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May 2012

Live
encounters

Dear Readers,

This edition highlights the burning issue of slavery – human trafficking and exploitation. **The Special Report by Saskia Wishart of NOT FOR SALE (NFS)**, an international anti-slavery movement, reveals the extent to which slavery has infiltrated society all over the world. But on the flip side it also showcases the magnificent efforts by NFS in rescuing and rehabilitating victims of slavery.

And in the following pages we offer you a spread of some of the best writing...

- Hot off the Press we have a Chapter from Harish Nambiar's book - **Defragmenting India - Riding a Bullet through the Gathering Storm** published by Sage Publications.
- Natalie Wood's **Hitchhikers' Guide to The Galilee** is a fine travel piece which includes a great recipe for Passover Bagels!
- **The Other Half** is by Welsh poet and writer Jemima Fincken, wife of Mike Fincken, a Captain who sails with Greenpeace
- Terry McDonagh's poem, **Hands**, leaves one thinking...
- Photo - Gallery exhibits Jill Gocher's stunning photographs of **Bali's Buddhists in the hamlet of Budakeling.**
- **Death of a Star**, a disturbing poem by Arjun Bagga
- Candess M Campbell's **Empowering your Intuitive Self** is a must read.
- **Good Friday in Lovina** is a novella by Mark Ulyseas.

We request you to kindly pass this free magazine on to everyone you know.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas
Publisher/Editor

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NOT FOR SALE - international anti-slavery movement special report by Saskia Wishart

She works for Not For Sale and began combating the issue of human trafficking in 2008 while living in S.Africa; assisted in the founding of Not For Sale South Africa, at which time she ran the "Red Card Campaign" focusing on raising awareness about sex trafficking and the 2010 World Cup; organized a countrywide Stop Paying for Slavery tour and using the skill she learned through NFS training; her team went on to identify or assist with the cases of 52 victims of Human Trafficking. 2011 Saskia moved to the Netherlands and is currently working in Amsterdam on an innovative social enterprise that seeks to empower vulnerable women through skills-training that focuses on creating dignified employment for survivors of exploitation. <http://www.notforsalecampaign.org>



Defragmenting India - Riding a Bullet through the Gathering Storm by Harish Nambiar

Nambiar is a journalist with Reuters in Mumbai. He has been a mainstream English journalist in India since 1990, having begun his career with the Times of India group. He has worked with the Indian Express, the television channel CNBC, and The Telegraph, Kolkata. In the course of his career as a reporter he has covered the 1992-93 communal riots and the serial blasts in Bombay. He has been responsible for several exposés in his stint as an investigative reporter with the Indian Express, specializing in economic offences, including the union housing scam that the Supreme Court of India took up. <http://www.sagepub.in> email: amharish@gmail.com



Hitchhikers' Guide To The Galilee Natalie Wood

Born in Birmingham, U.K. Natalie began working in journalism a month prior to the outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She continued in regional Jewish journalism for more than 20 years and left full time writing to assist her husband open a bargain books business. A year ago, Natalie emigrated to Israel. www.alwayswriteagain.blogspot.com - my.telegraph.co.uk/perfectlywriteinIsrael/



The Other Half Jemima Fincken

Jemima Fincken is a writer and poet born in Wales. She is currently based in London with her husband Mike Fincken, a captain who sails and works with the international environmental NGO, Greenpeace. They are recently married and are expecting their first baby in early Summer followed by 'plans to run back to the wilds to settle as a family'. <http://www.jemimaroberts.wordpress.com>



Hands Terry McDonagh

Poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh has published four collections of poetry; a play; a book of letters, novel and poetry for children. His work has been translated into Indonesian and German, funded by Ireland Literature Exchange. **In the Light of Bridges - Hamburg Fragments** is his latest book that was launched in Hamburg on 26th April, 2012. www.terry-mcdonagh.com www.podcasts.ie www.killedan-and-nowhere-else.com



Photo Gallery - Bali Jill Gocher

Bali based international photographer has spent her life exploring and enjoying Asian cultures. Her work has appeared in National Geographic, Time, International Herald Tribune, Asia Spa, Discovery, Silver Kris and many more. Her books - Asia's legendary Hotels, Periplus, Bali- Island of Light -Marshall Cavendish, Indonesia - Islands of the Imagination. Periplus, Australia - the land down under - Times Editions, Singapore, Indonesia - the last paradise - Times Editions. She has held exhibitions in Singapore, Kathmandu, and Bali. Email: jillgocher@gmail.com



Death of a Star Arjun Bagga

Oscillating between low and high life, Arjun ran his bakery business for nine years but landed in Mumbai and joined movies. Known more for the fights that he's had with his colleagues on set and the times he's been chased by the cops from dance bars, he's been a damn good movies guy. He's made a bunch of friends who swear by him and a number of enemies who might want to shove a beer bottle up his rectum. Email: bagga.arjun@gmail.com



Empowering your Intuitive Self Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is an internationally known Intuitive Life Coach, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Seminar leader, Hypnotherapist and Author. She specializes in assisting others to gain their own personal power and to live a life of abundance, happiness and joy. Early 2012 she will be releasing her book 12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine. <http://www.12weekstoselfhealing.com>. You can reach her at <http://www.candesscampbell.com>



Good Friday in Lovina - a novella (wip) Mark Ulyseas

"When I'm not with you, I'm an incomplete man.
Here in the vineyards of Lovina I hope to find myself again, that boy running along the bank of the brown swollen river pregnant with the Bore Tide."
- Krishna searching for Vrindavan
<http://www.marculyseas.wordpress.com> <http://www.coroflot.com/markulyseas>



Did you know that there are more than 30,000,000 slaves in the world today...more than at any other point in human history?

© Not For Sale

Human trafficking is probably the most lucrative business today, generating billions of dollars and impacting humanity across continents. Even little girls are not spared. Many as young as 9 years are sold into prostitution by their own parents .

When I came across the website of NOT FOR SALE (NFS) I was heartened to read that there are people out there willing to rescue and rehabilitate these unfortunate victims of human trafficking.

Live Encounters Magazine thanks Jerry Kim of NFS for responding promptly to our request for data and Saskia Wishart for writing the in depth special report on the fight against human trafficking and exploitation.

From USA to the slums of Asia, abolitionists are fighting a frontline battle against humankind's sordid under belly. News from Southeast Asia and Latin America reveal that parents commonly sell their children so that they can make an improvement on their home or purchase a vehicle or other consumer item. It is said that parents in Albania sold their children to traffickers so that they could buy a color television.

NFS reports that male clients from Japan, China, Korea, and Taiwan drive the demand for young girls who are virgins. In these Asian cultures, sex with a virgin (a minor) is thought to bring good luck to a new business venture.

In the world's largest democracy, India, where nearly 400 million people live on or below the poverty line, slavery is reflected in the hundreds of thousands of bonded labourers who work for little or nothing. Children as young as 6 years can be seen working alongside their parents who are invariably "owned" by the contractor. It is a known fact that these families are trapped in the vicious cycle of debt by borrowing small amounts of money at high interest rates from the contractor. Hence, the loans can never be repaid and the families, sometimes generations, work it off under horrifying conditions.

The arrogant Indian Middle Class perpetuates slavery. One can see young children working for a pittance in the households of the IMC. Sexual, other physical and mental abuse is rife and this is confirmed by the national media whenever a case comes to light.

NOT FOR SALE is an organisation that is inclusive and not exclusive. I was pleasantly surprised to find the following sections on their website that involved the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities.

The **Jewish Abolitionist Movement (JAM)** is created in the belief that the Jewish people have a special role to play when it comes to the work of abolition: freeing slaves and creating a world where survivors can thrive. And who best to understand this than the Jews who had been slaves.

The **Underground Church Network (UCN)** is created in the belief that people of faith have a special role to play when it comes to the work of abolition.

The **International Muslims Abolitionist Movement (IMAM)** is created in the belief that the Muslims have a special role to play when it comes to the work of abolition, because of the example of Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him), who's family, friends and companions personally freed almost 40,000 slaves in his own lifetime, and who dedicated Himself to creating a world where peoples, regardless of race, creed, status or religion can thrive.

Here are links to real life stories of human trafficking.

- [Real Stories from Africa](#)
- [Real Stories from Asia](#)
- [Real Stories from Europe](#)
- [Real Stories from Latin America](#)
- [Real Stories from North America](#)
- [Australia](#)

Please email Jerry Kim - jerry@notforsalecampaign.org - if you want to join NOT FOR SALE's global fight against slavery.



NOT FOR SALE

an anti-slavery movement
that is at the forefront of fighting human trafficking and
exploitation *an exclusive report by Saskia Wishart*

The modern-day slave trade is fast becoming the most lucrative criminal activity on the planet: affecting every population demographic, stealing vulnerable individuals away from their families and into exploitation, commodifying human lives, and leaving victims strapped with insurmountable debts. Active in urban and rural settings, criminals from both highly organised crime networks and low-level crooks make an enormous profit out of the trade of human beings.

The scourge of human trafficking has become one of the most talked about global issues of the day. It is estimated that over 30 million people are living in slavery at this moment. Human trafficking is an issue that has, in recent years, made its way to the forefront of global minds, assisted by mass-media attention and the tireless advocating of social activists.

Not For Sale (NFS), a solutions based anti-trafficking organisation has taken a lead role in the movement to abolish slavery once and for all through the creation of tools that connect business, government, and the grassroots movement in order to incubate and grow social enterprises to benefit enslaved and vulnerable populations.

Not For Sale was founded by David Batstone, a professor of Business at the University of San Francisco, who discovered human trafficking in 'his own backyard'. Batstone read in a local paper that his favourite Indian restaurant was the center of a human trafficking ring that trafficked over 500 people into the United States. His shock at this crime turned into an all-consuming passion that took him around the world where he met many abolitionists who dedicated their lives to addressing modern slavery. Reporting on his experiences, he wrote the book, Not For Sale, and founded the organization to give everyday individuals the opportunity to **take action.**

Not For Sale focuses on cross-sector collaboration with leaders in the movement to design innovative social enterprises that provide new opportunities for survivors of trafficking and change the circumstances of those at-risk to exploitation.



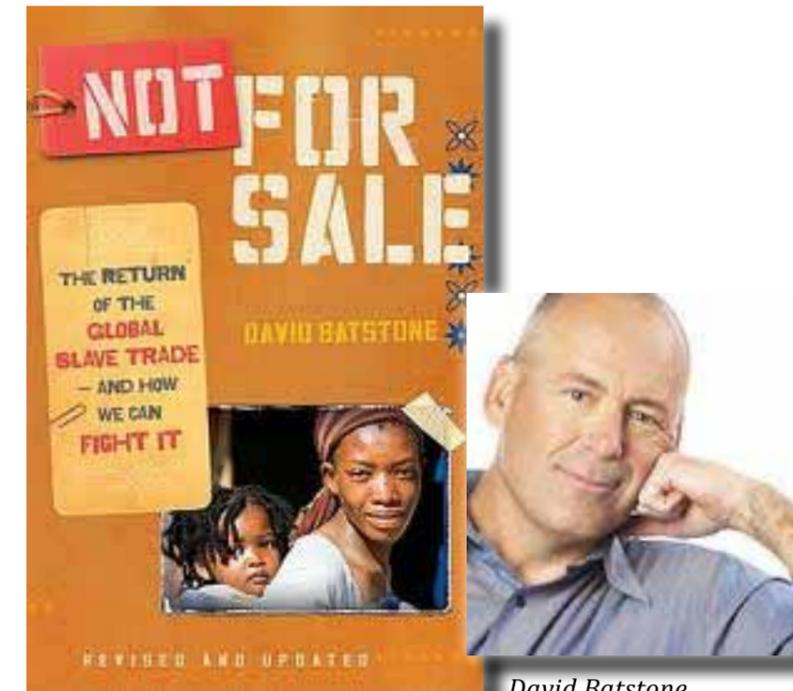
Not for Sale combines technology, intellectual capital, abolitionist groups and a growing network of individuals like yourself – joined together to end slavery in our lifetime.

My own personal journey with the issue of human trafficking started in 2008. I was living in South Africa volunteering with an organization that provided human trafficking prevention programs to at-risk students living in poverty stricken communities. We told kids how they could protect themselves from human trafficking, but instead found they educated us on the truth and reality they were experiencing. At the end of our presentations, hands were raised as the children shared stories of how others had left with recruiters on promises of careers in modeling and domestic work. Those who left were never seen again.

During this time I read **David Batstone's book, Not For Sale**, and realized that the same stories we were hearing in Cape Town were occurring all over the world. I wanted to be part of this global movement to end slavery; I wanted to be equipped to make a difference. I attended the **Not For Sale Investigative Training Academy in San Francisco**, and learned practical skills for identifying cases of human trafficking. I returned to Cape Town and co-founded Not For Sale South Africa. Our first goal was to document and identify human trafficking in a city where previously very few cases had ever been recorded. My work led to the development of relationships with highly placed law enforcement, and the creation of a government supported rapid response protocol to address cases of trafficking. In the course of one year, our team uncovered 45 cases of human trafficking. At the same time, we ran awareness-raising campaigns that spread across the country.

The more victims of human trafficking we identified, the more difficult it became to simply assist with the rescue and placement of individuals. After victims were placed in a government shelter, there was little to offer them in terms of employment. Many women I encountered came from Eastern Europe and South-East Asia. I constantly faced the same challenge: send a woman back to her home country and risk her falling back into exploitation, or push to have her stay in South Africa where without employment opportunities, there was a high risk of her falling back into exploitation. With minimal reintegration programs available, victims seemed to fall into a vicious cycle of exploitation. I knew we needed to move beyond awareness and basic care; thus, the idea of designing and incubating social enterprises through Not For Sale became more and more attractive to me.

But how will social enterprise be used to address this global crime? Not For Sale's research on the issue of human trafficking revealed that this is an economic issue demanding economic solutions. Many victims of human trafficking come from poverty-stricken communities, where those most at-risk - young men and women looking for work - are easily lured away from home by promises



David Batstone

of a brighter future. Most often dreams of a better future never materialize as victims find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt-bondage, violence, and coercion. All the while, traffickers profit from their victim's situation of duress. To address the flow of individuals vulnerable to human trafficking, NFS has begun moving 'upstream' to alter the opportunities for at-risk communities. This enables the dreams of dignified employment and provision for families to be addressed before the lure of traffickers ensnares them in a system of exploitation.

The critical need to stop the cycle of exploitation hit home for me while working on a case involving a 28 year-old woman Ukrainian woman named Elena*. **Elena was trafficked to South Africa**, had her passport taken away, and had been working in a strip club to pay off an outrageous debt. I remember sitting across from her as she told me that she had moved to Switzerland when she was 18 because she had been promised a job as a nanny. **When she arrived, she was given alcohol, and told that she had to entertain men. In a few short weeks she was working in prostitution.** After several months, she was identified as a victim of exploitation and sent back to Ukraine. However, when she arrived home, her family was angry with her. They expected her to return with money and successes. Instead, she returned home with psychological damage from months of abuse. Her father told her to find another job or go live on streets.

A friend of Elena's offered her a position as a dancer in the Dominican Republic. From there, the scenario repeated itself. For ten years Elena had been moved from country to country, always under the same circumstances. She told me that every time she thought things would get better. *"I believed that things could be different," she recounted in broken English, "I didn't think it would happen again."* I was shocked as she showed me her passport, full of stamps. The serious young face of the beautiful woman staring from her passport photograph was entirely unrecognizable to the Elena who sat in front of me. Years of exploitation had stolen her beauty, her youth, and her mind. I faced the harsh reality that if she returned to Ukraine, she would probably not be trafficked again, because after ten years, she was not even profitable for a trafficker anymore. She was so far emotionally and mentally damaged that her best option was to be admitted into a mental health ward.

I left Elena that day, and questioned how this could have happened. How could one person be rescued and re-trafficked so many times? And how can we stop this system of exploitation before we are left with another case like Elena? A month after meeting Elena, I moved to Amsterdam to join NFS in piloting a program to combat the sex trafficking of women through 'upstream' preventative solutions.



HOME delivers nutritious and inexpensive soups to women working behind the windows in Amsterdam's red light district where prostitution has been legalized. First soup tasting © Not For Sale

In Europe, Not For Sale is answering the question of how to stop the flow of victims through a unique social enterprise, **HOME**. This business delivers nutritious and inexpensive soups to women working behind the windows in Amsterdam's red light district where prostitution has been legalized since the year 2000. Originally, when the Netherlands legalized its sex industry, the hope was that by bringing prostitution into the public eye and regulating it, the Dutch government would create a safer environment for prostitutes. Unfortunately, the seedy underworld of organized crime and human trafficking has infiltrated the red light districts across the Netherlands. Approximately 70 percent of the estimated 25,000-30,000 women working in prostitution are foreigners from Eastern Europe and Africa. Not For Sale researched the situation in Amsterdam's red light district and determined that access to healthcare and proper nutrition were two large gaps facing the Eastern European women working in prostitution.

Nikolina* a 26 year-old from Bulgaria told me that when girls first arrive in Amsterdam, everything is arranged by the pimp who brought them. *"You don't speak the language, you don't know what the laws are, you don't know how to buy groceries, and you don't know that there is free health care. When you are with a pimp, all you do is sleep and work."* **Nikolina was able to escape her pimp after 6 months, but 6 years later, is still working in prostitution. I asked her if she would like to do other work, and she replied, yes, definitely. But when I asked her to say what she would like to do, she shrugged. She explained that as a Bulgarian, her working options in the Netherlands are limited. She cannot work in a service industry. Her only option is to be self-employed. She does not have the resources to start her own business, and so she remains in prostitution.**

Not For Sale has developed a holistic approach to addressing potential exploitation by first meeting the nutritional needs of individuals currently working behind the windows in prostitution through the **HOME** soup business, and secondly by partnering with those government entities that provide free healthcare to sex workers. The final step to creating new futures for survivors of exploitation through NFS Amsterdam is the development of a job skill-training program that will give women who were trafficked into the Netherlands the opportunity to learn skills in cooking and catering, and the creation of products that will be sold through HEMA, a department store in the Netherlands that has over 600 distribution points. Not For Sale's targeted efforts to train survivors of exploitation in skilled job training is led by Not For Sale Netherlands Director, Toos Heemskerk. In 2010, Heemskerk conducted in-depth research on the situation of prostitutes in the red light district by

interviewing women from Eastern Europe, particularly those from Hungary. Through her research she discovered that the majority of women coming from Hungary did so through the help of a third-party, and over 35 percent of the women interviewed revealed that they had been trafficked to Amsterdam by a boyfriend or a pimp. More than 90 percent of them felt that the reality of working in prostitution did not meet the expectations of what they had been promised when they left home.

Heemskerk knew for years that Eastern European women were being exploited in Amsterdam, and now she had the data to prove it. Pimps were profiting on the vulnerability of the Hungarian women. One convicted Hungarian pimp made over \$120,000 in seven months by the exploitation of just three women. These women were trapped, working for him through debt-bondage.

Heemskerk now offers skills training to trafficked women as a way to better prepare them for their return to their home country. The meals being served in the red light district provide a platform for women rescued from human trafficking to gain work experience before they are repatriated to their country of origin. During the HOME soup launch in Amsterdam, over 90 women from 15 different nationalities taste-tested the soup. Toos Heemskerk said that during the testing she asked the women to give feedback on soup recipes from their home countries that they would like to try. Heemskerk commented, *"Over the last 16 years I have been approaching the women, telling them that they can come to us if they need help. Over and over again, I have been offering my help. But now, when I go to the windows, I am asking the women to help us. The difference is remarkable! You can see their excitement as they get to share recipes of soups from their home countries."* The concept of **HOME** soups is that we are providing a taste of home for those girls who are alone and far away from their families; providing comfort in a cup of soup.

One of the first customers of HOME soup, a young Bulgarian girl, welcomed those delivering the soup. She told us that she was having a terrible day, had just been verbally abused by a john, and was so thankful to receive something good. She was more than happy to buy a pre-paid card, which guaranteed her four more soups for a low price. The next customer of **HOME** was an older woman who had already tried to exit prostitution once, but explained to Heemskerk that nobody would hire her. She expressed fear of what the future would hold for her. This basic service of selling soups gives room for people like Heemskerk to better understand the needs of women who wish to leave prostitution.

MOVEMENT TO ABOLISH SLAVERY



Amsterdam © Not For Sale



SASKIA WISHART



Toos Heemskerk found that many times when women tried to exit a situation of human trafficking, they were not only met with violent opposition from their trafficker but there was also very few services in their country of origin to assist with their reintegration. Heemskerk saw that after the women were free, they often lacked the opportunity and restoration to seek dignified employment. Research has shown that over 60 percent of human trafficking victims end up re-trafficked, due to a lack of reintegration programs and employment opportunities.

Vera is one such girl whose story shows how difficult it can be for a woman to exit exploitation and return to her home country. Vera was open and engaging with everyone she met. To Toos Heemskerk, she appeared to be “free” and working on her own. Vera spoke openly with the police officers and social workers, and was considered a legal, self-employed prostitute. In truth, Vera was working for a pimp who encouraged her to maintain this illusion of freedom.

When the pimp needed to return to Vera’s home country of Hungary, he allowed her to accompany him so that she could visit her child and family. The visit was supposed to be for several weeks but after only three days, the pimp suddenly cut it short and insisted they return to Amsterdam. He informed Vera that they had to leave, and when she resisted, he threatened her with violence.

Later that night, the pimp returned with a gang and attacked Vera. Her father and brother-in-law tried to defend her, but the gang overpowered them. They severely beat Vera and her family. Vera went to the police to take legal action against her pimp. The police tried to persuade her that this was a waste of time. Yet Vera courageously persisted, and finally the police brought her pimp to trial. Vera testified against the man in court and he was sentenced to prison. However, after only two months, he was released. Vera could no longer live with her family who feared the pimp would seek revenge. With no money, no job prospects, and no safe place to live – her future and the future of her young child looked extremely bleak. Hungary has little to offer victims of modern slavery. **Desperate, Vera was forced to return to prostitution to provide for her child. She recounted her story to Heemskerk upon her return to Amsterdam, and shrugged off any hope of leaving prostitution. Her main concern now is for the safety of her child.**

To prevent women from ending up in Vera’s situation, the movement against slavery must address the root cause of why people are trafficked. Poverty and lack of employment are two factors that drive at-risk people into the situation of extreme exploitation in the first place.

This is why Not For Sale has chosen to address the trafficking of vulnerable individuals from economically depressed communities. Alongside job skill training in Western Europe and creating opportunities to stop the flow of women from Romania and other Eastern European countries, NFS recently began a farm expansion in **Romania** that will provide jobs to fifty survivors of human trafficking. On this farm, NFS plans to grow a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. These products will be distributed in Western Europe through the Netherlands operations.

It can be hard for those living in western countries to grasp the depth of abuse and exploitation occurring in the hidden world of human trafficking. But for individuals working in the anti-trafficking movement on the ground in Eastern Europe, stories of slavery are all too common. In Romania, NFS’ regularly repatriates victims of human trafficking from all over the world; the men, women, and children who cross their doorstep on a regular basis report harrowing stories of slavery in both sexual exploitation and forced labour.

One story was that of Marie, a young girl who was first sold into prostitution at the age of nine. For six years, Marie experienced traumatizing abuse and exploitation at the hands of her traffickers and was moved to multiple countries throughout Europe. At the age of 15, Marie was rescued from forced prostitution by authorities and repatriated through NFS Romania. There she received counseling, the healing power of acceptance, and the experience of a new family. After several years, Marie finished her high school education and went on to be accepted into university. NFS Romania says that each case of human trafficking is different. “We work with real people who have thoughts, needs, fears, and hopes.” Through their re-integration program, NFS Romania looks to provide individual care to each survivor they encounter.

But there are still many women in desperate economic situations that may choose to leave home with traffickers, hoping that a life in the West will provide their families with a better future. Presently Romania is the largest source country for migrant sex workers on the European continent. While Not For Sale Romania works tirelessly with survivors of slavery to provide support and education to better assist with survivors reintegration process, after-care and repatriation are not the only answers to address the global crime of human trafficking. Preventing exploitation and disrupting the flow of vulnerable women from Eastern European countries to cities like Amsterdam are keys to creating long-term change in the anti-trafficking movement.

MOVEMENT TO ABOLISH SLAVERY



NOT
FOR SALE

Together, we can end slavery in our lifetime.

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While Not For Sale expands their work in Romania, they are also developing relationships with agricultural co-ops in other Eastern European countries to broaden the economic opportunities in at-risk areas. In this way, NFS holistically addresses the injustice of human trafficking across multiple sectors. From the rescue and repatriation of survivors; to the provision of legal services, health-care, and job skill training, to the creation of employment opportunities and betterment of economic situations, Not For Sale is creating a unique and innovative system to end the modern day slave trade.

Today, I was having breakfast with a friend of mine, Sofia, who is from Ukraine. I recounted to her the story of Elena, the Ukrainian girl who had been trafficked for ten years and ended up in South Africa. Sofia was shocked that this had happened to a girl from her country. The realization hit us both, had my friend been born in another city, to another family, she may have ended up in a situation much like Elena. Instead of eating pancakes for breakfast in her cozy flat in Amsterdam, she may have been servicing men in a brothel with no hope of escape. Sofia looked at me and offered to share some Ukrainian soup recipes for the HOME soup business. Sofia's act of sharing soup recipes may not be the typical way to get involved in ending modern slavery, but it could have a wonderful impact on a young girl behind the window. Talking with Sofia reminded me that we all have a role we can play in taking action against modern slavery. Each act, no matter how small, should not be discounted. As the movement grows, so do the creative ways that people can take what they know, or the skills they have, and channel them to seek justice for those who are enslaved.

If you are wondering what you can do to become a part of the movement to end slavery, please know that whoever you are, and no matter where you are in the world, there is something that can be done. Tools like **EMPOWER**, give people individualized opportunities to take action and abolish slavery. Not For Sale provides **academies** to train individuals to become smart activists, and hosts a yearly **Global Forum** on Human Trafficking, where leaders from around the world share solutions and incubate incredible ideas for long-term change. While there are many terrible things about the issue of human trafficking, there is also great hope, not only for girls like Marie from Romania who is embracing a new future, but also for the next generation of men, women, and children, who will avoid the trap of exploitation through the betterment of their situation by the tireless efforts of organizations like Not For Sale.

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Thank you for enabling Not For Sale to work around the globe to create new futures for vulnerable communities and survivors of modern-day slavery. See the incredible outcomes of your support.



CLICK ON ABOVE PIC to view the Impact Report.

For all enquiries kindly email
jerry@notforsalecampaign.org

Defragmenting INDIA

Riding a Bullet through the Gathering Storm

Hot off the Press

An excerpt from Chapter 17,
A Drunken RSS Man in Jassema,
from **Defragmenting India**,
Riding a Bullet through the Gathering Storm by Harish Nambiar
reprinted in *Live Encounters Magazine* by special permission of the author
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This was typical Rohan. He was a great source of street language for me. His earthiness and the taste of cordite in his language when he was excited, while narrating his subaltern experiences, always opened up new fronts in my heading-to-genteel-but-do-not-wan-to-give-up-subaltern consciousness.. I am acutely aware of a lack of familiarity, an easy familiarity in any case, with that kind of directness and grit of street language. Even when I knew the words, it was a passive vocabulary. I was never confident about it. Because where I grew up, the language was different. South Gujarat's pidgin Hindi, or the biting sourness of its many Gujarati swear words, I knew. It, however, did not constitute a subaltern language on its own right, unlike Bombay's street language which is more layered, complex, rich and with polyglot influences that give it greater tonal range. Besides, the regular usage in real time, in real situations rarely happened with me.

Rohan's colourful narrations often brought to mind Ben Johnson's quote about how normal language cannot ever match the directness of street language, 'nothing brings out the futility of argument so directly as the street word jawing.'

"*Hai beedu log...kaisa hai?* Fucking biking trip and all *haaN*" Tony interjected as he invaded the table from behind me. Hugs and handshakes over, he sat down apologising for being late etc. Jassema was getting noisy by the hour. Not a boisterous noise, but conversational noise steadily thickening, punctuated occasionally by a raised voice, slowly rising like a palpable mist right in the centre of Jassema.

I introduced Rohan to Tony.

"*He is also a Chembur ka Chokra,*" I said.

"*Arrey kya baat hai, kidhar?*" Rohan asked Tony.

"*Apun Chheda Nagar ka hai.*"

"*I am from Maitri Park, yaar.*"

Tony then said that a common friend, Jagdish, had gone off to Sawantwadi on a sales trip. He had called, and Tony told him I was in town. Jagdish said he would try to reach as soon as possible. Sawantwadi was the southern-most district of Maharashtra, edging Goa, and Jagdish was a sales representative for Godrej, an FMCG major.



“Loretta will be coming too.” Loretta was Tony’s wife, and the better of half of a demon dancer couple.

While we chatted about this and that, Rohan said he would go off to check the internet. Besides, he wanted to call up home.

It was at that moment that a man called out to Tony from across the bar. Tony turned, went up to him, and they chatted there for some time. After a few minutes, Tony’s friend, Nagaraj, joined us at our table. He had been beering for sometime, and it showed.

“Hello, I am Nagaraj.”

“I am Harish.”

As we started talking, Nagaraj decided to check some of his interests against mine. He asked me if I knew of somebody. I said no, I did not.

“Arrey, how can you not know? You have not heard of him. He is Bangalore’s top underworld don.”

“Oh,” I said.

“Tony told me you are a crime reporter. You should know about him, no?”

I told Nagaraj that I had given up crime reporting long back. And was currently on a bike tour and this was the last leg. We were headed for Bombay. Tony winked at me, sitting next to Nagaraj across the table, perhaps enjoying my embarrassment, and my attempt to switch the topic.

“Oh, accha.”

The TV was on at Jassema. The chatter was rising. The quaint bar’s bric-a-brac lined on its walls, huge shells, old bottles of old liquor or vintage wine, all seemed to be placed there to ensure that the warmth stayed inside the bar. Nagaraj abruptly turned the topic.

“What is happening in Gujarat is really sad. Inhuman.”

“Yes. I have not been following the news, though.”

“But you know, it is all the fault of the leadership. The Muslims never had a good leader.”

Nagaraj was serious, I realised.

“Why do you say that?” I was not in the mood to do much talking. Besides, Nagaraj seemed to be just looking for something to argue about.

“Look, is it not true that they have remained uneducated for so many years now. They want to continue to live in the dark ages. They do not want to adopt population control. Why? Because their religion does not allow it. They want to marry more than one woman. Why? Because their religion allows it. They want to have separate laws for their people, why? Because their religion says so.”

Tony’s cell phone rang, he excused himself, and got up. Jassema by now was not amenable to soft telephone conversations.

“You seem to be talking like the RSS,” I said, mostly to wiggle out of the conversation, and yet not seem unwilling to talk.

“No. No. But what do you have against the RSS? I love the RSS. Have you been with the RSS?”

“No,” I said. I was getting a distinct feeling that the conversation might get out of hand. I tried to douse the chat with monosyllables.

“No No. I have been with the RSS. In Belgaum. I was good yaar. I was leader material.”

“Accha,” I said. It would have been better if we talked about his life and achievements than RSS.

“They build character. They teach you to be proud of our culture. They do a lot of social work.”

“Yes, I know about their social work. In fact in Kandla, when it was hit by a cyclone, I saw many RSS volunteers who moved around helping people. They also carried kerosene and burnt the rotting bodies they found. They did good work there.” I realised I was fighting in our conversation like somebody trying to get rid of a gum that is stuck to the seat of one’s pants.

Nagaraj went quiet. I was relieved. Tony came back, and said that Jagdish would not make it. He would have to check into a hotel in Kudal, a small town mid-way between Sawantwadi and Goa. He must have hurried, realized he would still not make it in time anyways, and decided to check into a hotel there for the night. But he told Tony to see if he could persuade us, Rohan and me, to reach Kudal. Whatever the time, so we can meet.

“Why don’t you go to Kudal. It will be easier to reach Bombay from there. It is only 100 kilometres from here, besides it will be a peaceful ride in the night. The way is safe. He wants to meet you,” Tony said.

“Why not order something for me here first. Our man Rohan should be coming. I will check with him. After all he has to do the riding, and we have had a tiring day.”

Tony ordered a chicken kafrial for us. Special orders to Thomas got us the best that was made that day in Goa. Rohan joined us just then.

“You are a secularist,” Nagaraj interjected all of a sudden. He probably felt left out of the commotion at the table, and was still trying to hold on to our rather skewed discussion.

“No I am a journalist.” I told him.

“Yes, yes, that is the same, na?” My subtle attempt at setting the record straight was met with unusual fury. Nagaraj smacked it straight back into my face.

Tony heard that, and started laughing. Nagaraj briefly jolted into alertness, and then slipped back into a pensive mood.



“But this is serious,” he said, “We have to solve this problem.”

“Which one?” I asked.

“This Hindu Muslim one.”

I was getting exasperated with the scattershot talk. We were not making much headway. There was no cogency; Jassema was not very conducive to a serious discussion on the merits of the RSS or the Hindu Muslim problem on a Friday night. But, Nagaraj did not see it that way. The beer must have been good.

In the meantime, Rohan and I decided we would move on to Kudal. It was better that way, because then we could reach Bombay the next night. Otherwise, we would have to spend another night away from home.

“One more beer?” I asked Rohan.

He refused. He had to ride, and did not want to drink anymore. And we would have to leave soon. It was already 11.00 in the night.

Having decided to ride into the night, I snapped back into alertness. Or so I thought. I thought I should reward Nagaraj with a decent closure, since he too sensed that we were planning to leave.

“So what are you in the RSS?”

“Nothing. I left. They prefer brahmins, so I left. I could not move up the hierarchy.”

We ordered dinner, and moved out into the road where our motorcycle was parked. While dinner was being readied, Rohan and I packed our bags back on to the carrier of our Bullet. Nagaraj slipped back into a pensive mood. He had a faraway, glazed look as he stared into his beer mug.

We had dinner, and the conversation was now mostly between Tony, Rohan and me. Tony was a Syrian Christian from Kerala married to a Goan Catholic. They were neighbours in Bombay, Loretta and Tony. After some years in Bombay with the Times of India’s response department, he had chosen to move to Goa and handle the paper’s marketing in the state. The Times did not have an edition in Goa, but there was a tag-along Goa supplement in the Bangalore edition of the paper that was distributed in Goa. Tony had had several years in Goa’s easygoing life. And was beginning to feel that he might lose the professional edge if he remained pickled in the salubrious state’s famed susegad, the Portuguese word that was often used to convey the state’s all pervasive take-it-easy policy. The locals often hated it, the tourists loved it. It was much like the exotica of a country peddled only among the outsiders. Goans always fought the use of the word to describe their state by others. They were only sensitive to all its negative connotations; laziness, lack of work ethics, general stupor. Those who use it, mean it in its more positive form: easy going, relaxed, and unhurried.

“So how is your sister?” I enquired. Tony’s sister was a teacher. She had married a Bangladeshi Muslim and had moved to Dacca.

“She is fine. Making money. Teaching is very lucrative there in Bangladesh, yaar.”

Some more chitchat, and it was time to say goodbye. Nagaraj had slunk away from the conversation like an unfairly defeated argument. I felt I should not let him feel that I was not attentive to his ideas. So after the goodbyes were over, I asked Nagaraj what was the solution to the Hindu-Muslim problem.

“Should we pack them off to Pakistan?” I was hoping it was a funny question and Nagaraj would get to score the clincher before we parted.

“If my brother is mad, I do not throw him out of my house. Do I?”

He looked at me defiantly. The booze, whatever other feelings he was slowly churning in his head, the various ideas that were randomly laid out on the table by him, all coalesced into a look of deep pain. His eyes were speckled in fierce glints of pain and alarm. It was as if he was actually living with the situation of his metaphor of the family and the deranged brother.

The drunken RSS man suddenly jerked me back. All of a sudden I felt sympathy, even empathy for him. He was certainly not a man to be judged that night. He spoke randomly, made some reductionist ideological points from the RSS perspective, but so randomly, jerkily and above all disconnectedly, that I did not take him seriously. He was also not somebody who was much of an ideologue. But that parting shot from him made me look at him in a light different from what he had seemed inside Jassema that night. It was when he used the family simile for the Hindu-Muslim situation that he seemed to have come into his own.

We finally wheeled into a hotel in Kudal. We could not locate the hotel where Jagdish had checked in, and Rohan just rolled into the first hotel with an open gate he saw. We were dead on arrival, the night out in Goa had ensured that. Another tough ride was ahead of us; we were still about 400 kilometres away from home, though we had exceeded our target 350 kilometre ride from Mangalore by a clean 100 kilometres. This ensured an unhurried last lap.

[DEFRAGMENTING INDIA](#)

[Riding a Bullet through the Gathering Storm](#)

[HARISH NAMBIAR Journalist, Reuters, Mumbai, India](#)

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Hitchhikers' Guide To The Galilee

One thing's clear. If you want to avoid Israeli honey pots at Passover, you stay at home and grumble that you've missed one helluva party!

So it's worthwhile making a large packed lunch loaded with your favourite seasonal delicacies and then hitting the road early before everyone you know has woken up!

Last year, we queued for hours at the famous Rosh Hanikra grottoes. This time we strayed barely east from Karmiel to the Jordan Valley Park where the week-long festivities were in full swing for hundreds of Jews and Arabs, along with foreign Christian pilgrims, enjoying the day together under a springtime sun.

Who wouldn't want to play at a resort on the shores of a stretch of water renowned since biblical times but which now boasts campsites, picnic and barbecue areas, idyllic walks and a chance to kayak down the scary bits?

Then there's respite for the Christian devout, as a mere few hundred yards from the main park lies the tranquil archaeological site of Bethsaida with its stunning view of Lake Kinneret - **'The Sea of Galilee'**.

Modern research reveals that Bethsaida - **'House of the Fisherman'** - was probably a fortified city known as **'Zer'**, mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, but also where Christians believe that Jesus performed some of his most important miracles.

No wonder that during our amble around the site, we were accompanied for a time by a party of nuns from a Far Eastern order, demure in dove-grey habits and mysteriously-shaped headgear, large enough to be recycled as fruit baskets!

But our day had started at **Korazim**, a town occupied at intervals until as late as the 20th century, whose restored remains include the ruins of an ancient synagogue with a facade strikingly familiar to anyone who has visited one in Europe. We found the site sublimely quiet and after our tour, we sat under the generous shade of large tree to enjoy an enormous picnic before heading to the park.

However our delightful **tiyul** (trip) ended on a curiously personal note: We were leaving Bethsaida with a view to breaking our homeward journey at Capernaum (**Kfar Nahum**) when a couple of boys in their early teens knocked on the car window.

Somehow we understood that they needed a lift to Tiberius - a favourite place of mine. So we exchanged covert glances - who could resist two such sweet faced **yeshiva** (Talmudic) students? - and invited them to jump in.

Kfar Nahum could wait for the next holiday. After a short journey, we dropped our new friends in town to walk their final few steps back home. Meanwhile we joined more jostling throngs - this time on the shore-front - for the best cuppa tea in town!

* Many *Live Encounter* readers know observant Jews eat **matza** (unleavened crackers) at the ritual Passover **seeder** meal. We had a wonderful evening this year with a friend, who like us, has emigrated to Israel from England.

But what about the rest of the week? Below I share a popular recipe for savoury rolls made from matza meal which are great served warm for a mid-week breakfast after being popped in the microwave oven for a minute. But they are even better when split and served with a favourite filling as part of an outdoor lunch. I republish this with acknowledgements to Cooks.com - but there are many other versions available on the web.

PASSOVER BAGELS

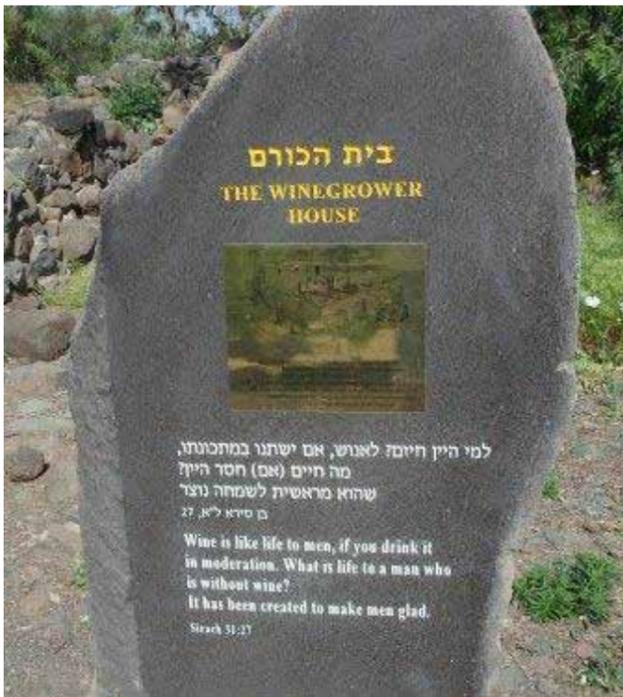
2 cups matza meal
1 tbsp. sugar
1 cup water
1/2 cup oil
4 eggs

Combine matza meal with sugar. Bring oil and water to a boil. Add to matza meal and mix well. Beat in eggs thoroughly, one at a time. With moistened hands, shape into rolls or bagels and place on well greased baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 50 minutes. Makes 12 rolls or bagels.

B'tei avon!



Korazim pic © Natali Wood



Bethsaida pic © Natali Wood



Tiberius pic © Natali Wood

Jemima Fincken, a writer and poet born in Wales, is now based in London with her husband Mike Fincken, a captain who sails and works with the international environmental NGO, Greenpeace. They are recently married and are expecting their first baby in early Summer followed by 'plans to run back to the wilds to settle as a family'.

Mike's job means that he spends half the year away, 'there is always a certain wow-factor surrounding Mike's job when people find out...' Jemima says, '...and in echo, he feels very lucky to be doing a job that he loves, and work that he believes in...but the curiosity is two-fold: how is it for me?, they ask, how do I 'do' it, how do I 'cope' with him being away so much of the time? what is life like as a sailor's love?'

Setting sail

Mike and I first met on the Greenpeace ship, Esperanza, in the UK Winter of 2003. I was a volunteer onboard - dividing my time between deckhand and assistant cook; Mike joined as Second Mate.

I remember lucidly that first trip on the Esperanza. Tall and slim, with springs in his limbs, Mike was the ship's sprite - light in spirit and in stature. He was also known as the 'weatherman' - on account of his uncanny accuracy with his meteorological predictions. I can picture him now, stood on the bridge, clad in a chequered shirt and marginally too short jeans - both retrieved from the secondhand clothes cupboard onboard - kicking his heels from side to side, in a bid to keep warm.

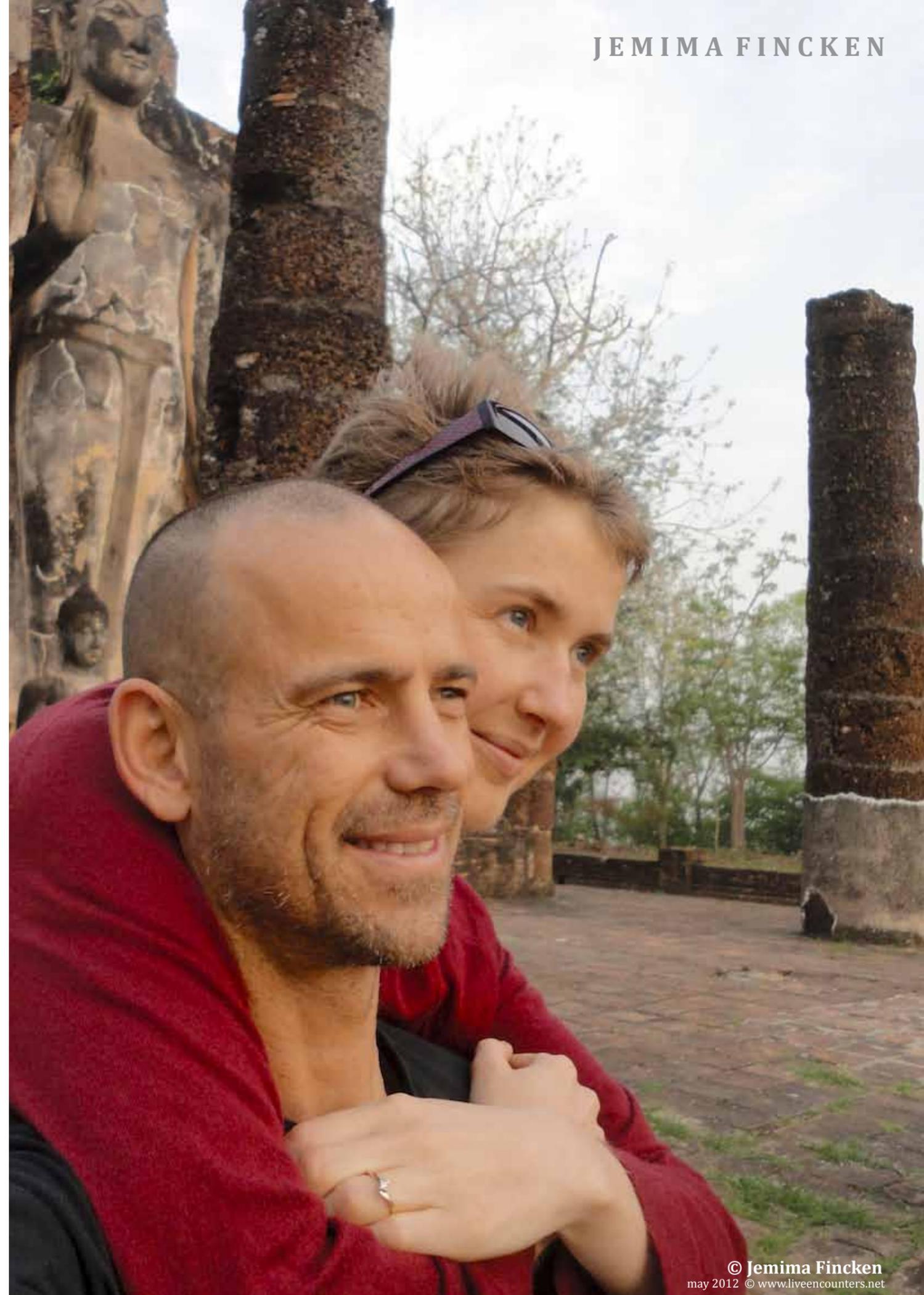
Mike was the officer assigned the 'graveyard' watch (midnight - 4am), so called for it being most anathema to the body's natural rhythm, awake as you are in what would ordinarily be the deepest hours of sleep. I was his watch keeper - his second pair of eyes.

In the black of night, the boat tossed like toffee into the roaring jaws of a rough winter in the English Channel, with only a blink of lights along the horizon for company; it can feel like you are the only two souls awake in the world. Sustenance was derived, eyelids propped and yawns staved - for us both - by the sharing of stories and 'philosophies'. The graveyard watch invites this somehow: 'nightdreaming' - staring into the black sea and pondering on life matters both trivial and quizzical.

At the end of the trip, we exchanged email and pigeon post addresses. Over the years, we wrote to each other regularly, rooting a friendship whose seeds had been planted over those weeks at sea.

Mike would later tease me for those early, epic emails and letters - long, spinning yarns that solicited a half-day's commitment to be read from beginning to end. There was an innocence, a naivety somehow - to that time. My correspondence filled with florid prose but only as scintillant as the details of my days and the minutiae of my musings, could ever be. Still, I was keen to keep the friendship afloat, Mike too.

Romance blossomed in postcard-perfect Paris, several years later.





Mike and Jemima on board Rainbow Warrior cooking Christmas feast at the climate summit in Copenhagen 2009.

Mike was going to be in Europe - a good chance to meet up, we agreed. Innocence, by now, replaced with a flutter of knowing, a flush of colour to the cheeks. By the time you read this, Mike will have been Captain for six years, whilst I have been afforded the chance of gently realising my dream of life as a writer and poet - dividing my time and quixotically inclined curiosity, between land and sea; under roof and under sail.

Come April's end, Mike and I will be married and our first child is due at the end of May. If life has been an adventure thus far, this will be our greatest adventure yet.

Charting a course

Casting my eye over my shoulder and into our wake, as I am by sharing some of our story with you now, I indulge myself just a little - the chance to marvel.

Mike was - is - a South African, whose 'home' was the sea, I'm a Welsh writer, a landlubber rooted in soil. He had a good career, a clear life-thread; I had a fountain pen, a bulging notebook and a meandering curriculum vitae.

The practical odds, the 'facts' and geographies of our lives were apparently stacked against us. But those are the odds that skittle, scatter and sink to the bottom of the sea, when faced with greater odds: we tap to the same rhythm, we both clock into the comfort of daily ritual and tick to the tock of flux and flow, of surprise and serendipity. Both larks, alive and alert at daybreak, drooping by day's end; both diligent daydreamers, on a heading of wonder.

Life - as the adage goes - often happens, when you are making other plans: when you leap into the wind and throw caution into the waves and spray. 'Suitable' pairings on paper, do not necessarily fly in the breeze of life or pulse with the beat of a living heart. I choose the person, the circumstance chooses me and I welcome the serendipity in its sidecar.

I love the spontaneity - the sense of adventure - that our life 'style' affords. Mike is away for long



Mike Fincken, Captain of the Rainbow Warrior. Pic © Jorgen Bergstrom

stretches, but when he is home he is home for long stretches too. I am a writer, which makes me very 'portable'. I often get the chance to join him onboard for parts of a trip: dividing my time between working in the elements on deck and cooking up feasts in the galley.

Our map is colourfully flagged - holidays in France, Italy; ocean crossings from Singapore to Bangladesh, a Christmas onboard the RW in Copenhagen. Months too, spent in South Africa, in England; in Laos and Thailand. We can and do, just go off on adventures at the drop of a hat. We are not bound by the nine to five, living for our ration of four weeks holiday per annum. It may depend when you ask me, but mostly I feel lucky, very lucky. Life should be well-spiced with the extra alongside its servings of the ordinary.

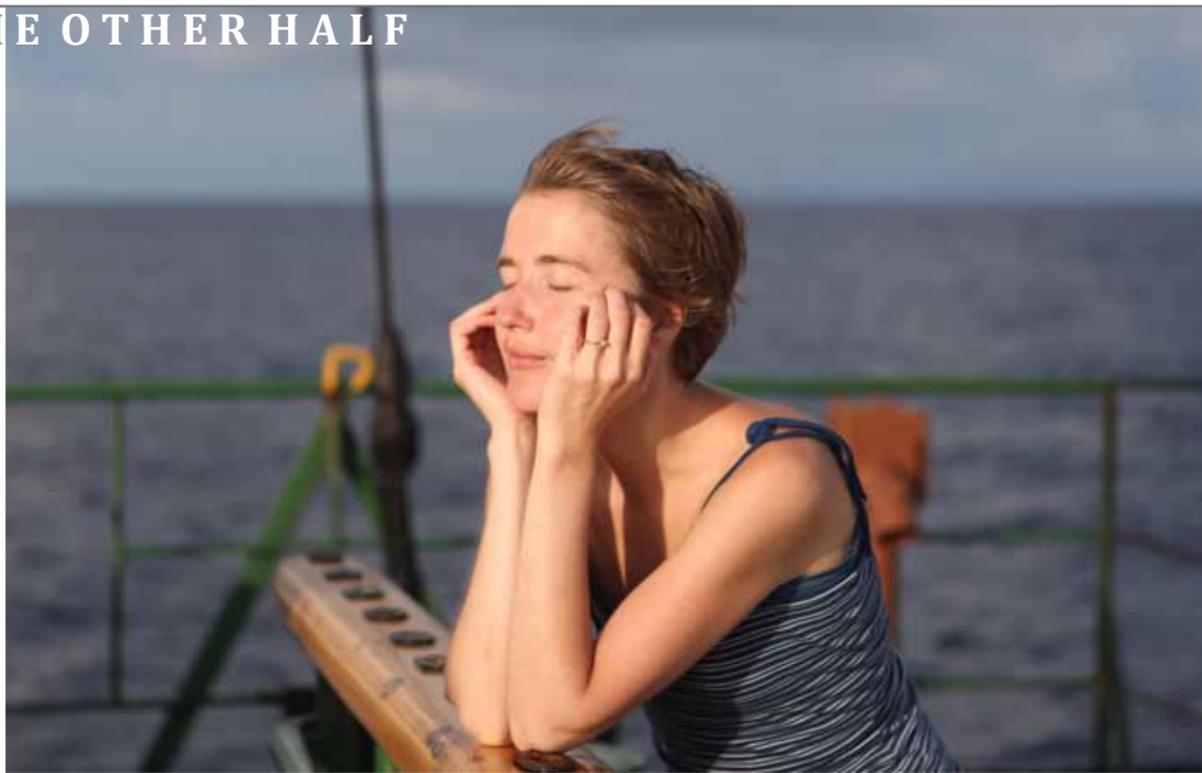
Choppy seas

There are trade-offs: the life we live is extreme. We are together all the time, or none of the time. When we are apart, we both work very hard at keeping close: daily correspondence, daily chats on Skype. Letters in a 'bottle' for me, snapshots and a sprinkling of quips via my trusty mobile phone for Mike.

I am thankful for the technology that keeps our lines of communication so open, but by the end of one of Mike's three-four month trips, I am ready to throw the laptop - and Skype with it - out of the window, likewise inclined to switch off my mobile phone.

I thrive in the pulse of low-tech world: real life and all of its elements - hi-tech dulls my brain and zaps my life-zeal. Sometimes, I just don't want to be mediating my relationship through a computer. I want the real Mike, not the cyber-sieved version.

Sometimes, the only way through is to mute emotions, something which is wholly counter- intuitive to the way I 'work' in the world. I am open as a summer flower, sensitive as a petal; stemming tears, feelings, means stemming some of what makes me who I am. But it is also an inevitability at times - whilst Mike is away charting the world's oceans, flooding into a pool on the floor, is not an option. Though sometimes I do.



Jemima at sea on the old Rainbow Warrior, voyage to Chittagong. © Jemima & Mike Fincken

I miss cuddles, touch; curling up on the sofa, walking hand in hand down the street. I miss someone to point things out to - be they interesting, quirky, odd, pretty. I miss sharing my day-to-day life. I miss my crossword partner. I miss someone to rant at after a hard day, poke fun at in comic foray. I miss someone to share the highs and the humdrum. I miss waking to a morning kiss and the plait of our limbs at lights out.

The darkest times are the moments of Mike's return to sea. Saying goodbye, is the one thing that does not get easier with practice. It is like a biannual death - a mourning.

This, my diary entry written just after Mike's ['Tinker'] departure in December:

Life is a mischievous trickster, ladling in and spicing up the pot just when you are patting your apron with pride at having got the seasoning just right. Tinker's return to sea has unscrewed the rusting lid from my neglected Lamy pen. The ink dry and stained along the brass nib, still it proves a trusty friend in times of strain. I have felt the departure hard this time, less the strong and resourceful sailor's love, more the forlorn fawn left alone and wondering what all the strange new noises in the forest are.

Shuffling about in his soft red jumper - like a comforter - today has mostly been spent tripping up on emotional booby traps. I cried when I found his hat on the bed, his fleece flung across the duvet too - the way he does when he strips to get in the bath - clothes strewn here and there like indiscriminately shelled debris. The way he does, when he'll be back upstairs in 10mins or so. Not the way he does when he'll be back in three, nearly four months. I was suddenly desperate for him to be back in 10mins.

A glass bauble fell off the Christmas tree a few days ago. Tinker picked it up and put it back in the 'wrong' place, upsetting the symmetry of the in-place decorations. I kept meaning to re-hang it, despite laughing at myself for being so 'stiff' and pro-symmetry. I now cannot bring myself to put it in the 'right' place and maintain regular vigilance that it remains exactly where he hung it.

It feels like somebody has died, like someone has skinned me of my shadow and it takes me a while to stop running in circles looking for it.

But if goodbyes are a dark time, hellos bring the light flooding back. As I write today, it is mid-April and Mike is four days away from signing off, four days away from home.

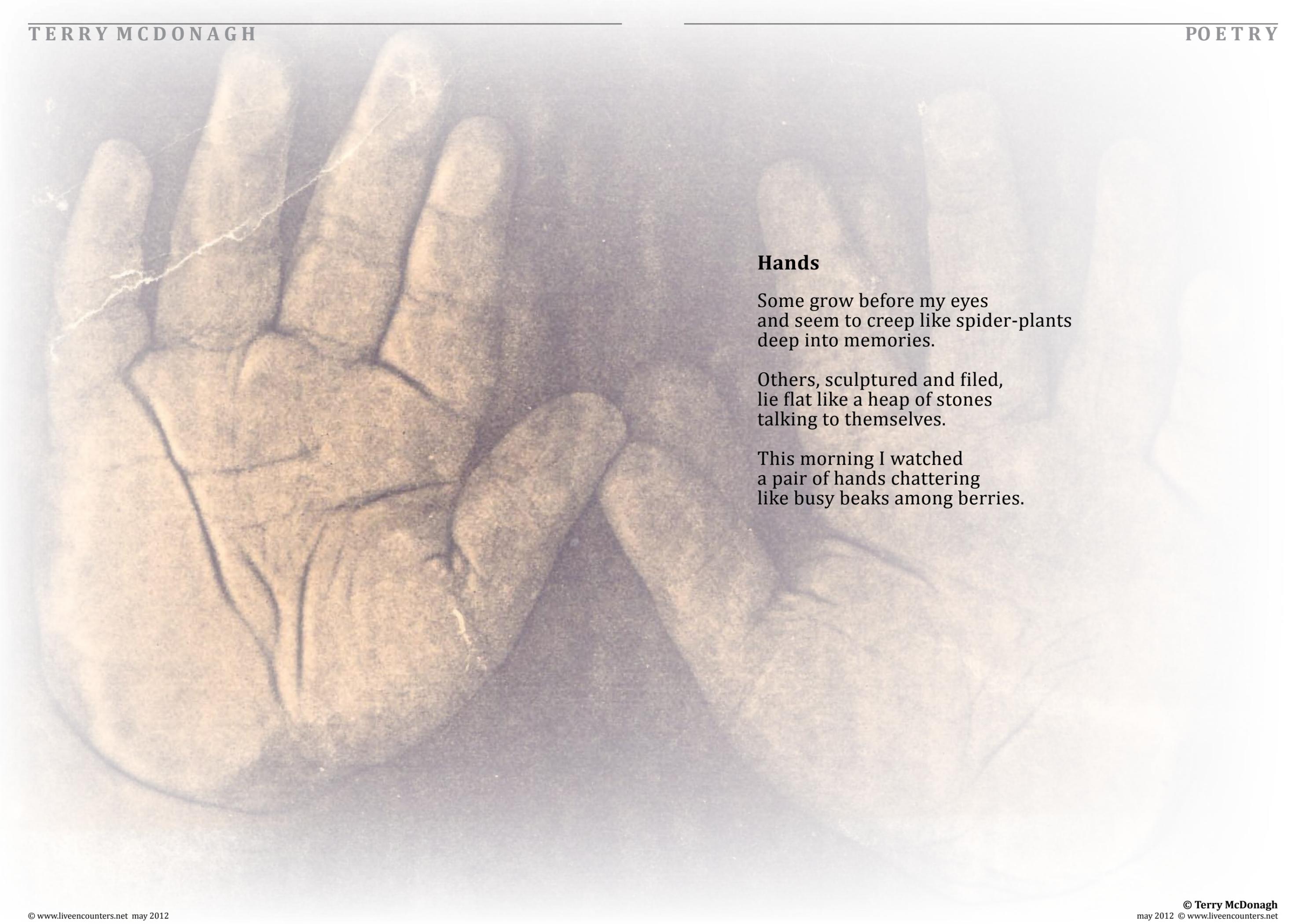
This has been - for us both - one of the hardest times to have been apart. I am now heavily pregnant and with that has come a vulnerability, a fragility. It has been a lonely time - going through the ins and outs of my first pregnancy on my own, having to be 'strong' when at times I have felt as open, as bluntly exposed as a cracked egg. Mike, in turn, often strained by being away with a strong tug home and soothed only in part, by regular news that all is well with the little 'bean' and I.

But we are days away from reunion now and there is nothing quite like the feeling of seeing and greeting him, for the first time in nearly four months. A combination of the deeply comforting familiar and also freshness, newness.

It is a sweet sensation to feel again that momentary shyness, just as you do in the first flushes of early romance.



Mike Fincken



Hands

Some grow before my eyes
and seem to creep like spider-plants
deep into memories.

Others, sculptured and filed,
lie flat like a heap of stones
talking to themselves.

This morning I watched
a pair of hands chattering
like busy beaks among berries.

Bali's Buddhists in the hamlet of Budakeling

*"The one substance is called two, namely Buddha and Siwa
They say it is different, but how can it be divided by two
Such is how the teaching of Buddha and Siwa became one
It is different, but it is one, there are not two truths"*

- From an ancient Javanese epic Mahayana Buddhist poem

The island of Bali is well known as a centre of Hindu religion, culture and thought. Here in the remote Brahmin hamlet of Budakeling in the foothills of Mt Agung, the island's holiest mountain, the village of Budakeling is home to devout Buddhists.

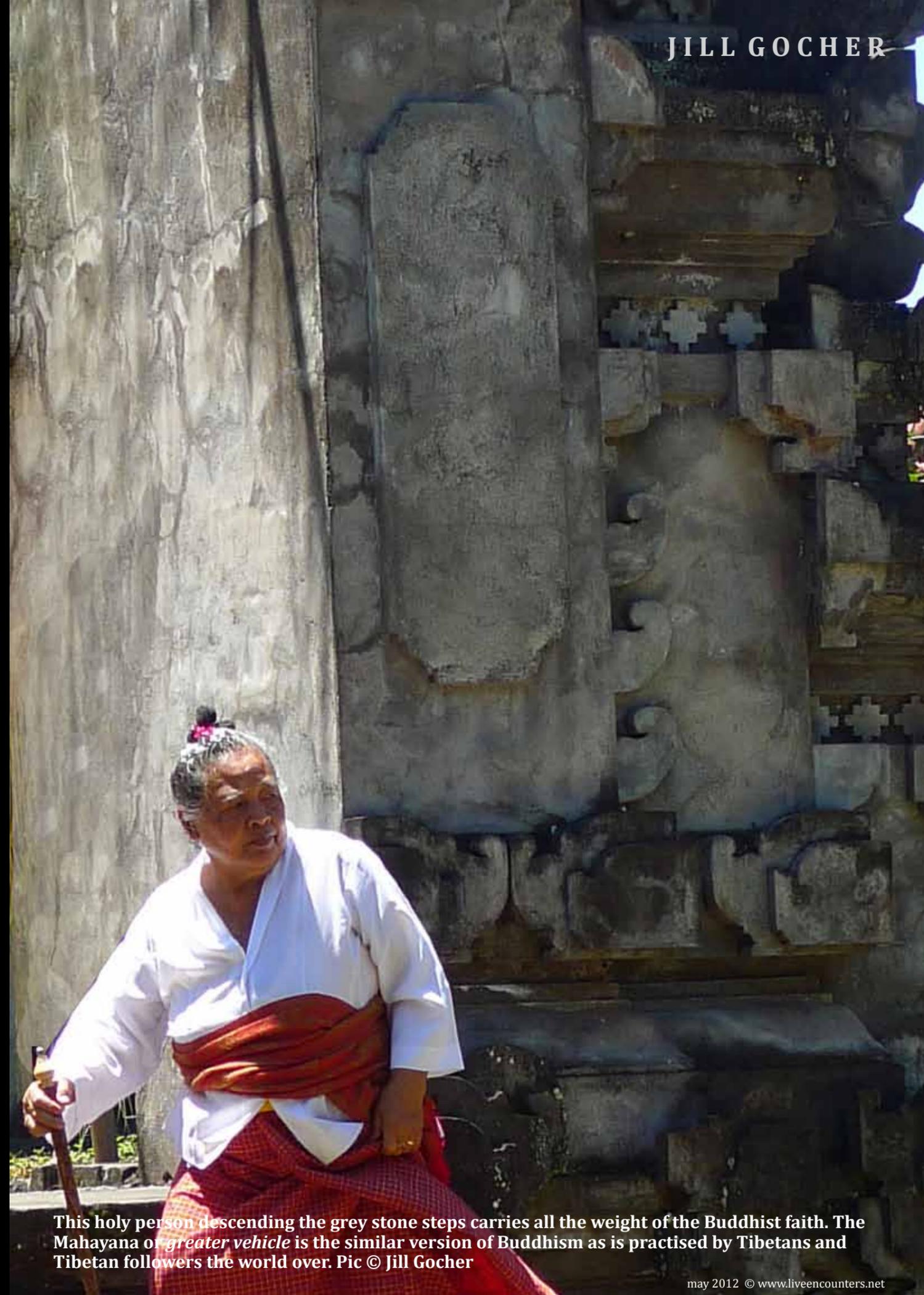
Surrounded by verdant padi fields, the people live in harmonious peace. Their high priests are much sought after across the island, to officiate at important ceremonies where they will usually sit side by side with Siwa (Shivaite) priests.

Their rituals are complex, their paraphernalia impressive and it is always appreciated. Buddhism and Shiva-Hinduism are a duality. They co-exist in harmony – two sides of the same coin. In Budakeling, even the offerings are different to the rest of Bali as are the people.

It is a village of peace, where it seems never a harsh word is spoken.



Jill Gocher Photographer, Bali, Indonesia



This holy person descending the grey stone steps carries all the weight of the Buddhist faith. The Mahayana or *greater vehicle* is the similar version of Buddhism as is practised by Tibetans and Tibetan followers the world over. Pic © Jill Gocher



Dorje & Buddha bowls, high priests (perdantas) use a dorje similar to those used in Tibet. Small cups hold holy water.



The offerings are made of popped rice - similar to a rice cereal and are coloured with bright colours to please the gods.



Sashes and sarong – each man wears his version of traditional dress of sarong and sash. Pic © Jill Gocher



The gamelan ensemble is held by golden dragons – symbolic protection from evil. Pic © Jill Gocher



Death of a Star

She jumped from the highs
ended her life in the boulevard
long before the sun was to set

faked her smile
acted till she could bear
she died severed with depression
ending her miseries
in the pool of her blood
the newspapers said
fans moaned over a cup of coffee
in despair...

but in the morgue
diehard mortal men
mounted her.

the pin up diva
dead, yet performing

speaking in mute whisper
they immersed her
in shadowy gossip
in the wild
with the flow
beyond her control

i hope she is dead.



Empowering your Intuitive Self

Notice how you get caught up in the hurriedness of the day and over-extend yourself? Years ago, even on a busy day you were not bombarded with the over-stimulation you experience today. Time has accelerated with the Internet, emails and cell phones. This technology allows you to connect within seconds locally and around the world. It also leaves you feeling drained, ungrounded and disconnected from your own Self.

Meditation is a great resource, but for some the thought of meditating is too difficult. Often I have heard clients say they cannot quiet their mind no matter how hard they try. A few weeks ago, I suggested a client begin his mediation as soon as he awakes, before he even leaves his bed, rather than trying to quiet an overactive mind later in the day. He began meditating and not only did he say it worked, he shared that it also relieved the pain he had been experiencing. This practice can connect you with your Divine Light and is a great way to start the day. It helps to meditate in the morning before the busy-ness of the day begins.

Another suggestion is to connect with your Intuitive Self by focusing in your body. Begin by focusing in your heart. Just sit with your eyes closed and focus in your heart for five minutes a day. You don't have to do anything but just be present in your heart and notice what you notice. There is no right or a wrong way to do this. After doing this daily for a week, you may want to increase the time to ten and then twenty minutes a day.

As you show up for yourself, focusing in your heart, your inner Self, your Intuitive or Higher Self begins to trust that you are listening and you will begin to receive gentle messages that guide you. At first you may also hear other voices and you can just let them go. Just notice them, but you do not have to do anything. Just be aware. You will learn to differentiate the inner Divine voice from your ego. You will begin to trust this Divine voice, which is gentle, loving, and kind. It leaves you feeling secure and confident.

After you are comfortable with focusing in your heart, you may want to begin to focus in your body. Again, just close your eyes and relax and just notice what is happening in your body. You may want to scan from head to toe, or just wait and see what you experience and where. If you feel tension in your shoulders, just notice. Some thoughts may come up and just listen. You may hear why you are so tense or you may be told how to care for yourself. The discomfort or tension or other sensation may go away. You may just notice with no change. It is all good.

Sometimes feelings may surface and if they do, just feel your feelings. Your body carries stress from day to day that does not get recycled in your sleep. Taking five minutes or more a day to focus in your heart or your body will decrease your stress and give you a greater sense of your Self. You will access the Divine within and you will feel more confident and be more at peace.

This is a powerful way to connect with your Intuition and the Divine within. You can do it anywhere as often as you like. The more you practice this, the more empowered you become!

Good Friday in Lovina

by Mark Ulyseas

“When I’m not with you, I’m an incomplete man. Here in the vineyards of Lovina I hope to find myself again, that boy running along the bank of the brown swollen river pregnant with the Bore Tide.”

– **xxx Krishna searching for Vrindavan**

“Run and be free! And be sweet lovable Krishna. You are my cause.”

– **xxx Radha**

These text messages are between two lives searching for eternal love, one caught in a marriage and the other on the prime meridian between light and dark.

Chapter One

The sun rose over the hills as they drove from Bedugul to Lovina Beach. The light drizzle pock marked the road and washed the lush green vegetation on either side of the highway. The grey sky kissed the sea on the horizon while Dylan sang a dirge for a loved one.

Radha held her stomach for she could feel the rising pain of her impending rendezvous with Krishna in a Lovina hotel, the thought of once again clutching desperately to the moment while he held her close in the dark and whispered wicked sweet nothings as she rocked him to joy.

She had left her home in Sanur, her husband sleeping the late night off and her son scampering across the lawns of her art gallery, on the pretext of spending a weekend in Kuta with her friends but instead sat in a car next to Krishna for a day out in a hotel room having another momentary lapse of indiscretion.

They had met suddenly through an innocent email sent by Krishna to her inquiring about the art gallery of which she was the proprietor. She messaged him back the same night. They exchanged messages into the wee hours of the next day till Krishna telephoned her curious to hear her voice, to put a life to the messages. A meeting was arranged for the morning. They met hesitantly searching in each other’s eyes for a hint of love. They found it and talked, felt, exchanged fears and tears and then explored each other to the sound of vehicles passing by in the shadow of Batur Volcano.

From then on they met in parking lots, small hotels and in the washrooms of bars. The elation of the forbidden only increased the urge to feel each other’s skin against the cold tiles of the floors. The exchanges in his car in a rainstorm left her feeling satiated as she lay spread-eagled and at momentary peace with the universe as he left his imprint on her.

Krishna stared at her and muttered under his breath about the top she was wearing. “You look like mutton dressed as lamb”, he said. She looked away disappointed as the acidic feeling of being criticised ever so often in what she wore, did or said rose within her. He never seemed to understand how precariously they were living their lives. She was married to an Indonesian and had one child with him, a successful business and was Founder of a well-known art gallery. If her husband discovered her indiscretions she could lose everything including her child and all the businesses. Krishna and Radha could be beaten or worse still jailed for adultery.

She turned to him and said, “ Krish you always comment on everything I do. Nothing I do seems right for you. I think we should see each other less. Take a break...why don’t you leave Sanur and rent a place in Seminyak? It’s a short drive from Sanur and I can see you there. Good idea, ya?”

He kept quiet. The conversation was taking a turn to matters he had been avoiding for some time. He knew he had to leave, to detach himself from the quagmire of convoluted love, lust and misplaced passion. Or, so he thought. Krishna remembered the night when she telephoned him and cried about being a prisoner in her own home, of being alone in the company of her husband and child. Of being lost in a world where her ex-lovers congregated with their wives to gloat over her spent body. He couldn’t understand her grief. But he knew that he was there to bring her back to a life she recognised as her own, to gently caress her tired soul.

She took out the letter he had written her from her fake Prada handbag smiling wistfully and began to reread it.

My beloved Radha,

Today while chatting with you on the net it dawned on me that you were the child unborn, the daughter that left me in 1989. I recognised the voice, the hurt, the betrayal and most of all the sense of loneliness. Somewhere between the lines I could read the frantic clinging to reality in the hope that revelations would heal the pain. Pain of lost loves. Of having to know that it had many cruelties that defied logic.

I asked you many questions and you so kindly consented to give the answers but there was suspicion in your voice and you accused me of wanting to use the answers against you some day. No my dearest, it was never intended this way. I wanted to seek out the spirit in you, to hold and protect you from the onslaught of failed relationships. I wanted to know the colour of your mind and to leave my imprint on you as a guide to safely navigate you through the abysmal narrow gorges that is life.

The stutter in your sentences only confirmed my worst fears. Of your lost loves now your friends, of shadows past racing through you mind and making a loud bang through the ether waves and confusing your spirit.

I sat transfixed by your answers to my questions. They were honest and reflected the sincere affection of a woman lost in her everyday life and marital hypocrisy, who had to rediscover herself and embark on the journey of belief, belief in herself, in her family and in life.

I sensed an anguish of sorts...of expectations and unfulfilled dreams. What could I say my dearest but listen to the torment in your voice. And yes the loneliness.

Life has dealt you a perfect hand. Use it to build your karma points. Who knows you may need to in cash it someday.

There are no friends. There are no lovers. Just people who want what you have, to taste it, chew it and then spit it out. They rarely remember the taste of belonging. They have moved on to other lives. You have been left a prisoner in your own world, waiting, waiting, and waiting.

I came into your life like a flash flood drowning your sorrows, pains and loneliness. Nothing could survive the sheer force. But the flash flood covered everything in a muddy haze of exhilaration an unsustainable passion burning itself out on the back seat of my car.

Let's meet one last time in Lovina and spend a night searching each other for signs of belonging. If we find it let's run away from here and live our lives out sharing our souls.

Please call or message me. Think we should give our lives together a second chance.

xxx urs always Krishna

She gently folded the letter and placed it in her bra. She wanted it near her heart, to feel the cold smooth paper pressing against her skin.

Krishna suddenly braked and cursed, "Fxxking motor-cyclists, how do you drive in Bali without running over someone. Look how those women are driving," he said, pointing to two young schoolgirls racing mindlessly in front on a small bike.

"Chill out sweet heart," said Radha, "those are just goddesses on wheels." She smiled to herself wondering when her son back home would get one of those wheels and how he would drive.

She gently rested her hand on his legs and stroked him. He looked at her adoringly, God what would I have done without her he thought to himself; Her gentleness, her womanhood, her body aromas permeating the air in the car and surrounding him like a cloak of ethereal delight. He was breathing and living her every moment he was with her. He wondered when he would lose the anger within. The bitterness and desolation he felt even having left Ceylon more than two years ago.

"My Krishna," she said, "isn't this wonderful...I call you Krishna and you call me Radha when actually we have names that are not so romantic? If I was not married I would marry you right now."

"But you can't," he said, "You know that you can never leave all the trappings of a successful business behind. So there, I said it, I'm sorry I have to be so blunt but reality is like a recoiling snake that bites you in the arse just when you turn from it."

"You're being melodramatic, Krish, you can't live a fluid life. You must get right into its bloodstream...it makes me scared...I feel scared when you are angry you may leave me..."

"Nah am angry not angry with you my sweet, am angry at my life. How I screwed it up. How I threw it all away. Have you heard that song by Dylan?"

"Ya, it's nice, no?"

"Baby I think music does strange things to the mind. It plays through the veins and enters our very souls. Dylan's "Times there are a changing" refrain curdles the milk and leaves one searching for answers that are not there. Dylan is the Bard, the Pied Piper of lost souls. Very often I find myself humming a tune that I had probably forgotten for many years. The mind recalls the happiness and trauma and replays it to remind me of who I am and where I come from. When you hear the music, stop and listen, it's your soul telling you where you have been and where you're at. It will always be true to you."

"Remember Dancing Queen by Abba, gosh those were the days of my life in Sydney where I felt I could do anything I wanted," said Radha smiling coyly.

"Yes baby I remember, but I really didn't like their music!" He said.

"Go on you never danced to Waterloo?"

“Yes I did with this fat woman who kept doing the bumps and throwing me across the dance floor to the giggles of the girls. Yes, it was fun.”

“Why don’t you drive now” he said, “am tired”? He stopped the car and they exchanged seats, Radha smiling to herself knowing what was on his mind.”

“Feeling like to play with me while am driving?” she asked.

“Yes, how did you guess?”

“Oh well you had that dark look”.

“Hummm...goody goody gumdrops”

“Where did you learn that expression?”

“In boarding school in Calcutta”

“Never did go to boarding school, mine was a convent school”.

“Always loved convent girls they are hot hot”.

“Slap you, you’re talking like a man now. You know I don’t like you when you talk like this”.

“Sorry, just feeling a bit untouched”. All the time his hand was under her T-shirt playing with her.

“Ya okay. Hey! Let’s swim with the dolphins at that weird hotel you keep talking about”.

“Actually we’re staying there. Anyways I can’t swim. I’ll watch you!”

“Aduh! What other hang-ups do you have?”

“Fear of heights, fear of bathing in a bathtub and fear of being unloved”.

“Come off it, it’s all in your mind. You must have had a horrible childhood”.

“Nah, actually even though my folks were rarely together I had a great time running when ever I sensed my brothers and their hoodlum friends wanted to snatch my tuck in Boarding School. In fact I got so good at it that I joined the Relay Team and 3000 mtrs. Became sort of a champ. I remember my House Master calling me up on stage at assembly to announce my achievements. I suppose it was then my brothers and their hoodlum friends grudgingly accepted me into their circle. Too late by then I had grown up and could see how ridiculous we looked in our blazers and ties in a hot humid city like Calcutta, singing hymns to the French general who founded the school almost 150yrs before. Thinking back, no regrets”

“Gosh nothing like my life” she said, pulling his hand away from under her T-shirt, “Am driving and you’re getting me turned on, please can we hold on till we reach the hotel?”

“Okay” he said, “guess I’ll have to button up!”

“Stop it or I’ll spank you,” she laughed.

Silence suddenly descended on them blanketing the sound of life. For a moment Time stood transfixed... then broken by the groan of the engine as the car breathlessly crept up the hilly road.

“The angel of death just flew over,” said Radha in a subdued voice.

“Yes I think so,” replied Krishna.

“Hope tonight will show us a way out of this...this...”

“This...this...what do you mean Krish?”

“Never mind...too tired to think now just lets get there...then lie skin to skin...”

“Hummm...think you’re right...let’s”.

The road snaked its way down to the plains. The coastline loomed large on the horizon. They were nearing Lovina. Half hour more and they would be at the hotel in a cold room with clean white sheets that smelt of perfumed detergent.

They arrived at the hotel a short while later and checked into their room that smelled strangely of almonds.

“You know the spirits are here to greet us Krish”.

“Rubbish you’ve been living in Bali too long...”

“Can you smell almonds?”

“No, just the musty room...put on the air con”.

The room came alive with the cool air blowing across it. Krishna undressed and stood under the shower, cold water racing across his body.

“Where are you? Join me...the water’s fresh...need a soap up?” laughed Krishna

“Ya coming...just messaging home to check where hubby is”.

“Give it a break, he’s probably still sleeping”

“Got to make sure...you know”

She undressed and neatly folded her skirt on the side table, panties and bra on top of it.

Then slowly walked into the bathroom and stood behind Krishna wrapping her arms around him. He turned and looked into her eyes, the shower sprinkling water over their faces and trickling down their bodies. He caressed her with the soap in his hand, lather forming over her breasts and racing down her thighs. His hand searched out her quim and for a fleeting moment nestled and then moved to her back. She stood still in wonder at the feeling rising within her, of belonging to him forever. It was as if he was cleansing her body and soul before their met on the sheets exploring each other for one last time.

The room bell rang and he cursed under his breath, wrapped a towel around and opened the door to Kadek, the waiter, who was standing there with a tray of drinks and a smile that waited for a tip.

Chapter Two

Jimmy Nail's doleful voice lamenting his crocodile shoes with the sound of the waves splashing the rocks set the stage for a night of reminiscences: Regrets of never having really tried everything...of tasting the nectar of truth and tasting it again and again. He lay in the dark with a satiated Radha breathing in his ear and watching the moonbeams playing across the ceiling, shadows of palm fronds dancing in the night air. He could feel her heart beat and wondered whether it was time to tell her that he must go. He wanted to get up, get dressed and vanish into the night leaving her asleep on the bed they had shared. But the lure of the morning and the wonder of sitting in a low-slung catamaran to watch wild dolphins dance in the morning sun held him back.

His deep sigh woke Radha from her dreams and she muttered, "Krish why are you awake, you shouldn't have drunk tequila it doesn't agree with you. In fact you shouldn't drink it turns you inwards."

"Yes I know" he said, "My dad died alone in a hospital. I still remember I was in Ceylon married and happy with my cocker spaniel when the call came from my cousin Christopher who informed my wife about dad's demise. She nonchalantly told me. I didn't feel a thing. I should have, I know. But I think all those years of shuttling between mom and dad, the extremes had dulled my senses. I now wear a casing of armament of resignation to living a perfect lie."

"Sometimes I feel I want to take you in my arms and hold you so tight to squeeze the bitterness out of you like a lemon and then sweeten you with my love. You have been unhappy for so long you have forgotten how to enjoy your life. Sweet heart put your leg between mine let's hold, come closer" said Radha with an intensity that even surprised her. He moved between her gently mounting her Venus and entering her presence. Warmth encompassed him and held him tight. The sanctity of love was once again renewed between them when she cried out his name as he left another part of himself in her and she on him: The wetness slowly seeping onto the sheet and staining it like the mark of Cain. He lay there on her like a dying flower waiting to be removed from the vase and replaced.

Radha tenderly moved him aside and sat up in the bed.

"What are you doing baby?" he asked.

"Oh got to wash don't like being sticky, you okay Krish?" she replied.

"Ya am okay but you know I want you to keep me in you for while. Don't like you washing yourself so quickly just feel you want to purify yourself of me."

"Aduh, what's wrong with you...huh? I am just uncomfortable. I've been in Bali too long, here we have a fetish for cleanliness".

"Awh come on it's more like a repressed person who suddenly lets herself go and then wants to hurriedly rid herself of her sins".

"Rubbish...utter rubbish...it's the catholic in you that's talking...jus lets leave this subject and let me wash its dripping down my legs.." She got up and hurried to shower. He followed her under the shower. Two lost soul mates clinging to a spell they had created just for themselves. Silently they washed and then dried each other with the coarse hotel towel.

"Next time am going to bring some soft towels, don't like these ones they're so rough".

"Next time?" he asked. They both laughed and threw themselves on the bed.

"Want a ciggy?"

"Nah don't like those clove ciggies you smoke, shall have one of my Ramayana cigars".

"Please don't smoke them here, I will also stink of them and most likely my hubby will smell them off me".

"Fxxk your hubby".

"Ya I do" she laughed.

"That's not funny".

"You started it" she giggled.

"Pass the lighter"

"Catch"

"Oops it's fallen between my legs"

"Let me get it" Krishna searched it out face down, sniffing.

"Stop that you're tickling me"

"Got it!" handing the lighter he kissed her softly on the cheek and lay back resting his head on the pillow.

The first smoke after having him in her revived the thoughts that she had kept from overwhelming her. She could now think without the passion and the futility of belonging to one man. Krishna had taught her to respect herself, to take her marriage as part of her life and not an end in itself. He had led her into a world she didn't know existed, the beginning of comprehending the subtleties of being a part of someone's life and yet existing in a parallel world. But she wanted to possess him body and soul. Not allow him to be with another woman. She wanted him to be just for her but this could not be done. It was a selfish act by a desperate woman trying to co-exist with two men. Radha had to set him free to find himself again and to be a man once more.

She glanced at him lying eyes wide staring at the motionless fan while stubbing her out cig.

"What are you thinking?"

"Nothing"

"Bullshit"

"Really, nothing...have you ever tried clearing your mind and actually thinking nothing for a fleeting moment? It reveals your true self."

"No never tried it... too constipated with my present, too much happening."

"You let time rule you that's your problem"

"Krish what you're suggesting is like mental masturbation."

"Nah try it when you are chilled out. It's like having a cold shower on a winter night and then getting into a warm bed and snuggling up to someone."

She cuddled up to him and ran her fingers over his nose.

"You have a beautiful nose, your profile is perfect. Look at your skin. Wish I had it."

He laughed and caressed her back. She had the amazing ability to touch him beneath his skin: To awaken the feeling of belonging. Of love and joy he yearned so much to possess in his journey through the labyrinth of forsaken lifetimes. Placidity overtook them like a mist of sweet memories gently creeping over them and cocooning them in bliss. Suddenly the enveloping calm was broken by the crowing of a cock. She moved away from him turned her face down on the pillow and started sobbing.

"Baby, Baby why are you crying? Come on tell papa...papa loves you baby," he said as he stroked her head running his fingers through her hair.

"That stupid cock crowing reminded of the time my hubby brought home one that had lost a fight. How I cooked it for the family. What fun we had. The contentment I felt was perfect. I imagined it would last forever with HB. It's gone...all gone. We never talk now. In fact when I'm talking to him he walks from the room. He's just like the other men who came into my life and left residues of love and vanished into the fading light". She spoke in a muffled tone her voice shaking with the pain of living.

"Look at you are you also going to leave me after you have eaten and chewed me out, yes...tell me" she accusingly asked as she turned her tear stained face towards him.

"What do you want from me...what...every time I tell you about the wrenching pain I feel when you make love to your HB you tell me if I don't like it to go away and leave you".

"Because you pressure me into doing what you want all the time...I don't give into that...you should know that by now... do I have to explain everything to you...why can't you just understand...I am a mother...I have reputation with my work..."

He pushed her away and got up from the bed opened the door and walked out into the moonlight. The Luna light bathed his naked body in a cool glow and calmed the rising anguish of destitution he felt. After over two years on the road never thinking of women he had now shackled himself to one who belonged to another. He was a loser who could never get it right. At one time he believed love did not exist...because love to him was an intrinsic feeling of deep affection for another that went beyond the boundaries of selfishness. Now it was there lurking somewhere in the shadows of this deathlike embrace that held them both together.

From the shade of a hibiscus tree a snake raced across the manicured lawn glistening in the silver light. He shuddered and went back into the room to Radha who was sitting at the small coffee table in the corner making Kopi Bali. She smiled sadly at him and beckoned him to hug her with outstretched arms.

"You always smell so good...feeling better?" he asked tentatively.

"I will survive...just need you to be gentle with me...just be my friend..." she whispered in his ear.

Chapter Three

They lay there in the dark holding each other in a vice like grip afraid that if they let go they would fall apart never to be together again.

"I wonder if it would rain when we are out at sea?"

"Nah unlikely, Lovina is in the rain shadow of the island" said Krishna confidently.

"Let's dance"

"Are you mad?"

"I want to hear some music!" said Krishna

"No not now please baby. Ok why don't you recite one of your poems to me?"

"Well" he said a bit reluctantly, adding "which one?"

"What about "Oh Radha"" she said.

He took a deep breath and spoke in a warm voice.

*Visions of love and passion
Drifting ashore at dusk
Announcing the night to lust
On crumpled sheets of lost thoughts*

*She sat on the beach
As darkness crept up her feet
And covered her in a cloak
Of twilight madness, eating her soul*

*Krishna had left with the tide
Leaving her forlorn on the shore
Holding her spent dreams
Afraid of them being washed to sea*

*The moonlit charcoal waters
Raced between her toes
Flowing up her legs
And drowning her sorrows*

*She waited long through the night
For Krishna to dance into sight
But there was only music to behold
Mermaids serenading him in the depths below*

"That's so beautiful. Was it about me?" she asked.

"Yes"

"So what's going to happen now?" she asked.

"Dunno, maybe we should both just go out to sea never to return"

"Krish you're so unrealistic. Gosh, what of my son?"

"Suppose I have made my dreams my masters. I live in a world devoid of Time."

"Great now you are going all weird on me. Baby I love you but I also love my family. Can you understand this? I need you both" she said with heartfelt conviction.

"Yes I understand that I will remain alone like Akela the leader of the Wolf Pack in Jungle Book... strength and honour as leader but also alone to lead the way."

"I hate it when you talk about yourself like this. You are Krishna to me and will always be Krishna to me. Please don't talk this Akela shit. Don't like it" she said vehemently.

He moved over her, resting his body on hers and kissing her ever so sweetly on the lips running them over his while breathing deeply into her mouth. He was giving her life...the breath of life. Silently she opened her mouth and sucked it in feeling the intensity of being one with him. Then he rolled to her side and held her hand. She gazed at him in wonderment.

"You're so tender with me in the bedroom. Why can't you always be like this baby?"

"Guess I need to figure that out amongst other things"

"No just be like this always. I love it when you touch me like a feather falling on my face. It's like you have just kissed my soul."

"I gave you a part of my soul. Keep it safely for soon I will be moving on to another world."

"What are you talking about?"

"About me...something I feel is going to take me away from you, forcibly"

"You on that trip again remembering the time you tried to commit suicide over something or someone"

"I think your trivialising my life...don't do that to me"

"I'm not baby, am just saying that you are, well, a bit dramatic. We will and can work this out, make a life separate from everything around us".

"Never mind, let's just drop the subject. Are you feeling hungry?"

He rummaged in the large plastic carry bag and took out some cold cuts, baguette, and cream cheese and put it on the coffee table.

"Radha, could you make a sandwich for me, please?"

"You're such a baby. Wish I could stay with you and cook for you. Gimme the knife from that bag I need to cut the bread".

He gave her the knife and stood near the open door looking out into the night lit up by the moon.

The croaking of the frogs in the lotus pond signalled the coming of rain.

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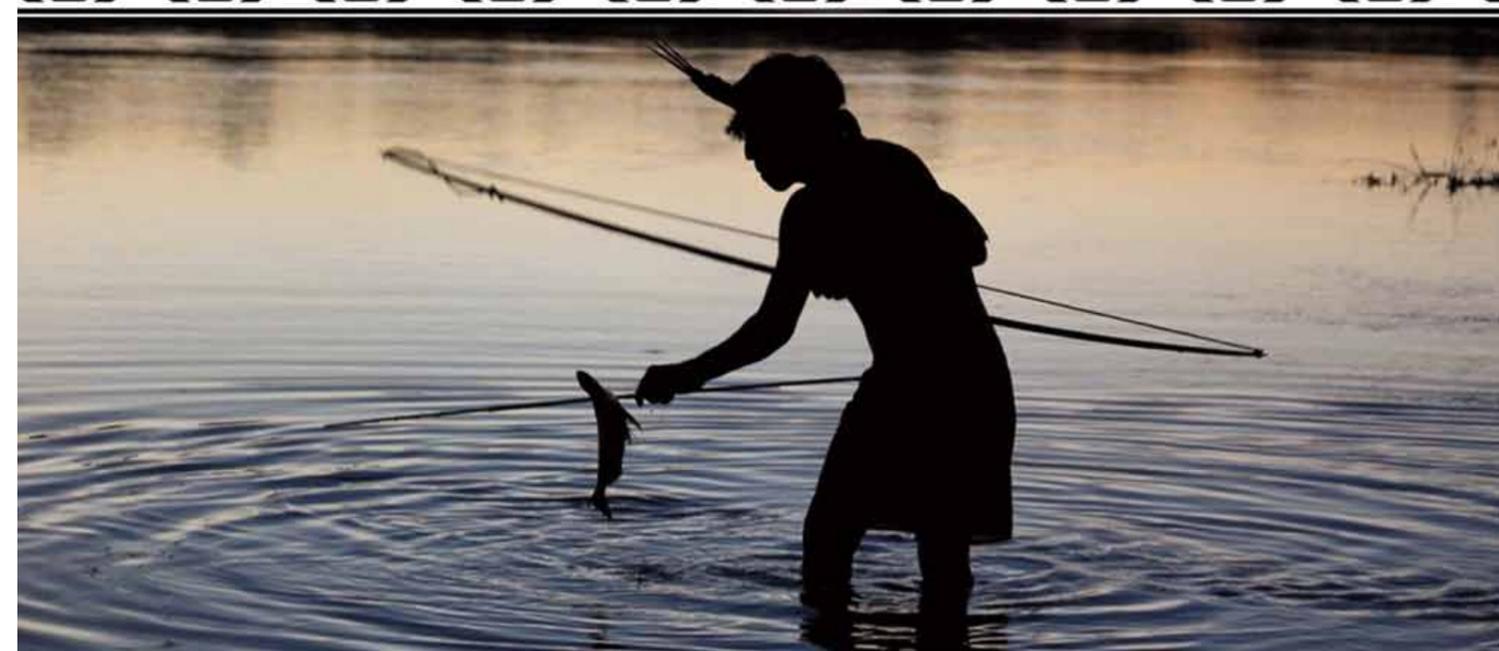
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