

Volume 3

The Dream

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Dedication

For those that cannot sleep

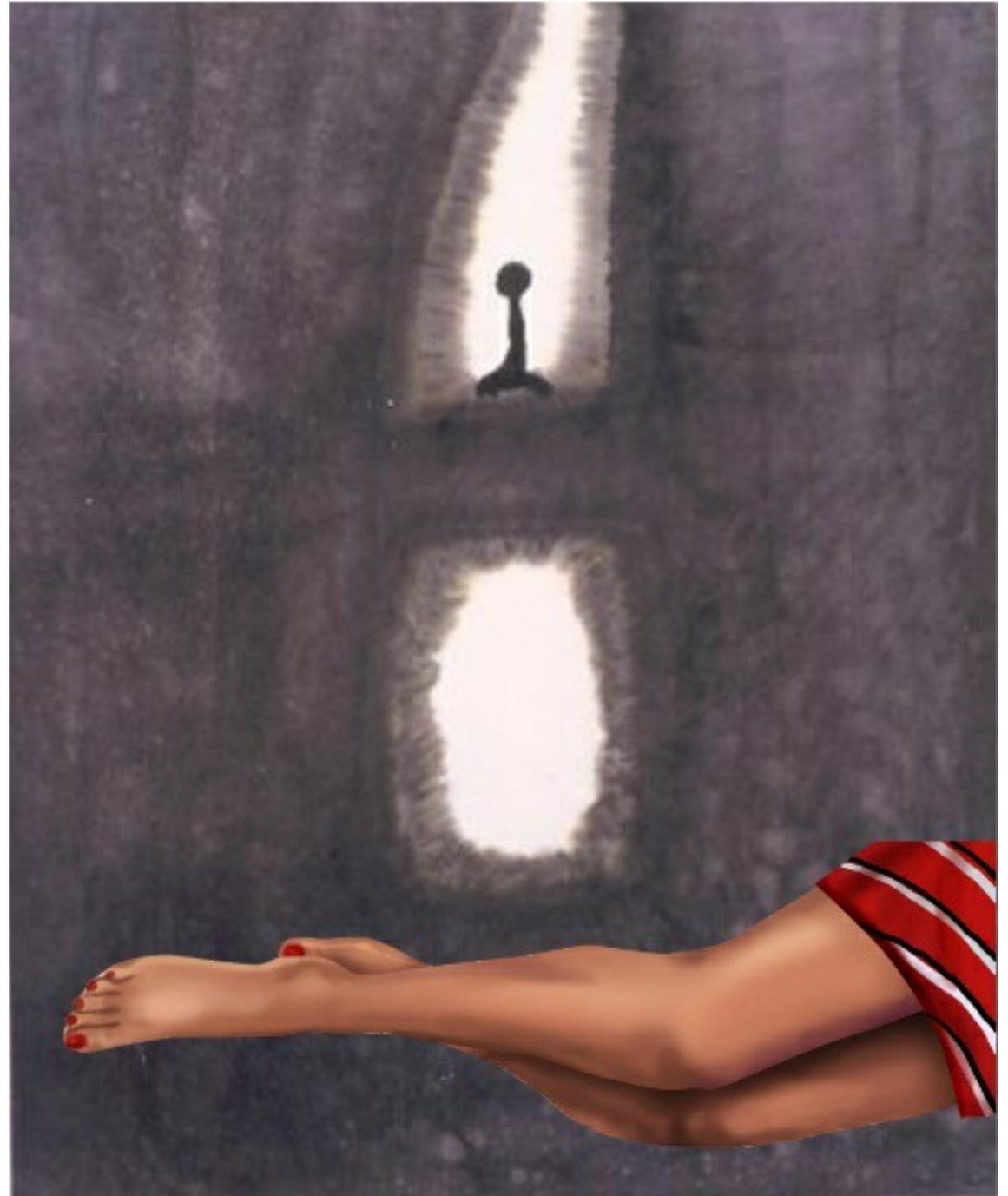


When I woke up in that guest house
Just outside Kangra*
And looked out into the mist
Looking for you,
Years after we had been here last,
You were not there.

I wondered where
You might be now,
With that infectious half smile
And red painted nails.

All I could think of were
Those times
When we enveloped each other
And giggled at the lyrics
Of some Bollywood
1950's song.

* Kangra - a town in the Himalayas





Rattling bangles, allowed
Only in the room
But not at the shrine.
Would anyone believe me
If I told them how you were
In the twilight?
Not only rattling bangles
But stamping anklets
and all that laughter
Aimed at the mountains.

Even right up there,
At the snow line
There must have been a Buddhist
Who heard it all,
Carried on the breeze.

What must he have thought of
All that irreverence?

Poking fingers
Into a plate of cakes,
Looking for freshness, and nuts.

I told you they were
From the German bakery,
The best for 100 kilometres.

You applied bright red lipstick
Before you took the first bite
Just to provoke me.

And licked cream off
Seductively before
Offering me some.

We thought we should kiss
To make sure we both had
The same taste of walnut cake.





I wanted to know why
A Buddhist statue couldn't
Wear lipstick, or for that matter
Make-up.

You had big eyes
Forbidding me from even thinking
Such blasphemy.
I love your dramatics.

Wearing a headscarf in temples
As if you were always
So good.
Even then you didn't look innocent.

Anyway, God knows, and I
Know all about you.
If you could, I bet
You would dance for Krishna.

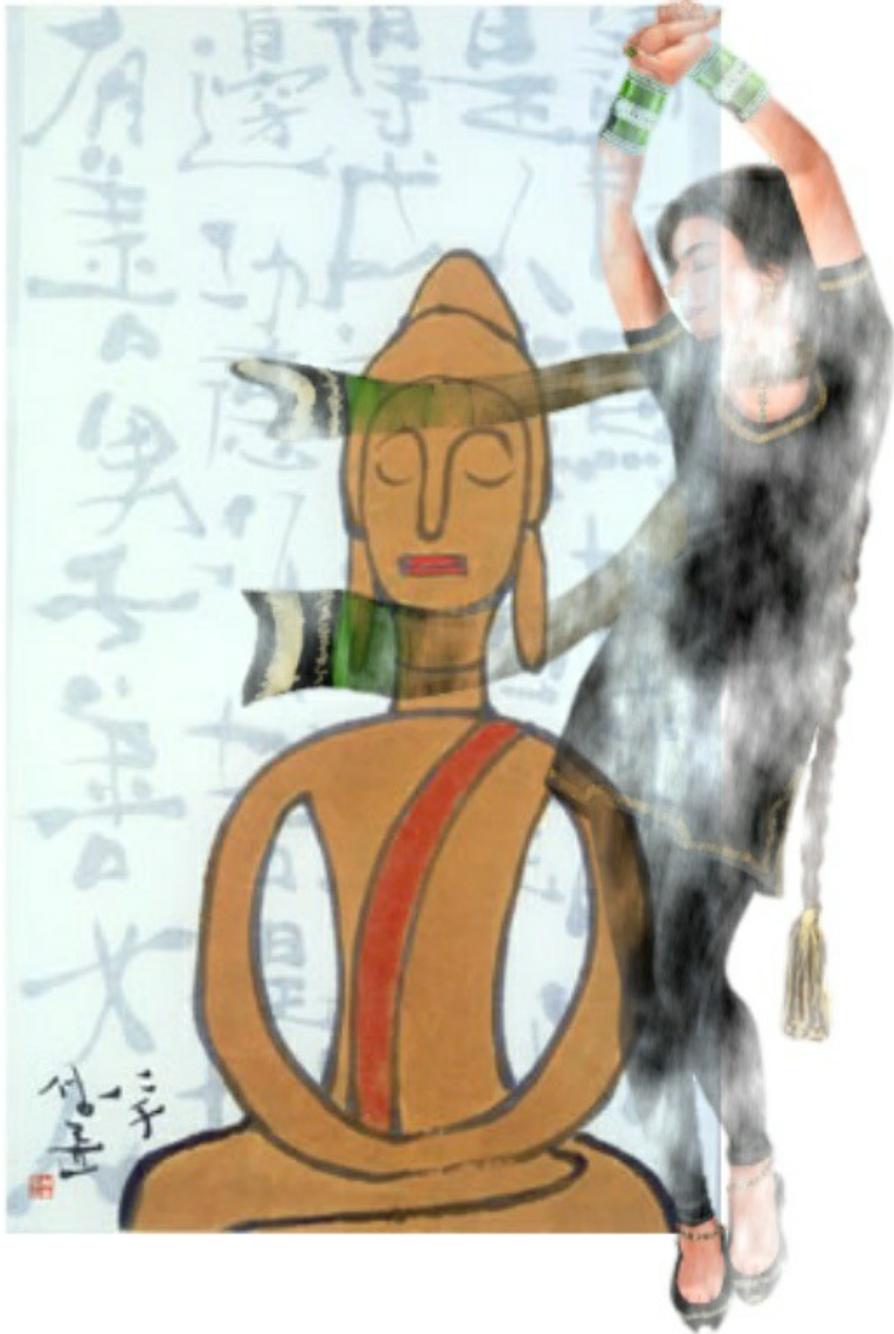


Let's cover the statue
You said,
Because it was probably
A good idea.

I reminded you of all the
Statues sculpted into the walls
Of Hindu temples.
But you were adamant.

So we lit incense sticks as well,
Sandalwood and jasmine
And I walked you around
The room, seven times.

Then we ate lemon cakes
With icing on top.
And to drink, goat's milk
Again, from the German bakery.



The sun streamed in
And the purdah of the mountains
Was lifted for all to see
Their grandeur.

Your hand was so small
In mine considering
That the mountains
Were so big.

But your smile still melted
Everything around it.
We were so small
In the bigness of nature.

You whispered to me
Brittle words, soft and special
That mean so much.
So much in so little.

We were bound to each other
Inevitably
Amongst silky scarves
Multi coloured.

Will we ever leave?
You asked me.
I said: Never!
This is my spiritual home.

I placed the whole
Mountain range
In your heart centre.
That is forever, I said.

Your heart was beating fast
As I held you tight
In the street.
Really? you asked.





The necklace in the shop,
You pointed with your eyes.
I said wear it and you
Did, all day long.

Do you want to sleep
With me or the Buddha
I asked?
Both of you.

With the mists gone
The day was warm
But the night was freezing
Tighter, I held you.

Who can hear the wolves?
Is that a spirit of the mountains
Scratching on the window?
Or the frost forming?



I told you a story about
The lost soul of a young man
Pining for a lover
Lost in the winter snow.

Listen very hard,
I told you
Can you hear his yearnings?
You listened, holding your breath.

When the snow melted,
I said, she emerged, a Devi,
And she called his name
And he was ecstatic.

Together they roam the high passes
Uniting lost lovers
And saving the magical words
Spoken, of love.

Crunchy bread

With butter and cheese.

A breakfast to write home about.

So I wrote a poem for you.

And what will you give me

In return, I asked?

Your face contorted in thought,

Nose and forehead wrinkling.

You gave me a kiss

But I said I could have

one of those anytime.

So you kissed me again.

Bread and kisses consumed

It was time for pondering

The rest of the day.

We sat on the balcony.





Packing up suitcases

Three for you

One for me

And some song DVDs.

Make sure the Himalayas are

Safely packed in your heart centre

I reminded you.

Yes, they are there.

The ponies we had booked

Three days ago

Arrived, suitably late.

No time now, we are packed.

What will you take

In your heart centre, you asked?

Your perfume, your wiggly nose,

Your creased forehead, and cake.

Never say goodbye.
It is too final.
Dosvedanya is Russian.
'We will meet again'.

The taxi driver looked
Through his mirror
Keeping an eye on us.
I thought he was very diligent.

Mountains left behind,
Now plains, hot, and then
racing on through
To Delhi.

No one knew here
What it had been like.
I squeezed your hand
'Hold on to the dreams'.

