

Broken Dreams – A Poetic Trip to India and Nepal

White sails glow
Surf luminous sunrise
Thrown up by the spinning potter's wheel
Casts a glowing red hot iron bulbous streak and
Elastic shadows over this vast oceanic horizon.

I feel like a circus high wire tight rope walker
Fragile
Pensive
Nervous
Brimming with anticipation
An elongated silhouette
Dangling on thin brittle wire.

Safe landing at Mumbai International Airport
Wrapped in a sunlit gold crown of fresh flowered awakening.
Experience an intense baptism of fire
As if I was on a pilgrimage
To drink the holy waters of Lourdes or to
Catch one glimpse of Mecca's forbidden city
Before retreating for 40 days and for 40 nights
Into remote desert wilderness.

My innermost thoughts surfboard and free wheel
Across mystic Disneyland visions
Cascade over muted sound barriers
While the white sea gull
Acts as a backing track
To the white cliffs of Dover.

Dance with Vera Lynne
In the long green grass
Feel warm gentle breezes
As I reach out to caress
Dry dust drenched mountain ranges.

Jet lagged
Bombay duck
Bombay mix
Mixed up in magic carpet cocktail waitress cauldron
As my depleted self
Feels at a loss
Physically and mentally.

Airport bus journey runs past
Wild sprawling stilted stunted shanty town,
Making its cradle around airport runways blurred edge
Marking out an indistinct frontier of
Cardboard, corrugated, congealed, congested, concealed
Flimsy, transparent minimalist family homes.
There are no for sale signs within this drifting sea of humanity
Who have disappeared through an impoverished black hole.

Cinematic distorted black and white projections
By an absent minded projectionist
Who has left in a hurry
Without writing a farewell note
As the spool continues to run on automatic rewind.

Saturated with this blind medley of
Discordant, blurred and disconnected imagery
Glance at the make shift shelters
With collapsible butterfly frames
Shoulder to shoulder with
Hard nose high rise drab concrete apartment blocks.

Brightly printed sari
Squats on worn haunches
Rough working hands
Hug the lived in muddy water line
Washing clothes in this quagmire
Bathe in humanity's grim stain
While earth bound hips
Move to the rhythm of
Silk screen rose petals
Retouched with a hint of Japanese cherry blossom.

Career along hot grimy streets
Dodge slow moving bullock carts.
An elephant lazily saunters across this urban mayhem
A fat whiskered rat plunges head first into an open sewer
As a heat stricken camera crew film this pulsating mirage
Which has miraculously thrown up haphazardly
A galaxy of colorful and gaudy billboards
Advertising television sets, soap powders and dubious health products.

Poignant signposts herald the rise of a
Materialistic glad land marsh land hinterland.

Visions of hope in this world of broken dreams.

Momentarily I am paralyzed and bowled over
By this in your face abject poverty
Watch the slow stench of death
Rear its ugly head
Above smog ridden bleak horizon.

Book into the Royal Guest House, Main Street Bombay,
Without post code, royalty, red carpet treatment
Or VIP status.

Outside this bustling and gregarious Main Street,
Awash with taut hungry faces
Hungry brown eyes patiently waiting
For an immediate and more dignified exit
From this lamentable poverty and hunger trap.

Sit slowly sipping a
Cheap ceramic cup of saccharine milky Indian tea.
Close my eyes to the miserable plight of those who hover around me
Thinking to myself that I am no Messiah in sweet disguise,
I have no bread and fish to feed the 5000 miracle
Up my magician's sleeve,
I have no Father in heaven to call upon
In this bitter hour of need,
I have no sermon or instant parable on line
In this sublime eastern pageantry.

Women with fissured dry earth stain sunken cheeks,
Embalmed with tearful rivulets of despair
Clutch young children tightly to dehydrated breasts
Draped in tie dye hanging skirts
Which solemnly scrape the ground.
Bare feet twinned with hung dog eyes
Stare out into this ravenous choppy sea of plenty.
Outsiders patiently lurk in the shadows,
Waiting to scrape the hungry scraps and leftovers off
Grubby stained floor and outpouring of noxious exhaust fumes.

Helpless visions litter this sidewalk,
A double amputee, her stoic torso
Knar led and twisted withered branch like hand.
Pitiful outstretched fingers battling with
Arrogant stone steps pushing her down a peg or two.
Stubbornly inching her frail frame towards my table of plenty
As the death head cherubic angel casually like a moth drawn to a bright light
Stays put in the shadows singing in harmony with a fat bloated vulture.
Blood drips from crooked pink nostril
Waiting to plunge its scimitar beak into the primal depths of her iron soul.
A fishing boat chugs out of the harbor fading from sight
Engulfed by a thick swirling dervish Macbeth meets witches brew on the
heath mist.

Mid morning sun rays filtering through the smog of this stifling Bombay
heat, taking one's life in one's hand on the No 70 bus as the mad crazy
driver free wheels roundabouts as passengers hold on to the designated
safety bars with the tips of their fingers. There is no Mary Magdalene to
look over me and sooth my sweat travel stained feet as the dilapidated red
London bus, symbol of a lost colonial past carves a drunken disorderly
passage through noisy congested streets briefly stopping at unmarked bus
stops to disgorge agitated, unruly and disorientated passengers while the
band plays on. Others care free and fancy free hang on to the side as this
crimson mosquito floats on this Persian flying carpet of existence unworried
about passenger fears as they hold onto synthetic wings while the manic
hunched driver watches pirated Star Trek videos and reads his uncle's letter
bringing news of the extended family working the cotton mills in Bradford,
England.

Take the local train north out of Bombay Central Station,
Head for Sapati, a fishing village
Situating at the end of a beaten track.

Relax in brilliant sunshine.
Gaze at the wide horned cattle
Which nestle along side
Low tide marooned fishing vessels
Dreamily at anchor in the shallow bleached blue tinted creek.
The flat horizon punctuated
By a lean-to line of dusky lepidopterous
Light green palm trees.

Low cut dug out canoes
Embroidered with luminescent frescoes
Upon tranquil meditative canvas.
Art nouveau with copious lashings of Jackson Pollock and David Hockney
Weave abstract impressions with incoming waves.

Fishermen, mother their craft.
Wash them down.
Wait.
Glance up at the midday sun,
Look for an indicator
Of the next high tide.

Horse and cart trots along the public beach
Loaded down with shimmering blocks of ice.
Leave heavy traces on the velvet sand.

Cast adrift from the usual trappings of
Western culture and civilization.
Bury my head deep in my hands.
Drawn into this beach's intense solitude.
Immersed in that eternal heart beat.
In synchronicity with gentle waves
Lapping at the coast line
Unveiling encrypted stanzas,
Throwing me a life buoy
To collect and hang my thoughts to

As I drift aimlessly and
Wait for poetic inspiration.

Interred beneath this timeless and unchanged land.
A helicopter bursts into this mystical time warp,
Hushed expectant opened mouthed children
Gather to gaze at this alien machine
Which is whisked away,
Fades into an illusion
Leaves no footprints in the sand dunes
While fairy stories do their rounds in the scorched dust
Laden heat.

Brightly clad women stroll to and fro
Beneath my sleep induced balcony.
Parched water pots
Gift wrapped to oil sleek
Combed veiled heads.
Delicate balanced wicker baskets
Sway gently in afternoon sun.
Young boys in khaki shorts
Casually spin stones into becalmed waters,
Disturb a chattering animated flock of green parrots who
Fly back agitated to the safety of coconut tree roost.

Flash backs in the sultry dead heat of night.
Tossing and turning in mosquito net buzzing haven.
Scratch and blindly lash out at the invading bed bug army
Creeping and crawling over my tormented and infested body.
I muse whether they have come in their thousands
To listen to an updated version of
The Sermon On The Mount.
Transcend the sack clothed draped balcony
In this lost and forgotten world.

Take an absent minded stroll
Merge with the hustle and bustle of
Thriving end of the road market place.

Layered freshly caught fish
Open mouthed shark
Sharp tooth
Glistens beneath the
Endless swarm of bloated black flies.

An orange garlanded sacred cow
Oblivious to its saint hood
Wanders past
Acts as an unofficial and unpaid street cleaner
Within this paradise island.
The brown cardboard box
Super glued to sharp curved horns
Creates havoc in the market area as it
Freely samples the delight of the wrecked flower stall,
Nonchalantly chewing the cud on succulent green stems
And twisted bus and petals.
Acknowledges the bows of the proud stall holder
Standing with folded arms and mute reverence
To the sacred beast
Moving closer to reincarnation and a
Touch of nirvana.

Pungent fresh fruit
Vegetables crusted in rich seams of ploughed earth
Golden lotus roots piled high
Sweet with unadulterated nectar
Their past lives rooted in muddy groves,
A gift from the Buddha to his disciples.
Rose tinted glasses zoom in on
Potatoes
Aubergines
Succulent blood red tomatoes
Onions
Green peas and hot chilies
And other untamed exotic vegetables
Stacked in gloomy alley ways.

Watch enamored at the full moon as it races stars in the night sky.
Spot an occasional meteorite display its
Sparkled peacock plumage
Shot into this void
Pulsate in perfect time and pitch to the
Temple music blaring out of crackling white light speakers.
Echoes of a distant wedding celebration.
Emissions from squat beach sandstone temple.
Discordant notes and frivolity coupled with
Animal madness as I feel myself losing the plot and
Become shipwrecked on some Robinson Crusoe treasure island.

Loaded bull cart slowly saunters through the shaded
Coconut glade en-route to the distant Krishna Temple celebration.
Brilliant white carbon copy toothpaste smiles greet the visiting
Strangers perched precariously on the shaky wooden floor.
Brief glances at the group
Squatting in a circle
On the warm flagstone floor.
Offerings of rice and spiced vegetables
Are handed out and gorged with sticky fingers
From a green banana leaf.
Manic fire eating dancers
Cast eerie shadows over temple celebrations.
A glossary of fireworks brighten up the approaching
Evening curtain.
A child cries contentedly in the arms of its smiling doting mother.
I feel intensely satisfied making the return journey
Traversing this surreal ink blotch enriching landscape.
Solitary glimmers of distant wax candle light flicker from
Concealed huts scattered in the forest surrounds
Which add magic to this blind journey and in the
Cool breeze and thick charcoal air the black snake oiled river unwinds and
Blends in with razor sharp crack of hoofs from homeward bound bullock
cart.

Broken spells,
Disorientation and ill temper
Are the order of the day.
Lodge at the Ever Sunshine Guest House
Downtown in Delhi.
Like a wilting sponge
The mind blowing pollution is soaked up in true osmosis style.
Stay in a single room with a sparse single mattress
With rice paper thin
Noisy vibrating partitioned walls.

Feel so tired and listless.
Spent all-day battling with minor Indian autocrats.
Ordered pillar to post and back again.
Screamed at. Yelled at.
Join queue after queue only to be told that I am in the wrong queue.
All I want is a bus ticket to Kausani in the Himalayan foothills.
Comb the city in search of honest black market money launderer.
Am met with blank hostile looks together with tight lip silence.
The flash suit at the smart desk treats me like a walk on character
From an unpublished Kafkaesque novel.
Finally I collapse from sheer exhaustion.
Listen to the plaintive cry of the werewolf
Haunting this full moonless night.

India you have washed me away in your slip stream of life.
I have been christened in your incessant flow of brain shattering
Cosmic consciousness.
The circle never completed.
The circle never broken.
Sucked into a maelstrom of utter mindlessness where
There is no beginning and no finality.
I catch the occasional speck and shadows which briefly reveal
Pure and unblemished oil paintings
Depicting the infinite in all its splendor and glory
Stretched onto a tight canvas.
The high pitched crescendo building up
To explosive point on the packed crawling city crossroad
Becomes unbearable.
Forced back by this ever increasing tidal wave of sound to

Collapse on to my narrow soiled mattress
In my squalid 'I am lonely and feel so sorry for myself' hotel cell.

Early city fog frosty morning armed with bus ticket,
My passport out of this bureaucratic nightmare
Arrive at the bus terminal to find my journey is
Simply one of the imagination.

In blind desperation I leap on the first bus
Seemingly heading vaguely towards the Himalayan foothills.

The bus's iron nose like a wily bloodhound
Erratically sniffs out that phantom mountain range,
Birth place of Indra and those other gods and deities
Which oil the prayer wheels of modern day India.
Begin to feel that magnetic attraction to this continent
While immersed in inner reflection.

Delhi street vendors are left shivering in cold
Strips of blanket provide no protection
Against this bitter sharp winter chill.
Take a final glance from rickety bouncing back seat.
Dull rising sun shimmering in white glazed frosted smog.

Deep breath. Saccharine gasps of pure air sublime tranquility.
Overdose on these majestic 360 degree panoramic visions
Sweeping into view.

Manic coach driver
Inspiration for \Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters
As they road movied the American Dream on kool aid acid.
Bus filled with the laughing gas of the driver's
Deep seated laughter
Recklessly unaware of vertical roadside edge mountain drop.

Renewed life, rebirth,
A multitude of spiritual reincarnations
Lotus flowers bloom.
Inspirational roots claw into cracked paving slabs
As the dilapidated bus careers round steep winding mountain facades
Bursting at every corner with Bollywood film scores.
Travel through silver strands of test tube flow attenuated air.

India I love you
India I have come under your magic spell
India I cannot describe you
India tell me who you are?
India I beg you tell me what you are?
India your rainbow has a hint of the schizophrenic
India I am still searching for your pot of illusory rainbow gold.

Full moon rising, racing through wild bleak badlands. Heading towards the mountain town of Almora. Enter new world gates. Senses are overwhelmed by this heightened stream of radiant energy.

Stand alone on Almora hotel verandah. Feel the gold crisp morning sun shower me with yellow daffodils. Smell them burning in the breeze which filters through in this tranquility.

Mystic mysterious mountain skyline revitalizes my crumbling edifice.
Submerged within this subterranean twilight world,
Explore rambling labyrinth chambers by candle light
Searching for the real estate of my being.

Arrive at Laxsmi Ashram submerged in Himalayan foothills.
Overshadowed by distant snow capped peaks.
Apparently Gandhi rented out a room in a Kausani hotel and his visit
Is embedded in local mythology and history.
One still senses his presence in this remote community.
Traces remain of visions and hopes of a better tomorrow.

I am reunited with my long lost brother. Find myself entering some weird abstract world.
Struggle to solve 12 down in The Times cryptic crossword.
Feel thwarted. Let down. Abandoned.
Still caught up in the tidal wave disappointment of lost youth.
Invisible demons invade my tortured soul.
Collapse in an untidy heap on the floor of the wooden hut.
Tormented by crucifixion hallucinations in the lush landscape of childhood memories.
Heat of barbed nails driven into my tormented flesh.
Dissolve. Float away on a veiled caravan driven slowly through the gathering fog.

Plunge into the powerful current. Stroll along remote bulrush banks.
A yeti casually munches on a fresh, thinly sliced cheese and cucumber
sandwich.

Reflect upon Jung in the cool heat.
Wonder whether one can ever rediscover the forgotten self or find the
primeval source of being or whether love can ever be reestablished in its
rightful place?
Can love once again rule supreme and sit upon the peacock throne?

Jettisoned in the green waters of the Saragossa Sea.
Float in this under water world.
Knock on the doors of buried treasure troves.
Seek out the Goddess of Love.
Stranded on an revolving door acid trip.
Watch life slip out of control.
Walk up and down sterile corridors guarded by cold and glum white
serpents.

Downcast. Locked up in this isolated mountain top retreat.
Stubborn refusal to partake in the outside world.
Happy to wander alone drowning in my discontent.

Dream vision. The empty room. A line of wooden staves. Upright and
alert. Serpents coiled on each staff. Waiting for the shadow to enter. To
grasp the snake head. To leave via the back door. To wander the world
spreading Gandhi's philosophy and teaching.

Laxshmi Ashram breakfast
Captivated by the lullaby simplicity
Of the Pueblo Indian adobe type hut.
Tuck into a plain fare of chapatti and porridge.
Wait for the late arrival of Goldilocks and the three bears
Who have missed the 9.18 morning express train
From Paddington station.
Sit cross legged in full lotus position.
Feel as if I am poised on the edge of some awesome spiritual experience.
Spellbound by wall to wall smiles.
This to me right now is unmapped and uncharted territory.
New frontiers to be transcended

Amidst soft laughter and
Warm fruit pastel shades, airbrushed on the adobe plaster
Garlanding the inhabitants sitting cross legged
Amongst the ruins of this Greek temple.
Lithe subtle limbs lazily dangled in smooth flow torrent.
Takes the pain from taut aching thighs.
Angels nonchalantly lean against the bough of a golden apple tree
And this Garden of Eden is a woven mass of warm smiles and cherubic lips.

Thick mist combined with thin penetrating rain drops encase this subdued
morning.

Black crow precariously perched on a protruding water pipe
Dangles a minute piece of offal from yellow darkened beak.
Other nameless birds shelter from the gloom
Disheveled by the reckless downpour in the dour conifer forest.

Dogs howl,
A stray monkey on an abortive kitchen garden raid
Dashes from the cabbage patch.
I stand looking out at no mans land.
Wait for a multi colored stamp
To appear in my blank passport.
My mind sketches out transient Buddhist type landscapes.
Vague and undefined blurred images
Rattle about in my creaking uncoiled brain.

Cinderella at the ball as the smile vanishes from her distraught face.
Midnight's last stroke chimes from the clock tower.
Buddha remains stoic calm
Cushioned on a throne of lotus flower petals.
Floats upon soft tissue tinted breeze.

India how dare you suck me into your mainstream!
India screaming out into the night saying I want to be left alone.
India cant you see I want to be in charge of my own destiny.
India I have no long term or short term memory.
India I haven't a clue about which way to turn.

Indian sweet tea mirage.
I clutch loose strands of magic flying carpet
Ride the big wheel
Soar high above gay painted fairground.

Time's rigid dimensions appear to disintegrate.
Day and night cease to have any relevance.
Radio and television stations tear up programmed schedules.
People seem content simply to blankly stare at vacant snow storm screens.
Watch with startled curiosity at lines of flickering dots pulsate,
Emit invisible waves,
Connect with that greater reality.
Beaten up, battered, leather arm chair vision
Put through a gas turbine blender
Mixed in with the smokeless zone brand of ultra realism.

But still I cannot unchain myself and release myself from my own chaotic
past.
Question whether I am still locked into some weird and wonderful primal
scream LSD adventure.
Still tripping after all these years down memory lanes.
Stand at the heavy gates of perception.
Take a close look at the local heaven and hell drop in centre.

Two boys fly a red paper kite.
Throw stones at the visiting tribe of marauding monkeys.
Listen to the woodpecker drum out a drone on a rotten tree trunk.
Watch a woodsman lift his iron axe and plunge the worn blade into a tree
Buried in the dense forest hill slung panorama.
White fleece clouds clamber sluggishly over the marzipan coated mountain
range.
Banks of low mist drift across the planted fields of this green fertile valley.
I sit on the grassed slope, immersed, saturated, captivated,
By tepid honey perfumed vista.
Cottages rubber stamped over furrowed inter-space.
Cylindrical haystacks bound with sheaves of fresh olive green grass.
Snowy peaks so close yet so far engulf steel silence, rattle hushed void.

Descend inhospitable hostile valley.
Avoid twisted venomous forest stumps.

Effortlessly jump fast moving rock strewn mountain stream.
Catch quick glimpse of fleeting villages, small towns and hamlets
Tucked into the razor sharp folds of this wilderness.
Swirled menacing cloud formations like drunken kamikaze pilots
Nose dive jagged rocks and are swept away by massive boulders.
Mysterious temples on sparkling 5 leaf clover hillsides
Overlook plummeting gorge.
Kingfishers and other brightly plumaged chattering birds dart in and out
Of low cut slippery wind in the willows river bank.
Pensive clusters of villagers huddle on bare parched soil
Outside the grimy teashop rolling out balls of malleable hashish
In the soft heat of their well worn pock marked palms.
Utter inaudible toasts to the dream maker while slurping cheap earthenware
cups of steaming chai.

Christmas Eve spent amidst the tranquility of the wooden hut.
Wood fire simmers in small iron grate.
Shadows playfully dance in unison
With primitive white wash walls.

Christmas Day spent on sunshine mountain.
Embrace the raw essence of this festive season.
A celebration to that elusive gift of life.

Clear blue full body horizon trailed by seven clouds sprouting transient
wings which vault over hills of wedding veil and linger over morose forest
bathed in the specks of gold leaf web crest tango dance sunbeams.

The ashram is left far behind.
I have finally severed the umbilical chord
From youth's eternal fountain and return to the outside world.
Already I am missing that sense of community
With all of its outer trappings of warmth, happiness
And simplicity of lifestyle.
That intensity of being alive in every diverse and scattered moment
While bedazzled flames light up blind evening tracks
Set them ablaze with cherry blossom smiles.

Slump against my bulky and unwieldy rucksack
Packed tight with camera gear and film.

Thrown around in the back of heavy steel Indian army truck.
Listen to well oiled turbine engine grumble and the moans of
Heated rubber tires scream around and succinctly tackle the sharp mountain
bends.

Ready to explode in tears at the final goodbye as the foothills finally depart
fragments of my imagination. My eyes sweep vacant windswept hillsides
which are lost in torrid avalanches of disconnected memories.

The Goddess of Confusion reigns supreme.

Arrive at Gurapor railway station.

Try and stay calm under the strain of constantly been pushed from pillar to
post while trying to comprehend the Indian transport system.

Join queue after queue yet still am unable to purchase a train ticket.

Begin to feel like a battered and bruised fairground prize bare knuckle
fighter after surviving for fifteen long and exhausting rounds in the sawdust
ring. Who eventually hands in the sweat lodge towel, admits caustic soda
defeat before finally accepting a third class and unreserved ticket.

Act on impulse.

Buy dream ticket to Nepal.

Leave Gurapor.

Adhere to the timeless rhythm of ragamuffin steam locomotive.

Stare out into the night.

Crave for that peace of mind.

Feel agitated by the unceasing, undulating flat Indian plain.

Overwhelmed by rapid disintegrating urban sprawl

Eroding my fragile and tottering psyche which squats anonymously

In third class railway carriage with India's untouchable caste.

Cracked crouched tiger not burning bright

Crushed in the mayhem of rag and bone carriage

Buried in a rush of musk raked vibrating Mel colony.

Covered in the debris and hubris of discarded cigarette butts,

Orange peel and dead skin.

Sensitive nose pressed out of joint against

Charcoal greased soot blackened window pane.

Try to avoid the stench from flooded toilet.

Two muddy footprints embalmed on white enamel throne.

Close encounter with the murky over world of peddlers
Who patrol the forecourt of station platforms in utter disarray.

Coated in a veneer of ambiguity by dreary candle light.
Hawk bundles of fresh bananas, home made Somoza, packets of nuts, spiced
concoctions designed to assault travel weary and betel nut stained palates.
Hands reach out of the jail bar windows and from open swinging cell doors
Before the prison train picks up speed.
The journey is broken sporadically by the occasional flicker of a brutal light
bulb of an interrogation room which is vaporized in the specter of dawn's ice
blue sultry spectacle blended with a turgid cocktail of phantom crocodile
infested swampland.

Sleep cobra sleep
Curl up in my dagger shaped heart
Curl up in my dagger shaped heart
Allow the lotus flower
To spring forth to blossom in your muddy water
Let the lotus flower spring forth and blossom in your muddy water.
Sleep cobra sleep
Let your beauty weep
Sleep cobra sleep
Let your beauty weep.

Incandescent lurid green fish tail mermaid
Mislaid within this immense scintillating landscape.
Swim in the close confine of cool lush fertile water meadow
Webbed fish tail waltzing with elongated water spider.
The liverish moist monsoon sun strokes this rich pumice crumbling soil.
Reawakens the exotic and erotic murals on the temple walls.

Life is transformed into a pilgrimage with the ultimate aim of bringing about
a manifestation of the absolute godhead.

Lucknow awakens to a steam boat stinking squalid smell bound sunrise.
Ragged gypsy moth eaten unwashed children
Squat outside decrepit gruesome pigsty cardboard shacks.
Black hair spine chine bristled swine
Scuttle playfully in the dirt and grime.
Pink snouts like magnetic shovels
Sniffing out like drug dogs any sweet morsel of comfort
Oblivious to jet black ravenous crows on arched backs

Pecking at and making a meal of thick brooding armies of delicate white
lice.

India I am fascinated
But appalled at what I see.
India please speak back
When you are spoken to.

India don't just bury your head in the sand
And run away and hide behind the silk curtain tapestry of your illusions.

India
I want to drink from the hidden golden chalice
Of secret knowledge and absorb your innate wisdom.

My subdued blue eyes stare blankly from the musty stationary train window.
Listen to the grating rickshaws traveling over uneven potholed busy street
Taking dazed and bewildered culture shock passengers on these speed
wagons

Balanced precariously like high wire circus clowns.
Busses weave in and out of this bedlam
Randomly startling onlookers with weary blasts of massive Indian rubber
horns.

Bubblegum taxis, their molten chassis stretched to limousine limit
Of human endurance as motorized rickshaws merge dangerously
With bright gaudy painted bird land ramshackle lorries.
Jeeps, motor bikes go hand in hand with a
Continuous procession of excited buzzing bee pedestrians who enact
mysterious ceremonies which are transmitted by satellite
Throughout the Indian sub-continent.

Making her way meticulously through this static down at heel train
Followed by the eager child observing the forlorn will o wisp
Floating talon plead in sign language.
Her naked and unadorned defenseless bloated stomach,
Thirsty lips hungrily caress my dust smeared feet
Hidden tears falling between the gaps in the railway track
Flooding the well trodden and traveled carriage floor.
Leaves a fossilized implant on the blotting book pages
Of a callous humanity
Which ignores her desperate plight
As she screams out

‘Where were you when I needed you the most’.
A dwarf caught up in this carnival parade
Points an accusing finger at nobody in particular.
Casts a sculpture in bronze
Out of the remains of my transparent cold store
Lack of sympathy and charity.

The singer in a red two piece
Crawls through the seamless bowels
Of my consciousness.
Her hungry stare tears deep into my ravaged skull.
Blinds me with ultra sonic beams.
Renders me powerless as I collapse.
Feel myself drowning in a storm beaten sea of savage helplessness.

Unaware of the thriving and bustling platform
Stacked with a brilliant medley of hawkers selling
Sunglasses, plastic religious icons,
Remnants of Hindu deities, lurid magazines, cheap cigarettes,
Ruffled post cards, shoe shine boys and girls hustling to bring out the glow
In well heeled patent leather shoes.
I continue on my quest to escape the barbarism of 21st century special brew
lager connoisseurs who watch Indian home thought from abroad, float past
lotus flower blossom in neat terraced rice paddy fields.

Steam along the flat Indian plains iron horse track.
Black wing red bill vultures perch from wavering thin gold leaf tree tops.
Heavy feather black and white stripe wing flap in sultry mid day breeze.
Patient, nerves of steel, wait for the death mask to rear its weary, ugly and
unsuspecting head.
Children laugh. Splash ankle deep in the pond’s muddied water.
Flocks of swooping hawks skim the becalmed surface.
Stretch marks etched on the surface by swift claws.
Solitary washer woman clasps the reeds on the slippery bank.
Her long drawn out day buried amongst a pile of soiled linen.
Match stick boxes of propped sentinel storks.
Hérons of all shapes, hues of blue and grey and sizes
Ponderously fly low alongside the shuddering locomotive.
I survey the instant flash of small ponds and rice paddies teeming with
birdsong and wild life.

Blue flash of oasis zoom into the path of the bright sun.
Colorful parrots display exotic wares.
Telegraph wires buzz with mid-day cosmopolitan chatter
Adorned with a hung out to dry smarty box assortment of birds.
Sharp claws clutch magnetic static electric taut telegraph wire
Like classroom monitors, their sharp glistening wayward eyes
Gaze out over simmering grey flat pastoral panorama.

Irrigated patterns branch out and spread out in New York grid system.
A slow turning ox sedately chained to a revolving linseed oiled creaky
wooden pump.

The circle completed.

The endless movement of the falling and rising bucket
Its minute rust bucket flooding the narrow suave of pencil thin drainage
ditches.

Watch this act of creation spread invisible shadows over ploughed green
succulent leafy shoots

In the wake of upright herdsmen and peasant farmers.

Briefly they turn aside from their work

Glance at fleet footed transient train.

Sheep and goats methodically chew the cud on dry tender foliage.

Contented buffalo casually squat on lean tanned haunches

Spread-eagled in a still tranquil pool.

Meditation in this drip fed Buddha sunshine.

Armies of beggars methodically march through metallic remote corridors of
the speeding train blasting a passageway through India's heartland.

Display an array of crushed and battered limbs dangling meaninglessly.

Splattered and spinning on the cosmic wooden prayer wheel.

Mucus pours out of splayed nostrils.

Desperate eyes plead for a grain of truth and the dried bread crumbs of my
dining table.

Destitute mournful singers chant dirges and you feel the pain of this sub-
continent flood into the carriage.

A timeless lost in space flautist trails with the blind leading the blind in this
train of abject misery.

Beat out a rhythm adding to this endless carnival ragtime burlesque show.
Hidden volcanic craters mask rivers of anger and resentment waiting to erupt
and reach melt down point.

Bus journey to the Nepalese frontier.
A marvelous ramshackle and chaotic affair.
Broken and cracked windows.
A worm infested rusted floor.
Comfortable but dilapidated and shredded leather seats.

Cruise past the Nepalese border post.
Enter a bright fresh new world
Where cows and goats roam carefree
On broad unpaved urbane boulevards.

Transcend this green gentle soft pastiche landscape.
Drive past the sweet corn vendor,
Children sell fresh baked coconut slices and
Rich saffron cakes.
The wayward frisky chicken is chased by red blush girl.
A crimson robed Buddhist monk flits passed unwashed bus window frame.

Reach Katmandu that dreamlike hippie idyll.
First impressions are of nose retch reverberations
Rumbling waterfall gurgling morning throats.
Mucus discharges, the tired night soil of a sleepy hangover
Onto red rose garland guesthouse pavement.

Katmandu, a bright array of oceanic temples float in the subtle waves of
every street corner whilst in the quiet subdued market place a woman
dressed in rags breast feeds her slumbering child, beats out an hypnotic
rhythm on the transparent skin of a small hand held drum.
Behind her manic swaying body a deranged Hunchback of Notre Damme
figure obscenely gropes at her ice pink aroused nipple. His ravaged and
cease face indented with a full moon lunatic smile.

The temple on the city outskirts has been transformed into a tourist
extravaganza.

Wooden tea houses overlook the abattoir cut throat killing grounds.
Blood encrusted skinned carcasses are washed up against bleak granite
smooth rocks.

Squawking chickens receive the last rites from clean cut temple priest.

Squawking chickens enter the blood soaked slaughter chamber

Depart for the next life.

Hope that they have changed their negative karma.

Souvenir sellers compete with brazen beggars on the high rise stone steps
swarming with camera toting tourists all out for a quick fix. All waiting for
the sacrificial blood to flow.

Later listen to the calls of the night and feel the absence of motor cars.

No flickers from moribund television sets.

Simply the hiss and crackle of distorted radio transmitted waves

Bringing on home the latest one day international cricket test scores.

Rice paper Chinese lantern illuminations

Emerge from the far off lakeside city.

They are the last vestiges of the modern world.

I sit pirouetted on this shimmering gilded perimeter fence

Separating the old from the new world

Light years away from Star War fantasies

Dreamt up in White Houses with plush croquet lawns

Where deluded politicians dance with the commander in chief

Closeted in a spiral of geriatric decline

Besotted with Armageddon.

Madcap scientists sip on slow moving cocktails.

Prepare the world for novel painless methods of mass destruction.

Five star generals drown in their wet dreams.

In the milked silence a dog barks sandwiched between the murmur of distant
anonymous voices.

Someone sings a plaintive tune reaching deep into hidden labyrinths.

There is that unfathomable contact with a greater reality.

The heavens open up revealing pearls of diamond wisdom.

So clear and so precise. The 12 points of the Zodiac etch their signatures on

Holtz's planet like azure night sky.

Cloud so of butterflies filtered through a net of sunbeams
Weave silk tapestries above the yellow beaded mustard field.
Low flying house mountains glide to the rhythm of mule trains
Wend a path up and down the cloak and dagger mountain trail.

Annapurna Sanctuary, snowcapped, flows into rough out cropped wooded
hillside.

Misted valleys obliterated in these nymph like glens of distant obscurity.

Laughing children wash beside the cold running water tap.
Beethoven rhapsody in blue
Emanate from deep running water orchestrated river.
Divers emerge hand in hand with signed copies of some
Forgotten symphony rediscovered buried amongst sunken ruins.

Musty fruit fly oil lamps engage in free style distant conversations with
spirits from the over world.

There is a card game in motion.

I choose to stare out into that remote undefined inner space.
Completely over awed, engulfed by my immediate environment.

Visions hijacked with ease from a Hollywood B Movie.
Gold diggers and prospectors haunt rocky mosquito ridden river bed valley
Frustrated by neurotic mule trains ambling their stubborn foolhardy way
Through red rock canyon.

Hostile hoofs lunge out at mid day ramblers.

The eagle's flight passes by unnoticed.

Alert mule ears hover over pock mark turf crop circle edge.

Deforested hillside quietness broken by the ramblings of magic flute
crescendos.

Women cut bundles of fire wood from the brushed bushy slopes.

Break into harmonic sporadic song sheets.

The chanting mule driver edges the hoofed volatile pack along the raised
downhill high note rocky path.

I lie exhausted, breath deep, silent beside the well worn track.
Replay in my spinning head the original music score of The Sound of Music
in its entirety.

Sun's warmth has vanished.
Evaporated,
Swallowed up in the approaching chill of the night's damp icy grip.

Annapurna South. Treacherous slopes barely visible.
Hidden by a bank of turgid oil spill monsoon cloud.
Grey slate roof village with steep moss stone steps
And convergent narrow playful lanes.
Children pass through rites of passages,
Play ball games at till dusk.
Rainbow vision cockerels strut,
Face painted with a dazzling explosion of sparkled tail feathers.
Proud aristocratic crowned heads raised high
With claws holding onto a royal flush in this high stake life poker game.

Cows freely roam across the vast endless timeless landscape.
Hawk soars high over head.
Listen to the earth sing rapturous psalms.

Shattered remnants – charred paper buried in the hot smoldering ashes.
The lost space craft re-enters the hot house atmosphere.
Safely lands on dreamland runway.
I am transfixed by the lizard image submerged and flaccid in the tank's calm
and tranquil clear spring water.
It is left to die in slow agonized torment.
I continue on my pilgrimage searching for that unknown objective.
Look out for shadowy knights in dull plate armor.
Vague shapes scour the mystical countryside for the elusive holy grail.

Poon Hill is reached as the last burning rose wood embers of sandalwood
incense rays of the setting sun merge with visions of a double rainbow
photographed by Alice in wonderland.
Drunk and elated wedding guests drift out of the mad hatter's tea party.
Wait to be photographed before escaping from the crazed bagpipe player.
Impressionistic visions of pastel shades entwined with harsh charcoal crags
and sharp jagged rock faces.
White coned vanilla mountain peak threatened by the gathering storm.
Cloud formations transform the hinterland into a cosmic battleground.
Blind forces of good and evil engage in bloody hand to hand fighting.
Struggle for that ultimate supremacy.

Dark fragmented tree trunks act as surrogate totems, act as signposts pointing the way towards forgotten and hidden worlds bathed in the vanishing rays which paint the disappearing horizon with Chinese whisper ink brush strokes.

Royal blue snow tinged with bright orange silk strands.
This snow white magic served up as the main meal of the day.

Sit cross legged in circular wooden mountain guest house on Poon Hill
Savoring oat porridge, Tibetan bread coated in lethal dosages of steaming honey. Drink red hot sweet tea. Sample the protein power of a trekker's breakfast.

Bathe in the hot springs at Tarapani.
Unclog tired, foot sore and aching muscles.
Revitalize the blossoming orchard of one's deepest being.
Gaze out at visions of reincarnated Greek river nymphs.
Splash naked and lazily in luxurious hot spring open pool.
A natural hot tub embedded beside white water rafting mountain river.
Today the springs lie empty.
There is no innocence laughter from
Brown oil nubile bodies adrift in these temple waters.
Today Maoist guerrillas hide out along the empty tourist mountain paths.

Bare barren gigantic granite rock sculptures
Thrown randomly across down stream river valley.

Heavily clad Tibetans run yaks, mules, sheep and donkeys
Up and down the crazed escalator trail.
Weather beaten tanned rawhide complexions.
Braided beads in thick grease jet black matted hair.
Toughened samurai bodies,
Draped in the crown jewels of day to day existence.
Wrapped in thick skin animal pelts and fur.
Display powerful and bright lighthouse beacon brown eyes.
Thick fleshy lips always flashing a penetrating quicksilver mercurial smile.
Extensions and an out growth of this windswept terraced desolate wasteland.

Vivid dream nightmare leaves a bitter after taste.
The formation of a police state in Britain still lingers in my mind
As I struggle to reconnect with the mountain path.

Press on through the strong howling wind as the razor sharp sand storm tears
at my battered and lost soul.
Saps at my final residual energy stores.
Blindly walk with my thin scarf as my only protection
Covering my weeping nose and mouth as I
Stumble through the bitter swirling dust.

The high altitude takes its toll.
Hear bells ring.
Feel pulse rates rise.
Watch the Teutonic pressure plate
Clash and beat wild drum time.
Spasmodic heart palpitations surge as purple veins bloom and blossom
And lose all sense of responsibility.
I am swept away by the rolling waves of this once oceanic terrain.
Before the lights of a down beat village appear from this sea of madness.
The vanished trail reappears and guides these weary travelers down
To the safety of the harbor hostel and jugs of cool home brewed beer.

Stroll amongst the ruins of this quiet dignified white cloak Buddhist temple.
Coated discreetly in invisible finite layers of honey comb magic.
Stunted stubble trees, silver lined, shine and glisten like sentries
In the continuing snow fall.

Knar led and twisted with open arms.
Completely at the harsh mercy of Nature's brutish elements.
twisted and forlorn.
Carved into bent wind shapes conveying all manner of expressions
Trapped within individual life states.

Tongues tripping through the moods and emotions
And states of being.
Easter Island statues.
Their consciousness opening up.
Look out through the looking glass towards that opaque blue horizon.

Appalling weather conditions force one back down the route one had come.
The high pass is swallowed up in Nature's white unseen fist.

Pinnacles of raw isolation covered roughly in a blanket of thick wind and
snow.

Latched on to a frozen but potent explosive laced ice martini cocktail.
Hand held, shaken but not stirred.

Sharp thorn like snow flakes rip into my bearded exposed face.
Beat down on the sand stone escarpment surrounding the desert fortress.

From the strained mist a column of horses emerge.
A lost brigade of French foreign legion fighters.
White turbaned Bedouin warriors.
On the aloof battlements stand battle hardened soldiers
Clutching ghost rust spidery rifles.

Feel the passing warmth of the fire ablaze in an open ended tin box.
Watch the sparrow hop across the concrete floor.
Search out scraps and bread crumbs.
Listen to the old white bearded man
Read aloud the letter he had just written
To his brother living and working in Delhi.

A bunch of yellow, red, white and blue ever lasting flowers.
Red chequered plastic table cloth.
Wooden chairs. A paraffin lamp, a mirror, the hand washed towel,
Pink and lilac green salt and pepper pots,
Water urns, copper pots and pans line the wooden cabinet
With its crumpled Nepalese wall calendar.
An empty cheese carton substitutes for a sugar bowl.
I hear the sound of a bell as a yak trail
Saunters past the wide open window.

Sunlight highlights ancient wood smoked white wooden beams.
I let myself meditate on the mountains and watch sail boats
Tack through the storm cloud holes cut into the tiled roof.

Rescue scattered dreams washed ashore during turbulent and unsettled night
sleep.

Find myself walking along a disused railway embankment.

Strangers emerge from shanty town shacks.

Beg in plain song for a bag of heroin.

Huddled in a ramshackle corner a 13 year old girl child with

Long smooth silk auburn hair

Shivers in the mildew

Desperate for the next heroin high.

Fragments of dreamtime.

The space craft safely takes off

Is hurled into orbit

While my fragile space bound head

Is still in a state of recovery

From the previous night's farewell drinks and

Mad drug cocktail bash.

Wander through these deep weary depths of eternity until the hilltop is reached. Lean against black, twisted, distorted trees scarred by the fire storm. Look up at the lucid sky filled with pink rose fluttering scented petals. Observe the becalmed priest conduct this annual ceremony. Commemorate the nuclear bomb attack which had annihilated the previous civilization. The priest chants out a succession of prayers for world peace and a renewal of hope for a better world. These prayers echo through the sequined lace valley and a lone voice cries out in forlorn hope, 'No More War'.

Iridal threads strung up over gold web glen.

Alone. Feel good just being alive.

Cloaked in soprano birdsong.

Inhale the warm aroma of honey suckle.

Remember blurred visions of the Annupurna Sanctuary.

Allow the eagle to fly high and free and to

Guard this vanishing brittle vista..

Yellow primroses crown the ridge of the mountain path.

Lights the way for flocks of migrating eagles to follow

The rumbling river to towards the sea.

Bodhisattvas of the earth

Search for the lost Eagle Peak and that sacred path to Buddha hood.

Nepal shuts its door and turns its back on me.

I face death head on in Gorapor's mean streets.

The corpse, prone, motionless, lies in the dust.

Angry faces seem to surround me.

Radiate discontent and hostility.

I munch my way through hungry handfuls of unshelled peanuts.

Dark poignant heavy cast brown eyes with

Somber tight lip wafer thin glances

Storm the barricades and exile me to the

Grave yard of a far way comic strip planet.

Lose my way completely on the train ride from Gurapor to Delhi.
The compass bearing spins madly and falls into the crevice of savage garden
bear pit.

I stagger blindly around Delhi.

Knock on the doors of servile politicians and complete strangers

Listed in my ragged address book.

Chase phantom dreams which spring from unknown corners.

Find myself chasing non-existent illusions.

There is no mirror in the cramped hotel room.

Fail to notice my skeletal frame

Protruding from flaked notes of consciousness.

Follow the maple tree trail to Rajastan armed with a pocket magnifying
glass.

Look for clues at the festival of the sands.

Track wheel marks which seem to disappear into the retreating desert

Swept along by the tidal wave drifting into the infinite.

Desperately clutch my rose wood Buddha statue.

Let go of the golden crucifix

Snatched by a loitering pick pocket as

Mad dogs and Englishmen stroll out under the midday sun.

Nomadic opium eater sits in full lotus position.

Floats above the concrete garage floor.

Questions me about the price of my Doc Martens.

Vacant figures embalmed in the seams of Joseph's dream coat
Float across this yellow peril desert mind scape.
Move in and out of melodic sand dunes
Cloaked in a veil of potential danger and mystery.

All night festival dancers kick out pearl thighs and rainbow shadows
Over this jaundiced earth.
I climb aboard and launch into a discourse with Einstein in Sanskrit.
Transcend his theory on relativity,
Discover another reality but lose the formula within this vast expanse.
See it vanish into the toothless jaws of a giant iguana as it
Hurries off into the dusk looking out for pots of gold buried on remote
planets.
Observe my soul disintegrate.
Crumble into grains of sand.
Become absorbed into this desert escarpment.

Children weep in the gloom.
A softly spoken genteel mother
Shivers on the cold night jar platform.
Draws her bundles of humanity closer to her chest.
Allows the stray dog to lay down beside amongst the other
Ragged sleeping shards of humanity
Which are daily disgorged from the railway station bowels.
Crowded waiting room hold out blank cheques
Signed with tear stained prayers of hope.

Neon night time commuter train
Transports the spirit of India
Across ghostly realms of this sub-continent.

Steel metal hydra goddess removes nightmarish stupors.
Pumps them out onto chaotic platforms
Down that convulsive railway track.
Start to leave Rajasthan's happy go lucky bright cloth and flowered hanging
gardens.
Feel the sand erode my ever more weary tired and battered soul.
I make my penniless escape towards Bombay
Jumping trains like a 1930's Woody Guthrie American hobo figure.
Live in fear hustling for spare change,

Hungry and disorientated
Desperate for release.

Spread eagled
Strapped to the sea wash deck of an Indian fishing boat.
Marooned in Bombay harbor.
Ravaged with fever. Delirious.
Unable to eat.
Wracked with dysentery.
Bowels flushed into the stagnant pool
Watched by vultures
Guardians of the Parsi Crematorium.
Crimson red insatiable talons
Clutch smooth edge of blue glass tower block
Licking thick lips
Waiting to consume the entrails of my wasted passion.
I long for that moment when their claws
Dig deep into my last remaining fantasy.
Death finally becomes a mirror image
In the cool morning breeze.
My last remaining strands of flesh are ripped asunder.
The crushed spine explodes upon impact.

I cease to exist.
I finally refuse to swim in this pool of utter madness.
I pull up the iron anchor.
Drift into those out stretched arms.
Drown in a pool of passivity.
My last vision on planet earth
Those hideous bulbous vulture eyes
And hook beak.

Destitute, wander forlorn Bombay streets. Escape from the hysterical taunts
of a displaced Indian-Catholic who mistakes me for Mother Theresa.
Sell camera gear at rock bottom prices to pay for a hotel room and for the
bus fare to the airport.
Am in a terrible state. All skin and bone..
Taut with fever. Etched with acid memories of rip offs,
Good and bad times,
Lurid tales of the pig toilets in Goa,

The return flight held up because the ground crew forgot to refuel.

Take off time.

Sail through warped visions.

Briefly think I hear muted bells

From the temple hidden high up

On that snow covered mountain slope.

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