater national context.

The period after the election was followed by a long hiatus in any form of holidays for Rahil. As the holidays neared, Rahil planned to travel to Calcutta for the holidays. Rahil felt an intense need to distance himself from everything because the material realities he had overlooked came back to haunt him. His room was a dungeon where hi mind was tortured with new instruments each day. The situation worsened because of the company he kept; it was not because they were indifferent towards him, on the contrary he felt that they clinged on him a lot. A few days after the election, Ranjan brought over some mutual friends who knew Rahil well enough to have a grueling debate with him. The topic of the debate at any other time would have sent Rahil into a deep cave of interest but his being was so distressed and darkened by grief that he wanted to evade the topic at every conjecture. His mind was fixated on getting out of this mess hee was so caught up in but he ha no idea what the mess was. The only way that Rahil thought his tribulation would end would be moving back into his old PG but there was a major problem in making that move which was that he would have to pay the month’s rent and he had no money. So the only alternative left to apply here was to squirrel into the PG secretly and not letting the broker or flat owner know.

He packed his bags and negotiated on both sides of the borders. After doing so, he embarked on the shortest exodus ever taken up by a human. On reaching his old accommodation, he found out that they had recently installed a wireless internet connection.

-How dreary was that night, how long was that walk for my lapop. Ranjan, my loyal Sancho Panza by me, on a starry night that departed long back from dusk. And into the night we rolled in quest for that divine object, one ‘laptop’, the giver of many pleasure, a million tools in one. To me it was divine, sacred, mine and to Ranjan was my will. The night was magnetic, as if the whole world was a giant black magnet and we were like little pins caught up in its field. The traffic moved, we got into a bus, not knowing where it would go. Lost souls in a lost night… As we lost ourselves, we found city hidden inside a city like a dream within a dream. Two doors opened together magically and as we entered one, we exited through the other at the same time. Both of us were confused, baffled, petrified, not sure what to do, not willing to do the sure thing. We got out of the bus and started walking the rest of the way. A giant black trunk, which could be easily mistaken for a throbbing phallus for it had hair on it, guided the way. It asked just for one small favor in return; that we pet it. As we moved closer to the trunk, the face of the elephant became visible. The face was actually in a very peculiar form of darkness brought about by the spatial arrangement of matter in free space. The elephant was a baby with pink eyes and soft skin. Instead of patting it, my naughty fancy took hold of its trunk and I, taking Ranjan by the arm, ascended the animal and patted its buttocks just hard enough to set it to motion. It swayed side and side but moved straight, like a drunkard walking on a street, his mind bent on getting home safely. We moved through posh lanes, people staring at us, their eyes popping out of their sockets, growing legs and following us. By the time we crossed three streets, there was an army of eyeballs with feet, and their feet tapping almost uniformly making a wet tapping sound like that of a bloody heart falling on the floor. Raanjan advised that we descend from the elephant as it was a God to the army of eyes and it would be disrespectful to pat their God on the buttocks again and again. But as we were about to descend the elephant, its trunk fell off from his face and started burning. Oh, poor animal!

Thou hast dispos'd me to renew my voyage,

That my first purpose fully is resum'd.

Lead on: one only will is in us both.

Thou art my guide, my master thou, and lord."

Suddenly the elephants disappeared, and so did the army of eyeballs but a big wall was constructed afore us. We knew not what to do; the noble and heroic Ranjan ran into the wall only to hurt himself. Suddenly the wall started talking and it said: “He whol holds no money in his pockets shall only enter.” So we emptied our pockets in the street. I had nothing to empty except stubs of paper, and I proclaimed with a loud voice: “I shall pass now and thou wilt not stop me.” The wall crashed into the floor with a booming sound and left behind it a fog of sweet smelling blur which had a tinge of blue color in it. We were confused about where we were. Both of us closed our eyes and when we opened it, we were in front of the Andaman guest house. All was calm after that. We forgot which room people carrying the laptop were in. We got into the elevator which took us straight in front of a door. We were unsure whether this was the room where the divine object rested. I knocked, mustering my courage. The cave lighted from the inside.

“You have completed the quest and rightfully earned the divine object. Its power and utility is immeasurable. Many A thousand hands have bled to forge this miracle. Do not let their toil go to waste. Where do you desire to go?” the voice, asked.

“Satya Niketan.”

“And go you shall”-

He was remined of his first visit to Andaman Bhawan whene he had stayed there with his friend Sunny in the dormitory in its entire pretense.

In the days that Rahil spent in sheer indecision in Port Blair, his elders forced on him choices he did not want. There was an engineering college in Chennai they wanted him to join for biomedical engineering. Initially, he had been fond of biomedical engineering.

-I want to be a biomedical engineer… coalesce all the fields of physical sciences with that of biology, scientifically and even generally, the holiest of sciences- it is the science that saves lives. The theories that I could have used to practical efforts and changed the world view of sciences with my ambition…. To use the venom of the snake *Bothrops Atrox* to produce a proper antidote to the unsolvable problem of hemophilia because the property of the venom of this particular is to make blood flowing through the veins curdle. This property can be analyzed and the elements causing it singled out and processed in such a way that they can be locally used to treat the blood cells of hemophiliac patients so as to regenerate the property of coagulation. And he use of morphed genes of the patients of Syndrome X to actually regulate ageing. The biological possibilities to change man’s lives are multiplex. But alas when you see that deep down every man, there is just a consciousness and that apart from all the scientific advancement and entry into the age of prosthetics which can renew a lost arm or even a lost heart with a pacemaker, can send someone into a space of virtual reality, can send a person into outer space of the Universe, can provide one with symphonies and music to enjoy at the push of a button, can make deaf hear, blinds see, cripples walk, dumb talk, breathless breath, sleepless sleep, toothless have teeth, hairless grow hair, can make ugly look pretty and pretty look prettier –by the standards of the world, can take blood from one person and put it into the ailing other, can find out-among the complexity of the brain- any humane problem and operate to solve them, can make sterile couples have children, among all of the miracles that science can testify to as its own, there is a flaw. This is the flaw of the God. The flaw is simple, it is humanly. The flaw is that all that has been possible and all that will be possible has only been possible through will… the will of man and that will has only been possible through consciousness. The science can perhaps help the blinds see, cripples walk, dumb talk, breathless breath, sleepless sleep and the toothless have teeth but it has never helped the thoughtless think. Science has not brought knowledge, it has propagandized it. The theories of Newton have become derivate formulas for the tinkerers and had Newton existed to this age, the tinkerers would surely have looked at him with acrimonious indignation, their chests puffed with the pride at the creation of their thingamajigs and whatchamacallits. How can you still theorize about imbecilic topics when there is a universal one demanding from you an answer? And so I commit myself to something higher. Is it to be doctor? Is that high? Is that even above the ground? I hoped not. What do they do but give assurances and pills you don’t want, tonics you don’t need. Every suffering of the body is the suffering of the consciousness and I do not mean that in a spiritual manner like a religious guru would, no. I mean it in a literal sense because it is only obvious and practical that we think of everything in that way, in the way that it affects our cognition. Physical conclusions do not help the cause of the mind. Exercising, for instance pays many gifts to the body, makes it stronger, powerful and depending on the rigor and intensity of the exercise, either muscular or agile but its propensity is physical and not psychological. Clarity of the mind can come to faster to someone with an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis who has kept his mind open to thoughts that some ignorant brawny thing that cannot even turn to look at his back. Sure people advise to stay fit but they also advice not to smoke marijuana and take LSD although they are noted forms of mental relaxants and psychoactive hallucinogens that lift consciousness barrier respectively. How is one to keep his head upright when a force pulls us all to the ground, and I’m not talking about gravity; because each of us has a purpose assigned to us, or imposed on us? It is like Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment, the movie or perhaps the James Baldwin although they are strikingly contrast features, but they do exist in me. Life is a battle of the opposites and you never and the fight between these opposites is what keeps us going. Punishment is the idea of justice for Raskolnikov and he sees this justice in the form of institutional punishment. He wishes to be a demigod and comes out of prison as one. Dostoevsky in his book hints to it:

But that is the beginning of a new story—the story of the gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his passing from one world into another, of his initiation into a new unknown life. That might be the subject of a new story, but our present story is ended.

This is the humble manner in which Dostoevsky ends a novel so intricate and stimulating that it has been the basis of discussion and debates for many thinkers that far surpassed his time. In the last words we see a truncation of sorts, formation of an infinite loop that is endless not because it is ever stretching but because its construction is such. Joyce’s Finnegan’s Wake is also cyclical in terms of structural components and does ponder over the subject of the human subconscious, something that Dostoevsky tried to deal with externally through character’s feelings and emotions. Joyce, on the other hand breaks the barrier of language to use it as a form of signifier, in Saussurean terms. Ideas are rerouted by Joyce through his direct use of almost musical language:

They'll never see. Nor know. Nor miss me. And it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning, makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into your arms. I see them rising! Save me from those therrble prongs! Two more. Onetwo moremens more. So. Avelaval. My leaves have drifted from me. All. But one clings still. I'll bear it on me. To remind me of. Lff! So soft this morning, ours. Yes. Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair! If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings like he'd come from Arkangels, I sink I'd die down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to washup. Yes, tid. There's where. First. We pass through grass behush the bush to Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousendsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the

The last phrases of the novel Finnegan’s wake, they talk about the fading of a dream that he has been having and upon which the whole book is based. Even the syntax of the novel is broken and appears distorted like a fading dream. Joyce, acting on his part as a ‘synthesizer’ as he once called himself, pulled up his sleeves and took the role of a contortionist of human mind and created flux of linguistic processes. He immortalized himself using these conundrums of verbal language taking it to the most extreme possible epoch, although that epoch was built only by him. He truncated his last sentence to his first, where a dream is conceived and in the initial stages, seem like an obnubilating moving image, dream half remembered or half realized. Then we are thrown into the proper, or perhaps the best we could get to proper with the daedal structure he has in store for us. His first sentences denote a fall of some sorts which only come in later pages. The first few lines are totally detached from the beginning because they are not a part of the beginning; they are part of the curve that links the end to the beginning:

riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs. Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fr'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of Europe Minor to wielderfight his penisolate war: nor had topsawyer's rocks by the stream Oconee exaggerated themselse to Laurens County's gorgios while they went doublin their mumper all the time: nor avoice from afire bellowsed mishe mishe to tauftauf thuartpeatrick: not yet, though venissoon after, had a kidscad buttended a bland old isaac: not yet, though all's fair in vanessy, were sosie sesthers wroth with twone nathandjoe. Rot a peck of pa's malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arclight and rory end to the regginbrow was to be seen ringsome on the aquaface.

So the whole thing turns the other way round, a brilliant technique that I think comes from Sterne’s work Tristram Shandy. It is amazing to see how one work of parodist nature seen a masterpiece of its age can affect another one of the same kind. The fact balks me because the way one has affect on the other cannot quite be called ‘influence’ as it is much too diminutive a thing. So the best word to come up with would be ‘borrowing’, I suppose. And that is why I believe I changed places from aspiring to become a biomedical engineer to…well……aspire to be a God, only not in a sacrilegious sense. Great men……think……thoughts……..full stops….without……on such……and renditions of what is seen….and heard…..and felt……come what may…..staking….crucifixion…..boiling pit of tar….. Self-inflicted mental breakdown…When light is thrown on things, their true reality is revealed and when the light is not there, the reality cannot be trusted, so maybe the light is the reality. The thing-in-itself is empty. Apropos, light is a component invariable of space and time. It is not reality that is brutal…it is the light…that…is-

Rahil longed to be back to R.K Pur and not so much as despised Port Blair, but still felt disappointed staying there. He felt stuck in time but the time itself was moving. There was no two way about how Rahil felt. There was disillusionment in his mind about everything yet he saw it as clarity. He was living in moments as hours, days and week passed by or seemed to pass by. He stopped to go outdoors. If he would take a place in the house, he would remain there for hours, reading, writing, thinking, doing something or the other and he would remain fixed at that particular spot. Others felt out of ease just seeing and even their backs soared at the sight of his persistence. He had grown vegetative. He looked at the clock but the minute and the hour hands did not make sense to him because they moved too fast. He would gaze at the wall clock once, turn his head and when he caught sight of it again the hour hand had changed places. He began to grow frustrated with all this. But how was he to take matters into his own hands now? When the chance had presented itself, Rahil was hesitant to seize it and ran back to the fetters that had been on him so long, they left a mark on him. Maybe it was true what everybody said, he thought. Maybe he did lack the necessitous composure and maturity needed to make such a decision. He had made a move on the opposite way and had failed. If game theory taught him anything, it was a similar move along the same lines would be unfavorable. And this made Rahil more hesitant to be firm. He molded himself from what others told and expected of him for too long. ‘Why should now be any different’, he thought to himself.

-I am mature. I can live with my own decisions regardless of what they are. Be? I am not even fledged enough to choose my own words. How would I fair for those big black ugly wolves of cities I have seen? There is not a person who would probably come to my aid in times of distress. And the way I am now, I would need more people like that. I am flailed by circumstances and I let my own mind bully me, if such a thing can be called bullying. The thoughts need a channel. God needs His worshippers. I do not even know what I want in the first place, so how can I come about to get it? There has got to be some metaphysical sign, or a grand connection between my life and the choice. What have I done wrong? What can be the cause of such biblical magnitude of instability that renders me thoughtless about the one thing I need to thrust my life forward? Why am I so detached to the most rudimentary fact such as this? Maybe it is because I have no such thing as a fate guiding me to do things but even without knowing many people take fate in their own hands and they deal with their choices passably. Why am I, then, in such a swindle of time? I use the term swindle of time here because I irrefutably see time as a live actor than mere condition. I see time as a character, well, according to this particular situation I do. It was not that confusion of scores that kept me from admission the Delhi University, no; it was time. If I had been there for three more days or had come after two or three days, I would have been a student there now. I know to lament on the past is the past-time of fools and so I refrain from such interests. Everybody talks about the importance of timing in a sense of punctuality. Some do talk about time as a flowing river and how that river keeps life on its platform but they do not do so in a direct way. To recall a discussion with my English teacher from school, before Umberto Eco published The Name of the Rose, many were doubtful about the success of the novel because it was a novel highly based on metaphysics and its constructs-the complex constructs of metaphysics- were applied in sort of a mainstream detective novel. The novel, contrary to all prior accusations, turned out to be a bestseller and Eco pointed at timing to be the reason for his success. Obviously, I could not draw conclusions then because I was just so naïve and the teacher was so vague. And so the lesson learnt is only one: always pay attention in class. Lessons will be learned all throughout life but the question of this choice remains to be solved right this instant. The question? The question? Ah, the question. The choice? Is it the question or the choice? The question is the choice. So, it’s just the choice, then. So, what’s all about the question? The choice still remains. A thought lingers through my brains. Two bags of rice one of grains-of course the thought of rice and grain does not remain in by brain. It is the thought of going back to Delhi University, now that the third and fourth cutoffs had been declared. I am sure the percentages might have come down. No, it is too fast. I can almost feel my head spinning. It is one thing to act on an impulse when the characteristics can allow but it is a completely different thing to just go bouncing around India on some hunch… again. That is not possible. It is definitely out of question, a taboo. It is good as a wild erotic fantasy but not as a proper choice to follow. Don’t be so directionless. Think about it. There are two ways to completely dissipate and decimate your life: one, to follow backbreaking, authoritarian and overly disciplinarian rigid order and two, to yield to wild, groundless, otiose and psychopathic disorder. Anarchy however, is not disorder; it is chaos which should never be confused with disorder or frenzy. What I ought to do is seek counsel. Yes. That is the desire of the moment, not a momentary desire. Maybe it is momentary lasting only till the moment of the choice and when the choice is resolved, the desire will erode but then maybe everything in life is momentary and so what is purpose of going through with anything? That attitude will get you by, I say- to not believe even in material things. Neither a materialist nor an idealist… To be a nihilist, that is something which I have no inclination towards being. The choice…the choice… the counsel… what is to be done? And this question, at this conjuncture is more Leninist than ever. ‘The cause’, here is to be in a college. Don’t confuse it with a materialistic cause because it’s not. My cause is idealistic because college is a haven of ideas and its cultivation-

He knew he needed someone to guide him but he was not sure who would guide him to the right path. The aptitude of the guide of massive significance just like a psychedelic experience, he thought to himself. He turned to his mother for counsel on what he needed to do further. But before doing that, just to make things certain, he checked on the internet whether Delhi University was still declaring cutoff lists and found out that another cutoff was expected in two days. Be it premonition, be it impulse but he still felt entwined with the thought of ending up in Delhi University. He was unsure as to the thought of this entanglement. He was sure there was still hope and so he was still persistent in somehow arranging for an admission. With this persistence, he wrote to the principal of the Delhi College of Arts and Commerce about his condition of being stuck in a remote island and not being able to make the travel to Delhi to be physically present for the admission process, the reply to which never came.

His mother had called him to R.K Pur and he also felt a need to visit her and have a thorough discussion about colleges. As far as she knew, the child had nowhere to go besides the engineering college in Chennai and so the only matter that was left was final partings, kissing, packing bags and bidding goodbyes. He was as also sure of that, but only partly.

So it was brought to be in such a way that Rahil had to take matters into his own hands. Two days had passed since his arrival at Port Blair and people, particularly the elders had forgotten the gambol that he had undertaken around the country. They were now talking to him about accepting the things that presenting itself around him as something friendly. That was what his experiences led him to believe against but he still accepted the notion that they were concerned about him more than he was concerned about himself. They saw him as a human who had to bear the consequences of his actions while he saw himself as a dissociative force that could be infinitesimally divided like the Galatea of the spheres. Everything that came to his mind made sense to him and there was no filter to his thoughts. If that was his greatest strength, it was also his greatest weakness and a source of manipulation. It was that strength in the first place that instilled in him the idea of travelling back to Delhi for another cutoff if it was possible being well aware of the fact that in reality it was not. But that ‘if’ lurked in his mind and then suddenly it was gone and all that left of the phrase was ‘travelling back to Delhi for another cutoff…possible.’

The mysterious ways in which the mind works is now demystified for all to see. And in that way, the tattered remnants of an idea rearranging and forming a stronger built in his mind that was completely opposite to the general thought that was now in everybody’s mind about him. It was not as strong as opinion but rather random thoughts on the course of action that he would take. They figured especially, judging by the eagerness that he had shown to leave Delhi and the further relief he was living in now that he was home safe, his opinions about studying far from home would change and he would be more amicable to advice of his elders. He doubtlessly showed that amicability but the source of that amicability was misinterpreted by the elders as defeat. Rahil felt no such harsh feeling that one feels when one is defeated. He felt a mild disappointment and restiveness about his future. His concern about his future was more in respect to activity and inactivity rather than success and failure. His interest was not in being a cum laude scholar in his college but to be able to turn his scholarship into practical results or at least propound his theories for all to see rather take asinine exams and excel them.

It was due to that very reason that he despised joining an engineering course. He knew that it was a private college and that at least he would study in comfort as private college student instead of studying in a government college where children were stuffed inconsiderately like herds of cattle in wait to be slaughtered for mass consumption. But then he was so separated from science now that he was unsure whether he would e able to accept even the basic principles involved in it and his mother was of the mixed liberal mind one must succeed in whatever field one chooses.

“Hello ma, I want to ask you something.” Rahil called his mother sometime late in the next morning. The wait was unbearable for him and he had to get the burden of his chase.

“What have you thought about my college?” he asked her, with patience in each of his words but anybody could tell that that patience was very scrupulously made.

“Well, come over here. You still have time and the only reason I’m calling you here is to talk it over with you.” She replied with a musical voice.

“Ma, what do you think about Delhi University?” he asked with a firm but dubious voice.

“What do I think about it?” the mother repeated the question, and then paused as if provoking Rahil for an answer.

“They have recently declared the next cutoff list and I meet the cutoff list for Sri Venkateswara College.” Rahil finally answered. She had bare idea about the college’s reputation.

At first, Rahil was unknown about the reputation of the college and its legacy. He considered Delhi University as one single faculty and the difference was just of the location. But that was before his first trip to Delhi. Before his first trip however, he was beginning o get an idea of the esteem of certain colleges, the bulk of which were in the North Campus. When he was in Delhi with his brother’s friend, he began to develop a clearer picture of certain colleges of repute. Sri Venkateswara was one of them. Although not a college in the North Campus, it was the most premiere college of the South Campus. It held a standing similar to St. Stephens in the North Campus although some criticize it as the audacious words of people with a ‘South Campus Complex’ or a ‘Venky complex’ as Venky was a much used name in the student patois instead of the larger Sri Venkateswara. And it just so happened, out of the oddest corners of coincidence that the cutoffs for English honors were down to eighty percent, exactly what Rahil had scored. This could mean a one way ticket to stability but first he had to convince his mother about it.

“Are you sure about it this time? Think about it carefully. I cannot afford…we cannot afford another mistake. Think about it. How can you be sure about it this time?” she asked her faithlessly. Rahil grew disheartened. He thought it to be a mistake to recur this topic because he knew that others considered his fate sealed now and Rahil would also consider it if only he had faith.

“What do you want, ma? They won’t send invites. This isn’t Harvard or Berkeley! It’s the penniless University of Delhi. They got so many students admitted already that even I’m amazed how they are still declaring more cutoffs and not all of them are princely Nehruvians. Come to think of it, I believe only a bunch of them are because most of them would shoot off to Cambridge then, like Nehru did.” Rahil replied, flowing in his own thoughts.

“That’s exactly my point. Do you think it’s just you going for admissions there? People from all over the country are still trying to get in and I tell you there’s no way of knowing how many seats are left. What if they declare that the seats are taken up on the second day?” she asked.

“That’s not how it works. If they release a cutoff list, they have to take all admissions till the list closes.” He reasoned.

“Somehow that seems to me practically implausible.” commented her mother with a serious tone, deepened now that the matter became more and more apparent.

“Look ma, I don’t need you to understand it. I just need you to approve of it and make arrangements.” Her son answered, in a detached and estranged manner which was surprising even to him as he felt the resonance of the words gone by.

“Think about my future. I mean… I am sure now… surer than I’ll ever be and I am sure this is a good choice. It’s better than engineering because it will keep me happy, I know that. And I know you want me to be happy. And I know what’s best for me. I believe very strongly that you do too.” He added breaking the silence that like the distance between them kept them from feeling each other’s emotions.

“All that’s fair and well… but… I guess… Okay, I’ll talk to your brother and we’ll arrange for the tickets but remember that you are all alone this time. You’ll have to stay there at a guesthouse, get to the college all by yourself and manage all your application and admission procedure on your own.” She said to him, not in a threatening manner but in a manner to place before his son what awaited him if he was to go down that road.

“But your ship tickets to here are confirmed. Then again… you have to what’s more important I guess.” His mother added, with admittance.

“I know, and it’s hard. What else can I do? I… I… Hmm, I guess losses are inevitable!” Rahil replied out of deep thought.

The talk ended and there was more hope and some surety that Rahil would make the trip again but it was still unclear as to how the other elders would react to it because he did not yet reveal to them the idea of going to Delhi again for admissions.

“That’s a mistake, mind you! How on Earth did you have that idea again?” one of the aunts remarked on finding out. It was evening and the room was occupied by everyone along with his elder brother.

“There is no other choice left.” Rahil spoke formally.

“I have to take this chance. I have to do this.” He added.

“You made a mess last time. What makes you so sure this time? Was your name shortlisted, huh?” The aunt asked again as the brother silently looked at him.

“There is no list. You just have to meet the cutoff requirement.” He replied defending himself.

“And everyone who meets the cutoff gets in?” asked the aunt disbelievingly.

“Yes, that’s the general idea.” Rahil confirmed although he could have done it with silence. One would say he was trying to be bold although there was no need to be so. He was among family.

“You just make decisions so fast. Two days you’re here and now you just…” the brother now said.

“Okay, but you have to stay in a guesthouse because I cannot ask Gauruv to keep you again. It’s just… It’s just not possible. It’s impossible. Your mother and I will arrange for your stay at the Andaman guest house. But the tickets are another matter. I’ll pay for them myself and book them.” The brother said, and showed warmth.

“Ma, bring me the money I gave you last Thursday… all of it…. and some of your own. How much do you have?” he asked her mother as she went upstairs, unlocked the metal cupboard and brought a small carry bag full of cash back with her.

“I have… how many do you want?” she asked him very personally.

His son leaned forward to her as to whisper to her ear but not reaching and his words were distinct. “Two thousand more.” He told.

She got to a corner where she always keeps her purse and pulled out two thousand rupee notes from it. Rahil could see all this done for him. He could see the importance of family. He could see the importance of money. He could also see the power of each not only affecting but shaping his life. These things could not be overlooked and now Rahil discovered that they should not be overlooked. The brother stood at his feet and was ready to leave. He was doing all he could for his younger brother. The elders were doing all they could on their part as well. It was all so that Rahil could be happy and they wanted to see him truly happy, not happy as in some subjective Epicurean self-destructing way but by building himself into a better person so that his personality would later in life give him the fruits of success.

“Okay then, I’ll book and confirm the tickets for tomorrow afternoon so you better start packing your bags. Just… you just do the right thing and…and be… and be happy. That’s what we all want.” He said as if in justification for his misconceptions about his younger brother’s studying in Delhi. There was no display of love where everything and nothing became beautiful or colorful. The love was an internal condition. The only way it was not personal was that everybody felt it but there was no display. Outside there was still darkness and nothing changed. Rahil always wondered that such moments would be accompanied by a natural change of feelings and he would be enraptured at the mere presentment of it. Contrary to that, Rahil felt heavier as though an additional burden was put on his back. He felt his chest clench and his pupils involuntarily drop down as if he had done something shameful. He could not meet the eyes of his elders and it was not out of shame or some sort of emotion brought about by the monetary transaction. It was a moment of communion and Rahil was a case of nonidentity. How could then there be a communion, he thought to himself. The effeteness was caused not by the situation but by his involvement in the situation. He felt alienated by these grand ceremonies of sudden trust. For his family, he knew he mattered because it was a ratified and almost compulsory normality. Whether they possessed it or not was not the question. The question was whether he possessed it and the conclusion, judged by the catatonic state the current affairs put him in seemed to be that he was losing his capability to possess that normality. He had not completely lost it but it was evident that the loss would soon be inevitable.

He needed some form of exile to retain that and the current enterprise was the perfect source of that exile. His aunts provided him with his brother’s large travel bag since the smaller one was inadequate to fit all the clothes and other travel items. It was kind of them to do so. They helped him pack his clothes.

“You’ll return after your admission, won’t you?” the aunt asked him.

“Yes of course I will. I will take the admission and come back again to get all my things in order to take them with me for the three…four years in college.” He answered.

He was going to come back because he was not able to take all his things necessary for his entire college life in one night. There were not even enough bags to put his things in. While packing he received a call from his mother who told him that she had been talking to a friend whose brother was in Delhi and she revealed to Rahil the good news that her friend’s brother would lend him his chauffer driven car to go from his guest house to the college. It was a great relief for him as he had to get to the college by ten in the morning which he supposed was a busy time and would be even busier in a metropolis like Delhi and hence he would face difficulties in finding a cab at such time. Also, he did not even know the proper area where the college was and so there were a number of problems that could open out of that very cause. Rahil thanked his mother for making such a lucrative arrangement and made it a note to thank her friend’s brother when he got to Delhi the first thing.

The impatient night passed into a drowsy morning for Rahil but his nervousness kept him hyperactive for the whole duration of the morning that he spent in his house. He had nothing to take with him in hand except a few things but he needed a bag-pack so he stuffed in it his mobile charger and headphones. He also took with him a copy of ‘Mrs. Dalloway’ by Virginia Woolf. Though it was a heavy read due to its stream of consciousness narrative and its cerebral characteristic style of Woolf, he thought it would be good for an in-flight simple read. He stuffed it inside the bag-pack too. His bag-pack was still empty. Two hours before his flight he took a bath and got ready to leave. He got ready and sat on one side of the table. He opened the drawer. He pulled out his ship tickets to Hut bay and thought how things would have unfurled themselves had he made use of the ship tickets instead of the flight tickets. He pondered over that thought.

-oh the times they are a changing and all the losers now will be later to win. All the first ones now will later be last, as the present turns into the past the slow ones now will later be fast. Don’t expect to be soon for the wheels are still in spin… and there’s no telling who that it’s naming. For ever there was a destiny, I sure shattered it…alliterated it. People will be people and thoughts will be thoughts: it is the combination of the two that creates a sense of determinism in our lives. It’s actually when thoughts become ideas and then is carted out by the driving needs of fulfilling the idea. Ideas only come to our mind when they relate to our ideologies… and the problem for me is my lack of ideology. Of course there is the ‘Marxist sense’ but I am still diffident as to whether it actually is an ideology that follows me- I am certain I follow it through and thorough- because one random act or a random perspective of that act can alleviate your faith from the ideology that one follows. Now I’m in a position to either embrace an ideology to its fullest or completely disregard and dispose it. But on a deeper look that’s just the nothingness that every man has and which is not a reason to forget my ideology, whatever it may be. Everything in life needs justification; it is only a human tendency but some things stick to us so permanently that we develop justifications for its case. These are cases when we are ethically cornered and instead following preset models of right and wrong, we subconsciously define it. Although we do not have conscious awareness towards the recalibration of our ethical doctrine, we begin to get the idea of the bigger picture due to this readjustment. On closer, we do find changes in our basis of gradation but by then it becomes a highly complex process undoing which is not possible. Another problem poses itself now that we have come to terms with the changed-some would regard it improved- ethical doctrine. We acknowledge it as implanted into our system yet we yearn to revert back to the previous mode of ethics. This we cannot do because we ordain the latter to a higher and much improved process than the prior. Thus, our consciousness bars us from going back to standards which we have deemed primeval yet we cannot dwell in the doctrines of the present being aware of its contrivance. In so we are stuck in the cobwebs of our own ethical standards like a powerless insect as the spiders of reality approach to feed on our scaly crunchy bodies.

The problem with us is we try our best to find our places in life. I generalize this statement in all cases. Those who refuse that they seek a place in life and do not do so are also put in places by others and so no one can escape this activity. We have made it our prime motive although we are aware that it is just a situation created at the height of utilitarianism but we still refrain from expelling it out of basic human nature. Of course there is Thoreau who did it and many would say that the Indian Hindu state of the Sanyasa is such but one needs to understand that even Sanyasa is a communal process and of course there is the adherence to an ideology-the ideology of Hindu religion- in the case of Sanyasa. The Western society still regards it highly which purports to two things: Their lack of analysis due to the lack of knowledge about the Hindu culture and the inability to find their own inner selves-

Rahil was dropped by his brother to the airport well in time and he was sitting in the waiting room after his security clearance ready to board the flight. He went to the lavatory to relieve himself once and then sat back into the seat where he was sitting before. His eyes took a gander at all the passengers travelling to Delhi and strange thought lurked through his mind.

-Aryans, what a race. They assemble themselves in a caste system just so they can marry their own cousins. Of course there are a lot many factors other than that for the reason they arranged a caste structure but why would they want to preserve their gene pool. Even in modern cases, even after development of genetic biology they tend to do…not to mention at the cost of caste prejudice-such a thing is almost a taboo. And they mostly turn out to be belligerent fatuous inbred dunces. I again do so at the risk of generalization and also inflaming a whole community but then I have historical, sociological, scientific, philological and ontological evidences to support my claim. But the claim that I am most interested in is the anthropological and slightly evolutionary because there are many skeletal evidences of similarity of Aryans to that of a tightly knit, almost incestuous community such as the Neanderthals. The squarely built of the jaw, the thick eyebrows, the thick muscularity, the flat face, large protruding noses like the Romans, the big and almost symmetrical size of the skull, the coarse language so prevalent among Northern, North Western, north Eastern, Central parts of India, the Southern civilization have a problem of their own which is the total cultural fragmentation to such an extent that the locals either choose to speak their mother tongues varying from Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam or speak in English, the mob-mindedness of the middle class, the lack to express cultural exoneration to improve on other aspects of life-to cite an example, the theological concepts of Enlightenment came to Indian middle class only in the middle of British invasion, and even then the Enlightenment was meant to preach the ‘White Truth’ and not the better Hegelian aspect of it- the hostility and subjugation of other races at the height of its power… the Dravidians, the dark skinned race, particularly the forefathers of the people who now dwell in the Indian South. I am unaware of the race belong to and I don’t even care. If I am an Aryan, that’s just my hard luck and if I am a Dravidian, then it’s my hard luck because of the Aryans. Neanderthals, though being intellectually inferior were particularly hostile to the Homo sapiens which unfortunately or maybe fortunately resulted in… not so much as extinction as metamorphosis. Some historians still believe that Neanderthal genes were sexually carried into the Homo sapiens gene pool and still exist within our society. And they have scientific proof that these genes probably are more common in Aryan genes, both Indian as well as European. There is no way one should feel offended by this. A Greek proverb comes to mind: ОПόΣ ΣΤΡόΣΈΙΕ θΑ ΚОΙΜΗθΕΙΣ… The thing is though that it still goes on in the form of arranged marriages and the traditional Indian marriages where bride and groom are to have the same sun sign, star sign, planet alignment and whatnot and the bride and groom have only the consent to accept or reject. After that consent is followed, all privileges are lost and the parents take over. They try to familiarize each and every aspect of the bride with the groom’s family as if they travail to make the groom one of their own and lose her individuality. How is the society then to expand and grow? It’s a historical fault. Our Nietzsches and Stirners and Kierkegaards and Hegels and Voltaires and Feuerbachs and Montaignes and our Sun Tzu and Machiavelli never got to the general public and remained a pièce de résistance to the princely courtship of the Maurya dynasty. We have nothing to be proud about except our ignorance and incestuous organization but our ignorance for us in ways: at least we did not go about annexing territories and invading colonies, and then live in its burden and shame like the most Western democracies. I guess in that way, every cloud has a silver lining but then we are not one dimensional cloud but human beings made of flesh and bones that hurt on hitting and bleed on wounding-

He completely lost track of time and as a result of that he was the last one on the line to get on the bus leaving for the flight and so seeing that he already had the least preferred spot, he took back to his and waited till the major part of the crowd cleared and only three to four persons stood in front of him. He got into the bus and took the seat next to the driver out of the warmth of his heart towards the humanly driver. The ride to the flight was really short and did not necessarily need a bus ride. But other people always felt good to be a little pampered and it seemed like the airport authorities derived some kinky pleasure out of it.

The narrow aisle of the flight brought back memories for him. Some memories he could bear but some were so near that for some time Rahil felt like passing through time. He felt he could see two frames of times at once. He looked at his feet and saw the shorts he was wearing on his way to port Blair from Calcutta.

He claimed his baggage from the belt and then went over to the arrival gate for departure. He exited out and saw his brother waiting for him with a smile hanging on his face. He went over to him and his brother remained silent. There was not a single bit of emotional leakage from the side of the brother. He just stood there as if he was picking Rahil up from a vacation that had just ended. It appeared to Rahil that either he was very successfully mocking to neglect the blunder that he had made or that he actually did not consider that there was a blunder at all. He walked Rahil up to motorcycle and after adjusting the little red luggage they rode back to where their journey had started from.

They reached the house and everybody mildly rejoiced their union with him. Almost instantly, there was an invitation to lunch for the elder and he Rahil whether he would like to join him telling him that the other cousins would also join. He was so akin to eating out because of the travel that at the mere reference of eating out, his mouth began to salivate.

“Of course you’re not going there in shorts! I suppose it is fine in airports and flights but this is a formal place.” One of the aunts remarked and so he changed into his trousers.

The place was along the beach. It was actually a revered enshrined tomb, a religious place where people of all religions held feats. There was no religious bigotry when it came to feasting. Rahil accompanied his brother inside but his mind was more enraptured by the waves crashing on the stony mounds keeping the waves from crashing on to the roads. That place, Rahil thought, was the place of worship but it could never be.

Rahil walked along the narrow pathway that took him into the feasting hall with a well on the right side. There were two feasting halls and by the time Rahil got there, both were majorly occupied. Rahil saw a familiar figure cross him. It was the figure of a girl. It was a girl he had gone to school with. An instant desire burned in him. It was a completely asexual desire to ask her about her future, seeing as how his was in such ruins.

She recognized him too and turned to face him.

“Hey there.” She attracted his attention which was already fixed to her.

“Yeah, long time no see.” He replied. He could see she was also curious in trying to find out where he had ended up so he let her ask first.

“So, what are you studying?” the girl asked and he was clueless. He cursed himself for letting her ask first because he had no answer, no answer to what course he was going to study and no answer to where he was going to study. He collected his thoughts for a moment and then just came right out with them.

“You know, I have no idea. What about you?” he asked.

“I’m doing dentistry. BDS.” She said.

“Where, in Chennai?” he asked her.

“Yeah, close by.” She answered, not getting into specifics because she knew by Chennai he meant the whole Tamil Nadu.

-there is some about that, I see in her. Maybe she is still confused about it. Maybe she is still without a decision or maybe that decision of hers is still without resolution. Maybe she is still like me. But what does that matter. There are many colleges for BDS in South. She is fortunate. The course though is something I would not pay my mind to. Still, it is fortunate for her to have chosen something. Close by……. Probably a good college, eh, any college is college enough when you’re out of this nutshell. But, this is my nutshell. What shall I say to her when she asks about me? She has asked about me, I believe. Well, that’s no reason for her to not repeat that question or further clarity. Or for a different answer, I believe. She must think I’m joking when I said I had no idea-

“Tell me about you. Where are you studying?” she asked as the crowd around her either moved in for the feast or moved out having done with their feast, their feet driven not by the minds inside their body but the food on the platter. In all this, both Rahil and the girl found it hard and awkward to stand and talk and so they clipped their answers and questions to objective length.

“Well, I started out to study in Delhi, then in Calcutta and now I’m here. So, I’d see I’ve been all over and none of them want me.” He said with a deplored humor.

The young girl smiled and her lips parted to reveal her short well-lined teeth. Then the thought came to him- how good a dentist would she be? But then the world had lost its goodness and the only thing that meant anything to people now was stability. Of course the ill effect of not having stability was well borne by Rahil enough to condemn it. Still Rahil refused to measure the consequences on the same scale. This was not a negative escapist vision that was born out of his inability to accept reality for what it was, but a truth that Rahil accredited with his confidence and ideals. It appeared to him that the choices he had made were more or less inevitable not out of some predestined kismet or kabalistic fate but very physical and obvious reasons that were all the very rightful and justifiable. Maybe one thing is the other and people just never see the difference.

“Just pick something up and get it over with.” He said, reflecting on her consequence of the path on which he was treading along aimlessly.

“I should, shouldn’t I? Well thanks for the advice, doc. Wait, dentists aren’t actual doctors.” He smilingly said with a sharp but friendly satirical humor.

“Not until four more years.” She replied jovially with a mouth open with laughter and words coming out of it in an argotic manner. Just then her parents stepped into the frame and she grew hind sighted and conservative as all Indian daughters usually do in presence of their family, especially their father. Rahil spoke no more. ‘Penis envy, or the supposition of the Electra Complex, one or the other’ he thought to himself.

After his meeting with a character from his past and the reflections that he submerged in after he got back home and tiredly lied on a bed feigning a travel lag, he was shook by the dual way that he existed. He existed in two ways, the way he thought of himself and the way others thought of him. Most people go about their lives in either one or the other state, or if they ever realize such a duality, only do so in a physical sense never fully understanding the nature of consciousnesses, of the one that the person is and the many that he is surrounded by. The way Rahil thought of himself, his nature of being, was as something stable ye blooming like an eternal tree with its branches blooming out every season and every season withering off and dying but the base of it remaining and furnishing new branches in lieu of the ones lost. Now he did not think that way anymore. His nature had stopped being static. It was not about finding happiness or realizing ideals anymore. It was about growing. It was about undertaking a daring quest for discovery. The quest however needed a fuel. It needed a path but there was no path to follow.

“Uh, excuse me. Do you need help in finding your seat?” an airhostess stood behind him and his reverie was not by the presence of that burgundy haired lady with hair like a Maenad dawdling down to her firm blessed buttocks the curves of which were quite visible out of her tight white and blue airhostess uniform. Thoughts did not betake his mind at the sight of this beau figural design maybe because he saw it holistically. Had he seen just the dawdling burgundy hair or the black nylon clad high heeled feet with her fair skin glowing from each minute pore of that finely serrated stocking giving a texture and color never named before dangling from the parted curtains of the foremost segment of the plane where the airhostesses sit, like a peeping tom, he would have never been able to get that abstract image out of his mind but now he was just overexposed to the body to which that leg belonged. It was not that she was not a beautiful woman but her beauty did not correlate to his image of her beauty. It was also not some heightened sense of a perfect beauty that he had in mind; it was just a common picture but the picture was either or the dangling feet or the dawdling hair. It was not of a woman standing in front of him in tight white and blue clothes with high heels and long burgundy hair gazing endlessly at his open jawed expression searching every contour of his platonic face searching for an answer.

“Oh….um….it’s right….no…it’s no problem. It’s right here. Thank you for your…thank you...Ahem.” he ended with a disengagement of the eyes and a lost smile which she might or might not have recorded. He swiftly moved to the next seat which was his seat after putting his bag pack on the overhead cabin. He felt the two hooks embrace each other and felt and heard a mildly strong tick of the lock as he pushed the compartment closure to the compartment. He took his seat which was next to a middle aged man whom again he did not feel worth considering. He gave him a first look and found him to be one of the many undistinguishable men who wanly point themselves out to be distinct in their own ways. His flight would go through Bhubaneswar which he recalled to be a prominent city of Assam. He found Assam prominent for its bamboo forests, tea and insurgency, particularly insurgency.

The plane took off and Rahil felt pressure ensue inside his ears. It felt a little painful and took thoughts out of his brain as he began to develop them. There was no escape from this and so he let his thoughts get cleared by the pain and accepted the angst on the face of it. It just so happened that all it needed for the pain to go away was credence. The pain then vanished into thin air like the smoke of a house burnt long ago.

The plain reached Bhubaneswar and emptied itself. Then it filled itself again and left for Delhi. The flight was completely occupied, by interesting people this time but the person next to him was still boring. It did not matter. There were utterances of pure Hindi language. Some of them also spoke English but Hindi chanted dominantly. No other local language surfaced at that moment and no other blemished or abridged version of Hindi was spoken. Though the dialogues were mingled obscurely, the vernacular was as distinct, imposing as sun in the afternoon morning. His mind now was filled with a pain greater than what he had overcome just then and this pain was accompanied by fear and trembling and the story of Isaac sacrificing his son went through his mind. Will he be able to do what’s ‘best’?

The plane bumped and screeched and the yellow lights flickered as the engines of the plane dragged the big metal eagle through runaway and its momentum was conserved as the speed broke in a timely fashion. He looked out of the window and though he had been in the same place before, it seemed new to him. It was due to the glasses of freedom through which he saw that everything looked different. He was free to roam about the city anytime he felt like. There was nobody to interrupt him or to pester him about anything. He had no need to live with a petty bourgeois family anymore. He was his own man. Now he could suffer as much as he wanted and suffer peacefully. Now he could pursue any path of life that he wanted. Now he could be a Bohemian college student. The first thing he did when he claimed his baggage and was ready to head out into a city he had the most egregious opinions about was to go to the toilet. Then he went over to the pre-paid taxi counter to get a taxi to Andaman guest house. His mother had already arranged a reservation at the dormitory.

“Two hundred and sixteen rupees sir.” The man in the counter sternly demanded. Rahil causally pulled out his wallet which had the cash and dispensed it. The man gave him a slip and told him a number. He exited with his large travel bag wheeled behind him as he held the handle without giving his bag another look or a thought. He found himself out in the torrid heat of the notorious Delhi summer that overpowered him for what followed. As he approached the taxi stand, a swarm of taxi cab drivers gathered around him and he was momentarily aghast with indecision. From out of this cloud of crowd, a man came and snatched from his hand the slip that was given to him from the counter. His ears rang in horror and the lobes reddened in sudden surge of blood. He could almost burst into sobs.

-I’m tricked…this vindictive city, preying on the weak… the defenseless…hopelessly on the meek. Who? I do not see anybody. That man! It is! Better go after him. Run. Walk. Trod along or jog. He slows his pace. I gain pace to confront him. With a gun, a knife…no my bare hands, not even folded into a fist, but loose, like a lover’s as he approaches his betrothed for that first kiss that swings his life into romantic blossom. The heart pounds the same way, the feet tremble alike and the pupils also, confused whether to meet him or to avert-

“Hey, what the…..” Rahil started.

“Keep your bag in the trunk.” The man said and went over to get into the driver’s seat. This was the man assigned to Rahil by the counter. ‘But why did he not notify him first? Was there not even a shred of courtesy left in this city?’ he thought to himself as he got inside the spacious cab and the man drove off.

“Damn Delhi traffic!” Rahil said as the car was deadlocked not much far from the airport.

“Yeah, traffic here… you’ll get used to it. It’s the damn Metro service. They turned the whole Delhi inside out digging tunnels for the lines in every inch of the city.” The driver replied, making a conversation.

“Is it any good, the Metro?” Rahil asked.

“It gets you there fast… but it’s mostly crowded…so crowded that a decent guy can’t even find a seat.” He replied gustily.

The conversation ended there as Rahil made no further comment and there was nothing further to talk about and so he started to look around the traffic in which their cab moved ever so slowly and into the cars- looking at the people sitting on motorcycle deriving Delhi from what he saw. Again the chant arose, the chant of pure Hindi. For some reason, it frightened him, cornered him, sidelined his beliefs about universality and nationalism and provided to him a picture of a Reich that sustained contrary to all problems and corruptions as though they were the very reason for it still managing to exist and was something that was internally corroding itself so in an effort to get those corrosive thoughts that always lurked in his mind out of it, he immersed himself in the sound of the horns and the sight of the cars with their fancy brand trademark. One such car took his mind out of everything, out of reality itself because in that car sat a beautiful maiden and it was then that he experienced original attraction for the first time. It was not reprobating but conscientious. He was an artist painting a picture on his mental canvas that would last as long as he lasted.

-My nymph… my maiden…my Houris… let me get a better look at your musing simulacrum as I twist from side to side and closer to the window to be more polite towards your beauty by giving it the felicitation that it so rightly deserves. Let me not refrain from doing that by your posture as I am mesmerized and entranced by your beauty, right from the top-those fine silky wave locks of copper brown hair carpeted carefully till your shoulders the frontal part of your hair tamed by bangs extending just over your eyebrows. The color is just enough for the feel…the smell…the caress… Even the highest quality of silk would be no match for the gentle touch. Your fair angelic face-though turned to one side I cannot make more out of it. Oh, the cruelty of it! I bend and flex in my seat to make more of you but I am also careful of what you should thing of me should you hay eyes on me while I, the fly with dazzled and dazed eyes fixedly gleam at your perfect Form. Form…not form…Form…for you deserve that. No one but you deserves that. You face appears so much more than a humanly design of flesh and bones, no they must be or else why am I in such a haunted possessed attraction that all other things mean nothing to me. Ah,

*O fleece, that foams down unto the shoulders bare!*

*O curls, O scents which lovely languidness exhale!*

*Delight! to fill this alcove's somber atmosphere*

*With memories, sleeping deep within this tress of hair,*

*I'll wave it in the evening breezes like a veil!*

All lines of beauty, of poets consecrating to their mistresses come to mind on seeing you. Your fingers, white…thin…pure…divine…slender…fair fingers stretched over to hold the book. What do you read? Which book is that? Oh, if only I could lose all sense of civility and just lean over the taxi and see the book you are reading, call you eat. I am a beast hungry for your attention. I am a soul burning in need of a salvation from you. I am charred…I can smell the putrid fumes as the flames burn me…They burn me…I helplessly burn but I do not die… I hold… I hold in anticipation of your gaze that you would look at me with your beautiful brown eyes like the fruit of passion and just by your stare I would lose my soul to you… The single finger of your left hand stretched along the middle of the book, parted with the right thumb-a very elegant way of holding a book-another thing that catches the eye. A woman kind to a book is a woman is a gentle woman… a sensible woman… a woman whose beauty is not plastic or unnatural but an underlying yet sensual beauty that does not meet every eye. I have found mine…but… no…this was to end someday… at some moment but when those moments come, you cannot help but curse the farewell. All good things must come to a pass. Such are the laws of this brutal world, and now I see her puffing black clouds of smoke, smoke of despair as her car takes over mine and diminishes in size as it goes along the road, puffing out more black clouds until she is completely reduced and all that is left of her are the black clouds of exhaust smoke, and I am well aware of it, yet I breathe those black puffs of smoke finding in them the faintest hint of the perfume she must have worn. There was none. Just her memory…her face and her body, the well tamed bosom covered discreetly under clothes and jacket and the curves of her loins extending to her thighs also maturely covered with dark brown jeans. I come back slowly to my senses now. What was she? She was a mere reflection of my desires-

“Hey… Do you…Hey…Do you have any idea where Andaman Bhavan is?” the driver intentionally broke his attention as he looked outside the window at the city he had so basely hated.

“Yeah, I think its opposite to Bihar Nivas…or Bihar Bhavan…whichever one it is.” He causally answered, cutting short and taking back to his sound meditation.

“Look, they’re both *in* Delhi and they’re…like…in two opposite parts of the city. So try to make certain, man.” The driver said. He found it odd as they had been traveling for almost an hour now and this doubt only came to the driver now. His cab diverted from the highway into a smaller road and the driver asked a rickshaw driver where the Bhavan was.

“It’s not… It’s Andaman guest house. It’s not Andaman Bhavan.” Rahil corrected the driver so the driver corrected himself and asked him again.

“You’ve come the wrong way, pal. It’s the other way round, in near Akbar Bhavan.” The rickshaw driver in a red shirt answered with a strong Haryanvi accent.

“Ah yeah, Gosh damn…damn it! We’ve come the wrong way.” The driver remarked irritably striking the dashboard and his staring with his flat palm because he knew it meant loss on his part. Rahil understood it too. Since, he knew the place now, he drove with speed to reach his destination and be done with it. Finally he could saw them in line- the Goa Nivas, the Bihar Bhavan, the North Eastern council, the Tamil Nadu Bhavan and finally Andaman and Nicobar Guest house. Rahil emotionlessly got out of the cab and aided by the driver, took his luggage out and gave him a blank look as if he wanted something off Rahil.

“Look, it’s really far and too much petrol’s burned. You need to make up for it” the driver asked rigidly.

“Give me a break. I’m just a traveling student, you know.” Rahil replied and after a pause added “I hope you understand”.

The driver looked and started walking back to the driver’s seat.

“Hey, no hard feelings” Rahil called out to him. He did not want to get on his bad side or leave him disappointed. After all, he was also just another low man on a totem pole. He turned his gaze back on Rahil as he heard those words and gave him a blank look which was more along the lines of a stare down. Slowly, the lip twisted into what resembled a smile and the shoulders clenched closer towards his neck in an unusual, almost bizarre gesture, but it was an acknowledgement of his apology that was never made. In a few seconds after that, all that was the outline of the person standing was left on Rahil’s memory as he stood thinking about him long after the car was gone.

Living in the PG without intimating the landlord meant living underground like a rat. He would have to leave any time when the broker would come to collect the rent from the other boys or for a surprise inspection which he never did. It also meant living according to the whims and fancies of the residents with whom who previously lived. He had good rapport with everyone except Karan. Furthermore, a new resident had moved in. His name was Ashish but he insisted that he be called Jerry. He was in the same course as Rahil in Ram Lal Anand but the tragedy was, for both Jerry and Rahil, that he did not know even a word of English. It was a tragedy for Rahil because he hung on to him accepting Rahil as a best friend as a pre-requisite relation. And due to his present ircumstance, Rahil had to be good to him and tolerate all his idiosyncrasies of which there were many. All this factored into the insolent madness that Rahil tried to imprison in a dark corner of his mind. He regressed a lot; and the only release was the internet and internet was where he channeled all his psychological frustration and negative energy. This led to many boisterous and bombastic moments.

He walked around Satya like raving madman, cheeks sunken to the bones and his head bobbing side to side. His unconventional mode of lifestyle and psychosexual divergence affected his eating habit. He became a tantric and he would have walked the streets naked if public nudity were allowed. He was always the most shabbily dressed person in the street. He grew his beard and hair long and did little to maintain it. All of his money he spent on meat and when he went broke he ate like a vaganbond with a friend somewhere. This openness that he showed was counteractive to his refression and introversion. He realized his chakras one by one and the journey was for him both physical and psychological. He had all kinds of things going through his mind, mosly of a sexual origin. He did not completely understand this undiscovered terrain of his self and that was the precise reason why it was so dominant in him. One gives the greatest amount of accordance to that which one does not understand. Rahil could not understand why he was doing the things that he was doing. He had no control either ovr his body or over his mind. It seemed the more he let himself go to his darker side in order to be free, the more controlled he felt by a superior chaotic force. He lost the originiality of his actions though Rahil gave it a positive spin as losing the origin of his action.

-One should remember to never remember. All our lives all we do is do without knowing, and when we sit and try to know, all we do then is to know without doing, but we are still doing something. There is a constant cycle of activity in which we are caught up in. I try to end but I am thrown at the start, to end again. The dark night streets I walk, and when when tired look for a secluded dark place to sit. Maybe a stair in front of a closed shop with enough shade to hide my disgusting face from this magisterial world or my magisterial face from the disgusting world. Funny, my face with my unkempt bear and tangled long hair, spotted skin that I wash only once a week, magisterial. But how can the world be magisterial? Millions are dying of hunger, students get looted of their capital in universities and accommodations, teachers made slave by the draconian administration and all happening behind the iron curtain. Neither I matter nor the world; truth matters. Whose? The truth. In what form? In what tabulation, in what proportion, in what spirit? Tattered clothes on my back as I walk, it is my own will to look that way, that is the ruth. The principal denying me a place in the college hostel and leaving me desolate in the grunge noir streets of Delhi, where souls are trafficked and where the inconsistency of the city keeps people alive like a patient on an artificial kidney, is the truth.

Beware of the bourgeois benevolence of the city, Rana

They do not take the burdens off your head but the heads, Rana

Be insolent and mad, be rude and you will be the most friendly person in the world. The more people you take advantage of, the more they join you clique. These are the twisted laws of the thuggee city in which I dwell. If I had an axe, I would go to every house in this city and ax the necks of every soundly sleeping baby off their necks so that they should not grow up to be like their mothers and fathers. I contemplate murders and homicides, strategize the perfect crime, think often to act on it. Rape, murder and theft- at least theft will keep me aloof- arson, and then I wonder is it me thinking or is it the city. Accursed be the black day on which I decided to come to Delhi to study. I study all right. I study the lifelessness of humanity, the rotting corse of so-called college lifestyle in the desert. I am a wasteland, infertile; burning under the hot sun, everything in me is shriveled and wilted. I do not have even a drop of water to give to passing travelers. I am death for those who enter in me. I am quest for those who dare. I am muse for those few who understand my artistry. I am the power that maddens men. I have nothing in me, I am a dry peiece of land. I create illusions for the lost travelers and tease them with mirages. I was not this way before though. The city made me this. I was once fertile, decorated with shiny green wving crops ready to be harvested. They tried to tame me into an urban jungle but could only manage but could only manage to tame a fraction of me. And now I am barren. I am also their worst nightmare, the biggest threat to their development. I am my own-

One evening when Rahil was walking on the main street in front of the college, Hesiod, who lived in the hostel, greeted him. He was accompanied with his friends. Rahil was in a state of complete forgetfulness and so he did not catch the name of the Hesiod’s friend. His name was Imran and he was also an ardent Left supporter, a good reader and a knower of facts. He was amazed that a student doing such an elitist course like English literature could be so concerned about the proletariat and be involved in student politics so seriously. Since, Rahil was in a lost world of his own, Imran did not make a lasting first impression on him. Rahil was more concerned about anything new happening in the debating dociety from Hesiod who said that there would soon be a round of debating tournaments, the first organized by St. Stephens from October. He did now at the time that it would coincide with his calamitous Calcutta trip.

He was remined of his previous trip to Calcutta, before his arrival at Delhi.

He sat on the lower tier now and gazed outside the window the sceneries that appeared to be running along the railway. There were brick houses, ponds, green fields such as he had never seen back home. His heart was engrossed in the view outside but mind was still elsewhere, he could not locate where it was. He was always in a daze, more so in times when a daze was not expected from him, like when he was traveling. His absent-mindedness had cost him a great deal at times. He liked his absentmindedness because it gave him a lot of time to ponder over and not think about the world in materialistic consciousness. He plugged his earphones to his phone and started listening to music as he watched the colorful landscapes in abstract brightness of the day.

-*Flashing for the warriors, whose strength is not to fight…..*

*Flashing for the refugees, on the unarmed road of flight…*

*…………tolling for the rebel………tolling for the rake…*

*Tolling for the luckless……they abandoned and forsake……*

*Tolling for the outcast………… burning constantly at stake*

*………………………………… and we gazed upon the chimes of freedom……… flashing*

*Striking for the gentle, striking for the kind*

*Striking for the guardians and protectors of the mind*

*And the poet…… and the painter far behind his rightful time*

*…………………… and we gazed upon the chimes of freedom……………… flashing-*

He closed his eyes and felt those words, those thoughts, and then he opened them, and looked at the landscapes with the kind of reverence as that of a man cured of blindness, for the first time looks at the surrounding around him. He knew the power of words now and his mind was rested fully, refreshed by this meditation that he was desperately in need of. The train was no more uncomfortable. The train was no more unpleasant. He saw, then, the attendant from the corner of his eye approaching from the far end of the coach with fresh tea and some snacks. He took the tea and snacks and munched at the snacks first, resting his tea besides him. He did not look at the person sitting on the other side of him but aided to the hot cup of tea he kept on the opposite side of the seat. The attendant stood there after serving his tea in demand of a tip. After receiving his share from everybody, his eyes fixed on Rahil, and there was no need for words for Rahil knew what the attendant had meant.

“I’m only a student traveling………” Rahil uttered, flinching his eyes. The attendant said no more and walked away. After he went away, Rahil took out his wallet and checked how much he had and there was a ten rupee note along with some papers and cards. He gave a senile emanation of a laugh as if to laugh at one’s own dearth. He drank his tea with soft sips and watched the silent fertile plains green and lush with soft silky strands of green vegetation waving over the veiled ground. The houses seemed to be on the mercy of this generous silk-covered mistress and the men that dwelled in those houses thanked and worshipped the mistress piously for the bounty that she unleashed on them year after year. To these people, the train was an abnormal existence on the face of nature’s green earth and to the people sitting inside the coach, the people outside were sad blot of blood on their progressive, modern, sophisticated and bourgeois existence.

The impatient and eager look on the faces of the people and their racy movement to get their luggage before the door to get out early suggested Rahil that the station was indeed near. After the pretty sights, the sights soon changed to a dull enclave with plain brick walls on either sides of the track. Occasionally, he passed several graffiti made on walls by railway union workers’ Parties. The train started to slow down and the people grew hastier. When he finally saw the platform from the far end his vision as he gazed through the window, he took his small trolley bag from under the seat and fitted himself in between the line that was desperate to plunge out of the train. At that moment, he again got a call from his sister.

He regretted having squeezed between the lines when he could have taken his time. As the lines eased and one by one each passenger got out, Rahil managed to draw some breaths but it was only momentary as the moment he stepped down to the platform and stepped out towards the food court, crowd moved about from endless ends and caught him from all the sides like a puff of heavy smoke walking through which was barely possible especially with the trolley bag jangling on the uneven station floor that was kicked side to side by every other commuter who constituted the smoke in which Rahil was caught up. By now, he was partly longing for the caresses of the privileges he enjoyed so banally and yet admonished due to its pampering nature but in the affairs that Rahil was now literally caught up in and yearned to get out of. He felt his hand that gripped his travel bag stretch to his back and his body move forward uncontrollably until he resolutely pulled his bag to himself like the reins of a horse and the bag came obediently to him tumbling and fumbling and throwing three or four people out o balance who came in its way. The people gained their centre of gravity and sent a threatening and angry look towards Rahil who had only squinted brows dabbling with water to respond.

The train station was far and so they had to take a cab in all hurriedness. The cab took them to the station and the local train stood there ready to depart as if on cue. The train, like all Indian local had hands, legs, feet and torsos coming out of that big metal box as if it was God’s dustbin of extra body parts. What was inside the box was not visible unless he screwed himself in with pressure turning to one side first and then the other, managing enough place for him to breathe first, and then stand. As soon as he firmly put his body along the walls of the train, he felt the vibration of the train starting and saw his sister waving him off.

The train would take two hours to reach the destination. Rahil did not know how many stops were in between but he knew that his destination was the last stop. The two hours would seem like a lifetime, Rahil thought as it was the natural thing to think in that moment, stuffed between sweaty bodies with his bag pressed so tightly against his legs that he lost all feeling of it but along with the numbness, he felt the right portion of his thigh souse up. The train took its pace and but more power could be felt inside the train, among the conversations and the lively rambunctious trivialities they engaged themselves in. Rahil remained reticent as others about him seemed to be somehow immanently pleased even in the state they were. Some notion in their mind or perhaps some little mental state eluded their attention from the banal brutality of the train ride. It was something Rahil was not capable. To Rahil, every time he took a train ride of this sort, he felt he was losing a part of his originality in the banality that surrounded him. He thought with awe how others could come to such an understanding with the compromise that they were making; as for Rahil, this compromise was almost a form of humiliation that reduced the matter of man into mere body and destroyed the presence of deference. It was not a feeling of prejudice that made Rahil hurt or some superiority complex but the exactitude that was laid upon him on sight and sensation of that minimalistic dismal concourse although actually there might not be anything dismal about it. It was a feeling that surged up on him almost ineluctably in every one of his travel. It was travel that made him feel that way, partly, he thought due to the verity which became obsolete in travel. He could almost bear that but due to his inability to observe how things are and inexorably brash towards the keener realities of life that he could positively see.

The train took a half hour stop at the Seoraphuly junction and now Rahil came to grasps that he was far from the burling city of Calcutta and into the bosom of the green agrarian rural West Bengal. There was still probably another hour to go by and he could tell the time because he did not wear a watch. He could not tell the time from his mobile phone because the display was blotched yet all these things did not torment him now that the train was sufficiently empty and he managed to get a seat by the window. Still, he desisted to be comfortable even though all the comfort was awarded to him. He felt a similar grip wring him the way it had wrung him in Delhi in a stay that was all too comforting. ‘Am I going back to that?’ he thought to himself and then sulked into the near darkness that came over as the dusk seemed to give away and moonlight claimed the place the sun once held upon the sky.

The train was a train full of stories, all unique in their own ways but the presence of all those stories out of frames, their plots and settings and into this one area seemed deploring and distasteful. It seemed like they did not belong, or maybe it was just that he did not belong. ‘It very well could be’ he thought to himself. His coming out of his Islands was a divergence from what people expected of him and the fact that he was to be at Delhi but again perturbed from his destined position to be. There was no closure of fatalistic determinism for him. His fate, if had any, like the body that enclosed it was wanderlust but then he never had any respect for fate to begin with and so his psyche never shared the general resignation to fate that others hold, even those who make it a point to chafe away from it.

The train finally reached its destination and Rahil got up upon his sore and numb feet and touched the spot where he felt soused. He had completely forgotten about it when he sat because of the relief the act of placing his rump on the seat and the light diaphanous ecstasy it had brought. Now that he was up on his fee, he felt the blood flow through his feet again and was filled with warmth as that of life itself which was jocund enough for him to gather the necessary strength and head for the platform. The platform, from the train, was only a short jump away and it did not take much for Rahil to make that jump. The way to the outside of station consisted of going up and down through three different sets of stairs jogging past the peculiar Indian crowd which, even as he had confronted thrice that day, he was still unused to. Mustering courage along with strength, he took him bag upon his back, crouched forward to support the bag and nimble, like a rat, went through the crowd of rats. After crossing the stairs and exiting the station, he waited for is uncle to come pick him up. It was night and he did not have much of a meal, so he went to the nearby store and had a cold drink. He precariously thought of what would happen if he was in the middle of a light snack and his uncle would show up. Although a situation like this was nothing to pay heed to, Rahil thought of it as a precursory moment of social discomfort. After all, he thought, it was not like he was in the comfort of his own home where he took everything for granted and had his own meticulous reasoning for things that might seem out of proportion to others. But now his consciousness was relative to that of his relatives’ and even though any ordinary person would feel his obligations and standards similar to that of their relatives, being from the same social upbringing, Rahil found himself alienated from it. He lived a life that was ethically and morally too advanced for their relatives’ contention. His thoughts regarding the fluidity of relations with anyone in the same social order as his was more complex as a result to this. In losing his equity with the society, he somehow also lost a part, or maybe even the whole nature of gregariousness he was very sure he once retained. He could almost call himself a beast, far from the ethical aspects of the society which, from where he was standing seemed like a vista which he watched as a lonely vagabond with no home would a pair of innocent children playing on the swing by the front porch of their house.

The sound of silence was broken by a motorbike approaching his direction which Rahil did not see even when he man got down from it and pulled at his shoulders. It was his uncle Rafique. His uncle was a slim figure with a hearty mustache and thick black-rimmed glasses which were bigger than his face. He was an ex-communist but it was during an era when everyone with a slight knowledge of Bengal politics could call themselves communists without finger being pointed at them. He was quick in getting back on his motorcycle and Rahil had to first place his bag in between and then climb on to ride behind his uncle. It seemed as though the uncle was as wary of making a conversation as Rahil himself. It could have been a good thing but it threw Rahil into a guilty conscience of ligation of a social exponent that was the bridge of the social contract on which his stay was built. He was reminded of all of that again. He was tormented by all of that again.

Nothing in life seemed sweet to him now. Even freedom had tasted irksome on the train ride from Delhi to Calcutta and from Calcutta to Tarkeswar. It was the name of the town he stayed which was more of a rural village. To him a city, a village, a metropolitan esplanade or even the Parisian Champs-Elysees was all the same and the difference was only in the mind that traveled through it and the consciousness that saw and felt it. The house where he was to stay was more comforting than the thoughts that ostracized him from making proper contact with his relatives. His aunt was a nifty lean lady with a long face. She was hysterically caring of her visitors, sometimes to the extent of offending them. She was also hysterically careful for the house she lived in, managed everything with quintessential perfection and it was also sometimes to the extent of offending others. She was not an egotist but an egoist.

He reached the house at night and they welcomed him complacently like middle-aged couples living in a house with minimal connections generally do. He did not feel disdained for it. On the contrary, it filled him with a sense of austere purity for the way that he was treated. He started seeing things in white now, for some reason and thought everything to be pure and positive. His mind was eased and so his thinking became murky. His modality was now distorted and his factiousness seemed repulsive to him. His soul began to simmer down and in the night many more things went to sleep along with his body and his mind.

In the morning, he was woken up early and that became a tight regime for the days that he spent there. He had nothing much to do at that time but use the internet the whole day on his cell phone with a blotch on its display. He did not make any effort to pass the time as other people would do when espoused with the constant feeling of boredom. He welcomed boredom at that time because he knew soon things would take a turn for the opposite mood.

-What to do now but wait. In wait, for St. Xavier’s, but why am I sure that I will not be admitted? I recall it was because my name was on the hundred and thirty second on the list. No, that was Scottish Church, which is the only other college I am in wait of. Oh my, what wrong choice I have made. My wits have betrayed me and I shall live with the consequences of it now. No, it is not an error. Nothing is an error in actual life but do spare the euphemisms of ‘where there is a will there is a way’ because logically there is always a way as long as there is space. It is just a matter of alternatives. For me now, the first alternative is to wait in perseverance for the admission list for St. Xavier’s and then of Scottish Church. When those fail, the next and more prominent alternative for me would be to go ahead and take admission for media sciences in the college where my sister is studying. At least that is what everyone would be rooting for me to choose-

“Are you crazy, don’t choose to study in that pathetic private college where your sister is studying!” the uncle retaliated with sudden alarm as Rahil was talking to the uncle and aunt about plans for his future.

“All they do is eke money out from you and give you a degree that isn’t worth the ink in it in the market.” The communist uncle added, being highly respective and considerate towards market economy.

“Why didn’t you apply to Calcutta University colleges, like Maulana Azad?” his uncle started again.

‘Firstly, I don’t even want to study in Calcutta, and then to study in Calcutta University which is the beating heart of the city’s action……is abhorrent’ he thought to himself.

“I missed the dates.” Rahil managed to answer.

“Why, you should me more careful than that. What are you trying to do, waste another year or what?” the uncle questioned with stinging potency. The reference to the missing year in his academic calendar always stung him. It was because people failed to realize that he achieved for himself more in that one year in solitude than he could in a lifetime in colleges. But this was not an achievement that was visible or evident like a college degree. This was the achievement of knowledge and the gift of self-reflection. He was blessed now with multiple perceptions and a complete ego-loss through consciousness expansion. However people disregarded these self-supplicating accolades of his as if it were nothing but a waste of time. He had managed to amass almost a sophist extent of intellect and still people were indignant at what they called his ineptitude.

It was frustrating for him to pay attention to their scurvy remarks but he also felt relegated when he did not do so. He was marred by the fireball of his self-accentuated imperfections and the invisible walls of time started to collapse on him. He needed an ease from the monotony that now captured him and he began to consider going back to Calcutta and stay with his sister’s friend. It seemed to him the better alternative and a more fruitful one away from his own self. He needed to run away from his reflection and the only way he saw it could happen was to immerse in second-person attitude that would take the focus off from his preoccupation with his own self.

As if this was not enough, the uncle and aunt were ceaselessly bickering about the need for Rahil to study in the Andaman in the government college there which was better than the private college in Calcutta. Rahil acknowledged that point but the middle aged tendency to keep going back and forth about the same thing really tormented Rahil. He was not being derisive towards their opinion but internally there was a repression of boiling crude reaction waiting to blurt out of him. He tried to sift it down to a bare minimum but they would always point out the same point again when he had acquired control over his repression. The result to this was a physical paralysis of sorts; his palms went cold sweaty and his thin dark face turned blue with asphyxia, the sides of his eyes, along with his temples and the toes of his feet twitched as if in mild ataxia and his eyes would water just so much that his vision dissolved. The water in the eyes was not tears but a little more stocked than that. It was not grime for it was not that white and sticky.

Whenever there was a call from home, his mother could sense that a deeper disappointment had clasped Rahil for the worse, his brother and his aunts in Port Blair suggested him to move to another relatives’ house for the travel, the fresh air and the freedom from the constant beleaguering from Uncle Rafique. At first Rahil was hesitant. He needed a static and inert atmosphere more than he needed internal peace, he thought to himself irrationally. Here there was comfort and he did not want to be thrown in another dynamic state. Here he had to endure sleepless nights and constant bouts of self-evaluation and refinement subjected to by his uncle and aunt. There were destroying his harum-scarum habits and reprogramming him with obedient conformist ones.

-Darkness! Cup me in your hands and take me far away. I do not wish to see the sight in light… it is too cruel for me. The road is too rough and the air is too heavy. The mist is too cold and the people, they push me around. I am not alone in this world but I feel alone. I have no purpose in life but I am to find one and compromise myself with its pursuit. There are many ways I can lose myself but I will not be reborn. I will be forgotten. People overlook the fact that there is such a thing as ‘mind’ in their bodies and that there are pursuits of the mind that are far too entreating than the pursuit of the body. I want to be a creature of the mind and shed the garments of my body. I want to cut every link that my mind has with my body. I no longer wish to be a being. I only wish to be a vision, the all-seeing eye. I understand there are no sympathizers or followers for the way I see things but rather criticizers but I wish to be free from their ethical and moral constraints. What is food but a fuel for the vision to survive and what is family but an organ that safeguards and entertains the vision. This vision is not consciousness although it is a derivative of that. Consciousness is suffering. Vision is release. The conversion of consciousness to vision needs the perfect understanding of consciousness to point of coming to terms with its fallibility. Many people cannot even conceive this augmentation of the mind from the body and those that do maintain a hard-line stance that there is a mechanistic indivisibility between the association of the body and the mind. The mind, they say is the puppeteer that moves the puppet of the body but they contradict themselves when they say it is impossible for the puppeteer to sustain without the puppet. A puppet is but a material and the puppeteer is the life. In terms of body and mind, if the puppet is left from the reins of the puppeteer, the puppeteer becomes vegetated. Then the question arises of the utilitarian ‘purpose’ as to how the puppeteer can lead an existence out of his role as a puppeteer. It is the only unprecedented question that keeps us going about our lives seeking roles to justify our existence. The ‘role’ is usually occupational and it brings out the behavioral characteristics of animals as they, in their primitive association, too find roles, as hunter or as the aged elderly. This proves to us how, even in our advanced and sophisticated society, we are nothing but caged animals. I will be one soon too. It is just a matter of fitting in a ‘role’. But I do not wish to fit in a role, and I will put all the effort in me in evading such an affixation. There is more to human beings than petty roles and competitions. This is the promise of life that lies in light while darkness holds no importance. There are no roles in darkness, and there is no solution. But I imagine the reason there are no solutions in darkness is because there are no problems to begin with. It is with positivism that I look into the pessimistic abyss. Why am I going down this road then? Why am I beating myself with an aim when there simply cannot be any? What do I want to be, a writer? So that people can read and discuss what I have written? What if I am misinterpreted, if people read me? What of my writings and the underlying purpose of writing then? The greatest favor the any human being can do to himself and to the people around him is to vanish into thin air and cease to exist. All the psychological, sociological and biological problems will be eviscerated then. People are miserable as long as they feel miserable. Sometimes even when they feel content, a condition of misery can also make them miserable. The latter is a case of materialistic occurrence. In that case, we are either required to come to terms with the misery and revert to the idealistic treatment of it or remove the materialistic circumstances that create the miserable condition. Since these two approaches need examination and action on separate fields, my concern is for the prior. It seems to me then, there is no way to feel the goodness of health without getting hurt first because without experiencing the loss of a sensation how is one to understand the presence of it? This should then bring me to my accreditation of the world. I cannot accept world for what it is once I do not metaphorically destroy it, in my mind that is to say. It is a concept that has been a dear one of the Greeks, the Hindus, the Sufis, the Buddhists and the embodiment of Jesus Christ. One needs to hate the world to generate proper love for it, refuse and discard its ethics and standing to really come to respect them but it also brings into introspective the need for a change of the system. The Greeks to the Hindus and he Buddhists did not notice it but with the coming of the Age of Christ it was evident that theology also had to take a radical notion in matters of politics and statesmanship. Since then, counter-religious beliefs bloomed under the auspices of every recusant notion. To a common man, it would seem revolting now, to find out that deep down even in the most sacrosanct of religion there is such destructive view towards mankind and the world but then the consumerist conglomeration of the modern atheistic corporate culture in its heart also has the same negativist ideals that drive forward the armada into the harbor of international economic market in full sail. As a result, we are religious towards money. We use money to as a subterfuge for the emptiness that really dwells in our world never in our wildest yearnings imagining it. If this emptiness is realized, everything shall fall asunder and people will experience true freedom for the first and the last time. Perhaps that is the reason there are only individual notions of bliss and happiness and not collective ones but we can create a collective utopia through a properly desecrating and torching every living ideal that man holds dear not in a violent totalitarian manner but in a collective vegetative state but resolute in defiance of the establishment. My fragile human mind can only think o far as to contemplate the framework of such a revolution and I cannot, for all the life in me predict the aftermath of such a transition if it is to take place or the entire humankind. For me, I will be reborn in a brave new world because I just want to be free and I just want to be pure-

Some people state that the joy of the living brings out the regret of the dead and so one must live in altruism towards the dead by being in constant fear of the afterlife and the underground. What Rahil made of this was that people stay intellectually degenerate because they fear they might understand the nihilism about the truth of the underground. The joy in their materialistic life was still limitless. And it was this joy that became a cause of sorrow for Rahil.

“There is no life for a writer in this century. You’ve seen it. You’ve seen the grizzly middle-aged men who grow out their hair and beard and strap a tattered satchel over their shoulder, their feet in those worn-out sandals. They never live to see their fame take hold. What is their point of life then? They become a disappointment to their family and to the people they hold dear. They cannot provide for them and shove their poverty down their throats too. And all they do is sponge off other people with no spine of their own. That is no way for a man to live. A man should be providing and ambitious. I curse the day you dropped out of that civil engineering course. I could have been so good for you and it was so cheap. Private engineering colleges charge a fortune for what you were getting almost for free.” The aunt lectured him.

-Well, it is only owing to you and people like you that they chare so much. You make the demand; they provide the supply and inflate the prices as the demand increases. It’s only basic market economy where you want to sell me like a prostitute. Why aunt, if I didn’t know better I would say you are being a panderer. Ah, but one sane patient in a ward full of mental patients and a hospital full of insane doctors can hardly point to his sane sense. And then you throw pathetic self-made proverbs like ‘money is not an important part of life but it is a part of life’. I don’t think even Mark Twain could have coming up with such a biting delivery on social satire. No you are far greater; a poet of Pindaric proportion, or better yet the Indian mass media-

He entertained himself as long as he could with his thoughts till the time his very thoughts became his bitter enemy and turned their still smoking barrels on him ready to shoot him with it.

By the evening his parents had arranged for him to stay at another place. It was not out of spite for anyone or at least that was how it was covered up. One of Rahil’s aunts in Port Blair insisted him to visit the aunt’s old mother and spend a day with her. Rahil had only once or twice met her but the image of her and the warmth of her remained imprinted on his mind as is the case with most people who look up to their grandfathers and grandmothers with reverence. His uncle and aunt were a little stricken with alarm due to this move and thought it to be a blunder of hospitality from their part that brought upon this shift. They questioned him erratically about the possible reasons for this and could almost point to the fact that Rahil had harangued about how they had bludgeoned him mercilessly with questions about his maverick future although he did not. Even though he was distraught for the very reason that he was put to a pulpit as a guilty, he was always taken aback by almost a Christ-like sensation of forbearance and forgiveness. While other people would see this as a hard display of self-constraint, Rahil found deep elation in forgiveness and the relative ignorance that it placated.

His timely exit from the Uncle’s house and entry into the grandmother’s house as he called it not only liberated him from a moral constraint but also fixed him to a more kaleidoscopic joint-familial experience that he was more used to. Here he had the freedom to do what he desired to do and do it when he felt like doing it. Apart from that, there was also the very hospitable granny experience which made the socially extrinsic mentality of his subside into a more psychologically associative and personal one as she fed him his favorite dishes and managed the right amount of contact with him. There was a language barrier between him and the old lady as Rahil could only speak Hindi with her and she only Bangla. This excised the much descriptive conversations an old person tends to have into curt but hearty dialogues both Rahil and the old lady enjoyed.

Meanwhile, on times when he was not involved in talking with her or doing any other daily chores like bathing or using the toilet, he spent it on reading the book that he had bought from College Street- the short stories by Guy De Maupassant. For some reason, his inclination was more towards sociological stories by Balzac. Maupassant had all the resources at his disposal, and if that was not enough he had a literary mentor in Flaubert. If Rahil ever wanted to be either one of them, he reasoned, he would definitely trace himself as a Balzac because the man had to struggle and bear the harsh whiplashes of life in order to commit himself to the extensive work that he left behind that still influences writers, artists and filmmakers alike. When he was tired of reading others’ work, he would write some of his own and in the middle of all this intemperate contortion of college and academism.

In the night, he had a call from his old friend. This friend of his was studying computer engineering in Manipal University and was enrolled in a four year program that required for him to study two years in Manipal and then be transferred to a college abroad for the completion of the degree. Initially Rahil too had pined for such a course but circumstances were such that he could not pursue it along with his friend. At times Rahil would imagine what it would have been like if he was with his friend there and contemplate the positives and the negatives of it and the negatives seemed to engulf the positives. Obviously, he thought, he would not be able to pursue his literary career engaged in such a turbulent discipline such as engineering which demanded from students to slouch over their intellect and mop the substantia grisea to be forever hitched in the maculated part of the brain unable to desist from the trite lockdown of condescension.

He explained to his friend about the scourge for college and felt eased when his friend offered him some solace along with some friendly advice.

“Why don’t you come over to Bangalore? There are some really good colleges here.” His friend told him.

“No sir, After Christ, it’s enough for me, but then what am I to do if I don’t even get into the colleges in Calcutta. But then something eventually turns out. Negative times negative equals positive, according to you silly mathematical laws right?” Rahil taunted. He heard a scoff on the other end and smiled noiselessly.

“Whatever winds your clock, you know. Just don’t let your confusion get the better of you.” His friend warned him.

“Who says I am in a state of confusion? I am in a constant state of constructive chaos and answers shall then create themselves out of me like matter created itself out of a universe of cosmos.” Rahil answered philosophically and he could swear he heard his friend’s jaw drop down at such an extempore. This was new for him. He had, for the first time, combined his philosophical exertions with everyday jargon and it felt good, as if he was Hannibal Lector. He found it very pleasing t put what he thought in solid firm words in front of someone who would listen. It gave him a sense of release from the prison of his mind the walls of which were corked with his own imagination so much so that they caved in.

“Don’t lose your ambition, you know. Winners take all.” His friend stated in a tone of unwavering seriousness and determination as opposed to the wavy wheezing voice that talked through Rahil’s mouth.

“There is no race going on, man. There are no winners.” Rahil said reverberating in his friend’s tone with the same freezing seriousness.

“Of course there is. How do you think there are people who achieve and people who go about their lives in wanton appreciation of what little they have? The ones that do achieve are the ones who live their lives comfortably. It’s the law of life.” His friend said with a tremulous voice losing the certainty it once held.

“There are no laws of life! You can go on imagining you have a nice life and a great place in the world but it will soon be taken. First of all, you don’t even have a right to have a nice life in the first place. What I’m talking about is the egalitarian society where there are no rich and poor” Rahil explained to him, his voice almost becoming a delicate coo by the end.

“No way can that be achieved. Why should the ones in power step down from it when they have done everything to be in that position?” Rahil questioned with a furrowed exasperation.

“They have done nothing. Those in power are only in power because they have historically been able to amass capital through misdeeds and accumulated it alienating the poor from their own labor value. Do you understand? Don’t you think it’s unfair that what has been wrong shall remain wrong?” Rahil grew more and more engrossed in conversation knowing it was to stretch beyond par.

‘Okay I get your point but I have a contention. Don’t you think that blaming and persecuting people in the present for mistakes their ancestors did in the past is wrong? I mean, that’s what you mean by pulling them all down on a same level. You will then strip the man who has means thereby deprecating all that he has ever worked for.” His friend rebutted strongly, he too in full swing of the debate.

“No one is talking about persecution and depreciation of social status. In all fairness, this is a move that defends the social status. In the contemporary context, we see social depreciation as an act of losing means, meaning capital but what we fail to see that the moral values of the system are formulated in such a way so as to create a stigma of shame and dejection. When we seek to change the order of things, we can very positively hope to expect that the social stigma will gradually change too.” Rahil explained very slowly and melodiously.

“Don’t you think that’s a heavy handed assertion? And besides, man’s nature has been that of competition and the survival of the fittest. These are the Darwinian laws of natural selection and are ingrained habits in every individual.” His friend stated now believing to have more ground in the debate having played with established scientific dogma.

“Individuals have learned to grow more favorably through mutual association than by natural selection. Besides, Darwinian dogma take years to set in and human thought and social association in not that far stretched. Look how quickly America came over the guilt of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Theories of survival of the fittest are usually used in market terms to fill an empty spot by playing on the guilty conscience of human beings.” Rahil stated.

“I understand the point of emptiness but what do humans have to be guilty of?” his friend asked scornfully thinking that Rahil was throwing dust in his eyes.

“The guilty conscience of humans sub-consciously lies in the superiority that human beings enjoy over other forms of life. It’s a psychological thing. A more exact example would be that of the ‘White Man’s burden’.” Rahil took a short pause and was immediately interrupted by his friend.

“The White Man’s burden isn’t that. It’s to do with the Christian missionaries who sought o civilize the barbaric culture of the Third World and took it upon this ‘burden’ of teaching civility through Christianization. Don’t think that you’re the only one knowing the artsy stuff and so you can keep me in the dark. I know a lot too, man. Life has taught me.” His friend grew philosophical now.

“You see there’s another more contemporary aspect to it which links from where you just left. See, after the post-colonial critique of the Western worlds and their barbaric methods of civilization filled the imperialists later turned democracies with guilt of a more latent nature rendering their nature of involvement in current international politics almost diplomatic. Hence what they lack in political tyranny, they make up for in socio-economic one. Of course it is not to say that they have ceased to be political tyranny but now the influence of an authoritarian surge is more dominantly seen in the economic sphere in the form of corporate globalization. And that is why it needs to be dealt with, my friend. That is why we need to steal from the rich and give it to the poor till we are all equally rich. That’s the most basic gist of it.” Rahil seemed to conclude seeing that he had nothing more to rebut.

“Okay, say you are successful in creating your egalitarian society and destructing all forms of inequalities that exist between us. How will you, then, make sure that the labor force is as inventive and compliant to work as is in the present system where there is a proper system of reprisals and rewards?” His friend questioned him with tireless attention.

“See, when people have the mode of production to themselves, they will, as you say, ‘reprise’ themselves in any way they see fit and with the channeling of capital towards the working class there should be no shortage of resources which is, in our capitalist case, mostly due to the inflation to raise the prices.” Rahil answered idealistically.

“Come on, man. Think of it in a practical manner. It is just not possible. Think of how many people like to travel in a Ferrari. Can they all have a Ferrari if they want?” his fiend now suddenly crashed down to the bare realities.

Rahil answered “It is simply out of bonds trying to discuss it on capitalistic notions. Ideals of communist or socialist economy cannot be compared subsequently because both have completely different structures, right from economic to socio-psychological manifestations. In a socialist economy, there would not be a need for a Ferrari but everyone would be able to drive a car. In capitalist society, excellence is praised and rewarded materialistically but the psychological satisfaction of the achievement of excellence lies not in the gift but in the success of the act. This is the exact ideal that is rewarded in a socialist economy.”

“So you’re saying that in your system, for doing something exceptionally brilliant and outstanding, all a person ever gets is a pat on the back.” His friend asked with whimsical glib.

“I’m saying that to do exceptionally brilliant and be expectant of a reward in return is not an instinct but a plastic state of mind and it is the instruments of capitalism that create that state of mind. A socialist economy would not instill such reed for reward in the first place. Imagine you are sitting under a tree from which an apple falls every ten seconds. Would you still have a craving, a need or a ‘greed’ for apple? Think about it.” he replied to his friend.

The debate turned into a fiasco as they remained up all night till they could see the morning sun going back and forth like classic chess masters in a stalemate. It was only around five that Rahil’s friend accepted, not his defeat, but that the debate would go on till eternity. I became a fiasco because everyone became suspicious of what he was doing up all night and whom he was talking to that long. It was obvious no one would think at the first moment that he was having discussion with an engineering student about socialism.

He finally slept in living daylight as the brute yellow rays of the sun punched on the window in an effort to get inside. The roosters starting to sing but Rahil’s eyes were too heavy with sweet hypnotic sleep. He slept without volition in a euphoric dreamless sleep.

From his euphoric sleep, he woke in a shabby reality with a wobbling head and a sense of disproportion lurking over both his mind and his body and his face burned, his stomach belched and his head seemed to be stiff as crisp leaves in bleak winter. As he freshened himself up and the old woman saw him walking, she served her tea and while drinking tea his phone rang again. This time it was her mother advising him to sleep early in a place where accusations about character could be made on something as casual as sleeping habits. She scolded her for his wavering confusion to everything. In it she cryptically also snapped on him for his indecision in matters of college admission and stressed on the fact that time was of the essence.

-Keep up to it. Why don’t you? You have nothing to look forward but time….to waste. You’re stuck as a fish in a hook and the rod is in the hands of a man who is too patient to pull it up and see what a fine catch he has made. I am that fish. Moment, as I know it is about to end for me, and I know it but when, I do not and this wait is brutal. The conception of death is more deathly than death itself, for the fish. There is a loss of time in such situation and every moment seems so big yet the days fly by as if they never were meant to be. Then life is reduced in those short moments and you can only aspire to live them for as you come closer and closer to it, some other power pulls you away from it. It is not fate. It is not God. It is not history’s hegemony over the common man’s uncertain life which he calls destiny. It is just chance…plain and simple happening of events in such concurrence that enable or disable us to do things in a sphere on normality and chance puts that spin of normality but in the oddest of odd cases, chance breaks chance’s chance of surety and then you have someone who goes to Delhi will all his bags packed to study in a college and ends up, by sheer happenstance to end up in some village in West Bengal. I did not think of it through and through because there was no thinking about. If we are in the presence of such a thing as God than our little decisions are impervious to his actions on us or His decisions about. But that is not what I believe. What do I believe then, and what belief has led me to make such a preposterous choice as to leave from Delhi where a guaranteed admission was a matter of days to a place where there is not the slightest hope for me to study. I curse the dreams of St. Xavier’s that lured me here wagging my tail like some mongrel with a bone flinging before his face. But then it was not that dream that brought me here either. It was that instinct that did. This instinct had nothing to do with St. Xavier’s. It had to do with Delhi, that wild and putrid city I never once more want to see. What altered state of judgment has brought in me this unquenched hatred for just a city with not even such a proper thing as a culture? I admit I despise culture but why do I despise Delhi, a place with such a colloidal cultural concept. It is purely instinctual. But then man has invented dogmatic logic to defy the imprint it has on the human psyche…like the concept of marriage does for the sexual instinct. Emptiness is covered with empty morals and the society levitates on its empty fabric but when I sit on a chair upon the so-called social fabric, I fall down and the society laughs and jeers at me as if it is my fault. Am I to go back to my obscurity and be unseen for the remainder of my life, unable to live life as I want; a life as my own? Maybe it is that way. It can be that I still need time to mature and face the world…outside. At least my travels have led me t believe that because even in the womb of pleasure and comfort I have found wretchedness and contrition. To go back now is a very big step to take, especially when nothing is sure here. Nothing is sure there. Nothing is sure in life. Take the leap of faith. Do I have faith in me? There is no such thing as faith. Faith is only a resultant instinct when they act towards as a response to a stimulus. I need to be that atavist man who is free from faith. Choices are complex because the society in which they come about is complex society is complex because the individual is complex, complicating his life with eclecticism and hence nothing is a result of free choice but of ideas born out of the many knots of dogmas in his brain. A child born in this world has no life of his or her own. You have to die in order to live. I might come out as some form of an occult tradition but it is an avant-garde thought befitting the consumer culture that consumes everyone in it. Consume me, O Consumer Culture! The naked flesh of my breasts long for you cold sharp teeth to dig in and devour leaving nothing…taking all…but you hawk me out of your mouth as I stand at your alter offering myself as your sacrifice. You hawk me back to the world I come from. I know what you want of me. You want me to suffer my non-existence as I have nothing but my mind to beat against my skull. You want to see me cringe for my life and my sanity as I am strait-jacketed among the insane who wear the mask forged by flesh and bones. You are too cruel an enemy…You are too cold an adversary… I wish not even to an enemy a nemesis as you but you are the God of my friends and my brothers and they trust you more than they do me. And that is why everyone falls to your feet and I shall too if you would just let me. Birds and cockroaches are all the same. One thinks the birds are free but even they are chained to the sky. I believe it was Dylan who said that. That applies to all the laws of nature…Contradiction about how things are and how we perceive it. The East and the West… The foolish and the wise….the educated and the uneducated…no place for the self-educated and I am free to choose and I am also free not to choose only not so much considering the social strata that besieges me. Everything affects me on the most personal level and that is why people say nothing affects me. I think too much while making a choice and that is why people say I am so careless. They are fairly right on their part and I cannot blame them. I am eccentric in making choices and not making them but… Is this crucial point such an ordinary point in my life to treat so experimentally? Perhaps not. Let us take a closer look at what I have to choose. On the one hand, I can wait for the results to come out and then what choice will I have left if things do not turn my way? There is the private college where my sister studies but I would never want to end up there. In that case, I would return to Port Blair and seek out other opportunities that are just not there; a task in complete futility. Then that is what I shall do. Two times I have learned that things do not sort themselves out until you take an effort to sort them out. But then **you** are sorting them out and in that way delimiting yourself from the necessary element of surprise that should make it more enticing. The drive towards order is all that it is about. If order was to be demolished from our lives, we would be complete. Now we live our lives in pursuit of completion. We seek everything that promises to complete us, comfort of a house, comfort of a partner or partners, comfort of friends and families and finally the comfort of the deathbed. I have only one life to look forward to but that life of mine stretches to the eternity in my own sense for as long as I live. I consider time and space only in terms of the time of day and night and the space that I need to breathe and that is exactly how everyone perceives time and space, even the quantum mechanics theoreticians. Life goes on with consequences that you inflict upon it but they are seldom bitter. They may be bitter looked through some emotional context or through a dream lost or an ambition unattained but one thing that the Stoics got right was that everything reconciles to our expectation because it is not the expectation that shapes the life but the life that shapes the expectations. No matter how high the expectations are or how usurious it may be from the conditions of life but our sub-conscious mind never lets our fancy abscond from the generalities that we are born in. As for me, I know and I know this because I am too foolish. It is only a point now to act on it-

The next two days were spent in somewhat inactivity but on the third and the fourth days he was thwarted into a gauntlet of adventure when he found out that he was unsuccessful in gaining admission in any of the two colleges for which he came to Calcutta. He kept him composure more than commendably and with an affable self-satisfaction as though he not only expected it but prepared himself to cope with the supposable grief that was to cast over him. The grief never came, not even as a brief hint of disappointment but on the final stages it did express itself as dejection.

-There is ‘what’ to look forward to. As I now stand in the wasteland that was once my irrigated and fertile land of enchanted yearnings, I watch the dust form itself as yet another picture of a map to another irrigated and fertile land of enchanted yearnings. I do not know what it is but I am sure in the pursuit of it, somewhere down the road, again I would find myself standing in the wasteland with dust blowing over my face and I only think whether my eyes would automatically start searching for another form of shape in the randomly blowing dust-

His sister decided to come and visit him and talk about the matter and how it would be furthered.

“You have no other choice now but to join my college. Think about it.” she said. He thought about it and he did not have a clue what she meant. Did she mean that there existed a certainty on the face of a constantly evolving and serendipitous universe? And that this certainty was based on choice which was subjective and random to begin with.

“I suppose that. What else am I to do? Can’t you look for any other good colleges here?” he asked her with desperation assessing the gravity of the situation.

“Well, there is Surendra Nath College where I think I can get you a place. I’m trying hard for Maulana Azad although I’d not get my hopes up if I were you.” She said.

“Well, considering all that is there I do not suppose I have any other choice then.” He resigned.

“Nobody’s pressuring you.” She said and then added “You can go back to Port Blair and discuss it with the elders. I personally feel you’ll be a lot secure in Port Blair.”

There was some truth in that last statement of hers, he thought. If not permanently at least temporarily it was what he needed. He needed an Eden and wanted to avoid the Fall of Man. But coming to think of it in those terms, he thought to himself, who would not be tempted to devour the ripe luscious fruit from the tree of knowledge. Or it could mean that Adam and Eve were just having sex and it was his Miltonic way of saying that and it was for that sin that they were cast down upon Earth. He thought of himself as the embodiment of both Adam and Eve.

He agreed to go to Port Blair in firm resolution and then revealed that firm resolution to his mother and his brother. The way they saw it, he had nothing more to do now than come Port Blair and then pack for Calcutta to study media sciences in Calvin College.

“I thought you should see the college too so a day before you leave we’ll do that.” She said. She wanted to take him with her to Calcutta. He agreed that it was a nice idea to inspect the college. His sister notified him that the college had no hostels and so he either had to stay in paying guest accommodation or as a separate boarder. The latter was a more expensive option an unfeasible for students but the prior was haunting and Kafkaesque. He had heard stories about the dissipative and despondent lives the students live in that crushingly claustrophobic existence in pathetic living conditions with direful conditions of food and water. He would choose rather to live in the comfort of his own house and amount to nothing or be trounced by his own thoughts rather than live in a state so sadistic and cruel and everyday bear its anguish. The cost also, was a big problem. Already studying in a private college with high fee, by living in city outside of college he would also have to bear his own finances for meager items like food and water which are usually provided for in a college campus and thus he would inflict on his mother further economic pressure for a discipline that even he knew understood would not financially amount to the capital he would invest, at least not initially.

The stay that Rahil had in Calcutta after his visit to Delhi and after the venom of college life had taken over his body was completely different. Jus the routine was the same. This time his brother, Yusuf was coming to Calcuta as his ship was docked in the city and seince it was the festival of Eid, he thought he would celebrate the festival with his brother, aunt and uncle. Rahil was apathetic towards the festival but towards the coming of his brother he was overjoyed. The dark stay in Delhi made him delirious and diabolical and Yusuf seemed to him at this point like a guardian angel upon who light he can depend. He trusted no other. He came on a bright afternoon, the sun shining and its rays entering the big hallway when the door was opened. Rahil had a very pleasurable relapse into personal relations. Living with his uncle and aunt, his food habit was restored to stability. He did not have a chance to travel inside the village and so Yusuf promised to take him for bike ride. There was a bike that Yusuf got from the other aunt who lived in a joint family. Then the two of them went to tour the village streets and also to shop. Rahil was not in want of anything and only accompanied Yusuf in his buying spree.

Then they went to see the dam as they had heard that water coming from Bangladeh and Assam through the river channels caused a flood which plagued the houses and the areas very close to the river.

-a flood is not an explosion of the owl; it is not a sudden death. It is slow suffocation. The kind I felt back there. There wasn’t a tempest or a swiveling current, the force closed in on me ever so slowly. Am I glad that I am here now, with my brother? The long lose face of whose seems age old, reminds me of a distant pace that I one may have had; I cannot recall. Is there any way for me to redeem time? Come, go…the flow of the life and its vigor had become like the pitch of a pendulum for me. Forwards, backwards, forwards, backward, the sly move of a masturbating hand grabbing a cock. Am I the hand or the cock? I have the lost the meries of face and the faces of memories. Time is sand that has blinded my eyes. O brother, you are in union with me but this union shall be erased from my mind. My thought will chance, new channels, new networks will form that will change the way I will look at you. I may look at you later in life with a sense of disillusionment or perhaps dismay. I may look at you with worship and reverence in my heart. When a flood comes, it does not take all the things you hold dear. It gives you a choice to prioritize which the harder thing to do because after a wave sweeps you away taking everything from you but your life, you are left with a great sense of loss. When a flood beckons at your door, its patient wait and the organization of things before the flood hits your home not only makes you fell loss but also destroys your sense of order and fills in you this vile emotion of seaparation. A sow impending disaster always leads to separation. I have borne the brunt of it unfortunately but I do not sing the ballad of my sorrow. What has happened to me has happened to me. It has changed me, and I say for the better. Every change, every separation, every loss, every gain is for the better. I am not being optimistic here because I celebrate loss, enjoy separation, make merry on disasters. On the other hand, I condemn religious festivities-

Rahil watched the water level raising. It was so high that fields were filled with river water and the crops ruined. The water almost reached the road made by cutting through the fields on which Rahil and Yusuf were riding. The evening began to turn into night. Rahil ould see yellow light coming from candles and firelamps in the relief tents put up on higher areas to aid the flood affected. As no force other than nature can account for natural disaster, no medicine other than time can heal it. Relief might help people in a material way but the scar remains in the mind in the form of a memory, a vision of that patient gurgling water thrusting its way into the house, its muddy color, its rotten stink that surely had the souls of so many drowned. It got a little late by the time Rahil and Yusuf reached the house. The next day was Eid and Yusuf would leave the day after leave as he had work to do in the ship and could extend his holidays no longer. Rahil made it adamant that his newly formed belief would not allow him to bow his head in front of any god. This not only upset the uncle and the aunt but also his brother Yusuf.

“This is sacriledge, Rahil. Is this what you have learnt in Delhi? To hurt your loved ones by hurting their beliefs? Never forget where you came from and who you are.” Yusuf said squarely.

“I am nothing. I am too little to believe in such a celestial existence. I am only an Earthly being. I only believe in Earthly existence. There are many wrons that prevail because religion prevails. Economic disparityas, ignorance, unwillingness to attain knowledge and worst of all, superstition and all of these things move me not only as a communist but also from the point of view of the existence of myself and others that religion boasts of justifying.” Rahil replied.

A poet once said that the threat of love should never be broken because it can never be tied again and even if it it is tied, it lesves a knot and is never the same again. Days went by after Yusuf went back and Rahil was not able to procure the train tickets to Delhi. One evening he received a message from Professor Nikita, his English professor who asked him to call her. Rahil did as she asked.

“Hello.”

“Hello ma’am, this is Rahil. You asked me to call you.”

“Oh yes Rahil. You see a couple of teachers from the university formed a group a few years back named Joint Action Body which was involved in organizing programs and protests against various educational systems wrongfully introduced in Delhi University. We had many programs against the semester system and we had two this year right during the admissions against FYUP.”

“Oh yes, I reckon hearing about that...”

“So we are organizing another event against FYUP under our campain of Rescind FYUP on the twentieth of October and I wanted to ask if you would join the event. You can speak about your experiences in the current system, your disgruntlement, how you would like the system to be, how your classes are getting affected by it. You know, in short your experience. And you can bring other people as wel. We also invite songs, play, something creative they have to share with the public upon the topic so bring some people along with you as well.”

“Very well, ma’am, I look forward to it.”

“And another thing, I have talked to Ved about this asking him if AISA would lend some help and he was obliged to lend a helping hand. He said that they would be there at the event with their people as well so you should also see to it that these people from your organization come as well.”

“All that is very well, ma’am but I am not in Delhi right now and I don’t know when I am coming back to Delhi. I’ll be in Delhi in a week which gives me some time before the event, three or four days I assume.”

“Yeah, when you come to Delhi, just give me a call. It is better that we meet and discuss about this in detail.”

“Okay ma’am, bye.”

This was evidently the first event in which Rahil was invited to speak. Though this was not much of an achievement, he could not stop going through it over and over again in his mind. And it turned out that he didn’t have to wait a week to return to Delhi as his elders booked the train tickts for the next day by reservation. His uncle took him to Calcutta city in the evening as the train had a departure time of one in the morning. There he met his sister with whom he toured the city and came back to the station at around twelve. The two waited at the platform for the train which was on time. This train was no Rajdhani but it had all the amenitites of one except food. This was the Pooja special express. This was the only means by which Rahil got to know of the Durga Puja which was massively celebrated in the city which he was about to leave. The train rolled away from that city which never left a thought on his mind, which was good for at least it did not leave a scar on his mind as Delhi had done.

All through the trip, Rahil felt like the dead returning to slumber in his grave. Delhi was nothing more to him now than black ash of burnt memories, a failed experiment and Rahil was the mutated Frankenstein coming back to slay his master who gave him this disfigured curse of a life.

It took the train twenty hours to get Rahil back to Delhi. The twenty hours of journey had made him so tired that he decided to spend the night at the train station. He went into a waiting lounge which had nothing but long rows of sitting benches and Rahil stretched himself on one. A lady approached him and asked which train he was waiting. On observing her closely, Rahil found out that she was illiterate and so without saying a word and acting too drowsy and confused he showed her the ticket of the train that had just dropped him off to Delhi. She just looked at the printed paper, paid no attention to the writing and went on with her rounds. Rahil felt a little guilt of taking advantage the illiteracy of a poor lady and took upon himself that he would absolve his act by doing something equally good.

‘But would that help this poor old lady? And if not, I am just creating a cycle in which one person is rewarded for the labor of the other. How is that different form sself-fulfilling charity?’ thought Rahil who despised charity. Charity was for him dually weakening. Firstly, it weakened the poor and robbed them of their revolutionary potential by making them idle through charity. Secondly, it took away the guilt of the hoarders who gave away just one percent of their hoarded money to justify their accumulation. As for the punishment of his act, he started to feel it in the form of the weather which turned awfully cold for him. His first thought was that the air condition was on which was erased when he looked around and found it too common a room to have an air conditioner in it. He found the doors open and no air conditioner on walls. Being from a tropical island, he had never faced this extent of winter and it was the mildest winter, the worst was to come later. This sudden chill around him made him sleepless but his fatigue demanded bodily rest. So he rested his body but his soul was awake, conscious, jumping from one thought to the other. It was after five in the morning that he got up to leave from the station in an autorickshaw.

After a half an hour’s journey, he reached Satya Niketan and very secretly entered the PG. Jerry was there to greet him with his open arms and embraced him. Rahil was so tired that he did not have any strength left for frivolity of emotions to deal with a serious case of Jerry’s anaclisis. He took to his bed and fell into a deep sweet sleep.

He woke around afternoon and still felt the chill around him. Winter was unforgiving but at least he slept through the first few hours of exposure like a log. When he woke up, he brushed his teeth and again Jerry was there to agitate him.

“Listen Jerry, don’t you have work of your own?” asked Rahil and then added “I am really feeling tired and sick and I need some solitude and peace.”

“Don’t worry brother. You will be all right. In the meantime, can you teach me a little English?” he asked.

Rahil did not reply to it. He just unpacked a little of his stuff to find his blue denim jacket. It was the only proper winter clothing he had except a thick t-shirt that barely kept cold way. He found the jacket and fastened its buttons, put on his boots after putting on his jeans and then plunged into his second home, the streets of Satya Niketan.

-I am back, but I am not cured. Ah, putz! You puntz! After so many rains, the bloodstain still remains. Blocked, I am, by this grime…that has coagulated…that which we call blood. That ehich is no longer blood. Once a frog always a frog, croaking, leaping, green, crack….crracck….crrrak… living in this filth, in the slimy, marshy pond…the water has dried out. Only the most obstinate form of life remains. Only the weak remain, because the weak are only obstinate. The strong are so taken by the notion of winning that they prostitute themselves away and lose the essence of what they are. The weak do not do that. Their originality is their only weapon. Let us stop thing…remember and then forget it all. What do we have left after all that? Not a force of any kind but an omnipotent zero if you count negation as power. Force is nothing if the thing behind it is taken away. Wow, what power powerlessness brings, what force forcelessness brings, what hope, hopelessness brighs. How is all that justifiable? How to make sense? To question the question and then keep on questioning.…the gradual degradation or the deconttruction of logic? Where is my sensibility that I once had? My experimentation on me has taken me across the seven seas of wisdom and now I am at the bottom of the ocean, waiting, dying-

He was sitting on the stairs in front of a shop when he saw Hesiod again going back to hostel after havin his lunch, or so he supposed.

“Hey Rahil, did you have your lunch?”

“No.”

“Let’s have it together. There is a restaurant on the other end of Satya Niketan, Mochi Gaon called Mount Everest. They serve good food there, and cheap.”

“Okay.”

“So where you off to?” asked Hesiod.

“You mean for the holidays? I was in Calcutta.”

“You know what? You missed the Stephens’ debating tournament. I told you we would team up, go together. I even registered the team. You know what name I gave it: “Lal Salam.”

Rahil smiled a little. He could not care less about the debating society or anyone in his college for that matter. His temperance was also temperance for intimate social relationships and friendships.

“Are there any other tournaments happening around now?” Rahil asked in order to steer Hesiod away from throwing allegatitons on him and implicating him.

“Yeah, there are two fresher tournaments. One hosted by SRCC and the other by Kirori Mal. But I can’t go with you for the freshers. Man, I really wanted to debate alongside you.”

They had lunch together and the entire time Hesiod was busy impressing Rahil by showing him how much of a Bolshevik he was. It was in a way good that Rahil was so disillusioned that he did not care the least for his comments and allowed all of it to pass through. His wit grew dim and so his wisdom grew dark.

“When are you going to make the teams for the KMC freshers’ tournament?” Rahil enquired.

“We’ll start with the mock sessions from Monday. The first tournament is on Tuesday of the next week and the other tournament is on Monday the week after that. So we’ll make the teams for both the tournament beforehand.”

“Good.” Rahil remarked painly with a stuck expression when Hesiod expected an animated one with lit eyes and cheeks flashing red with excitement. All he got in return were soft cold eyes and the sigh of discontinuity. They walked back to Satya Niketan and Hesiod stopped at a cigarette stand to buy cigarette. Buying two cigarettes, he put one between his lips and offered Rahil the other.

“No thanks, I don’t smoke.”

“Now you do.”

Rahil was not in mood to aruge and his life had life had become so malignant that another carcinogen would hardly matter. He put the cigarette between his lips and Hesiod closed in on him with lighter. Rahil took two three puffs and backed a little to exhale the hard thick smoke of the cigarette. In the chill of the winter, the warm cigarette smoke actually comforted his lungs. They walked to the Satya square and sat on a bench.

“You know what? Life has lost its flavor.” Rahil commented looking into space, and Hesiod staring straight at his face.

“For you, you mean?”

“No, I mean it objectively, for all.”

“You cannot deny that. I mean there is such poverty, economic inequality…”

“The conditions of those starving do not concern me. Their souls do. The murderers, the rapists, the homicidal maniacs come from the society itself.”

“They come from the fringes of society. They are almost as good as aliens and since they do not care to apply to themselves the compulsory rules of the society when they commit a criminal act, the societyimposes itself on those people.”

“The hungry, the starving, the homeless beggars and vagabonds also come from the fringes of society.”

“And thus begging, vagabondage, trespassing, idleness are all criminal activities and have some code or the other against them.”

“Do you believe in these laws?”

“As long as private property exists, society will maintain laws for its safeguard and to ensure the production, both of material and of ideas is ensured by strict or austere means of discipline.”

He was not looking for an academic lecture; he was looking for an expiation of ideas and seeing how impossible it was in this scenario, he walked Hesiod ill the hostel gate and then took his leave.

The college had not started yet. There were still two days left for its reopening. The other residents of the PG were celebrating Diwali with their families so Rahil and Jerry had the whole accommodation to themselves, and the internet too which made it even faster. Rahil’s interest in films piqued and so he started downloading good films which were both movement specific arthouse films such as Neorealist cinema of Felini, Nicholas Ray’s brand of American cinema, the urban pop cult cinema of Tarantino and Scorsese, Tarkovsky’s deeply involving science fiction, the Oriental beauty and the impressionistic cinema of Kurosawa and the technical genius of Satyajit Ray and on the other hand were the films that came out independently from genius minds such as Cohen Brothers, Sergio Leone, Anurag Kashyap, Cronenberg, Kubrick , Lars Von Trier, David Lych among others. But his frustration and intensely dark psychosis did not fade down with this past time of his. On the other hand, he went ino a darker path following his psychosexual urges.

He indulged often in erotic video chats and followed a libertine regime online. He did all this knowing well that his stay in the accommodation was based on how amenable he was with his friends and this present lifestyle of his was certainly a blow against. But in all the distorted things that went through his mind, one truth that he had formed from his analysis was the sly kindness of his friends and of society in general. He knew that he was too close to them to be throwm out of their accommodation. This would increase their already laden bag of guilt. They would show forgiveness for his acts and suggest him to amend his way and even that suggestion would be conditional to his will.

Rahil lived his life freely without any care because there was no one to care for. He immersed himself in a lifestyle of sexual excesses to such an extent that he lost sensation of the cold winter around him. He remained drugged on dopamine after a good round of orgiastic joy. He hled nothing back and unleashed all his coiled erogenous power till the constituent particles of matter danced rhythmically in pleasure.

-joie de vivre, my whole life, my entire body, joie de vivre…I am complete joie de vivre. I have no compunctions. I live to love, but only life. But what is a love of life without a strong passionate love for death. The two are inseparable and only complete together. O, how I wish to revel in the joy of both. Two sides of the same coin I can simultaneously see, such is my sense and such is my consciousness. We are who we are because of our sexulatiy, because of our bulging penises or wetting vaginas. Let us celebrate it, burn all veils that try to cover it, sever all chains that try to constrict it and raom free in our fancy, wild at heart, young at heart, every penis, every vagina has a heart-

In a few days, the college reopenend and Rahil called his professor on the first day itself. She asked him to come meet her in the staff at taround one in the afternoon. Since Rahil had no classes at that time, he went to meet the professor alone and talk to her about her event.

“Come in, Rahil”

“Hello, ma’am”

“So you see about the event, it is on twentieth of October which is only two days later. The event is just a cultural gathering of teachers and students for a very peaceful show of discontent where both teachers and students will gain a platform to raise their concerns in a more creative manner. For example, the Hindi dramatics society of Ramjas College is organizing a play on the four year program.

On the day of the event, he took the metro and reached the arts faculty only to see that there were no preparations made. He called up Amit.

“Hello, yes this is Rahil. Listen, why have you not reached here? You were told to come here with the others, rught?”

“Yes, but I had something to tend to. Ved and Mohan will be comin with some other activists as well. You be sure to meet them and stay right there. Don’t go anywhere.”

“Why would I go anywhere?”

He waited for them to come and saw a familiar face on the other side of the road in front of the arts campus gate. It was Shanto sir. He went to greet him and shook ands.

“Hello Rahil, how are you?”

“I am fine, sir. What about you?”

“I am fine, thank you. Do you want a cigarette?”

“Sure”

He gave a cigarette from the pack he had just opened to Rahil and after lighting his, tossed the match to him.

“So you will be staying for the whole event then.” Rahil asked, blowing smoke to the side.

“No I’ll stay just for a bit.”

“You ought to stay more than that. Professor Nikita called you, right?”

“Yeah”

“So are you in JAB as well?”

“No, I am not a teacher at present in the Delhi University and besides, Nikita’s JAB is only temporary congress of teachers coming together because they feel the same about a common cause.”

After a while of talking, he saw Nikita ma’am coming out of the corner of his eye but what conquered all his interest and became the point of curiosity was the appearance of Siddharth and Rita. Rahil went over to them scring them with his dark, sudden presence. While they were scared, Rahil was dumbfounded.

“What are you doing here?”

“We came for the cause.”

“Finally stepping up to the plate, I see.” Remarked Rahil and then added “But don’t you think this is too mediated an event for an issue like the four year program, and this is where you show up calling it a protest?”

“Hey, I never said I came for protest. I said I came for the cause. And I too came for the AISA protests at the beginning of the semester.”

“I believe you, good thing. The world is slowly changing now.”

Rahil and Siddharth then started to make the arrangements for the event. Rahil liked and appreciated seeing Siddharth roll up his sleeves and do physical labor. They tied up banners; put up a rope on wich they hung various posters and graphic art and handled the setting of the microphone in place. Rahil saw Ved and Mohan coming with six or seven other activists. He met them with a warm affection and had a brief talk with him. Now, Siddharth was helped by the AISA activits. It was a spectacle to witness because it was a union of varying versions of the same ideologices. Ved and Mohan, full-time party-working Marxists, Siddharth, the armchair socialist with diplomatic ties, like the British Labor Party and Rahil, the existential anarcho-communist, almost a post-modernist.

After the setup, a professor from Miranda House started the event. One by one, each teacher put forward his views. The review and the criticism of the teachers was nothing out of the blue let alone one or two of the speeches and even they were not wholly new. The teachers’ speeches were followed by a student from Ramjas who shared his experiences in the calss and his problems with the way the course was taught. After this, the daramtics society of Ramjas College staged their street paly which was a satiricial take on aspects such as the overcrowded cloassrooms, the increased surveillance, cronyism in the university administration and lobbying between political, corporate and university organs, the mental regression caused by the faulty and overburdening coursework. The play packed a powerful impact in irony and was strongly satirical. Next was the speech to be delivered by Rahil. The professor advised to keep the speech short.

“Students, teachers, friends…” He started with a voice that roarded over the microphone and poiting towars the dome of the Vice Chancellor’s office in the administrative block “…and enemies. These are times of great unrest. Students have been very strongly wronged. The students have been lied to, cheated, hoodwinked and our integrity has been snatched from us. The burarucracy coming in and disturbing the academic sanctity against the will of the teachers and the students shows the treatment of working class that falls under the boot of fascist power. Our rights have been violtated. The power structure has manifested iself wrongfully againand this time bearing us not only as witnesses but as victims. Let me tell you that this is just the start of such interventions. It has started here in DU and if this system is allowed here, this will give those fascists a validation and a boost in their ego to spread their wild junk inside the campuses of Jamia, JNU, Allahabad University, Aligarh University, Patna Universtiy, Calcutta University, Madras Universy and across all the universities in India. Therefore, if there has to be a stand, if there has to be a rebellion, if there has to be an uprising, it has to be now and it has to be here. Let me let you know that whenever the task of revolution presented itself with all its circumstances to the general public, students have been at the forefront of activism and struggle for an egalitarian society. The problem which lies before us, the problem that has united us here is not that of a mere academic discrepancy, no. It is an attempt at creating hegemony. And for this preise reason, we need an inversion of power, a revolution. And it has to take form inside the campuses, inside this university. All the revolutions and the revolts, whether it be the ’68 Paris students’ uprising, Mao’s cultural revolution, Cuban revolution, students’ involvement played a primary and pivotal point in all of these struggles.”

At this point, a great wave of applause came from the crowd, supposedly fuelled by his fellow comrades. Rahil ended his speech giving some euphemisms about the vice chancellor and the party that was most likely to come to power in the upcoming elections, and what their role would be in the struggle agaist FYUP. After his speech, there was another teacher who wrapped up in brief citing the ‘much has been said’ statement.

“Rahil, you are quite the rebel rouser.” Professor Nikita commented.

“What was that? You were out of your mind. You went insane!” Siddharth commented wildly.

“Was it not good?”

“It was good but it was a little bit too excessive.” He replied.

“Rahil” Mohan called out to him and added “Your speech was good but you need to keep in mind that this is student politics and we doing it in a very sensitive and reactionary space. All that aside, there is a protest march in Batla House near Jamia. You have to be there. Sanjeev will call you one day before the protest and take you with him to do some campaigning.”

“Where do we campaign?” Rahil asked, having in mind colleges.

“You campaign in the streets of Jamianangar and Okhla. It is a civil protest.” He replied.

The light dusk hung in the space when Rahil entered the Vishwavidyalaya metro station and took the tube straight to AIIMS. From there, taking the bus he reached Satya Niketan. In the PG jerry was there, as always to great him with his bothersome face. Now Rahil was thrown back into the political katzenjammer and there were also other matters to tend to. The exams were closing and the teams for the debating tournament which was close was also to be made.

The next day after school, he met Rahul, Siddharth and the other members of the debating society who were to decide the teams. He had already missed the debating tournament of his college which was a negative for him when it came to the gradation of experience. His seniors wanted him to participate in other events but were hesitant as to whether he would actually prove worthwhile in a debating contest. After all, the reputation he had made of himself was that of a high-minded rhetoric speaker and had to do but not much to tackle the eristic nature of the debate. Firstly they thought that the freshmen needed some lecture on basic topics of debate and so they divided the batch of first-year students into various topics like ethics and morality based debates, economics based debates, debates on international relations etcetera.

“Rahil, he does not need international relations but I think he would do with some background on ethics and morality.” Siddharth, the debating society president mentioned and so Rahil obeyed even though he did not have to. Siddharth asked him if it was okay with him to attend that particular topic judging by the look on his face but he said made the reply that he had no problem with it.

“The essence of any ethics and morality debate is, if you are proving a point that is outside of moral status quo, is to retort to classic logic. Consider capital punishment for once. The principle of crime and punishment that on serving a punishment, there are different scales to be looked at namely redemption, rehabilitation and repentance for which the basic procedure is to punish both the act and the intent.” The student went on with his freely associated tattle from his existentialist point of view. Rahil could very well see that his words came straight out from the essays of Camus and from the works of Beckett.

The lectures were the only things reminding him of a life with constancy and stability and it was the time in his life when he started to look forward to taking lectures from teachers even if came at the cost of obviating his political engagements. Debating was also something that kept his spirits up. Considering the fact that everyone in the debating society could be well reduced to a typified elite and he had a general malevolence for that particular creed, he still found more reason in finding peace with them than with his political Marxian activists from AISA. The debating society in turn saw his interest as an indication of his will in further involvement with the society and so they planned to put him on one of the competing teams that were to be contested against each other to pick out the debaters for the tournament that was to be held at Kirori Mal College in the North Campus the next day.

The debating session went well and Rahil was selected for his first debating tournament along with Rahul and another girl. They would be accompanied by the seniors who would not debate but adjudicate in the tournament.

To get the thoughts of spending the remainder of his days in the room out of his mind, instead of going there, he went to the library to read some books and find peace in them. He was neither peculiar nor choosy about books at that moment so but he still walked through titles of books with searching eyes. He found some good books on subaltern sociology and read them with great interest.

He was lost in the words of the book in his hand and the idealistic world they stretched until the librarian came to him and asked him to leave and it was nearing to closing time. The impending time crunched his heart with rising discomfort on the idea of going back to that direful room he had so happily invested upon. It was close to seven and darkness had started to descend, still he fought time and lurked around the street trying to bide to his sanity. He sat on a street corner drinking tea and looking at people going about their lives in a most ordinary fashion. Compared to him, he concluded that they were all leeches and cockroaches yet he was the one sitting under a blank streetlight overlooking dark alleys and on a damp corner of a street while life jostled on the main streets.

Finally after three rounds of tea, he made way towards his room through narrow alleys that resembled the road to perdition. The streetlights lit the features of the bending twisting streets rather diabolically and it brought out the innermost existential fright upon his mind and soul. He felt like he needed to evade everything, even his very existence in that dismal state of being and there were two ways about it- one was to transcend from his current state into a state of higher existence and the other was to retort with vigor and rebel in the most blatant sort. He had to shift his whole being into rebellion and forge his soul into a sharp flint built to excise all elements that combine to form the incorrigible circumstances he was caught up in. He knew he had to be unpredictable even to himself if he desired to keep his sanity not knowing that it was the very instability in his life that caused the mildly indicative instability of his mind.

He supped on the way and all that was left for him to do was to sleep and forget about time. A reminder came over his mind about the debating tournament he was to attend the next day for which he had to wake up early in the morning. Unable to sleep and exasperated by his own internal rile he shifted to the other room. It was a lot smaller than the other room but the heat, which had more or less took form, had disappeared. He slept satisfactorily there all alone, his world to himself.

The voice of the alarm woke him up the next day and he woke up sharply which contrasted to the tediousness with which he woke up every day when he lived in the room. There was a dire need in him to excuse himself from that ‘household’ as soon as possible. He brushed his teeth and did not change his clothes as he had gone to bed dressed in the same attire he wore last night and knowing that it was well enough to wear for the next day, he up and went as is. He strode through the narrow alleys like a lost child out of breath caught in a strange crowd of foreign people and only regained his normality when the culverts of his shadowy mind met the huge main streets where people had sprung about but only sparsely.

He went to the college after that. There was no college that day and the only thing he had to do was to fill the examination form and pay the examination fee. He took the examination form from the counter and filled it. Submitting the form took some time as there was a long line at the counter and on giving the form to the clerk, he received a challan which he had to pay in the bank for which there was another long line. This enraged him. He was thinking about ways to impeach the principal and the administration about it when he received a phone call from a person in the college magazine’s editorial board.

“Hi Rahil, listen. Where are you right now?”

“I’m in College. Why?”

“There is a film festival happening in JNU and there is a movie being screened which we want you to watch and review for the college magazine.”

“I’m a little busy doing an important work here.”

“You can’t make it to JNU?”

“Depends, when is the show starting?”

“It starts in about half an hour.”

“Okay then, you can count on me. I will try to make it.”

Immediately as Rahil hung up, his eyes saw the face of Abhyuday, his trusted friend and he fell in love with that moment.

“Listen man, can you take this challan and this money and pay and keep the receipt with you. I will take the receipt later. I have to go somewhere urgently.”

“I don’t know. You have to sign it somewhere, right?”

“Yeah, I’ve signed it. There, see? Take this and the money and just pay for me, all right friend?”

“Yeah, yeah okay.”

“Thanks, thanks a lot, man.”

With that, he left the college like lightning, got into a rickshaw and told him to floor the pedal for JNU. When he reached JNU, he knew the person to call. He called up Prerna, whom he knew well enough and asked her where the film festival was held. Coincidentally, she was among the organizers of the tournament and so she directed him the way. He reached the venue and found out it that it was a Kashmiri film and photography festival. The movie that they sent him to watch, *Jashn-e-Azadi*, had already started and so he made his way into the theatre and impatiently found a seat.

-*Jashn-e-Azadi*: How we celebrate freedom movie review-

- JNU became the bearing place to the Kashmir film festival under which a plethora of films on different themes were screened at the convention centre of the University with a distinguished academic panel and other recognized guest. One of the movies that were screened was Jashn-e-Azadi: How we celebrate our freedom by Sanjay Kak. The film, as the name suggests celebrates the spirit of Kashmir in all sense and terms of the word. It is a documentary with so much emotional indulgence and self-actualization that it really redefines the notion people have in mind about Kashmir in all contexts. Highlighting the struggle for freedom that has long been the dominant spirit in the land of the mountains, Sanjay takes the viewers starkly into the whole rebel ideology of ‘***Ikhwaan***’ and the general ‘***Shahaadat***’. The documentary takes us into the average lives and minds of the Kashmiri people along with the renegade segregationists of Al-Badr, Mujahidin and certain others.

Only in the hallowed grounds of JNU, the opium of the intellectual mind, could this sort of a creative spectacle have taken place this independently. The point here being that that the so called other side of the separatist revolution, the so called bad side was broken down and justifiably put forward in comparison and contrast with the picture of the autocratic Indian Defense infringing on what is seen throughout the movie as ‘people’s movement’ for the viewers, the audience to judge. The gruesome violence, the post-violence and the psychological and social repercussions of the violence were not just brought about in an abstract manner but also aestheticized to create a level of interaction between the trivialities of Kashmir and the realities of it. When it comes to documentary, this documentary is more of a classic magnum opus considering the amount of indulgence it had with its viewers. But in all this, it didn’t lose out on the essentiality of a documentary movie and did put out a major amount of matter that was and still is unknown to the general public of India. Coming to the matter that it panned out and its quality, it was a seminal critique on the nature of governance and a slight tilt towards the need for awareness among the general public about the movement in Kashmir. Through its various celebrations of Independence Day, where BSF and Defense are celebrating the occasion on a four-way street which is empty, the director very craftily and symbolically showed how uninterested people are in the affairs of the state that governs them and this false orchestration of an occasion that they think will serve as the propaganda to make patriots out of Kashmiri citizens. The documentary also features the more moderate movements in Kashmir for liberation brought about by public conventions and signature campaigns which creates the idea of this transcending behavior of the politics in Kashmir from a fairly radical one to a more Right centric approach which is conclusively evident. But the spirit of rebellion that the documentary is able to portray both through data and description is really laudable considering the risky pastures and the defiant stance the director has chosen for this documentary. The title itself states the contrast between the ‘freedom’ they have and the ‘Azadi’ they want to go ahead and celebrate because the director defines freedom as freedom from oppression and oppression is something that these people have never been free of so in that sense they have never truly achieved freedom.

The theme and style of the documentary is a breeze of fresh air. Unlike the dark and gloomy WWII holocaust documentaries which have nothing but grotesque clips of corpses and inessential data, which this documentary can be easily compared to, this documentary had really much to offer in the creative terrain. The aesthetics of Kashmir is beautifully maintained in the movie through proper characterization of the mesmerizing scenery that Kashmir beholds. The director has also very skillfully and ingeniously used couplets and verses of Kashmiri poetry all through the length of the movie to both preserve and invoke the beauty of Kashmiri literature for its viewers to see and awe at. This way the filmmaker ensured that the overall style and tone of the movie remains artistic, as artistic as Kashmir fundamentally is, and to get that similarity work in favor of the film. It’s like watching a movie about Kashmir in the full beauty and charm like being in Kashmir. The movie has been the single window to gaze at the state that is Kashmir, without any pre-conceived notion or bias, just the way it is supposed to be-

Rahil finished watching the film and was moved by its truthful imagery. He was so engrossed in the documentary that he completely lost track of time and forgot that he had to be in KMC for the debating tournament. He bolted out of the university campus, took a rickshaw again for the nearest metro station which was Hauz Khaz and from there commuted to Vishwavidyala where he met Hesiod who was standing on the street opposite to the metro station smoking a cigarette.

“You want a cigarette?”

Yeah sure”

“You’re a little late. You were not with the others? What happened?”

‘Pleurisy’ he thought to himself. Hesiod called an auto rickshaw for his journey till the north campus. On reaching the Kirori Mal campus with Hesiod, the two of them started looking for the rest of the team. Siddharth had shown up and the girls in the debating society clustered around him and Rahul who had just entered the scene after having a smoke elsewhere as it was not allowed to smoke on campus. The team, on seeing Rahil and Hesiod congregated together, discussed irrelevant matters and then proceeded towards the reservation desk.

Each member had to pay a hundred rupees for registration. That money, along with the money from the sponsors would be pooled in for the cash prizes for the winning team, best speaker and the best adjudicator in the tournament. It was one of those fortunate moments where he actually had cash in his wallet and so he was able to pay his share. After registration, they waited till the initial tabs were drawn and the groups were paired with their opponents for the first round. Rahil roamed about a little, not too far, not accompanied by anyone. The sunlight was bright and heavy and Rail could feel both its warmth and its weight. His eyes caught sight of a figure, dressed in a blue uniform which was probably one of the college guards, taking deep breaths, using his fingers clear the glistening sweat over his dark pitted face. Sweat flowed over the bridge of his nose and drenched his clothes making patches of dark blue under the armpits, around the neck and on the back of his shirt.

‘What is he doing outside his booth in this hot summer day sweating like that? Why doesn’t he go back to his booth or find a shade to hide under?’ Rahil thought to himself and reflected on his own words as if they were mouthed by someone else. He maintained his gaze on the guard and was lost in it as though it was a vision from outside world. A commotion near the registration desk broke his attention and he turned his back towards the centre of his past attention. He went over to the counter and saw Siddharth coming to him along with all the others except Rahul who was missing again allegedly gone for a smoke.

“What’s the matter? Are they starting now?” Rahil asked Siddharth who stood with two girls and with Hesiod at the backdrop.

“Yeah, they’re asking for people to get into the auditorium because they have clubbed the teams together and they will shortly be announcing the tabs and then the motions of the debate. There will be three motions, out of which both the teams will mutually chose one.” Siddharth mentioned, stating the obvious.

“Look, its fine. It’s your first debate, I know. There will probably be mistakes. Don’t take this as the last….and try not to get politically or ideologically too sentimental and stick to idealism where stances like that can cost you the debate.” Hesiod further explained to him. By that time, Rahil had grown very receptive as he had nothing constructive to do other than to listen to their exhortation.

“All right, leave Rahul. We’ll all sit inside and at least watch the tabs so that we see are clear who we are up against.” Said the girl teamed up with Rahul and Rahil. They went inside the air-conditioned room and it felt great after a long wait under the sun that brutally consumed all the water from the bodies of the young men and women standing under no shade at all. Inside the auditorium, there were many bottles of mineral water kept on the table and more packed in cartons stacked on one side of the auditorium. That became the centre of attention for the students and it was so for quite some time. When the students settled, the coordinators announced the rules of the debate and gave pamphlets regarding the rules and manner of parliamentary debating. There was nothing in those pamphlets that Rahil, or any other undergraduate, for that matter did not really know.

There were five debating matches that took place. TheVenky group with Rahil and Rahul in it, lost the first but then went on to win all the four and hence qualified for the quarter final matchups which were scheduled for the next day. There was a lot of drama that happened: sometimes they thought they were going to lose, sometimes they came up with random matter in their speeches, sometimes they were clueless how to oppose the proposition’s case; one such case happened in the third match where the proposition came with a case completely out of context from the cse in contest. Rahil was extremely reluctant on whether to challenge their definition and went against it. Here the heroic Rahul showed courage, with a little external help in the form of a nod that came from Richie who just happened to preside over the debate and confirmed the choice, and a definition challenge was brought by the opposition. The house, both the proposition and the opposition and even the judges, were in turmoil. In the end, Rahil and his team came out with flying colors. By the time they completed all the matches, it grew late night.

Rahil did not know where to stay. They were looking for a place to eat so they strolled to Kamala Nagar. Rahul had to go back too but he could spare a little dinner time as the metro ran till eleven in the night. Siddharth, Rita, Richie and Hesiod were staying with their friends from St. Stephens’ in a flat. They decided to have their dinner at one of those places that reeked of post-modern youth semiotics. The place was woodbox café and it was one of the most prominent eating places to sprout up like a fungus around every campus. They sat not in the main restaurant but in an inside room which was also a part of that restaurant. They sat on the floor which had a mattress leveled out on it an over a wooden table of short stature. The walls, ceilings were all made of wood and felt like a ranch in the American Wild West. They talked among themselves, chatting away from one inessential topic after another, gossiping about the lives of other people as if their own had no events of significance. Rahil could not bear a conversation such as this. He was fond of bloodraising polemic debates, clash of the ideas and passionate philosophical reflections on love and revolution. The restaurant attendant came to take order and Rahil checked his pockets to see if he could respectfully eat his meal or be kicked out from the place. After having checked his pockets and the relative embarrassment it secretively brought only upon himself, he asked for lasagna.

The meal was well made and it gave him encouragement to go ahead and ask permission to stay with Siddharth and the others in North Campus.

“Hey guys, is it okay for me to room up with you guys. Its late night and I don’t think I will be able to come back tomorrow so early.”

“What do you think, Sohail? Do we have room for another one?” Siddharth asked.

“Yeah…yeah, sure...” Sohail, the guy studying in Sttephens’ replied.

After having their meal, they walked back to Shohail’s room where two other people from the same college stayed. The band closed in on a gate and Sohail opened it to reveal a small ranch.

“Hold your noses. This is a fucking travesty.”

They entered the house and Rahil found it to be a free-living spread, completely opposite to what he thought it would be. There were three rooms, a small living room with the lights off, a bedroom which served partially as a living room and partially as a bedroom, with a bedh, chairs, a short shelf full of interesting but varied books, and a larger bedroom which served all its intents and purposes with a bed on one side and a dusty worn-out rug stretched on the floor on the other side. Having made the initial observations, it was time for Rahil to feel comfortable. He went to the kitchen and took a glass of water; then he went into the half-bedroom half-living room and went through the books.

‘History of Marxism in India, Penguin Edition’ Oxymoronic, thought Rahil. He flipped through the initial pages of the book and read briefly. There was little that Rahil did not already know. The interesting thing, thought Rahil, is to have found this book in Sohail’s room. Meanwhile the others made got comfortable in the bedroom and picked up the topic from where they left it off at the restaurant.

“Listen, whenever you go into any restaurant, just buy beef, order any beef dish no matter if the restaurant serves it or not. The faster these cows get slaughtered and eaten, the easier it will be to live here.” Sohail proclaimed.

“It does stink an awful lot.” Rita replied.

Rahil approached Shoail and asked whether he had read the book. He said he just flipped through it, and that Hesiod gave this on his birthday.

“He gave me one too.” Siddharth added.

The night actually began when Sohail pulle out a small packet of marijuana and lighted it in his bong. Conversations gradually eroded and the mind was left to wander in the daze of the smoke. It was then that Rahil joined in and a perfect union of the prophets was set.

“Is this your first time?”

“He’s done ether before.”

“Oh, so you’re that kind of guy.”

Rahil paid no attention the conversation they had among each other, even though it was concerning him and was partially directed to him. The drugs made him feel inert, senseless, suspended, and inebriated to an extent that he could see ten forms of his head as he moved it. The sounds slowed don and his throat turned metallic. ‘It was indeed good stuff’, thought Rahil as he looked around and saw the same expressions on the faces of others as he imagined he would have. He was relieved form the tensions of tomorrow; the now only mattered and the now was fantastic, colorful, wild that could make him do anything. The now was larger than the world, like Kubla Khan, Coleridge’s dream in opiate smoke. Te violetpink bonk looked head and shoulders above any crystalline showpiece he had ever seen in all of his life spent in sobriety. Siddharth looked into Rahil’s eyes and saw his own reflection which confirmed the freedom of his soul. Either it was the freedom of Rahil’s soul or the derangement of Siddharth’s mind. Paranoia dangerously injected its ptions and the glaze in the eyes of the stoners returned. Their perception was unilateral and all of then started to take another round of the drug. For Rahil, it was like giving anaesthetizing an unconscious body. Rahil groove and swirled, but he thought he fell and whirlpooled. All disappointments, worries and aspirations allayed and a soft sweet smile perched on his lips like a sparrow. He leaned on the wall waiting for another turn but the stuff ran out. The smoke had made them so inactive that they did not even feel like talking anymore. The lights were switched off and the disarray descended into sleep. The next morning, everyone woke up in time and Siddharth had only to eke out Rahil’s name to get him up and ready. Rahil washed his face and teeth and he was as fresh as dew.

They made the trip to Kirori Mal College and reached there almost in time. Rahul also arrived, fresh and sober. Rahil only looked shabby but then he always did ever since moving back to the PG accommodation. There were only two matches to the finals. Rahil was about to enter the room as the matchups were going to be announced when he received a call from his sister and he picked up the all to find out that she was crying. Already Rahil was as congested eventfully as he could get with a protest lined up alongside a debating tournament, and now he had to make space for the diagnosis of somebody else’s mental breakdown.

“Why are you crying?” he asked her.

“My boyfriend is about to leave me.”

“So what’s the problem?”

“We’re married.”

This was an answer that took Rahil by the force of a hailstorm. He recalled the events in Calcutta and the conversation he had with her in the Cofeehouse.

He finally found the food court and went in. There was a carousel over the counter covered with glass and displaying pastries and hotdogs. Rahil had had a measly breakfast and his hunger was roused by the associative memory of his mind on seeing the chicken burgers. He ordered for one and ate it esuriently. After eating, he called his sister who told him that she was inside the station and on his way to meet him. They met with dissuasive frankness. Rahil justified it on his part as he was really extinguished from travel and wished to be free more than to rest for the time being just to get the railway numbness out of his fractures.

She stated that she would keep the bag in one her friends’ house which was in the Ripon street area of Calcutta a little far from the station. The way out from the station was a scene to be framed. There were no men there, only ants crawling about by the thousands. There were no discernible figures one could indentify as human beings. These were just ants that all seemed to swarm to the bright yellow and black checkered taxis standing on the other side of the road in long lines looking like big ripe bananas fallen from the skies that lured the crowd of ants to itself. Holding his hand, the sister led his infant brother through the famous crowd of Kolkata and that that moment he knew it was not Kolkata but Calcutta. It was, is and always will remain Calcutta, the mosaic of the mundane middle-class proletarian lives and the hearty joy of that mustached Dada in white muslin tunic and pajamas and those black thick-rimmed glasses who looks through his seemingly impenetrable glasses at the precocious city and to him, like to Rahil and to all the other city dwellers who had felt that specialty of air in their breath.

But unlike Dada, Rahil despised Calcutta and to him Calcutta or Kolkata was still a bothersome territory because of the people and their strict attachment to their culture and had not the thinnest shred of individuality. This Rahil found out accordingly as he boarded the bus and climbed down at Ripon street where the crowd was as sparse as the city could afford to be without driving people out of its borders from other ends. There he saw a man quarreling with a foreigner. He heard distinct words in English:

“You…not take photos of our buildings. See the Howrah Bridge…why are you clicking pictures of those naked little boys…under the pipe?”

The Bengali man was ranting. Rahil saw that the foreigner had been taking photographs of some dark skinned naked children who were bathing under a municipal tap. The children were fully naked.

-Naked, as God wanted them to be…and wanted us to be. And they are……and we are not. God didn’t want them to be naked, the society did. The societies now, like this Bengali fellow who can row with the innocent foreigner taking the picture. Look at this old plum, bald right from the middle. He is really picking up a fight there. No. That’s Bangla in a nutshell; all shouts and no shoots-

His sister skillfully guided him to through the faded brick structures stemming right against the street, their walls defaced and a sore sight to look at, the nakedness of it standing, without paint, without whitewash wondering whether everything in the city is naked in its evinced reality. The streets reeked of a familiar smell. It was the smell of Calcutta and it was more like a pugnacious stench that stuck to the hairs of your nostrils no matter how much or how hard you blow your nose. But in all this ugliness, Rahil thought, there was still warmth. The city was not cold like Delhi even though he visited the place in the boiling tropical heat. Rahil could feel some sense of character as he walked through those broken, muddy streets with puddles of water around and flies and mosquitoes humming over those puddles.

The area of Ripon Street was notorious for its cutthroat violence and ardent adolescent youth with colored hair and even more creatively colored shirts with their collars turned up and a smile always plastered to their faces that always drove in their bikes ready to pick up a fight or commit arson and larceny as a hobby to earn pocket money. Her sister determined and without fear, bravely led his brother who pulled the trolley bag behind her.

They finally stopped at the mouth of a two storied building and waited a while after which a meek but taut young man, approximately of the same age as Rahil came down and asked him to go upstairs with him while her sister started walking down the road and out into the open street. The boy guided him through the stairs and into his home and he did not expect the kind of setting that welcomed him.

-Is that his mother on the couch, and the bearded old fellow? I pronounce him the father and with his mane, the lion of the house. I reckon he is a regular worshipper, praying five times a day and if he had the chance, more. This is a one-room bungalow for it is not the place where they live matter; it is the place inside the heart the heart that matters. But who is the young Bruce Lee. I do not know. I should not know. I should not know? Oh, drop my bag, here he says, anywhere. Jolly good, then. I’ll keep it this side then. Locks are good, nothing really to steal anyway. I should not ask him who he is. That would be the rudest thing to do isn’t it? Ask someone who has taken into hi home, given you a courtesy to rest a little before you go out venturing once again into the streets, and to ask such a good Samaritan just who might he be to export all this courtesy from his gentle and humble heart to me? Question always answer themselves should you frame them right. Rest now, this ennui is your asylum. The television is not too loud…the room is not too crowded……the fumes of the onion burning on the stove in the kitchen are not too pungent… if you just close your eyes. This is a despicable poetry……it is a poetry of despicability. Fall down the rabbit hole and don’t look back, the smoking caterpillar and the cat with the sustaining laugh awaits you-

-Where am I now? Why have I been having dystopian dreams? There is more to dreams that visions for dreams come with a purpose with a cryptic meaning that may be as general as a careless vision of bird springing from a branch into flight with its wings opening with a flap and the promise of escorting a bird up to heights that it wants to go. It may also be something that can mark a grand event like an historic toll of bells marking the commencement of an occasion man has never seen or felt, witnessed or heard. Time has passed in liters as I lie about here in doldrums……procrastination… Bloom into something artistic…now is the time…this is the place. Bloom-

He got up and with a wobbling head looked at the watch. Two hours had passed and now Rahil began to grow worried about his sister who was waiting for him there. He asked his friend if she was still waiting there and he replied that she had gone to his room and that he was to drop him to is room and then he could go promenading around the city. Rahil remembered her saying that she had something planned for him and he was eager on finding out what that was.

The boy had had a motorcycle and it was one of those preposterous cities that had the ludicrous law that the rider sitting behind also ought to wear a helmet. With his hair completely bucketing his forehead and the afternoon heat over thirty seven, Rahil would have found the ride to Amherst Street infernal had it not been for the Parisian style of the city that Rahil looked with a grotesque awe. The awe was grotesque because the Parisian resemblance of the city was grotesque. One thing he liked whole-heartedly was the ample presence of bookshops and book kiosks all over the city almost at every third corner where the eye went. Finally they reached Amherst Street where his sister’s room was located. The location of the room was in a very peaceful place coincidentally opposite a park. The park was also clean, tidy and well-kempt. He called his sister who asked him to wait at the park. He waited at the empty park where only a group of children played far away and quite unusually Rahil had no interest in their activity and was engrossed in his own thoughts.

After a little while, his sister resurfaced from one end of a narrow gully to the opposite of the park and called out to his brother. Listening to her call, he rose up heftily from his seat and walked over to her.

“Whoever was that fellow you left me with?” Rahil asked in a glib of tongue overlooking the grammar.

“He was my boyfriend.” His sister answered.

Rahil paid no attention. To him, what his sister did or did not do for her satisfaction did not involve him in any way and besides, he himself had quite a liberated idea about sexuality.

This time as Rahil entered the main bazaar, Rahil kept from making the mistake as he had made in Delhi again and so in the first chance that he got, he bought a book from a kiosk. It was a collection of short stories by Maupassant. It did not cost much although that was what he regretted later while reading the book; it had so many spelling mistakes. They walked from Amherst street right into College Street which was not very far. College Street had a bustling crowd though nothing matched the stream of crowd walking up and down the street of Esplanade with its showrooms as crowded as its footpath stores.

College Street somehow had a more refined kind of crowd, the kind that does not bother others with their fake satisfaction while walking besides you with sole intention of catching your attention. The people, when they walked in College Street walked with their own self-contentment. They turned around a corner and ended up in another road and suddenly his sister made an about turn towards him with full stride of an army officer and proclaimed:

“This is your surprise”

Rahil did not know what to make of it at first. Then she led him robustly into the building and into a big café. It was the Coffeehouse of Calcutta. It stood as a shoddy and archaic structure, but it was robust with lively conversations and wheezing smoke from every chair on every table. Rahil contiguously walked to the doorway but his life-force was stopped in tracks by the pull of her sister on his hand. She wanted to take him to upper level to get a more panoramic view. They climbed upstairs and Rahil overlooked the grouchy display of the yellow mellowing walls and the over dated calls for protests written by radical student groups. When he got to the upper floor, the sentence that his sister said resounded in his mind and he thought to himself in silence ‘it really is a surprise’. The upper layer of the coffeehouse was sparsely populated and people smoked less there. Perhaps that was the reason, Rahil thought, his sister brought him exactly there. He did not mind people smoking around him and he also did not mind people asking him to smoke. They sat at a table and Rahil thought to order coffee. He extended his wish to his sister.

“Don’t drink the coffee here, you’ll puke. Have a cold coffee instead.” She said, raising her hand to place her black locks behind her ear, pacing down as she did so. Rahil could tell that he wished to talk about something with unmitigated detail. He could see it from her face and he could feel it from actions. He could see her bulge out with her emotions but her projection seemed almost extraneous to his undivided attention towards the people who sat under him in the lower levels of the humble skeleton of the coffeehouse. He could not understand his fascination that overtook him because he was a part of the same decaying reality that he had always been a part of yet some promise of an evergreen and blossoming virtuosity, a glimpse to a brighter form of bliss seemed to be withheld among the loud conversations that surrounded the place. He felt it although he was not a part of it. The sound was like that of a chanting, an incantation towards a more conscious form of knowledge and a more eager approach towards it. It took some time for him to realize that not all was idealistic as he had initially thought to be as he had entered into the place but that did not send him dwindling into disbelief. Rather he was filled with an immanency which was more of a meditation to drive out the obfuscation that presented itself to him. His esoteric circle of an ascetic nature then merged itself with a sense of objective incurrence of a particular kind of stimulation to which he would only expose himself. He would build a wall around him to keep himself away from the rest of the world. This was his firm resolute knowing well the fact that it would not neither make a good Marxist nor make him a proper fecund mind and he would just be another bald head in an ivory tower in due course of time. He thought to himself ‘maybe he did want that’ but then he was young and with his youth there was an invigorating zest in him to unhinge everything that is real to show the world that it is all an illusion. But the chief problem with living in an illusion, he thought, is that one gets used to it to the extent of dependency. How is one then to free himself without pain? The reality is the illusion and there is no reality and it was very evident to him also as he watched those overweening young boys and girls obstreperously breathing in cigarette smoke as if the smoke they released would account for all the smoke coming from the chimneys of industries set up on the heart of farmers’ lands. It was all too cruel and debilitating for him to brood over and so he broke the glass of silence that had fermented between him and his sister as he gave a deigned look towards her which was not without respect but exhausted by his own obnoxious thoughts.

“I have something to talk over with you” she said to him as if it was a business matter but she leaned forward as if to reveal much more. Rahil sat mutely and waited for her to state her case.

“You know that boy you stayed with, Zaid?” she asked, and Rahil could see she was deliberately breaking up her case into little irritable questions scattered around like clues in a treasure map that would eventually lead to the point she was making. For Rahil, its purpose was defeated because he could see through her first little question the full case she was making and now the procrastination just seemed unwanted. But the lens of lie that one wears in talks like these to keep the other from seeing what she was thinking, guarding her most precious, treasured, inner and deeper secrets, she was not. Rahil would have seen through all her lenses, passed over all her high castles, but she built none. She laid her cards on the table and left it for him to judge. In times, people are very precocious to judgments passed on them but only heed to those whom the trust the most and he could now see himself inside the circle of her trust.

“We’re due to be married, in secrecy of course, and the family should not know. Can you keep that secret?” she said, emotions bursting out of her like from an amateur actress. Rahil glanced at his sister’s eyes, turbid with orphic emotions. She looked at him demanding much more than a look back; she wanted positive judgment from him, a respite that she would not get from others and a shelter for her grief which had had not come yet but surely was inevitable. He could look her no more in the eyes and turned his head away with a pinch of sorrow that he managed to hide. This sorrow was not disappointment towards her sister for making a bad decision, as others would say. The sorrow emerged from the fact that he knew what she had done was right on her part and that no one else had the right to commove her for that, but in the general schema of things, the latter was highly unlikely and that was the reason for his disappointment.

He sat silently as his sister continued on how things turned out to be and what it would mean for her if he could share some sympathy with her.

“Look, I understand you have your right to choose and I’m all for it. You just have to remember and be wary of the ireful response your choice can have on the family.” He said delicately, sipping on his cold coffee taking it up the moment it was laid on the table by a well dressed waiter with white suite, white gloves and pertly worn white turban.

She understood the gravity and was glad that Rahil tackled the situation with such delicacy.

-Wrong choices, what are wrong choices? There are no wrong choices as long as you’re willing to compromise with your conscience, and there’s the catch! Conscience, a plastic state of mind, a complex most unnatural and alien to the individual human psyche because everything about the so called ‘conscience’ is based on laws of society and what we are taught to think, rather than what we can or will really think to a particular situation should it confront us. In using our conscience to deal with problems, thus, we can say that we deal not with our natural mind but with a mind that society has given. In this case, sister, your mind is your biggest enemy. But them, love is something of an antidote for rationality. Falling in love is more powerful that lust, they say because lust is unethical. It is a perversion whereas love is a free pass to an effect of that perversion. But one never can get the absolute pleasure of that perversion without changing gears from love to lust, and then as the old Shakespearean phrase goes, all love is lost. Love is the most arduous and cruel of human emotion insofar as we fail to realize that is lust in a different form. If lust has become taboo over the years, it is only because of infatuation of people for love. But now, in the Indian context, even love is a taboo. What then, is the average Indian to do but castrate himself for the sake of the goodwill of society? And then they complain of rapes and sexual assaults, deteriorating the Indian culture and tradition when it is the Indian culture that is making the conditions in the first place. Of course, it is not that everywhere a young Indian girl and boy meet there is a rape waiting to happen. But one can be sure that everywhere a young girl falls in love with a young boy is a rape waiting to happen. I do not say that as some highly conservative, religious, innocent and uptight academic who feels that the culture is deteriorating by Western influence, although it is, but to the statement at hand, I say it as a radical deviant libertine along the lines of Marquis De Sade. What, then is she to be afraid of? I would not pay two dime worth my mind to it and come to think of it, I haven’t. Those endless discourses and demands of freedom worthless as one poor little girl trembles at the tumultuous tension of the mentality of mob-mindedness. Twenty first century has taken more from the world than it can possibly give. We lush over bright concepts of success and ambition not looking at the dark reality their course has taken in our lives. We are like sterile paraplegics numb from the waist down racing our wheelchair for the end of the finish line where a beautiful girl stands. What next?-

His flight was thus booked and he took off with his sister the next day as his flight was booked the day after. He would spend the night before the flight and would be dropped to the airport by his sister’s fiancé. He left for Calcutta with her, first taking a bus to the Tarkeswar station and then from there taking the local train to Howrah. Now that he had a travel companion, things did not seem to him too alienated. Now he could connect, and her sister became the medium, a sort of intermediate for his inner self to the outside world. He always appreciated in the presence of such a socio-psychical interlocutor and always felt eased in the presence of one. They left for Calcutta early afternoon and reached there by half past five in the evening.

The air at the Howrah station was mild but the crowd made up for its sparseness. Rahil had to hold sister’s hand and her sister had to haul him through the crowd as held the handle of the luggage that followed him around like a leashed dog. That bag of luggage had a life of its own It became belligerent and unwilling when the crowd was tight and fondled sometimes his leg with its canvassed body as he jerked the bag towards him. The bag was bright red and it was mediocre in size. He had purposely chosen that bag for its travel-savvy lightness and its bright and attractive red color. It was not so much as a style statement as much as a motif of attention. The sudden summer zephyr blew over the two as they managed to walk out of the station and fashion their way out. Rahil thought of buying another book and this time when they stopped at a book stall, Rahil bought the ‘City of Joy’ by Dominique La Pierre.

He had heart about the book from somewhere he could not recall and the lingering thought left an impulse on him so deep as to finally egress out in the full intention of fulfilling itself and doing it. There could have been reasons for which Rahil could have rejected it, like some interruption on his way to the book stall by his sister or the price of the book. Or maybe some book even better could have come to his notice which would then make the idea of buying La Pierre’s work perish. But the odds were just at right for Rahil and for the owner for the book stall and for Mr. Dominique La Pierre and the out of the whole event was that now the owner was one book less and Rahil could now read about the Calcutta he had heard about, the Bohemian-rich Calcutta, the smiling-through-tears Calcutta, the crushed proletariat’s Calcutta and to put it simply in accordance with the sentiments and the psychology of the author, the White Christian’s Calcutta. It was still Calcutta when that book was written.

First they went to a mall’s food court to have snacks and a fifth of a dinner. Rahil ate noodles along with Manchurian and a dessert of a chocolate cake. It was a wholesome meal and Rahil was a bon vivant enough to appreciate it. Then they ordered a cold coffee for themselves just so they could wait a little while more for the sister’s boyfriend to come pick them up.

“Do you want to see a movie today?” his sister asked him.

“I wouldn’t mind.” He answered.

The plan was made when the sister, along with Rahil met with her boyfriend who came along with a group of his friends who were all much familiarized with each other. Her sister was well-disposed towards all of them and it took Rahil by surprise that his sister could be so forwardly. She did not mind being with them and what also impressed him that she did not mind her brother seeing her being with them. That was a powerful gesture on her part. Most would put it as bold and even unbecoming but then those would be an opinion of a brainwashed mind.

Rahil thought himself to be jaunting around with the musicians of Bremen, just like the old story. The way Rahil saw it, it was his only night out in a city where he would not turn to look back and so it was the time to make the most of it. The company then dismounted in front of the Roxy movie theatre in the Esplanade area. They entered the theatre into the brightly lit lobby area and saw the boards that proudly presented the movies ‘now showing’ and the movies that were to be shown. Rahil and the band already reached late, by around forty minutes past eight so the only show available was late night. It started at ten and ended at about twelve. Seeing as how there was a girl with them, the boys were reluctant to take that slot. Then one of them boldly spoke:

“What’s to fear when she’s with us, and besides the younger brother will be gone tomorrow, eh? The least we can do for him is to show him a good time.”

Everybody agreed overtime after that and by the time the late night movie was to screen, everyone was eager to see the movie. The movie starred a southern hero and a very bad actress. The thing that caught Rahil’s attention in that movie was the fact that it promised the viewers a glimpse into the Leftist politics prevalent in Jawaharlal Nehru University. This was perhaps the first movie that he thought at least touched a ground aspect.

-Bollywood movies finally get realist nowadays. But the incomplete look can be deceiving. It looks more to me sill like a love story than a story that would involve the viewers in the actuality of socio-political individuality in the campus. Bear the sight still and critique it…then. It is hard still to lose patience….hard still to keep from shouting slang at every unnecessary slow-motion scene and framing every dupe-shot just for the sake of the artificiality of cinema. I think Nicolas Ray started this. No, he did it for the right reasons. I mean movies on and about youth should be that grand. Still. Yes, the movie is starting….there is complete silence. The movie experience really beats the subjectivity of watching movies on laptop, but you can pause, stop, rewind and counter-compare the scene with some other scene in another tab on a different video player. Ah, I’m going too far. The cinematic beauty lies in the big screen. But to me it is the projector that is more charming than the screen. Screen is but a medium…not so much as a medium also, but an object on which the images are projected. The cinematic art lies in the projector. Oh, now I could go on. It further lies in the cellulite reel, or whatever they use nowadays. I’m positively sure they do not use discs. Still deeper, it is the metaphysical presence of the ‘soul’ of the actors in the reel that brings about appreciation of the art. The whole charade of the cinema is but a medium. The screen, the projector, the cellulite are all but a charade. Well, that’s nothing new but that should prove one thing still: that watching a movie on screen paying the actors and the producers and the directors through our movie tickets is futile when you can torrent-download pirated clear versions of the movie almost exactly the day when it is released. Of course, the actors and the cinema industry dies of hunger then. But isn’t that the case with the writers and the poets and the painters. Yes, it has historically been that way. So why must the actors be any different. They ought to live the art-life too. I would want to see them drink absinthe and take drugs not because they are frustrated with their affluent lives but by their poor lives for after all it is the poor that shoulders the world on which the rich stand and it is true for industry, military, politics and so why should art be any different. Ah, look at this movie! That is why there are no proper critics in Bollywood because anyone with even the tiniest bit of knowledge about films would be rather be caught dead than use his intelligence to comment on films so greasy and mundane. It is not even the proper kind of mundane like the Soviet propaganda or the American counterpart, what is known as Red-Scare propaganda films or the epic theatre; it is worse. It is like watching fireworks on a corpse’s chest and not in a good way either. Look at the schoolgirl love, so naïve. They could have done much more playing on the school setting much like the Japanese anime shows but they fill it with cheap boisterous laughs and the audience marvels at it. Oh, now the heroine is back from college and the local bloke is still in for her. Gosh damn, the psychoses of love is played upon as a joke in this movie. I can almost cry. And the songs…and the songs…so goddamn many of them. He does it again and again like a sick psychopath and he is the hero. She does not fall for her still, after all the physical, creepy sacrifices he had made for her and all the indications he had given that he loves her. In him I see a potential rapist, not someone who would go to Delhi and lead a Left-leaning political party. This is what Bollywood is about then. Giving free pass to boys and validating psychotic judgment in times of sexual-romantic infatuations. I think the protagonist needs a nudist painting hanging over his wall in his home, probably Spirit of the Dead Watching. Oh, the days of the JNU and the entry of the other ‘man’. She idolizes him for what he is but psychologically seeks in him a master. Well why wouldn’t she? He seems a roust activist sort of fellow that exist only in movies because the real activists have long hair, a skin so burned you can scrape of mascara from it and bodies always writhing in sweat. It reminds me of the Hollywood ‘Spartan’ and the real Spartan. It is the same thing here. I curse the punishment I laid upon myself when I convinced my mind this would be a good movie. I have betrayed my mind and so now it finds fault in every pothole-there are many- that the movie has left. No movie is perfect but this movie is perfectly horrible. Well, in that case it is a pretty good movie by the standards of Bollywood because they adhere to any average of three horrible movies a week. Hollywood also cannot be spared with its Schwarzenegger and its Stallone and its-granted Rocky was of some social substance. Actually, Rocky was a great movie of social realism and the psychological conditioning of the lead character although the characteristics of the play seem too manipulated to be enjoyed naturally. The movie has nice content but much f it is being force-fed to you. Nothing compared this movie though. All the social realism in this movie makes the back frame of the movie. Oh, they’ve even managed to parody a JNU discussion about crime and punishment. Okay, the ‘man’ is dead and thus there is a lack of a master for the young girl, and still lurks the local bloke with the psychopathic personality disorder. At least, they got one thing in the movie, people with personality disorders that disrupt judgment move faster up in politics and among the goodwill of people than those with normal behavior. Yes, the lack of master has made her embittered towards the dialectical slave that the local boy has succumbed to become in his association with her and the sorrow that she has for the loss of this ‘master’ is directly converted into spite for this slave. This also has to do with the guilty conscience of the local bloke who somehow feels himself responsible for the death of the girl’s boyfriend and hence imposes on himself her domination which otherwise would not have been just for her pretty looks. If that had been the case, then he would very well have been a sexual deviant, a masochist. The bloke has risen up faster than what is expected from him and so the girl is filled with jealousy for him. This could be dangerous. It eventually leads to a plot to kill the bloke, the one who submits to her as lover but is actually her slave. It is only after his death that she will realize it was he that truly loved her whereas in actual mental reality, she would feel satisfied that he has died for her and his death, for which she now sheds loving tear will transform her into a reverent femme fatale, or it can break all her master-slave complexes and drive her insane, which judging by the kind of pretentious fool she is, seems highly unlikely. The denouncement would perhaps be… two dead birds in a bush make for one lousy feminist. And oh, the songs! Why the songs? Are we trying to make up for the music industry that we don’t possess at all? –

After the movie it grew dark as they came out of the movie theatre. Light from the open door of the movie theatre and the street lights nearby broke the moonless darkness of the night. The streets were empty and the cabs were static, in them the drivers sleeping after a hard day’s work of bickering of prices with those stingy Bengalis. They stood out trying to find a way to get back.

“Okay, I’ll part now. I see my bus coming. Take care now.” The sister told and wandered off to a bus stop a little ahead. On the way she stopped and added “Oh Rahil, you wouldn’t mind staying with them alone would you?” she asked and not waiting for an answer turned his head in the other direction and gathered pace as she walked to the bus stop. She stopped at the bus stop almost at the same time as the bus did and when the door opened, she got in first followed by other creatures of the night and the bus without the door roared out of sight into the gully of roads that was the circulatory system of Calcutta and he just stood looking not even beginning to contemplate what lay ahead of him.

Judging by the baffled look on his face, they all walked over to him to comfort him. He did not have a problem spending the night with them as they seemed to him affectionate guys who could hold their own. One of them came over to Rahil and introduced each of them. There was Aslam, Raheem, Karim, Salman, Faraz and Nazim. He already knew Zaid as his sister’s fiancé.

“Trust me, it’s all right. I hope you’re not scared” Zaid enquired.

“No, it’s alright.” He answered. He would not be scared. Fear was something he realized he did not feel anymore. Sure, he thought there was discomfort over sharing personal space with strangers and he felt amiss at the current turn of events but he did not feel even the slightest bit of fear for himself or for the night that he was to spend with them. On the contrary, fear forayed itself as anticipation for the next day as he had to get up early tomorrow and take the flight back to Port Blair. They took a cab which was very hesitant of taking the boys to the area that the boys had mentioned but it was ironically the intimidating propositions of the boys that then convinced the cab driver to ferry them.

They got off in a shady place with highly constricted brick structures almost sticking to each other serving as housing. Everything was dark and it was not because of the night. The place seemed to Rahil darker than the dark of the night itself. Rahil looked up and saw those red brick structures towering over him and they felt so archaic that Rahil though they would drop on him any moment. There was also a foul scent and wisps of heavy brown dust traveling through the air almost naturally, as if it was a component of that habitat. He felt a little repulsed by it but he had to accept it as a reality of life sooner or later and in his case it was quite sooner. There were no malls here and there were no people dressed for malls. There were only muddy broke roads and open pipelines. There were only men sleeping on their front porch on their scrimpy beds made out of wood and rope due to the summer that heated their homes. There was no essence of humanity; there was just humanity.

Rahil walked those roads and walked quite winsomely as if he saw none of what he was seeing. Anyone who had not lived that way and was seeing it for the first time would be either alarmed or moved by the way one saw life but he had no such pathos for what he saw. At first he thought that he saw the world around him as an apparition and that was the reason for his disregard for what he saw but as he walked towards the destination with the other boys stirring gaily, that thought of his started to tear away like wrapping paper in the hands of a child desperate to discover what the paper is enveloping. To that child, the beauty of the paper is nothing and he wishes to see truth nakedly and it is only that few moments that bring him joy in seeking the truth. Once he finds the contents inside, a part of him loses interest and gradually all of his self gets bored from the item. It was revealed to Rahil that the world around him was not an apparition but built on a harsh and cruel reality that can neither be shrouded nor uprooted yet there was a catch and it was the Rahil was an apparition himself. He was an apparition because he could choose to be. He could and did choose to move away from the reality, first inside his mind and then completely physically too. This could be a bad practice and it could turn him into a megalomaniac if he was not already one but at least it kept him stable in a world where nothing was actually stable, in a world where contradictions reigned supreme and where if on one hand there were sources or insuperable bliss there were also purges of instances of stark and unbearable sorrows.

They stopped in front of one such brick building and one by one began to enter it. As Rahil entered, he saw stairs and two doors on the lower levels and seeing others ascend the stairs, he went up too. He was then directed into the first room which was lit yet Rahil could not see anything. Had he gone blind, he thought to himself. Then, the thought came that there was nothing to see. The room was completely empty. Only at the corner by the wall there was a big black sofa and on the side of the sofa there were some implements; he could not make out what they were from where he was standing. There was nowhere to sit in this room, nowhere to lie down but the floor which looked as muddy as the road that led to it.

“Come to the next room” Faraz said.

At the right end of the first room was the door to the second room which was already open. He went in the second room after removing the sandals from his feet and took in the sight of the room. The room also served the purpose of an office and there was a big office table that took half the space of the room. The office table was novel; it was shiny and had a very exquisite wooden finish. On the table there was a desktop and a lot of items and opposite to the table was a very comfortable easy-chair that seemed more of a recliner for its big size. It was just like a manager’s chair in a corporate office. The room was also painted very nicely; one of the walls was painted with texture.

“Go ahead. You can browse internet on the computer if you want to.” Zaid said to him and since he was not feeling sleepy, he agreed to it eagerly and took his place on the easy chair while the others stretched covers over the floors and prepared to sleep.

-So now I have now the experience of living in a bachelor commune too. Seven guys in one small office in a flaring summer night and the only source of wind is a standing fan. I’m sleeping the closest to it. They will be courteous enough to grant me that. Why is it that things like these have to happen on such important times in my travel? I have to be at airport tomorrow and I can’t miss my flight. Sure, he says he’ll drop me off but what about my sleep. What if I can’t wake up on time? How am I supposed to get ready and all? Oh my, look at the size f the toilet, better use it and see. So small…I can fell both walls on my thigh as I move them about. This is depressing. A toilet should be so big as to create a certain air space. I can’t begin to even imagine five persons using this toilet. They can literally call it ‘the can’….I know I would. These are gentle folks, bringing me in and all that. Other people would say they are ‘big of heart’ but I refrain from using such phrases…. Maybe it is my love of the language or maybe it is my reluctance to accept the fact that people can be fundamentally good or bad-to me it’s situational….strictly depends upon circumstances….Anti-Semitism was fundamentally good until the Jews controlled the Hollywood…then it was not so good anymore and out of that guilt became the creation of Israel and Holocaust before that was rightful. Heidegger justified Nazism. No, that is still disputable. I would be charged with libel just for thinking that, I probably would. How can I not be able to adjust? Am I a Marxist or not? Even after the theoretical romancing how can I still not be able to apply myself in the Marxist setup of altruism when I know it is more real. There is some big design here that I am not able to see yet feel. It is economical-

He went to sleep late and was not able to sleep for a long time, partly due to the heat and partly due to the maladjustment that he still felt with the other boys. So he woke up late night and changed into his shorts which made him more comfortable and prone to sleep. By that time, his eyes were getting heavy and he was feeling sleepy.

He woke up with the alarm at the third time that it rang and as he revived himself with caution as to whether too much time has passed, he saw that he woke up only five to ten minutes later than his intended time. He got up and washed himself yet he was feeling so vertiginous that he decided he would make the travel in his shorts. It was not so much a decision as a spur of the moment impetus. He did not think to change into his pants since he was already wearing an amiably presentable t-shirt. Then he aroused Zaid who was to drop him to the airport and he asked him the time.

“Six thirty” Rahil replied.

“The flight is seven thirty, right?” Zaid asked, his head turned the opposite side and his eyes closed.

“Uh-huh” Rahil replied again.

He saw him stir a little and could hear him take a deep breath as he readied himself to break his sleep and got on his feet with suspiration. He was bare-chested and had on his blue denim jeans which were too indestructible to be rumpled by sleep. He entered the bathroom and Rahil patently waited. He sat on the big easy-chair and tried to get a little extra slumber while Zaid took time inside the bathroom but he was quicker than he had expected him to be and a thin fair figure with medium brown hair emerged out of the bathroom minutes after it had gone in.

“We have to take your ticket’s printout too” he said. There was just one hour to get to the airport and Rahil had to take a print of the ticket and the worst part of it was that it was six thirty in the morning.

They set out in their enterprise soon after Zaid had dressed up and mounted on a motorcycle with Rahil’s bright red travel bag between them. The roads were unusually empty for a metropolis but it could be ascribed to the time and the fact that it was a Saturday. The shops were also closed and so on their way to the airport they were hopelessly looking for an internet café from where they could procure a printout of the ticket. On their way finally they saw a ticketing shop open and asked them as a favor if they could make a printout of the ticket which Rahil had already confirmed. At first, the shop owner blatantly refused to grant any such favors but on further inquisitions he let them have a printout on good gesture. The mounting tension on Rahil’s mind and face was much released now that the only thing left was to get to airport and board the flight. They reached the airport and Rahil was flabbergasted as they travelled more and more close to the departure gate of Dum Dum international airport. The sight was so mesmerizing that it was almost for Rahil after seeing the entrails of Calcutta. There was a big grass land before under the elevated structure of the airport that was supposed to add to the infrastructural beauty of the airport and its holistic sense. Rahil was so crossed by the sight that his mind did not even care to register a comment on such atrocity. The beauty still overpowered him with its sadism. He dismounted from the bike at the mouth of the gate and Zaid helped the bag down impressing Rahil a lot with his chivalry. For his courtesy and since he was told by his elders, Rahil tried to hand the boy a note of five hundred rupees for services which he vehemently declined and since Rahil did not wield the power of direct insistence the matter was dropped there. The two young men embraced each other under the rising sun and Rahil knew he was embracing Calcutta for the last time.

-It does not matter anymore. Kolkata once again, to the many people walking out of that arrival gate on the other side but it does not matter far as my concern goes, it could be called Pakistan, and it would still be out of my concern for what’s in a name, but then the government censorship would run amuck and book me on sedition charges not realizing that everything is one and nothing can be divided, by borders, by military, by brainwashing nationalist sentiments because when all that is stripped the only truth remains. Hate begets hate…Dark days do die daintily while good things drown with grotesque ugliness. As the flights above my head roar, come about from countries unknown, I stand and wonder what is it that divides us into countries and what is it that makes countries good or bad and the answer comes but one….a bunch of people and this bunch is not big as the population of entire nation, no. It is just a handful of men building hundreds of nation…out of their malice for their own perverted ends. The olive branch around the world has turned it acrid. Let the dove peck it between its beaks and fly away. The world will be a much better place then. Countries, states, territories, everybody in them are terrorists. We pioneer terror in a different manner. We pledge allegiances and salute to flags. Our terror is in our masses. Our terror is in our minds. We do not even realize when we shoot a rifle or bomb a restaurant. We are not even aware or conscious when we send a threat to a school full of innocent children or an international embassy. These planes are the only things that are not suspicious. Keeping the dream of a powerful world makes us terrorists. But does losing that dream make us losers? It sure makes them losers. And so it must be that to us too. When we cry, our tears are acidic and bombs can be made out of them. When we laugh, we emit high pitched noises that can be used to locate targets. We are the victims of our won body and we are the suspects of our own mind. We fight over the land while the planes travel peacefully over the air. We dream of a world where our kids would not have to see the face of war yet we teach them national anthems by-heart and teach them the value of borders-

Rahil got in through the tough fascist airline security that simply needed a reason to feel the curve of a man’s buttocks and the warmth between his thighs to feel secure. There was a little time to spend before the flight started boarding and so he treating himself to some breakfast since he did not have one before he started out.

He sat on a chair and saw some people act the way they acted and observed them. One silver haired middle-aged man English mannerisms and aristocratic features caught the majority of his interest. He saw him talk with another old man of the same category as he ate his R’s and deepened his O’s spaced out words like an essayist reading his work. He was sitting elegantly with both his legs lavishly parallel to each other. Then he saw himself in his dark purple t-shirt and his stripped shorts with his thin hairy legs growing out of the darkness that was unseen and his lax sandals hugging his arches and coaxing his soles, his mind looking for eyes that was seizing him the same way he was inquisitively seizing the old man. It was hard to not take notice of him. It was as if he made desperate yelps from the bottom of some well of anonymity for a little consideration or some form of notice, if not understanding. The old man suddenly increased the pitch of his voice as he talked to another person sitting beside him dressed in a cheap suit but a suit nonetheless and holding a folded newspaper in his right hand. He turned to look at the top of the gate which was boarding for the flight to Port Blair and seeing that, he rose from his seat leaving his observations in an absurd conclusion not knowing what the conclusion although he was averred that there was a conclusion.

He had no hand baggage with him, just the book about Calcutta he had bought. He proceeded to the gate. As soon as he got into the aircraft, he felt déjà vu and the apparition of something he had seen before or the feeling that he had lived this moment before. Of course, it was not due to the fact that he was traveling via flight again but of a more recondite matter. This held for repetition in philosophically semiotic way, in which there was a meaning to be derived from. The thought did not permeate itself in Rahil as he was still befuddled by the sudden déjà vu.

He took his seat beside someone he did not even consider looking. He was still get adjusted to the mild light inside the craft and the narrow aisle space which was occupied by people looking for their seats. He had the aisle seat and so he could get perfect view of how human organization took form from chaos. It was a behavioral discovery for him to see that people of different age, ethnicity, physical attributes and gender all acted in the same acted the same way in the same manner as was expected of them irrespective of the sheer randomness that they corroborated to form. Seeing the plane get occupied, Rahil thought to himself there was no hope for planet Earth and its inhabitants. He did not mean it in an environmental way.

“Please keep your seats upright and your window flaps open until the seat belt sign is flashing” the voice radioed over the plane as the short skirted and stocking clad airhostess kept physically instructing on how to fasten seat belt and use the life jacket. Her face seemed to be made of wax, Rahil thought at the physiognomy that glowed with all its fairness from the distance.

That slender ref and white figure of patriarchal beauty was a sight ogled by many eyes. In them the men saw their mothers in a subconscious sexual power. Rahil leaned back on his listening to some music

*-And still I see no changes*

*Can’t a brother get a little peace?*

*There’s war on the streets and there’s was in the Middle East*

*Instead a war on property*

*They got a way on the drunks so the police can bother me-*

He was seen using a mobile phone and was asked to switch it off to which he complied. He opened his book and started reading from where he had left last, pulling the stiff book mark and placing it between the last page and cover. His stomach felt a little fishy as the plane took off due to the sudden change in altitude.

-no conclusion….it is right….something. Must have gone wrong-to think that all this travel was for anything-scientifically, a work is done when force is applied with respect to a direction and when there is a displacement, a change in the initial and final position but here I see none. I go back where I have started from and there is just nothing I can take back except with what I had come. Many-a-times people are overcome with the doubt whether will finish the work that they set out to do. I see a road and as I walk on it, it bends changing its plane and loops its way making me a hamster in a wheel. The sight keeps changing. Sun is replaced by the moon. I have lost my touch from the world but how can it be when the world dwells in me. Am I going crazy? I am a man with a complex mind in need of something or someone to share its complexity with. Everyone is like that in their own way. I am just complex because I have lost the complexity of life which seems oxymoronic and also a little frightening thinking what others might think of me but in my thinking of other peoples’ thinking about my thinking, there is certainly no generalization to make which means that differently thinking people think things differently but then there is mob-minded thinking and everybody do think that way and I cannot even begin to think what they must think about me. I suppose nothing can be said about it. I am only a pawn, but the problem is not that I am a pawn; the problem is that I am. To not be is the perfect state of being because to be and do things as if not being is the biggest error a man can bring down upon himself. It is vulgar to think of oneself in higher order not because we take the place of God but we bring upon ourselves the scrutiny of the people that think we take the place of a God. As long as there is complete atheism, one must never begin to put oneself in that position but then how will there come about a state of total atheism if that position remains unquestioned. That is the very catch that is after my life. That is the very catch Nietzsche failed to understand. How is one supposed to be a superman if no one redresses the superman’s being-there? And the person himself cannot ascertain himself to be the superman much along the same lines as one cannot psychoanalyze himself. So therein lays the psycho-philosophical problem about dreams and realizations, about achievement and compromise. No, there is much more, I suppose, to it but that is just looking at it holistically. It does not serve any purpose but becomes the cause of delusions. A shallow mind can never quite comprehend the whole idea of existence, the ‘truth of life’ or the ‘question of our existence’ and so deems materialistic purposes to it facilitated by the economic impositions and constraints that realizes and mandates the material goals and it is this economic base that then creates a social order, but then I know it all too well. I keep on coming back to that. The question of life is answered but the question of *my* life remains a mystery-

Suddenly, Rahil heard a loud clacking sound and the seat in front of him came crashing down on to his lap crushing under it the book that he was reading and now only trying to read. At first, he thought there was something wrong with the chair, that it had broken and his hand almost pressed the button to call for the airhostess. Then he realized that it was the standard level of inclination that the seat could make in order for their passengers to lean comfortably. One man’s comfort meant another man’s strain. He looked at the thick blob of inconsiderate mass that sat ahead of him on the first seat. A boy, not a man, in his twenties with ragged jeans and buzz cut with headphones covering his ears. He did not even care to register his problem on account of coming off as rude as he thought that one man’s rudeness should reciprocate with other man’s temperance. It was not Christly to think of people that way but more revolutionary. It was Che who said that a revolutionary is to be guided by great feelings of live. It was Che Guevara, he recalled at the risk of sounding ridiculous. A true revolutionary should be guided by an authentic feeling of love for humanity and justice and a true revolutionary is inconceivable without that love. Rahil was going through a strong internal revolution and hence only part of him showed love and calmness for the person sitting in front of him. Inside, another nature in him, some other form of natural instinct-perhaps it was vengeance or anguish- burned constantly in him like sodium kept in open space. He concentrated on his book but he was keener on finding the root of his pain. It was not as general as a feeling of discomfort caused by invasion of a comfortable space, because when we travel with the ones familiar to us, we do not care about such spaces and only in presence of unknown identities do we guard ourselves with feelings. Rahil was over now or if not completely, desperately wanted to be over it- an overman. If he could not get over such a basic feeling of pique, then how would he commit himself to higher causes of humanity he thought himself to be the channel of and conditioned himself in such a way as to be the perfect channel? So far he had achieved nothing out what he had trained himself to be. The ideals rang in his head with firm sonority as the scores of bells in temples sounding in their own disharmony. He saw through what he did not believe but could not even raise his eyes to see what he believed. Such was his compassion with his cause although there was no cause established. There were just ideals. It came to a point where the ideals became voices in his head and dictated his life, his choices his nature of association and dissociation with things.

In other people, even though that would be a highly reductionist view, these voices are general and not individual. Nobody can pick out these voices for the very reason that they are imbued in our personality, not individual but collective consciousness and so it is not wrong for them to do what the voice inside them tells because they are right in majority. In most cases, they are not even aware that there is a voice deep inside them guiding them to their effects. Rahil had recognized this voice and not only did he recognize it, he also manipulated it although he did not do it directly and much of it was a case of serendipity- like a young boy sitting on the driver’s seat unknowingly pushing buttons and changing gears and suddenly the car starts; he has no control over it and had no knowledge of how to start it-and still Rahil had no control over it and could only use the steps he took to learn to the conclusion he had come to. All this was still inconclusive to the life that he was living. He still could not convince anyone, even himself, that he was involved in worthwhile cerebration. He had still not achieved a position of permanence and the personifications of ideals that were expected of him by others. But how could he be that when he had his own ideals to follow? To that fact, he maintained that he would be a constant disappointment to people who imposed their own ideals on him or people who saw in him something that he just did not hold.

The plane landed with a faint screeching noise and it felt as post-orgasmic arrested moans could be hard. Rahil was sure there was a safe landing, although he did not mind an unsafe one into the many acres of uninhabited forests that still constitutes much of Andaman. He figured that death, like life is just a state of consciousness but it is hard, almost impossible to prove that death is also a state of consciousness because there is no practical explanation for it but here is a practical explanation about the presence of consciousness even in sleep. But the inactivity of brain after death cannot be compared to the active subconscious of mind during sleep. For Rahil, the fact that there was death meant that it had an effect too not seeing death as the ultimate effect that it is. He saw it as life.

“Why is he leaving you?” Rahil asked, over the phone.

“He thinks I was being promiscuous. Actually, we college friends went on a trip and he thinks something happened in the trip, that I had been unfaithful to him.” She replied in deep sobs.

“Did something actually happen?”

“No” she let out another sloppy sob.

“Then the truth will reveal itself out. Don’t you worry and just give it a little time. Listen, I got to be oing as there’s something really important so I can’t really talk to you right now.”

He hung up the phone and went inside the auditorium looking for his teammates.

“Where were you? The tabs are already announced and we’re up against KMC.” Rahul explained to Rahil. KMC was the same team that defeated them in one of them matches in the first round. People say lightning never strikes the same place twice and that history always repeats itself; if history were like lightning, Rahil and his team would have came out of the room with flying colors after the match but they came out with doleful disappointment instead.

Rahul had an expression on his face like he had lost everything. He tried to console him but it was in vain. The girl was not that affected by the judgment as the three of them knew they lost rightly. Rahil was not quite himself in the debate. They went as government in a principle based debate and didn’t even state the principle in their argument. It was Rahil’s fault mostly as he was the first speaker to take the floor and it was upon him to lay down the structure. However, the margin of victory for the other team was close meaning that it was not a lost battle.

“Where are going to go? Are you staying here or taking the metro?” Rahil asked Rahul.

“I’m going to a friend nearby. You go back alone.” He replied, lifelessly.

He took the metro and then the bus back to his PG and rested his head which was throbbing from sleeplessness. He slept at four in the evening and only woke up the next day. There was no college to go to. The college had declared study leave. Still, Rahil went there and sat in the canteen drinking tea and having a cheap lunch till fivr in the evening at which time he received a call from Sanjeev, an AISA activist.

“Hello Rahil, we were supposed to go to Jamia, right?”

“Yeah”

“Come and meet me at Satya Niketan bus stop and we’ll leave from there.”

Rahil was dying for some poltical action for a change of pace. It felt like the old days of embroiled actitivies were back. The only problem was that he had no idea who Sanjeev was or wha he looked like. He got to the bus station and gave the man a call. The man who picked up the call was right in front of him.

“You’re Sanjeev, aren’ you?”

“Yes, let’s go”

They took the bus but both of them could not manage to get any seats. On asking, he found out that the journey was long. Rahil then asked him what event was going to take place the next day. Sanjeev explained that just a year ago two engineering students studying in Aligarh who came to Delhi and were living in Batla House were encountered by the police on suspicions of having ties with a fundamentalist organization. These were innocent engineering students and it was a very obvious case of ethnic profiling. He went on to explain that the out of the two students, it was later found out in the autopsy that the bullet went through the upper temporal part of the skull and exited through the lower cheek bone clearly showing an execution type deal. It meant that the students had surrendered themselves to police investigation and they were entitled to habeas corpus and it was not only wrong but unlawful for the police to have shot them without a show cause. But the court ruled against the students in that they did not even pass a verdict of investigation into the encounters or the suspension of the officers in charge. The Jamia Milliah cadre of AISA took upon themselves to spread awareness about this issue so that justice can be administered fairly by organizing an event, a march through the streets of Okhla where the students were killed and then say a few words about the incident.

“Why don’t they raise this issue in their own college as well?” asked Rahil.

Sanjeev again explained the history of politics and the meta-political nature of the institution. Jamia Milliah is one of the most prestigious universities in India but it is also a minority institution. Unlike St. Stephens’ which gets grants from Europe, Jamia is a state regulated central university and hence is under government administration. There used to be a students’ union in Jamia but it was banned only a few years ago by the vice chancellor of the university. To take away the proletariat political power from an institution where the students are the working class ensures the complete hegemony of the administration which was the ultimate aim of the Vice Chancellor and his cronies in the political arena. Taking away the representative power of the minority institution, especially when the minority is a Hindu minority, a communal hegemony was ensured in the larger frame of politics because student poltics, especially in Delhi made the ground basis for the larger politics. Hence, pressure was put on Jamia administration to ensure not only that there was to be no form of student representation in the power structure of the institution but also that students were subjected to a regime that intensified the control of the administration on the individual bodies of the students. This was done by various methods, which included, architectural, that include putting barbed wire fences, non- clustered departments, high walls, high metallic motor cotrolled gates, surveillance measures such as cameras at every block ensuring complete electronic visibility, guard at every block of the campus, economical which included a fee hike of two hundred percent, a massive cutdown in the number of scholarship for postgraduate students, high canteen rates and disciplinary such as checking of student identity cards at the gates, not allowing grouping of students at any place inside the campus, not allowing any cultural event organization by students and strict disciplinary action, ranging from letter to the parents, a bad record certificate, blacklisting to expulsion of any student who breaks any rule of the university no matter how banal or disturbs the discipline of the institution wih his acts. Moreover, a student had no right to defend himself against any allegation made by any administration personnel. For these exemplary measures taken by the vice-chancellor to break down the spirit of the students completely, the erstwhile vice chancellor under whom these horrid reforms were made was appointed the Lieutenant Governor of the state of Delhi.

All this made Rahil desperate to want to meet the Jamia cadre of AISA. These were the real militants, hiding in the jungles, planning and ambuscading from the outside, working the local people. No student organization that Rahil knew, neither the JNU nor the DU unit undertook the task. The bus dropped them off at central Okhla and from there they walked inside the congested lanes. From there they went to the university campus, of Jamia Milliah University. Sanjeev received a call from, Sarfaraz, one of the AISA activists from Jamia who told him to come to the ground inside the campus. There was Amit already inside the campus with three other people from Jamia. There he met Rizwan and Sarfaraz, the two senior activists of the Jamia adre. They started talking among themselves, and Rahil wasted no time in joining in their conversation with his theorrtical expertise. From their mouths came, sweet theories caramelized with practicaliy and implicity. From their words, his soul was taken never to b returned. From their actions, a fire lit in his heart never to be extinguished. Hidden in the deep bushes of the urban jungle, Rahil met the truest revolutionaries. Whatever frustration he had in life, they had too. Their liberty was curbed, they lived in square inches for homes, they ate irregularly when the money ran out which was always, they had an avid interest in Urdu poetry and other forms of art as well. He was taken and never to be given back. The politics was sidelined for a moment. But Sanjeev put it back on table.

“Okay, we have to campaign in the locality. Let’s split up into groups. One group will come with me in the car and handling the panphlets to be given out from the left side of the locality and the other group will be on foot traveling through the gullies and handing out pamphlets. The group on foot will make sure theycover the people on the streets as well as the shopkeepers. Rahil obviously chose the streets because he wanted to be with the poets of the street. He was nothing compared to them. He marched alongside Sarfaraz and anoher boy who just joined; Amir was his name. He was a very compassionate comrade, like young Hemingway would have been enlisted as an ambulance driver. The locality took him too. The traffic was there but it was not infuriating as it had been in Satya Niketan. The streets were congested, they were unclean but the hearts of the people were pure. It was not like Satya Niketan where every eye looked at you with a thieving intent.

It was very much like Old Delhi, the hustle bustle, the psan shops, the choked streets, never straiht and always trisecting, multisecting into much smaller gullies and children played gully crickets dressed in kurta and skull caps, their undersides of their blackened by mascara.

One by one, they covered streets and distributed the pamphlets in every shop and to every passing pedestrian. Some did not pay any attention but those that did pay attention were moved and roused by this unjustifiable act of the police. Jamia had a tradition of sparse policing inside the area and there were no police outposts there. Still the only case of violence that became news was a violence perpetrated by the police. But the physical condition of Rahil worsened. His stomach felt like it had stones it it and it was paining badly.

“No, don’t stop on my account. We’ll continue the campaign till the tea stall where comrade Sanjeev said he would meet us. There I’ll have a cup of tea and something to eat and it will be alriht then.”

They continued and Rahil pulled himself up together. They finished the campaign and reached the tea stall where Amir took him to a haleem biryani stall and paid for his meal. Rahil was broke by this time. To have such a great time ruined of ill health was unsound for him. Great moments of closeness such as these were so few for the demented Rahil. Sanjeev asked him to stay with him so that he could be on time for the program tomorrow but Rahil asked leave for his ill heal and his studies even thouh he would have liked nothing more than spending time with these gentle philosopher Maoists. Sanjeev gave him lift till an aut rickshaw and paid the fare for the rickhshaw when he found out that he was out of cash. He reached the PG, pulled the covers over his head and only woke up the day. And even then the pain was not gone. Rahil felt so ill that it was impossible for him to attend the event. He remained in this state for two days and it took some costly allopathic medicines to treat his stomach ache.

In the days that followed, to surpass the stomach ache was easy but to get over the ache of missing the reunion with the Jamia cadre was impossible. He was filled with remorse that modeled into anger under the fire of passionate recourse to the well-lit memories of that night in Okhla. He would do something political. He would do it soon.

The letter was the point of ultimate condensation; the letter was the point of realization. There was no plot all throughout, but if there was, it came to a point of fruition. The next morning Rahil, impatiently walked out of the PG and towards the college. On the way to the college, he purchased a white envelope in which he folded and kept the letter, sealed the mouth with clue and addressed it to the principal, writing ‘confidential’ on the top. Of course it had to be confidential and it had to be only opened by the principal or it would never reach her; the letter would be filtered out of the system if the contents of the letter are seen by eyes of the lowers.

He went inside the college and waited in the office of the personal assistant to principal to hand the letter over. The clerk took the letter from his hand and signaled him to lead.

“I will want a reply on that”

“What is it?” the clerk asked, almost opening the envelope.

“It is only to be opened by the principal. It is a very critical letter of complaint.”

“Okay, she has a whole lot of paper to go through so you’re going to have to wait.”

“When can I have her reply?” Check with me in the evening before the college closes?”

“When would that be, sir?”

“Before five”

“Okay, sir.”

Rahil was in a state of complete isolation and his eyes looked at just one unitary purpose. Something in him had completely changed. He waited with nothing to do, in the canteen rinking one cup of tea after another, not for the moment thinking about lunch, or the studies to do for the exams. He sat there with a book in front of his face, his eyes raptly reading to words on the pages, and when done, the thumb and the index finger of the left hand turned the page while his left thumb, he placed at the base of the ridge of the book, his eyes still fixed in their places.

By three in the evening, he went again into the office and asked the clerk if his letter had reached the principal. The look on the face of the clerk changed when he saw him for the second time. His face turned red with irritation because he knew what Rahil was going to ask. Still, he said nothing and kept his silence.

“Has the principal seen the letter?”

“No, she has not. Boy, do you think that that the only job the principal has in the world is to read you letter.”

“No, but my letter must have some concern to her as I am one of the many from whose fees she fills her stomach.”

“What dare have you? Get out of the office, you louse!”

“How dare you call me a louse? I will see the principal one way or another.”

“Well, she’s too busy for you.”

“I’m going to wait right here.”

“Can’t you see the principal’s office is locked? And it’s the office’s closing time now.”

“So when do I come back?”

“Tomorrow”

He went back to his PG where he found out that they were invited to a party at Jagat’sflat upstairs on account of his birthday. The party started at about nine with the oening of a lot of liquor bottles, binge drining, a little bit of snacks with alcohol and loud rave and rascal music. Rahil was reluctant to drink alcohol; he had too much on his mind to let it all loosen up but they forced for just one glass with a little alcohol in it mixed with soft drinks. They were so obstinate that Rahil had to oblige them. He drank it slowly cusping his lips and sipping from that puckered orifice.

The drink burned through his neck even at such small sips, an indication that the alcohol was not mixed with the soft drink in proper proportions and that the alcohol was much higher than he had anticipated. He only drank half his glass and then looked at the spectacle of festivity. People were wildly dancing around and there was a total loss of order and institution. Beer bottles were violently shaken up and their caps opened to let out an orgasm of flowing beer that drenched all of them in mild beer alcohol. Their skins would have twinged had it been rum instead of beer that touched their skins. Rahil and his friends stayed watching the action from the periphery and all of them collectively agreed without speaking a word that it better to keep away from indulging in this excess.

After watching the pratfall of drunken bachelors a little while longer, Rahil decided to get back to his accommodation along with his friends. As Rahil was about to leave, he saw someone in the middle of a circle dancing, spinning like a top whom he recognized. He broke the circle of chanting men, and from between the waves of loud music he saw a blinded. He saw Samir on the verge of passing out and dancing to the song asking for more liquor. He was spinning like a top in a grotesque and hideous fashion, his fat body with absolute loss of grace, his hands flapping around him like the last moevements of a goose caught in quicksand. The vision of the blind boy dancing with senseless stupidity brought on by extreme intoxication was like a nightmare for him. Rahil felt incensed by this act of Jagat’s though he did not let it show. He went over to Jagat and asked if he could take Samir with him seeing as how delirious he had become. He told him to wait for few minues. The only thing that kept Rahil from knockin Jagat with a blow and taking Samir away with him that very instant was seniority. Jagat again served Samir with liquor and then stopped telling him it was his final doze. At this, Samir got violent and began to flap around madly. Jagat finally let Samir go with Rahil who needed help to get Samir downstairs and tucked in a bed as he was barely conscious. So Jagat asked his friend to help Rahil drop Samir downstairs and hen come right back. Samir was taken downstairs and into the accommodation where he was properly put to sleep.Seeing that he was put to bed properly, Rahil heaved a sigh of relief but he still could not that nightmarish vision out of his mind. He then went to his own room to lie for a while and then fell to sleep.

-What is that sound, in the dead of the night? Look out, tend to it. The lights are out. Bright darkness, can’t see naything. Better switch thelights on…look for he switch by the sight of my fingers, touch. There, and on the sevent minute, my index finer proclaimed, let there be light. Oh no! Samir, he’s all out of bed, he’s soiled himself completely and spewed vomit over his body and the bed. O poor soul, taken by drinking to the halls of opprobrium. Help, help, no doors open. Quick, tend to him, he’s falling. Grab the hind of his jeans and kick the door. Jerry, you two-faced supercilious little shit! Come out at once, one kick! Two kick! I laugh I cry I bell! Come out you hideous little deserters, a man is in need of you, your help. Turn your back to it and humanity will turn its back to you. Oh finally, you were sleeping you say, sleeping ehen I was making just about enough noise to rouse the whole neighbourhood, you were sleping you say? Humbug. Open the toilet door so I can help him relieve himself over the toilet. Somebody ought to get him unzipped and his penis out. No volunteers. God, me. There you go, easy does it now. Oh, now you want to chuck out the alcohol. Should have thought that before drinking so much, old chap….what remains now is to get him back to sleep…why does alcohol get people violent? I have ever, in my life experienced such transformation. Oh, whether to laugh or to cry at this tragicomedy. Maybe I’ll laugh when I have only grey hair and one tooth left. For now, hold him still the antidote of sleep should soon recompense for the venomous spirit. Sleep now, and tomorrow you shall be free-

The next morning he did not go to college but stayed with Samir. He stepped outside the accommodation only once to go to the electric repair shop to ask the shopkeeper to fix the heating rod all of them used to heat their water to take a warm bath in the afternoons of the cold winter. As the city kept descending into winter, the sun shied away and daylight became sparse and dim. This had a very negative impact on Rahil as he was not used to such dismal climates. He came from the tropical beaches of Andaman and Nicobar where the sun always shone generously. He did not go to the principal’s office to ask for his letter again. In fact, he completely forgot about the letter even though earlier it had been its sole occupation. In the winter cold, wearing his worn out denim jacket and a pair of thick pajamas, he waited in front of the electrical shop staring at the blackened sky and standing under whatever scanty rays that darted from the celestial distances and hit the Earth, when a phone call from Jagat asked him when he would come back to his accommodation to pick up Samir and drop him to the college hostel. Rahil replied that he was busy running some errands for the boys and will be back later and he would then take Samir with him at which Jagat cut off. Rahil came back to the accommodation and found Samir gone and the whole place dabbed with the smell of piss and alcoholic vomit.

At around eight in the evening, Rahil Rahil went along with Jerry and his other flatmates to eat dinner at a small shack made for metro line contruction workers and students with thin allowance. The food was fulfilling; it had to do little with the tantalizing of the senses. After their supper, they went back to the PG where they went into Jerry’s room and started talking. The conversation went on for hours and their lips labored away, their bodies wrapped together in a long thinck blanket. Laughs were shared and sentiments reciprocated. They were soon to part after the exams which were less than a month later and they shared their nervousness towards, especially Jerry as he did not know even the most basic syntaxes of the English language. The mood was mild and sombre as uneventful nights often are. The bright field of light glazed again the pure white walls and created an image straight out of the movies of Stanley Kubrick. They joked about the winter and how cold it would grew in January when the next semester started when suddenly Rahil felt hiccups accompanied by sharp jolting convulsion on his left part. He felt his lips stretching back to his ears painfully and his left hand stiffen and turn to stone. He was immobilized, unable to reathe and in great suffering. He tried to maintain consciousness and the asphyxia and ataxia gripped his body firmly. He could see and hear but wwith a painful distortion.

-What is happening to me? The lips, heech heech heech, Jerry, narender, Akshay who is doing this? It will soon be over, or not, the dying sensation, the grim reaper, none of them, but is it still there, the confusion, the agony. One slast swoop, and I will know what death feels like. No flashbacks of fond memories, no loved ones flashing before my eyes. Just one last thought as I near the inevitable. What next? My body jerkin, ech ech, each ech taking a part of life out of me as I am rendered paralyed by forceful tremors. Ah, I’m choking, choking, hurting, but death, come come. Hurt no more death, come, huh, huh,hu.hu.hu. The time has com to cross to the other side. What will become of me I know not? Those near to me are strangers; those near to my soul are now strangers. Who is mine in this world? Who? Who? Who? Hu.hu.hu. It hurts, as long as my consciousness is caught in this world, when shall the angel from the heaven take me away, or the ground beneathmy feet crack for to fall in the fiery depths of hell? , heaven make me free of it. The rest is silence-

Jerry had already left the room and so did Narender thinking Rahil was possessed by some demon. Akhsay was the only one to hold him down throughout his convulsion and make sure he did not hurt himself.

“Call Jagat from upstairs” Akshay ordered Jerry who ran upstairs and did as he was told. Jagat came running down and saw Rahil unconsciously lying on the bed with a tilted head as if he was dead. Jagat tried to revive him by patting on his cheek. He moved his hands and feet in a disorderly fashion and jagat was eased a little to find that he was alive.

“Akshay, go and get a bottle of juice from the store downstairs. Jerry, help me lift him up and take him to the toilet so that we can wash his face. Rahil disobediently moved his hands and feet trying to get away from the strangulating grips of Jagat and Jerry. They lifted him anyhow but due do Rahil’s lack of compliance and difficulty to maintain their balance and maintain Rahil, they dropped him twice, once on the way to the bathroom on the marble floor of the bedroom and once inside the bathroom while they were wiping his face after washing it. It was in the washroom that Rahil started to get a slow control over his senses, first of hearin when he began to hear only the shriller sounds, the tap waer hitting the tiled floor, the plastic buckets bobbing on the tile as they hit Jagat’s and Jerry’s feet, the sound of the towel scratching against his skeen, followed by sight, a distorted vision that saw nothing sharply or specifically. The construction of his sense of sight was mostly based on his sense of sound. When he heard the bucket rattle, the figureless orange color came before his eyes with white in the background. The colors gre sharper and the vision grew clearer only when Rahil was taken into his room and when Akshay came with a bottle of juice. He drank a little as his head was spinning and he felt very dazed and dizzy. His body pained after the seizure. He maintained that it was because of the convulsive tremors because he had no memory of being dropped tice on hard floor.

Rahil though he knocked on death’s door and came back. He was not in s state to think anything else. The whole night for him was a sleepless one. He racked his brains thinking what had happened to him. He called Jerry to sit on a bed besides him in case something happened to him again and good soul sat there obediently.

“I was scared man.”Jerry said.

“Yeah, I know. I saw you run away.”

“No, I ran away to get hep, to get Jagat.”

“Has it…ever happened to you before, this thing?”

“No, it has never happened to me before in my life. I do not even know what happened to me.”

“Well, you rest tight.”

The whole night was spent by Rahil in confusion. He woke up in the afternoon and went to roam around in the streets wondering what had happened to him. He wandered in the streets having coffee and cigarettes for lunch and then going to the college to ask about his letter.

“Oh, so you are Rahil, the person who gave that complaint letter?”

“Yeah”

“Wait a minute here. I’ll tell the principal you are here.”

The clerk escorted Rahil into the principal’s office where he saw the principal with another lady in a white suit on whose lap rested Rahil’s letter. It was underlined at places, with notes written and the sides and footnotes written at the bottom as if it were not a letter of complaint but a critical essay.

“You wrote this letter on your own?” the principal asked, her face partly with anger and partly with humiliation.

“Yes, ma’am”

“He couldn’t have writtern it. Look at the letter.” The lady sitting beside the principal with the letter in her lap asked.

“I assure you I wrote that letter.”

“What is the meanin of this letter?” asked the principal.

Now Rahil understood why she had called him. It was not to listen to his grievance and talk to him sensibly but to dampen his spirits and accuse him of indiscipline.

“Who are you to give me in ultimatum? This is the first time I have come across such a rude letter in my life. Never in my life has anyone spoken to me like this.” The principal scorched.

“Is this the way to write your superior a letter? Have you no respect for this institution in which you are studying?” the lady added, tagging in sentiments with the principal and supporting her.

“What has she done to earn my respect? There are still hundreds of students of this college living in flats and accommodations paying double the rent they are supposed to pay just because the so-called ‘superiors’ of this institution, the principal included refuses to take responsibility.”

“Hundreds of people ilive in flats paying double the rent, you say. Yet only you have a problem, and only you come to the principal with your blaring letter.” The principal said, and then added “The truth is that you are putting pressure on the administration for the sole fact that you are not given a hostel and so you want to agitate manipulating other people into believing your cause.”

“You better believe I will agitate. This has gone on for too long. If you look at JNU, St. Stephens’, each student gets a place in the hostel on admission and only reason is because they agitate for their rights and break the barricades with their student activism.”

“You want to agitate like the students in JNU, who have helped you, put you up to writing this letter. Go ahead, how many of these students do you think will join you? No one, I tell you.” replied the lady, more vocal than the principal now.

“And if you think you will be able to put pressure on the institution by wasting your time like this and agitating, you are wrong. Don’t you have studies to do?”

“I have studies but I don’t have a place to study.”

“Well that’s exactly what I am trying to tell you. It’s not the college’s problem.”

“It’s not the college’s problem. All right, but what about the indisciplined staff members that mistreated that blind student in the ICT lab, and let me tell you this is the enral treatment of the non-teaching administrational staff towards the students of the college. Just a few days back, your personal assistant called me a louse.”

There was a momentary silence following which the principal moved her head like the queen of a defeated empire and assured to take remedial action. Rahil asked her whether she would take proper actions on all the problems mentioned in the letter, especially that of his accommodation and to that the principal replied that she will talk to the warden of the boys’ hostel about a vacancy which was confirmed by Hesiod and his friend, Manu.

“What about the other students who are out there living in Satya and getting exploited in those accommodations?”

“Don’t. Your shoulders aren’t that strong enough.” The principal replied.

There were some things obscure and some things clear after the entire conversation. Rahil sat and thought about it in his room. The principal assured him to talk about the hostel room for him which would end this misery of living in a closeted accomodtation. What hit his conscience was the fate of hundred other students if he gave up the moment he had just been been successful to upsurge and went cold which would be like betraying the larger student community. He recalled having made a blog back in the idle days spent in Andaman doing various odd jobs such as online content writing.

After having his lunch, a bath and after watching a little television just for recreation, he booted his laptop and started work on the assignment that he was supposed to write. The file was in Excel format and it was named ‘*Raahil tasksheet*’. He liked the way his name sounded name felt with two ‘a’ in it.

The internet site that he was supposed to write for was a site that would give career guidance to students on various courses.

‘Define irony- A supposed burnout giving career guidance through an online website’ he thought to himself comically. The irony of it could not have been any clearer. His job did not lie in advising and actual career guidance though. He was in charge of content writing which included information on various degrees on aspects like course, duration, career opportunities of that course, its relevance in job sector and among other things, the job salary. So all he had to do was collect factual data and put those into words.

-*Each morning to earn my bread, I go to the market where they sell lies and full of hope I line up with the vendors………* This corporate world has me in it, but not encaged. *I am a cage looking for a bird*, in words of Kafka the great, the prophet of the soon-to-be fate of the blue-collars. Who is free? I am, am not, am too am not. Tend now, to the matter at hand; it is not all bad, at least I get to write and people get to read what I write. Isn’t that enough to rouse the instinctual satisfaction of a writer? That his work is being recorded, recognized? Or should he be disdainful to all works that he writes and burn all that is second-rate unless true art he creates, unless that perfect piece of literature drips down from his tired brows as he falls to the ground, extinguished looking for true art, which lies not in the end but in the journey. Leave all that at that. I have partaken upon myself a job and I am under a form of social contract to complete it. What do I have to write about? A degree in mass media; well according to me, mass media is the instrument of subjugation in the wrong hands or a means to an agitation or a form of social awareness to the extent of a conscious cultural awakening in the right hand, or shall I say the Left hand. The Right hand is the wrong hand and the Left hand is the right hand. Everyone who goes in the field of media though, especially television media, goes in it for the limelight, the money and the glamour. Not one news channel in India is dedicated to cultural sensitization or bringing out the truth but the management of their ratings and how to make stories crispier and spicier through yellow journalism; a line of hypocrites, media…… one step short in vice than politicians who talk of freedom of speech and then tailor-make the headline news in such a way that a regular viewer would think that these are the only few things going on in the country that matters and that everything else that is not on the news isn’t even worth giving a piece of mind to. And they do it……the news channels do it…and you and I and all of us seeing know this but we are too dumb to realize it and do something about. And I am to write about it. This gives me a chance to write on it the way I feel, and I what I make of it. It is good, it is nice. I shall write all of it and more. What’s next? Diploma in documentary film-making and here’s my kind of thing. But how many people actually go into these fields. I wish I could go into all of these, I wish there were more of me, or maybe more people like me that would do something meaningful with their lives as opposed to wasting it in pursuit of money and a happy family and all that forms of historical materialism. I wish there were more people who would be willing to take chances with their lives, and people who would provide for these people taking chances with their lives, the way these corporate owners provide their slave engineers and the way government provides for its doctors. A film-maker is one of those people who are seen as ‘without a job’. Is this what I shall write about? That if you take a diploma in film-making, you will be seen as someone ‘without a degree’. Of course, you can do it for your own pleasure, but then why go for a degree. Do it yourself! Travel, read, learn and experience what film-making is on a gut level instead of running on the wheel of the world like a hamster even after choosing such a Bohemian pursuit of film-making. Although biased, this opinion of mine, I shall use in writing the article: *After writers, film-makers are the most appropriate illusionists whose challenge lies in not just creating an illusion but creating an illusion using reality*. But does any opinion of mine matter? Sure it does. Any Bob that logs on to the site has to go through me, my articles to then know whether this course is good for me or not. This gives an idea; the idea of placing yourself well. Being a part of the system in such a way that you control it and then to change it; bend it according to your own needs and the needs of the general, the ethical system, an egalitarian system. Like the Illuminati, or Trotsky during the Bolshevik-Menshevik split, the later part that is, when he decided to join the Bolsheviks, the side that won and later on became one of the most influential members of the Soviet politburo and the father of his own brand of world socialism known as ‘Trotskyism’; and with it came some qualms as comes with all good things, the qualm of being assassinated by Comrade Stalin. That gives the idea…… There are things and there are things. Isn’t life all made up of it, on it, in it, over it, under it, about it, but always with it, never without it? Things; languages, next on list, Persian fist on list a very important language, more so if you’re a fan of Khalil Gibran. No, his verses are in Arabic. But wasn’t he originally from Persia? Anyways, have to read more on him, obviously. *Prophet*, his verses, so mystical, symbolic and so spellbinding that you really think that you aren’t just reading words or hearing it as your read his poetry aloud to your ears for you cannot help but read aloud his poetry, that is the magic of the artist that is Khalil Gibran and feel so much more in those words and in that moment than you would feel without those words in your entire life. Words regain their meanings even after the blows of German philosophy are dealt on them and when you feel you can never get convinced that words have no meaning because you would want the words to have meanings in order to experience and understand Gibran’s poetry in its truest beauty, with its darkness, with its mystique and that is why though I hate to bring up factual data but here I make an exception: After Shakespeare, Gibran is the second bestselling poet. And that is all you need to know about the languages, their beauty, their importance, and why they should be studied. –

He finished writing about three to four courses in two hours. He was pretty fast in writing articles when he knew what he had to write. Much of the content that he wrote were his own opinions and estimations and he did not refer to the internet or what other people would deem ‘reliable sources’ because he felt on the other end of the server, that served information into the stream of internet were also opinionated people and he thought better him than anybody else.

The next morning he woke up at his usual time and then freshened up and went to the internet café to send the write-up he had written about the courses. This was supposed to be the initial document with which they would start paying him off and it was only after the review of this document that the talk of pay would even begin. So he took his seat in front of a computer that he knew caught the best coverage in the whole café and it was only because the café was empty that he got an opportunity to choose. He logged into his email account and then did all the necessary attachments to send the file. After he had sent it, he did not know what else to do with his time. He thought this time would be best to make his own blog so that the people can read what he would write randomly. So he started work on his own blog. He was not a computer whiz but he knew his way around when things were given vividly and as long as there was no coding or computer programming involved. He knew a little html markup which he used t tweak his blog a little to customize its window size and text font and style. He was a little caught up when it came to background customization of the blog but only because the internet connection became a little slower than usual.

After almost an hour of creative and practically easy time spent in front of that big radiation-emitting monitor screen, he had finally completed making his own personal blog. He was not sure what to put in the blog. He was really hesitant to start off his blog as purely a blog dedicated to fiction writing as it would lose much of its audience. He decided to lure his audiences by writing about burning topics so that he could at least have a good crowd paying attention to his work to start with and then he could grow from it organically. He thought it to be a good starting point to something free that people would think twice before putting a tag on or canonizing. He thought of many topics to write, about art, about philosophy, about politics and then he was a lot cautious about writing a political blog because it would alienate more people than pooling in. Then he thought of the best discipline to write about- science. His interest in science particularly in the theoretical field of it or as he put it, the philosophical field of it. When he was in school, he was fascinated in physics by the string theory which to him truly was the ‘theory of everything’. He was now sure he would write about it since it was a good enough topic to rouse the interest of a generation hell-bent on science and its grandness, so why not exploit it, he thought.

*Search for twenty six dimensions in String Theory*

*~By Rahil*

*String theory popularly known as the ‘theory of everything’ is a theory that holds the promise to revolutionize ever branch of physics, both classic and modern with its proof as a valid theory holding good as the most basic theory in the definition of atomic and sub-atomic particles. The theory changes the very perception of matter the way classic mechanics had found it to be and so it will change the course o science as we know it. In a nutshell, string theory states that the smallest part in an atom is not a quark but a vibration of energy called the string. Mathematically, it means that quarks are made up of 1-dimensional strings.*

*The vibration of the strings is what gives the sub-atomic particles its mass, charge, spin and flavor. The strings are figuratively closed loops of vibrating energy which commonly open on action by a D-brane into 1-D lines. A D-brane is also a constrained membrane of vibrating energy. The string theory is a constituent theory of the quantum gravity and can also correctly describe our universe the way cosmology and quantum physics has strived for doing. The theory holds good for space-time relations and also energy-mass conservation. The theory also demolishes the whole idea of the indivisibility of the quark and it being the smallest indivisible component the setting the spin and the quantum number of an element. Through the realization of string theory, we can do away with the idea of an atomic picture as an ideal description of the charge distribution inside an element since the string will be the deciding factor to impart those charges. It is only a minor example in a long list of revelations that the string theorists forebode.*

*However, the problem to such a grandiloquent discovery in the history of mankind lies just in a mere mathematical complication. The theory is to hold good only in twenty six dimensions, in the least. In general terms, there are three dimensions- the length, the breadth and the width. These are non-compact dimensions. Mathematically, it can be represented as an infinite number of real numbers that make the axis of a rectangular coordinate system, say the x-axis. Now, a non-compact dimension to particle in its plane is, in general terms like an ant on a book. For it, the dimensions of the book are three, but there plane on which the book is kept which is again three dimensional. So in numerical terms, it is equivalent to rolling the x-axis into a closed circle of radius R, which then has a finite value of 2R. The length of the infinitesimal line element in spherical coordinates in ‘D’ number of non-compact dimensions is as follows:*

***dl2=gij dxi dxj= dr2+r2dΩD-1***

*where* ***dΩD-****1 represents the D1 angular terms in the metric.*

*If we consider a three-dimensional plane in integral and differential, there is a mathematical plausibility in the proof of the string theory. But then in that representation, the problem lies on the addition of the compact dimensions to the non-compact ones which creates a gravitational imbalance. The solution to this nevertheless is also possible.*

*Regarding the behaviors of planets and observing their orbits, one can deduce the change in gravity if the behavior of planets is altered drastically. This change in gravity can then be correlated to the imbalance caused in the equation of compact and non-compact dimensions. This would also save the cost and capital involved in the practical experiments conducted related to string theory which requires expensive particle accelerators that take much time, especially the LHC.*

*Putting the theory into another perspective, let us consider the previously mentioned infinitesimal line rolled up in a spherical form with angular momentum 2 in D-dimensions. The line element then becomes:*

***=D-1~RrD-2 Dl2=gij dxi dxj=dr2+r2dΩD-2+R2d2***

*So, if we add an extra compact space to our existing three non-compact spaces, the Newtonian force law still holds good as an inverse square law and if Newtonian law is followed as a universal law, then the concept of adding compact space dimension to non-compact dimensions should hold no objection. The only precaution that we need to take is while adding compact dimensions we take into consideration quantum gravity scale carefully.*

*This theory holds well on many grounds and also obeys the universal laws. There is also a very viable possibility in finding twenty six dimensions by the above mentioned calculations. Much of its opposition, however, is based on energy conservation, considering that the practical experiments to be conducted would need much more energy than is generated even by the Large Hadrons Collider and also other theories of energy considerations as put forward by Max Planck. However, to these negative theories, there are also a lot of auxiliary theories that support or perpetuate the hypothesis of string theory such as anatomical stability of the closed structure of the string which causes symmetry between small and large particle known as T-duality. Some theorists have stated that this T-duality is what keeps the gravity constant inside the strings and also between its structures however it has just been a local theory and is refuted generally. But if we change our perception to a much amiable hypothesis, in the near future, a fond recognition of this theory is undeniable.*

*END*

He thought of himself as pretty good in analysis especially after reading and reading that insightful piece of writing that he had just written. Though it was not his forte, one could almost never tell the difference between that article of his and a real academic paper on string theory. Though his numerical insights came from the official site of string theory and also much of the postulates that he put together, he could take the credit for putting it all together and even for giving it a clearer picture through generalized colloquialism. His ambition was never for science and he only took an interest in theoretical science originally because it gave him something to talk about with some of his friends with a higher scientific aptitude. He did many things that were completely out of his interests and yet he did it. He was many things but never an incomplete man. He could not wait and see how many people were logging in and viewing his posts as his time was about to get over. So he logged out and paid the man in the café for the hour he had spent. He really liked the article he had written and was quite impressed by himself. He never really made much of his works but this was something that he had taken a shining too. For one thing, he wrote that out of arbitrariness and sheer imagination. There was no presupposed or determined idea in his mind like most times but he just referred to couple of mathematical equations and used them very effectively over the course of a very strong argument to develop his point. If this could say anything about his character, it sure boasted of writing finesse and Rahil sensed that. That was the reason he felt so good about himself, some would say to the extent of overconfidence.

And then, completing his recollection, he made his mind to post the leter in his blog for everyone to read. His blog had been inactive for a very long time since he had been in Delhi. After posting his letter he made it viral on social networking sites by sharing it in all the groups that he was a part of. The letter was widely spread but its impact could only be anticipated.

The next day he had a class with Seena ma’am to check the scores of their internal assessment at the first hour. Rahill had a little trouble waking ever since what he perceived to be a stroke of some kind. He also thought he could have had some form an epileptic seizure. His mind was completely occupied by various thoughts. He was an introvert wherein his ego was completely eclipsed by his Self. Elements of collective unconscious burst into his mind and he inhabited many worlds simultaneously. The professor began first by taking attendance and then clearing doubts from the course if anybody had some. Smrithi, the confident opportunist who had made her way into the college editorial board and the good books of Professor Seena waged a conversation about Anita Desai and her novel ‘In Custoy’. She posed student when she actually had no need to because in that attempt she lost her psychical quality of horizontally expanding her knowledge. To aim higher is a fruitless expression when one talks about becoming; one should aim wider when it is the question of being. She talked of trivialities in the book that a writer only uses as a vessel for his vat of ideas. The professor tried to explain this to her as politely as she could Smrithi was stringent about the structuralism in the novel as opposed to its functionalism. Suddenly, a boy entered the class and Rahil recognized him to be Siddharth.

“Excuse me ma’am, can I talk to Rahil for just one minute? It will be just a minute.” He asked.

“Sorry he cannot leave the class right now.”

The teacher answered and so he left signaling Rahil to meet him after class. Rahil first thought it was a matter related to the debate but changed his mind when his phone rang and he saw whose name flashed on the screen. It was Shanto sir. The call came from JNU which meant it positively had to do something in regards to the letter he had just posted on the internet. He knew there was going to be a controversy; the pace of it though took him aback. The reverberations sprung form the letter and reached high ivory towers of JNU, its closed catacombs. ‘What’s to be expected’ he thought. And in spur of a moment brainstorm, his mind strategized a revolt that he had only theorized. Thousands of students from RLA, from ARSD, from Motilal and of course Venky occupying the college ground for days on end, camping there, singing protest songs and creating a counter-culural wave the likes of Civil Rights movement or Woodstock. He obviously did not think of student revolts that were ideologically charged such as those in Germany or Paris or 1960s India because he knew the students of Delhi University only had so much capability.

He finished his class and found out Siddharth attending classes just opposite to his class. He got in and asked professor Nikita to excuse Siddharth for a moment and she did. He came out of the clas calmly, and then, mercurially changing his expression, he bent and warned Rahil:

“Do not post that letter. You don’t know our principal. She is the most merciless instrument of the administrational mechanism. She will rain fire and fury on you.”

“I already did. I showed the letter to the prinicipal before that. Pale fire and pebbles did rain down on me but all in all I managed to survive the judgment day just fine.”

“Is it so?” Siddharth asked inquisitively.

“So it is.”

“But you certainly got the people in JNU concerned about yyour actions. So, what’s the net step?”

“Let’s see if we can have the occupy movement.” Rahil said, and after shaking hands with Siddharth parted for lunch. In the canteen, again he received a call from Shanto sir.

“Rahil, what have you done? Were you out of your mind to jeopardize yourself like this? You are a part of an organization, are you not?”

“Yes sir”

“Then why did you not consult with us before putting out that letter and doing this deed of individual anarchism. You are an indispensible unit to the organization. What will happen expel you?”

“They won’t. Do you think that they would?”

“No. I don’t think that they would. But you should think before taking desicive political steps.”

“But it would boost our present struggle if we actually organize an occupy movement.”

“Not at this time frame. Did you completely forget about the exams? Who do you think would come to such a demanding occupy movement inside the campus compromising with their study time? No one will come and for this kind of an event, we need at least fifty people just from your college.”

“Yes sir”

“Have they asked you to apologize or remove that letter from your blog?”

“No sir, not yet”

“Well they will, and you must comply because you must not be targeted by the administration people. We have a larger battle ahea of us and we must use proper siege techniques. You must keep yourself well hidden. Listen tomorrow is a teachers’ union protest at ARSD college gate. The principal there sexually harassed a female lab technician and AISA is joining the protest along with All India Progressive Womens’ Association. Come there tomorrow and we’ll talk.”

“Yes sir, Okay bye.”

Rahil knew all he had to know now of his fate from different rom perspectives and narratives. The only thing left to do now was to go into the villain’s layer with guns ablaze. He came out of canteen and walked till the foyer. He sat under the foyer on one of the long beches lined against the walls. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Latha ma’am enterig the college. On seeing Rahil, she slowed her pace and walked towards him and taking a place beside him, and asked with a pensive face:

“So what’s happening?”

“Well, there is a protest tomorrow in front of ARSD gate organized by the Delhi University Teahcers’ Association that I plan to attend. And studies are going fine.”

“I have heard of the great controversy and ruckus you letter has caused. The whole department, the professors know about this. You know a friend of mine read the letter and he said that the content of the letter were so scurrilous that one has to have the least bit of mind to keep his name off it. Why did you put yours?”

“Actually, I gave this letter directly to the principal, in print and she gave me a proposition that she would talk about giving me a seat in the college hostel if I let matters go. At that point, my conscience was overloaded with intolerable guilt. There was no point of refraining from writing my name.”

“But don’t you think that letter was too attacking? I mean there are more sublime ways of doing it. A milder form of satire would have also done the job.”

“It wouldn’t have done the job I wanted. It wouldn’t have roused the public like it did now. It would have remained subversive underground.”

“You should take it easy, you know. I have seen you a lot of times. You just lay your cards on the table. Go into the place firing guns. You should understand the dynamics of the circumstances first. You talk of activism in JNU. JNU is an island. It’s completely cut off from the world. DU is nothing like that. Let me tell you some more things about JNU. I have studied there so I know. Whenever they go for the protest, any organization…the first file that is always the first to be beaten up by the police or rounded up and arrested are mostly from religiously minority institutions and Delhi University which the JNU people are either at the back or drinking tea in vicinity. Inside JNU, yes there is a good atmosphere but like I said, JNU is an island. Don’t get your head caught up in JNU activism.”

“I don’t care for JNU and I have the Jamia cadre and the revolutionary spirit in their hearts. They don’t care about being arrested or beaten up by the police. I see your point but it does not mean that I should completely abandon activism.I know that JNU is full of misguiding cynical Marxists but that doesn’t mean one does away with organizational activism completely. If you don’t take the help of antisystemic organization against the system, then you are left an individual.”

“I understand that. I feel a little bad, as if I am breaking all your illusions, bursting those little bubbles one by one. See, but the reason I am talking to you right now is because you have a greater potential locked inside you. I was having a talk with the Head of Department and that you are among the better students in the class and it would certainly be interesting to see what becomes of you after these four years. But getting involved in indisciplinary action and getting expelled would be stop in your career and development.”

“I have already decided to drop out of this college and join another.”

“That is another concern in my mind that you would be frustrated by the system enough to completele cut yourself off from it but the truth is you need an institution to have some kind of a base or else you would be nothing more than lost treasure. I know there are some problems in the system, in the course but learn to deal with, or just bear and and get whatever positive you can, and trust me there is a lot you can get. You’re only in your first year and you have already read a great deal. You must slow down and get into other things, you know, and certainly activism isn’t one of them.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Another narrative was added to the list of interesting narratives just of that particular day. After the teacher left, Rahil decided that he would leave the college fearing further uncanny encounters. As he was exited the foyer, the face to greet him just in front of the small garden opposite to the foyer was that of the prinicipal.

“You think you can just about do anything in this college? Do you know how much embarrassment you hav caused to this institution and to me? I got a call from a friend of mine in Vienna who apparenty read this letter and telephoned me in the middle of the night. This individually targeted me. You know what I could do? I could go to the police, file and investigation report and charge you for defamation if that letter is not off your blog. Just you wait and see, mister. And I will set up disciplinary committee to take necessary actions for your letter. Where is your teacher in-charge? I want to talk to him.”

She meant the Head of Department. Crowd gathered seeing the tempest storm of the principal bank on Rahil’s rocky shores. Just then, as if everything in the universe of men symmetrically moved like clockwork, keeping to grand mechanical scheme of synchrony, came the Professor, Head of Department from the parking lot area speeding his steps, seeing the crowd witch-hunting Rahil with the principal at the centre of the trial, spewing curses of evil at Rahil, who helplessly tied on a stake kept on burning. He immediately came to his aid and asked what the matter was. The principal explained him. He asked the principal to spare Rahil and that after taking a look at the blog and talking to Rahil, he would come to a conclusion. Rahil went back to his room after such an interesting and trying day.

He came to his room and slammed his body on to the bed falling into instant sleep. It had not been more than fifteen minutes that he got a call from his Professor who called him to meet near the staff parking area of the college. Rahil tidied himself up and went there to find the professor coming out of his car with a disposable capped cup of store-brought coffee in his hands. Rahil was dressed in his usual beatnik blue denim jacket and a pair of faded worn out jeans.

“I went through the blog and I too feel that it was written too directly and might have struck the principal as offensive. We can have a long intellectual discussion about this some time later but now I think it is better for all of us, especially for you to remove the letter from your blog as soon as possible. We know, Rahil…The professors know how good a student you are and frankly losing you would be a loss to our college and you must also think that you will lose the opportunity to study in such a good college. Let’s face it; Venkateswara is one of the better colleges of DU, especially in South Campus. I kind of reaction I saw, that came out of the principal and the other staff is not good. They will not stop for moment’s thought to expel you judging by the mindstate that they are in. The exams are nearing and they could even bar you from giving the exams. So now, it all comes down to you whether you want to stay and study in this college or not.”

He did not say even a word after that. The professor was convinced that the words he spoke were few but powerful enough to move Rahil to a decision and then and there Rahil gave his word to the professor he would go right this instant to his room and remove the letter from his blog.

With this thought in his mind, he left the college premises and stopped at the mouth of Satya Niketan. He found Smrithi and the seniors from the editorial board waiting outside a restaurant and on seeing Rahil, they turned towards him and asked him about the letter to which Rahil replied that it had caused a lot of mess and drove him to the point of expulsion from the college.

“Is that event happening?”

“It might. I’ve not decided yet.”

“Well, we sure are interested in joining an event like that. You should really organize it.”

Rahil said he would think of it and descended further into Satya Niketan. It was not that he walked inside Satya; it was the peristaltic movement of the lanes and the people in it that Rahil furthered into the stomach of Satya like a grain of rice through Oesophagus. In the gut of the locality huddled over a cigarette shop, he found Hesiod and his friend whom he had met, Manu. Both of them heavily congratulated him for the letter and urged that an event like that ought to happen. They said that the letter itself was a very positive act of rebellion. Hesiod gave him a cigarette and asked him why he was looking so dull.

“They threatened me that if I do not remove the letter, I will be expelled from the college.” Rahil replied, taking in a puff of smoke.

“What have you decided then?”

“Damn them! The letter stays where it’s staying. Let them do their worst. Let them stop me from giving my exams. Let them expel me” Rahil proclaimed like a matador arousing the bull to attack him. The only question that remained was will the matador be able to dodge the bull at the precise final moment. He left them, went back to his room and went for a peaceful sleep this time. He shared the story with his fatmates who were all interested in how it would turn out. ASIA activists from different colleges called him and messaged him for a job well done and expressed their solidaity. In the evening, Rahil went to have a meal with the same friends at the saem place with what Rahil knew to be a genuine smile on his face. His face was just a mask hiding his fearful face, taciturn with the fear for his ailment, for what mysterious jinx happened that night. There was also the fear of the events that were coming to him. He knew that his happiness was only external, superficial, that inside he burned and suffered, more with each coming day. He wanted to be away; he wanted to be gone. He waited for the exams to come, and then go, so that he would return to his native land never to come back.

-*The tempest seas rocking on its shores*

*The blue belly of the beast bilging and thumping*

*And when a boat be astray on it*

*The foamy waters leave nothing*

*O the oceans, her mighty presence*

*Appalls the ethereal in my soul*

*The sea winds blowing through my ear*

*Whisper in it, the voices of ghosts*

*Poseidon’s rage unleashed beyond par*

*At this hellish stretch of seas*

*No life is seen, not near not far*

*Not even a speck or a tree*

*All that floats is blithering foam*

*Over the high-low waves*

*These seas have claimed countless lives*

*Put them to their ill-fated graves*

*And in the seas, the deepest deep blue seas*

*I see a reflection, a prophecy*

*An abstract art I fail to understand*

*Though I heed it with necessity*

*From little swallows to nightingales and eagles*

*Fly like the crown jewel, over the majestic seas*

*And under a whole entity, life that breeds*

*All subjects to the kingdom of the seas*

*The shores fear her vehement strike*

*The skies fear her ever-high tides*

*A raging beast we call the seas*

*A force every force abides*

*I am lost in the ever stereoscopic wideness*

*At the stretched blueness to endless horizons*

*Everywhere I look, each corner, the seas with the sky*

*The charm romance allures me*

*Even the giants of metal and of steel*

*Couldn’t tame her exact and true*

*And still she claims much of Earth*

*Over it, she firmly rules-*

His hair grew longer and longer as time passed on but time didn’t pass in a leap, it passed second by second, moment by moment, in a packet, each moment fading away, some of them futile but some moments so big that they gave him a sense of timely infiniteness. So in his case, moments weren’t time bound, they were importance bound but in reality, the objective reality, they were time-bound.

As he was now getting more and more engrossed into hallucinating for writing purposes, he remained in R.K Pur where he would spend much of the time. In this time spent at R.K Pur he would occasionally to the main part of Hut Bay which was the Hut Bay bazaar. It was a forty minute bus or jeep ride from his home.

His friends at the engineering college missed him, cursed him for getting out, for choosing a life of misery over a life of materialistic comfort. His friends knew he would now choose to study liberal arts in the next academic cycle, probably in a college in mainland. Rahil himself was unsure what discipline he would pursue the year after but that was a choice he left for that moment in the future. As for this moment, he just wanted self-education and enlightenment through self-knowledge.

Among many of his friends, there was one who was with Rahil through his schooling life but changed schools later, and like Rahil, took a year out, but spent it in high school. His name was Adarsh, Adarsh Kumar. He had mixed reactions about his friend wasting his time at a local engineering college and then wasting a year to join another college in the next academic cycle which started from June the next year. It was August then. He thought Rahil would waste his gifted talents among the commoners of Andaman Islands, lose that special glow that was hidden in his personality that shined whenever he would perform, or write, or speak to a public. He made this known to him one time too many but there was not much Rahil could do then but brood over the wrong choice that he had made. And now, finding out that he had dropped out of college out of the blue, and decided to self-study for the remainder of the academic year, he felt awkward that Rahil had the tenacity to make such a bold choice. Obviously, he would think so. There is not much a child can do when there are families, not just your family but a web of families, that of your friends, your relatives’ and your relatives’ relatives’ all wanting you to do the same thing as all other students in your batch and all other students before your batch and all other students before that batch did, but fall prey to the web of generality and mediocrity somehow combined and woven by these poisonous spiders. Many fall prey to their web and lose their lives but the sting of these spiders is such that you lose your consciousness and you neither feel you are trapped nor feel that you have been bit. You are bound by false consciousness.

On such visit to Port Blair, he went to see his friend Adarsh and reminisce on the memories of old times, school times and to catch up mutually on what has been happening in their lives as they went about it.

“Hey Rahil bhai, heard you dropped out? What’s the matter? College didn’t treat you well enough?” he asked.

“Exactly, talk about violation of human rights, Anna and that’s what it is. It’s like a jail over there man.” Rahil answered.

“So what are you doing now?” he asked Rahil in a friendly tone.

“Currently, I am into writing. I am developing a little article that I would get published in a newspaper, and I am also writing poetry now.” Rahil said, and looked at his friend’s jaw drop in front of him as he had something completely unexpected.

-What a man wants, he can’t have and what a man has, he doesn’t want-

“You sure have made my day with that piece of news right there!” Adarsh remarked but Rahil discovered a bit of sarcasm in his tone. Ever since he took this turn from the general to the artistic, he had been more and more defensive about himself, more and more paranoid of what other people might think of him. Many would say that this came with the transformation of his mind, his thinking pattern as he started to grow more and more sensitive and inward and humorless than he usually was before.

“Say Rahil, at least I got a real pal beside me for a little while longer, right?” Adarsh remarked, seeing that he was already drowning in his sub-consciousness.

“Yeah man, it’s you and me against the world!” affirmed Rahil.

When these two met, it was a paradise and there was never trouble at paradise nor was it ever lost. However, trouble started when these two departed and Rahil had to go back to his life in Port Blair, to his social life with his brothers, his sisters, his uncles and his aunts, his social life which seemed more tragically sunk at the moment in the cold icy waters of grief than the great HMS Titanic. He would sit around the house all day listening to the knacks and bickers of his aunts as they moved about the house doing their chores. He knew he was supposed to feel ashamed hearing their snide comments but he didn’t feel shameful at all. On the contrary, he felt delighted, as a child as he steals a cookie from the cookie jar or as an adolescent sneaking up behind an abandoned store to smoke his first stolen cigarette. There was much to extract from those shameful comments, extracts of contrition knowing the fact that he had made the right choice. Now that he was free from the social web, he know that the spiders would hawk venom at him and he would have to resist fighting back or there was a fair chance he would be caught in the web again. He knew the spiders would do that out of spite but he was happy now because he had beaten the system, at least in one little battle. In that little battle, he had redefined his fate. Fate was a word he thought needed a lot of revisionism before he could actually use the word. He was into revisionism for a lot of things. The philosophies that he read changed him, the politics that he studied, enlightened him.

His radical political views were only theoretical so far. It cannot be said that he never tried to go practical spheres, but it was just that he never got a chance to do so. One reason for his political inactivity during that time was due to the fact that Rahil’s uncle was a politician in the Congress Party, and among ideological and religious constrictions already tightened on his neck, there was also the grip of political allegiance which he felt now more than ever having been aware of right from wrong, and developing a political self of his own.

He learned much but he had much to learn. He was completely engrossed in this rediscovery of himself from himself. There were two Rahils now for him. One was the Old Rahil, the unaware artistic Rahil whom everybody loved and then there was the newer, still under psychological construction newer Rahil whom no one had ever seen fully but only as bits and pieces. This New Rahil sometimes slipped up between conversations out of the Old Rahil, almost unexpectedly giving unexpected replies and answers that silenced the people he talked to. On one of his visits to Port Blair again, he visited his friends from the engineering college. He had often been in touch with them through phone calls. Whenever he would come to Port Blair from his home in R.K Pur, he would always swap movies with his friends though he never found much fun in doing so. His friends always had those big-budgeted, special effects Hollywood movies that always had a shallow plot and famous movies movie stars to make up for it. He would rather watch something more art-house, something more French maybe. This was the demand of the New Rahil. The old Rahil was the one who would swap movies with an enthusiasm that not only seemed genuine but really was genuine. In his school days, Rahil would slam on his bed during holidays and do nothing but watch these Hollywood movies that he now so severely despised.

He waited for his friend in his house, as he had called him there to catch up with him, swap some movies and then together they would go for a walk through the Marina Park, watch the sea waves hit the beach, modestly now as there was an expected low tide this time of the year and talk some more. Manabesh was the friend’s name, a short, rather common looking fellow with a very peculiar almost dearly smile. His smile had something very personal about it. His hair was short, not buzz-cut but short and his chests and back seemed almost asymmetric, unlike the general proportion of body but that feature did not stand out and so all in all he was a rather common looking Local Born, as people in the Island refer to each other as. Along with the movies, Manabesh gave Rahil a standard edition of a Microsoft Encarta which was a kind of software quite like Wikipedia but it also worked offline and furnished others forms of media along with textual information as well. This was really helpful for Rahil but only to a certain stage, only till the point when he had reached the pinnacle of accepting his new Self, which was to come much later in his life. But outbursts of the inner Self came even within his conversation with his friend.

“Hey man, when will you download this new Arnold movie?” asked Manabesh.

“Why should I? I don’t like those kinds of movies.” Rahil replied. His inner self gurgling out answers for him now.

“Come on man! I know you don’t mean that. That’s a fine movie right, great action, and Arnold man, Arnold.” He said, very casually completely defacing what Rahil had just said, like he never said it. They remained silent for a little while.

-Damnation till the end of the Earth and the apocalypse, the world beyond it, the afterlife and eternal life till eternity! Feel the breeze, feel the cold breeze, I wish the breeze, free, light, always whispering into everyone’s ears, something, anything, like fine poetry, what am I now? Haunted, haunted like the mariner in Coleridge’s Rime. Time, pass Time pass; I should like to be away, away, faraway, what for? Something, anything, but leave the warm, known waters, off to uncharted waters, fishes don’t sail that way, boats so, synthetic creation of man Boats. Why do I have to sail though? Why can’t I Be still and still be, free? Say, something-

“How is the college going? Anybody misses me?” asked Rahil, full of his Old Self.

“Well, everybody liked your article published about the college in the Hindu. Many of our professors now want to meet you, you are almost famous now.” Manabesh said, casually. There was always a sense of ease in the way he talked, as if nothing was of importance that they talked about, as if everything was of general light humored conversation. In such a mood, it was hard to establish anything. For Rahil, it was hard to establish in that moment that it was a feat that he just pulled, to be published in a newspaper like The Hindu but in that causal mood, all seemed general. He had just found out from him that he had been published. He would now go to his home and on his way, buy a newspaper and look at his article. Ever since he was a drop-out, he had been writing and sending articles to every big and small newspaper and magazine in the hopes of getting published and actually being able to build a persona as a writer before even going to college.

-My old college, what was the article that I wrote about it? I shall check it out. Long memories, memories long gone, memories tiresome, touchy feely. What, who? Recollect, reverie. Ah, pink pinstriped shirt and blue pants, those breasts bulging out from those pink pinstripes layered with dupatta; I want to feel them again. Reverie, take me with you. Remember, ah, I remember immensity of it. That girl… everyone’s dream, her timid slender arms, her fine height, her swift, tight buttocks, always hidden under those jumpers, oh I wish I could feel them on my face. Pervert! That is me! Ubermensch, Sexuality, broken, deranged, deviant, perverted. Feel her, let me let me feel her, I am not penetrable, just a fetishist, wanting to feel feel feel, the clouds of her round rotund, tight flesh and smell, scented, sweaty cleaved naturally from between, let me put my tongue into the valley of darkness, for I will sin. Sin, a blessing, blessing is foul, Sin is a blessing, let me be blessed. Feet, those feet like any feet, but hers, soft, always baking, in her black shoes and in her black socks and with the black socks and black shoes of hers friends, lady friends with hers, baking; Sight, a thought, a piece of mind. My face, just my face naked, nude, among all those shoes, black shoes, their laces hanging over my face, their dusty souls brushing, over my head, through my chin, rubbing the grime of the ground on my lips as I smooch them, Why? Because I can; Fetishism, my ball to play, complex, sexually stimulating but completely asexual. Ah, the moment, the moment of breaking the cage of fancy, ahoy! What good is this fancy, but just in mind! Physical, more physical be! Fade, don’t fade… don’t…fade. Ah yes, the article, the Hindu, I should get it. Who are the professors interested, why are they interested, newspaper is something *they* read in the morning and wipe their anuses with in the evening what do they care about the fine print and the fine effort of the writers, ah yes! Unless it’s about them, then they frame it, kiss it and share it among friends and family, this toilet paper, Godly now, for them. I shall read it. I shall read it. –

On his way home after dropping him near the Mohanpura bus terminus near which his house was, he plopped taking a right from the Gandhi statue and making his way upwards towards the Ganesh temple.

-Why do they call it Ganesha? Rama, Maurya, Shudra- these bloody whites, those nincompoops. Just because they cannot pronounce the words right, *we* have to change our whole vocabulary for them. It should be Ram, Arun, but wait English phonetics is not that developed to contextualize these sounds, they only have alphabets, pathetic Britons, at least French and the Germans have their umlauts and dieresis to maintain a proper sense of pronunciation, the English have to make everything emphatic by using those loud harsh alphabets for every little sound. Urdu is good; however Urdu had the time to be good, when was it really established as a language, proper… Mughal, post-Mughal can’t remember. German! The master of French, every European language is Germanic in one way or the other-

He found a vendor selling newspapers, by putting them over newspapers that he spread over the street, and putting these newspapers to be sold on top of it.

“Have you got the Hindu on you?” asked Rahil.

“Haan” Answered the vendor, and Rahil bought it. It cost him ten bucks, that damn capitalist newspaper, he thought, and pulled out a ten rupee note from his wallet which had a combination of three hundred rupee notes, a twenty and the ghost of a ten he just pulled out, its mere scent, lurking still between the bellies of the hundred rupee note and the twenty, like the sublime form a Djinn.

He looked, page by page for his article. He knew and it was obvious that a special article about the college would not be on the first page, unless there was a scandal, a sex scandal, a sex scandal involving two male teachers and a female student, or a male student, a male teacher, a female teacher and a local transsexual hooker with some kind of sick sexual ménage-a-trios going on. He caught hold of his fancies as he felt a stiffness mounting between his groins. At last, he found it in the metro plus section of the Hindu, a petty place for his article to be in, but it was published in the Hindu and that thought was well enough for Rahil to savor.

-They edited most of it, they cut out the good stuff, damn! Nobody wants to hear to their criticisms but they’ll croak like frogs when they are given a chance to critique the other. They cut out the good stuff, which was essentially the bad stuff about the college. Look at this article! Read it! So stereotypical, maybe it’s a part of their, ‘wrap it in a box and tie a graceful bow over it’ thing. It’s appealing, why wouldn’t it be? Its mine, not that I privilege my work but there is a certain glow in the work, almost as if it has a personality of itself, looking at you as you look at it, looking at you, looking at me. I shouldn’t be too patronizing about my work, I should focus more on enlightenment. Writing article is one thing, talking of beauty is one thing, but to understand the meaning of beauty, to find the beauty in beauty, of beauty, aesthetics, and to find the logic, the reason, behind appreciation and construction of a technicality. Logic is as superstitious as belief. Maybe logic can cure some things but it brings a whole different set of problems upon the mankind that detaches us from the Hegelian ‘Absolute’. And thus there is conflict, a dialectical conflict, which is vulgarized by the terms thesis, antithesis and synthesis, just because most human mind are not prone to take the erratic philosophies of Hegel in its absolute form, and thus they use-guess what- ‘words’ for every stage of the conflict. Logic is this: *der Mensch ist was er isst!*  Nothing else matters. Historical materialism, religion, faith, ethics, the artistic, all seek of a way to define the indefinable truth that there is no truth, there is just nothingness, how one comes about to that discovery is what gives you knowledge. Whether you come to realize it through Kierkegaard’s one of the paths of ethical life, aesthetic life and religious life or Nietzsche’s blankness and then will to power or the Marxist socialist destruction of surplus value or Stirner’s individual Enlightenment or Spinoza’s substance or Sartre’s dejection of bad faith or Descartes’ *Cogito, ergo sum* or Kant’s thing in itself……………… to sum it up-GOD.-

He grew more in those few months he stayed in R.K Pur than any other young man could grow in years. He would rarely get out of his house, but when he would, he would take strolls after strolls on the bright sun and its yellowness and its sunshine that bathed him with warmness that lingered on his skin and trickled down, photon after photon, warmth after warmth and he looked, gazed at the little shops with houses on top, and those topless local boys shouting and living their subjectively meaningful-important-even-life as if they were fully aware of themselves as he was, and he, like a troubled poet, haunted with dead spirits walked along the stretch of that immense black road amidst the people sitting besides dreaming immensely of it. This road, cut from between by white stripe of lines like white tie to a black tuxedo, he walked, with a purpose sometimes and sometimes, without, feeling the pull of the ground or some force underneath the ground, that pulled Rahil, not the New Rahil but his old Self, into the ground, deep into the ground, and another force pulled the New Rahil, from the sky, a blue, no, purple almost sublime hand, like the hand of God, ready to sprout out the New Rahil from the chest of the body. It seemed as if wings would break off from his back and this new Self of Rahil would fly off, burying back the old one for the Undertaker of fate to take of him for the New Rahil would be above fate.

He lost interest in many things; he grew interest in many others and the new things that he grew interest in were much more complex and much more definitive to his outlook than the old ones.

Earlier, he used to be heavily conscious of his style. He had worn a full evening suit to his school farewell, the suit being borrowed from a good friend of his who was now in Bangalore doing the same engineering course so many others before him had martyred themselves into but still closely, but no secretly harboring a dream to become a soccer star by playing in English league. Many petulant dreams were still being followed, as if dreams have meanings, as if dreams have non-Freudian meanings.

He challenged everything there was to be challenged, put into the zone of conflict every institution, there was, even the institution of family. He could very well have fallen into the jaws of nihilism and lost every bit of faith from revisionism if he had not already been corrupted by the Red and the Black. He battled with a lot of things, old thoughts, new ones, old Self, new emerging inner Self, the peril of nothingness or the curse of the antichrist and finally the most realistic peril-joining college.

Time trickled down to December and he had not yet decided on which college he was going to study in or which course he would study. However, he was sure that e had lost the mind to study engineering. After all, he was losing his faith from scientific logic.

-What a funny contraction! Faith from scientific logic, more like logic from scientific faith, because science can only rid us of certain problems. Plus, science goes better with capitalism nowadays than communism. Science has become the tool of hedonism for capitalists to use on men to impose the master-slave dialectics of organization. Look at Apple, making gazillions and that poor, well not so poor, schmuck who is watching porn and jerking off in front of that fine, sleek well-finished Mac book that makes each pixel of the porn video come to life like a living cell and the culmination of those cells bring to life the orgy of the flesh, the opera of sex. No kidding, sex is musically symphonic, like the orchestra or an opera. It starts off with a mild tune an ooooooooh, and then you have the trombones, ah ah ah ah, along with the violins \*grunts and the string quartet, \*yes \*yes \*yes……… the tonality of the opera being the *sprechgesang……-*

-Sex sex sex, why do I keep thinking about, but it’s not just me, it may be you, our mother, everyone things about sex. The sexual desire of a man is the most instinctive emotion of man that drives major of his choices and desires. Much of his association and disassociation is based on sex. The id, the psychoanalysts call it, which shapes up the libido, the more common term. Healthy, unhealthy libidos all are a part of this id, and much more basic, things like neurosis are also part of this id. Id defines things as general as whether I sit with legs parallel to each other or with crossed legs, this id. Then there is the ego, that seems to talk but doesn’t. It just receives. It receives things like faith, and so as a child, if you’re born with faith, it is due to the fact that it has been hardwired into your brain by your social conditions, family. And then when you grow up, you develop such a thing as a superego that is what ‘thinks’. Superego is something that records all the outputs, if you want to get into technical terms, of the ego and the id, and then takes information, more information as you socialize and come under influence to different ideals. So if you’re a homosexual, if it is a fault at all, it’s not your fault, it’s the id and the superego. If you are neurotic, it is a collective fault of all the three, which is conflicting. Nothing is in your hands, everything is determined, and still you say you are free. You are Oedipus…………Rex. You *will* commit a tragedy, like killing your father, and then have sex with your mother, without knowing, but you *will* have sex with her, for which she will commit suicide, and will blind yourself for it. And only by blinding yourself would you actually be able to see. You are the ultimate tragic hero, whose fate is sealed and the only freedom of choice you have is manufactured. This is the tragedy of the post-modern world. And to this context, *all the world’s a stage and we merely players in it*……… And we talk about science, about logic. Has logic ever described to us the reason for our existence? Has logic ever shown to us how we came into existence? Has logic ever came close to examine how the world took form, took shape, took beauty, and now is taking degradation, no because science *is* that degradation. But then science is also the answer to it? Or is it philosophy, psychology, sex, bliss, end? These things are serial. Respect them in that way. RESPECT the depravity of the sexual needs of a man and the extent that he can go to, to fulfill that need, desire. He will defy science, defy hygiene, drink her lover’s blood as I comes out during her menstrual cycle, eat her pussy, like it was a wild, passion fruit, rub it on the face, those hairs, comb them with teeth, the depravity. Drink from the source her yellow shower, golden shower defying patriarchy as it exists, at last hesitate not, to fill with her dung if need be, need, the source of depravity, depravity, the mother of passion, the actor of reason and logic, and whips, blood trickling as Lady lover whips his slave for love, or slave, tortures him, physically, bring about pain but in this pain, there is contrition, charm, fulfillment, and care and warmth. Humiliation, as lover shares her love with another man in front of her hubby, the test of cuckoldry, to lick the man’s manliness from the woman’s passion-fruit, the ultimate act of depravity, not sex at all, but of sex, and more and everything goes–

-Surreal, smooth bed sheets but on it the night today, restless; Pillow is not right, maybe. Maybe there is some bad reaction to something I ate. No……………This is a feeling, something of the future, unexpected, uncertain, chaos………the bad kind. Dreams come! Sleep, take me away. One sheep, two sheep, three white sheep cloaked in woolen fleece. Not yet, the effect, strong, but of what? Four, five, six white sheep, goat, sheep and goat, and lamb! Fancy! Nightlines, keep me awake, feeling heavy, want to ease, let me-

He often had insomnia; some nights he would count the hours pass by as night brightened into dawn. This happened several times, during his stay at Port Blair and also during his stay in Hut Bay. Now that he was on the verge of a metamorphosis, he would often have visions of what he was like before, and he tried to emulate that. He tried to emulate that rock-star idol that he was during his school-time with an entourage of students and teachers alike that almost thought he was God. They had seen a side of him he was now getting rid of, not totally but in some manner that made space for accommodating the idealism that he was now feeling to embody. He had read enough to practice now, to talk of it, to be indulged in it, but the problem was not with his self now, though there was trouble but it was vestigial in nature; the problem now he felt with the other, the Lacanian Other, Master. The mirror image was melting for him; he needed something stronger. He needed a more productive and ambiguous other. He was almost so deeply engrossed into philosophy that he almost forgot his role as a writer, but he was revived and reminded of that every time he took the ship to Port Blair from Hut bay or the other way round because it gave him time to think, time to think like a writer, an artist. As he made that ten hour journey amidst the wilderness of the blue seas, he felt himself lost in the magnanimity of the sea, at the mercy of it. And all that logic in his mind, all that acquired consciousness just stayed in his mind, stagnated, and all he could think of, then, was creation, and wrote, and by God he wrote!

-Looking at the seas, the immensity of it makes me remember the Tsunami of the twenty sixth of December. I would have been a small child by then, I remember the day before the day before the day, when me and my mother were up all night during Christmas eve in our little shop that looked over the church, and boy the business sure boomed then. And the next day was sleeping till the afternoon, but boy, the next day……………that was sure to remember. Not in entirety, but bits and pieces of it, yes. I remember………… I remember all right……… A shrill feeling of sleep breaking, as I slept on the room in the upper floor, my mother, panicky, shoves me out of the bed and, ready to run out of the house. The lights I felt were going out and now, but I was just awaked and it was a rather right morning, and so the problem with the lights was a problem of my own. I was dreaming, dreaming before this nightmare came to life! And lo! I ran, took like a flight through the flight of stairs. I couldn’t feel anything, couldn’t feel why I was running, just that I was running, and when I rushed out through the back door, I saw the minaret of the mosque, breaking off, its tiny pieces of rocks falling and drumming the tin roofs of the other houses and ours. But still I couldn’t figure out, what on Earth was it? A field, not far from my house, but just in front of it, I went to; rushing, and as I rushed, I saw my aunt, her leg skid of and she, falling flat, like water balloon thrown with intent down on the ground, with a slosh. My brother helped her up, too far I was to help myself, and she using the drum that stood beside her as a support, took up and ran again till she was on the open ground. I.ran too………… I ran too! Nothing felt peculiar about the ground beneath, didn’t feel it shaking, though I was later told that it was shaking, shaking on a Richter scale of an eight pointer………………that’s supposed to be pretty bad. I’m running and running and all the while I feel like I am dreaming, dreaming, but in absolute realism. I get to the ground, warm green grass beneath me now and oh, silly me, in all the unexpected sudden haste I forgot the footwear, most of us did, and we ran with naked feet, the asphalt of the road abrasive to our skinny soles, but all that didn’t matter. What mattered was the fear, panic, animalistic, exhilarating and frightening. It was frightening, the earthquake, the earthquake that I never got to see, got to feel got to be really frightened about, but I was frightened by it. When things came to a more examinable standstill, I came to realize that we were just hit by an earthquake. I woke up from my dream; it wasn’t a dream at all. Then my brothers heard from somewhere that we had been hit by a tidal wave as well. We didn’t know yet it was called Tsunami. Though we lived very near to the seaside, we were miraculously saved by it. Because in our side, it was not that stronger, and then we went to the Marina park, only to find that the concrete pride of Islands had been tattered like a rag doll in a to-be delinquent child’s hands. The concrete blocks of the once-pavement along the seaside lay hither and thither, and the waters had reached the Government’s Girl’s school and the stadium nearby. The destruction caused by the waters was like a deep painful painting, something to be just looked at felt lost in, something that didn’t seem real and something that sort of had music to it, a sad ballad theme, chaconne…………… All that loss to be pondered over this kind of tragedy… so alienated from the generality of life and now I was thrown in this sphere like the theater of the absurd and then I thought of those who had lost their lives in this tragedy, what they would make of all of it. But all that didn’t cross my mind until later, for then I was just a boy, just a boy, a boy, foe then it was just a jolly good story to tell my friends and a hot topic to talk about once the school would reopen, how cruel is innocence? This innocence of ignorance, this not knowing and coming to terms with the effect of such an abysmal apocalypse, and be pleased with the innocent world built, a corrupt world built of purity. This is why corruption is, because we want to be pure, religiously pure, politically pure, pure with censorship, fools………fools……………fools-

-Wrong wrong………………… Poetry is about not having to think at all; it is about writing visions, ideas, symbols and those symbols come out naturally. Pass me the weed; roll it neatly in that fine soft paper, oh yeah, don’t let it get to waste, crush it, no, gently, don’t destroy the scent, the taste, the drag. Roll it roll it roll it allllll the way upp, and now lick \*slurp \*slurp \*Slurp, and then close the paper, and what have I got me? A nice fine marijuana cigarette; a drag a day keeps the doctors away, I say. Light it up, now, gotta light it up now, puff puff, smoke, thick fine fully puffy white smoke, puff puff. Great, now wait……………

Ah, not enough, my hands, they are looking like a lotus with five open petals and the arm, like a stalk, stuck to it, where is that domestic acid I made out of absolute alcohol, stiff pain and a little of leftover acid, and now…………… on for the hallucinogens.

Girls………………girls, one at a time, I need to choose which out of my three tongues do I use to kiss you. What is that? Are those scales on my back? No, it is your back, back, front, turtle hump. Rumps………look at the rump on you, girl! Girl! I don’t need girls, muse! Buttocks, the fine line between them, what do they call them; what is the analogy of a buttock, what is its literature? The buttock is the most symbolic organ of human being. It represents nothing but conflict, the conflict between the seemingly alike yin and the yang, and the line between, it represents the conflict between the waste and the good; the waste is wasted, excreted and the good is retained, that is the ultimate conflict of life, which is what we are all here for! Inclusion and exclusion, the circle-inside it and everything that is ‘outside’ of it; we are all asses, we have our points of conflicts, the yin and the yang, the fine line that divides us, the process to excrete the waste and retain the rest; we are anuses! My head, my head, is filled with colors, bright, and diamonds, reflecting those colors, so many colors, but one among it, dominant, purple, the majestic, the sublime all that is purple, is sublime; Purple lights, purple darkness, purple brightness, purple dimness, all-purple, and thoughts purple and faith purple and belief purple and friends purple but love? Love; red, red like desire, like fire, like blood or the suffering of blood, the passion is red, sin is red, colors, white, peace, freedom, orgasm, purity, one next moment-white. And black, soon to come, black out, not yet, more to see. Flashes, hazes, dazed and confused, like the movie, only worse, only better. More clearer, more inebriated, more muteness, more noise, at different levels, different dimensions, different axes, in many parallel universes, and I feel them all at once, for once, I am complete, not for long, not while after it dies down, the intoxication, the breeze of suddenness a realization, a truth, I am not one, I am many, and there are many in me. Not one, not two but many, and I see them all now, feel them hear them, am them. I talk to them, I wave to them, and they talk to me and wave to me, but I think I am talking and waving to myself. What is my-self? My and self; self and I. And these other people, other me? Do I see things that are not there or things that are there but we do not see? I see colors, aren’t colors always there? Where is my blood going? I feel it get hot, flow all, to one side of my body………… I’m falling, falling……… \*thud, no, I am sitting, feeling weird, feeling I just fell. Long, long is the time I have to live in this life. We live even after we die; we die when the music stops. Wait for me, kiss of life; firm on the lips of a child, kiss me, bring me to life. I see you, I see the start of life, bright and winged and fair and glowing, like an angel, like all that is holy coming closer to all that is profane. Holy is profane, one word for the other, changed, misplaced, in history, in language, in time. Twinkling stars, fallen on the floors, near the feet of the angel, as she descends from heaven; do I see God? Do I see goddess? The perfect form of beauty that will take me up in her arms and show me true bliss; take me. A man, pathetic; a woman simply marvelous; but the man is more general, something a woman will never be. It’s like the pagan symbol of masculine and feminine. Woman is the inverted triangle, in want of a base; man is the triangle, with the base. Triangles, squares, circles…………so many of them! I shudder I shatter I falter I fail; blackout. –

He always really justified to hallucinate himself to blackout. He had never used cocaine, heroin or meth though. He always made sure he would use hallucinogen. He desperately wanted to self psychoanalyze himself which he read was near impossible for any living person to do himself. To get to the deeper aspects of one’s conscious personality, there needs to be an unbiased, un-opinionated force without any pre-conceived notions or reasons that were relative to the self. Since the force that went into prodding the consciousness of Rahil, that of his own self was biased obviously, he had the idea of using his dreams and day dreams caused by hallucinations to examine symbols through its semiotic study and find out what his actual self was. This ‘self-obsession’ of Rahil in its true sense came from a loss of care of the outer self, that of his physicality. As a result, because of his lack of attention towards his outer personality, all his force, so to say, went towards enrichment and analysis of his inner self.

He was not very frequent with hallucinogen for he knew the consequences of over-usage. He was highly critical of the brainwashing that smoking was bad and that drugs were bad for heath. He was highly appreciative of the legalization of weed in Amsterdam and the much bigger movement to legalize weed in the United States. In his opinion, smoking weed was no different than having sex or eating chocolates. On the other hand, he found smoking actually good for heath. On cross examining himself, he saw that this assertion came from his complete denunciation of science as a form of logic. To him, philology was logic at its purest form, untarnished and untouched by any form of perception, science, faith, ideology or any form of subjectivity. He had many post-modal notions.

-More, more… reverie more… Believe me you, more… I cannot…more… think back about those befuddled days…daze… yes, how I remember and forget them, those times… those times that opened my eyes to the worldliness of the world in the terminology of Heidegger. I will not reveal all that I know for it would be too complex. How? When? Why? Questions arise…to which I have no answers… withal can I be someone who knows? I do not believe. I just…am. A bully of the mind and a bereft soul… within there is none. Take it or leave it. Which one shall it be? I am no one to answer. Time is…time comes-