



HINA

By
Harry Jivenmukta



First published 2015 by Loosewords Publishing Co

www.loosewords.org

Copyright © Harry Jivenmukta 2015

The right of Harry Jivenmukta to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

Dedication

For K. I was doing some spiritual work for her in 2012 when I kept seeing Hina who was from her last life. Hina lived in a small village in Libya.

Introduction

I have written about astral flying and levels of reality in detail elsewhere and so refer to it in simple terms in this story. If you want to know about these practices, please refer to the relevant documents. I find it both boring and distracting to have to explain certain practices over and over again, and so ask the reader to accept this story as it is.

**THIS IS A FIRST DRAFT FOR THE BENEFIT OF FEEDBACK. PLEASE
FORGIVE ERRORS AT THIS TIME.**

Part One – Silver Sandals

i had some strappy silver sandals
that i gave hina to wear.
she looked with that questioning
turn of her head and then
simply took them from me
and without words
sat down on a rock and
put them on.
as in a fairy tale
they were just the right size.
walk with me
i indicated with my hand.
she walked silently like
the beautiful apparition she was.

through the twilight we walked slowly
but with intent
until we came to the border with
aksai chin.
i held my hand up and she stopped
half hidden from the moon
in the shade
of a simple tree.

i bribed the border guard as usual
and he just took the money
and went back in to his shed
avoiding the gaze of hina
a curse no one wanted.

i walked on and could feel
hina walking behind me.
we went down the single road surrounded by

the mountains of the himalayas
into the forbidden zone.
round the wide curve of the mountain
evaporating in a mist above its
mid point.

we walked for a long time
until the moon had moved across the sky,
her breathing hardly noticeable,
a few beads of sweat gathering
on my forehead.
i stopped in the place that i had seen
in my dreams
and hina silently stopped beside me
her body lithe and snakelike slim
her hair not a single one
disturbed.

she looked then up at me
with the beginnings of a question
wrinkling on her forehead.
i just looked through her eyes into the mystery
of the desert girl, hina,
too much for most to cope with.
i touched her hair and then
ran a finger along the parting
of her lips.
she half closed her eyes and swayed
ever so slightly, forward
and back again,
her blood red lipstick shining
in the moonlight.

when a bird, early in the morning light
flew across the sky,

i said to hina, pointed my fingers to her feet.
she bent down and released
the straps of her sandals
and handed them to me,
eyes flashing with a hint
of challenge, her hair
sweeping forward and back
in the action of bending
then standing again.
then i kissed her on the lips
so gently that she urged forward
but stopped when i straightened,
the passion bubbling in her eyes.

i tore off one of the heels
from a sandal
and furiously threw it
into the distance with my
eyes always in hers.
with the anger rising in my throat
i tore off the heel of the other sandal
and threw it in the opposite direction
all the while stirring in her eyes,
a love....

she stood aloof, barefoot.
i gathered some sticks for a fire.
a strange action in the dawn.
collecting sticks.
i was on fire and could have engulfed
everything
with just a stare
of tantra.

she bent down sweeping her hair
away with one hand
and gently blew the embers into fire.
she sat then
on the bare ground
knees to her chin
arms
henna embroidered
enveloping herself
except her eyes
that relentlessly washed in mine.

i took the dagger from my waist and
held the point into the flames.
she winced at it,
sharp.
then, in the distance
on the air
travelled faint flute music.
i took one sandal and dug
the point of my dagger into the heel
of the heelless sandal.
a small hole straight through.

and then again.

i stood.
she rose silently and her dress edges
fluttered in the breeze.
i gave her the sandals again and she
fingered the holes.
new and warm from the dagger.
i glared a little too much
and the fear crept up her cheeks
as she dropped the sandals on the ground

and then stepped into them.

there. now where is there to go?
i ran my fingers through her hair, long
black and snakelike. nagin, i whispered. *nagin = snake
she shivered in her dress
too thin to warm her now
as she stepped away from the fire.
i warmed myself as she realised
that now she was mine
an apparition that could never move a step
without dripping her essence
her life
through the dagger holes
in her heels
and into the endless earth
below her feet.

i sang then, a whisper into her ears,
her perfume swirling in my head
and crazing me
driving me into a rhythm,
drunk,
cutting blood from my lips
that tasted sweet.
i wiped blood onto her lips
and into her mouth.
and she sucked it.

milein do dil nisaar ho gaya
when two hearts meet, there is sacrifice

shikaar khud yahaan shikaar ho gaya
the hunter himself is being hunted now

yeh kya sitam huwa
why this injustice

yeh kya julam huwa
why this oppression

yeh kya ghazab huwa
why this surprise

yeh kaise kab huwa
how and when did this happen

na jaanoon main
i don't know

na jaano tum,
and nor do you

hina simply stood and i filled her,
the stories and the ages of the mountains
i sprinkled her with stream water
i rubbed her with the red soil
of the ground
she scratched her cheeks with
her own nails.

i killed a goat in the afternoon
swiped my blade across its windpipe
and watched the blood gushing out
and seeping into the earth.
i wiped the two lines of shiva in blood *shiva = hindu god
on my forehead
and one down each cheek.

i touched blood to her lips and she
sucked my finger.

when the next moon rose
we ate meat of the heart,
and off the bone,
she nauseous but relentless
like me,
wiping greasy and blooded hands
on her dress.

we danced then around the fire
like crazy fakirs
throwing shadows across the ground
watching and being watched
by the relatives
of the goat we were gorging on.

in the dawn of the next day
i left her there
in the wilderness
and wandered back to the
border post,
to the world.

she stands there now, waiting for me
looking, creasing her eyes
into the distance to the road
to the curve around the mountain.
she seeps through the dagger holes
of her sandals
and the flute music
washes over her.

Part Two – A Room in Paradise

Along the single track road, deep in the forbidden zone of Aksai Chin, I found a strange café, called The Paradise, where I could leave Hina. It is easier to have a room to live in rather than be enmeshed in the open. She doesn't need a room because she is an apparition, but people don't know what the difference is between an apparition and a person, especially when I refer to her as if she is actually skin and bones. So, for the benefit of my readers and those people who fight for human rights, even for apparitions, I decided to find her a room. There is a sort of cafe about 20 miles into the Zone and about three miles further on, there is a settlement of about 6 or 7 houses. So, I don't know why some young man had decided to build a café in the middle of nowhere.

It is high up on a bend in the road. You have to climb 15 steep stone steps, each misshapen and different in length, height and width from any of the others. It is quite hard to do so, but I climbed them one at a time, concentrating on each one carefully. Inside it is as big as a one car garage, and is split into two rooms, but there is no door, just an opening connecting the two. You enter as if you were entering the garage from a side door. The place is built of local stone, sharp and pointy all over, not smooth, not made by an expert.

The building is one storey but at the far end from entering there is a small room above that is about 6 foot by 4 foot. That is the room I wanted to rent.

There are good rooms available in the settlement, the young man told me, pointing into the distance. Sometimes a Chinese official travelling through stays in one of them, he said.

I smiled at him and he smiled back. What would he make of the use I had for this room?

It is this room I want, I told him gently. What surprised me the most was that he didn't ask me why I wanted a 6x4 foot room in the middle of nowhere.

We agreed a fee to be paid in US dollars, about three dollars a week. I paid him with a hundred dollar note and told him to let me know when

it ran out. Then, on second thoughts, I gave him another 100 dollars. He looked at the money like it was the first he had ever seen. It might have been.

The entrance to the room was from outside around the other side of the café. The young man asked me if I had any luggage. I told him I didn't and he wouldn't see me again maybe for months. Then why did I want the room, he asked? I told him he asked too many questions. He nodded his head and pocketed the 200 dollars. I went up.

Inside there were boards on stones, making a sort of bed. And at one end of the bed, a sheet, a pillow and a very dirty blanket. That took most of the room, leaving about six inches down one side. The short wall, opposite the entrance door was perfect to transmit images on to. The bed was too wide for the room and so I removed some of the boards until the room resembled a bus shelter. There was room to sit down on the boards but it was not wide enough for a bed.

I spent about an hour untangling Hina from inside me and then, separated, I left her there, to enjoy her new room. I smiled at the ridiculous lengths I go to, just to make other people feel good. She is an apparition after all and takes up no physical space at all. There was no lock on the door and no need because anyone looking in would only see the room and would have no inkling of Hina's presence. There was nothing to see.

Before I left, I raised my hands up and drew Hina to me for a hug and a kiss. She was dressed in a virgin white simple dress and her hair was perfectly combed. I had told her she didn't need her heelless sandals and she had replaced them with identical sandals but without the heels missing. She flashed her brown eyes at me before she closed them in the kiss. I told her I would return and then left. Outside there was not a single alien sound; only ones made by nature.

I stood on the road and made a sign of tantra, and drew a circle in the air encompassing the whole building, to protect it, and then left.

Part Three – The Amulet Shop of Hotan

Yes, Amana, I want to become yours. Hina spoke gently but with determination. She looked briefly at me and then averted her brown eyes away, to look out of the door of her room at the Paradise Café. She calls me Amana, and that is another word for Jivenmukta. It means someone who is free of the mind. I wasn't sure of this. Lots of people want to become free of the mind but she was already mine in any case. Why should I take her to the amulet shop of Hotan?

I will reflect on it. I said.

She simply sat there as I ran my fingers through her long lustrous hair.

Tell me, I asked her, *tell me about your home in the desert.*

I lived there

Where the jackals wander,
Searching for the weaknesses
That make their next meal.

I sang into the wind
And asked again and again

For him to return

But all the while

I knew

He was going further away from me.

Men are driven further into

The desert to the calls

Of Allah, the calls that

Drive them further away

From life.

The camels die of thirst

As the women break their backs

To carry water.

I waited Amana, until

The beauty fell from my face

And then I got old

And then I was a white skeleton

In the yellow sand.

Hina stopped then, and sighed. That is why I want to be yours. I want to wear the sixteen ornaments of love.

I turned her face to mine with my hand, and kissed her gently. She moaned and returned the kiss. I ran my fingers all over her body and she writhed like a snake. She stood up and released the straps from her dress and it fell to her feet. She stood there naked, except for her silver sandals and those eyes, deep like a lake....

....

Hotan is a city in China. If you travel north through the forbidden zone, Aksai Chin ends, and China begins. The bribes at this end of the forbidden zone are more expensive. Then if you travel north again, you come to the city of Hotan. It is a dirty industrial city that there is little reason to visit. There used to be just a little village there in the old days. When Hotan took shape, it spread like a disease across the landscape, leaving the village at one edge. Anyone travelling there today wouldn't even notice the village; there are no signs and no tarmac to the few streets that remain. There are old people and degenerates living there now, oddballs on an odd edge of the metropolis.

But the amulet shop is there. Down an old street and then down a short passageway, there is a thick wooden embellished door, and behind that door, lives Tio-Tai, the old man who owns the amulet shop.

Hina knew how to change my mind and had dropped her dress around her ankles on purpose, to blackmail me. I was free of the mind but not free of my body yet, and had to acquiesce to her need to wear the sixteen ornaments of love.

We will go tonight, my Hina, I said. She simply sat there looking down at her silver sandals, otherwise naked. I arranged her hair and kissed her neck and she moved closer.

When the moon appeared above the mountain range, Hina nudged me awake and said it was time to go. I stood outside the room and opened myself up with the various stretches and exercises required until there was enough room, and she melted into my body.

The village was quiet with only the legs of a drunken man sticking out of an alley, as I passed. The streets were as ever, dirty with litter blown in from the city rolling around in the gentle breeze. Tumbleweed of the modern age.

I walked down the passageway and stood in front of the door to the amulet shop. I spread my arms wide and stretched enough for Hina to emerge. She was wearing a yellow dress with green and red embroidery. I knew immediately that this dress wouldn't be appropriate. I knocked once, gently and waited. There was movement behind the door like rats scurrying around. Then the sound stopped briefly and the bolts were being drawn back. Six bolts in all. The door opened enough for us to slide in to the dark interior and then gently closed behind us, leaving us in darkness. Hina moved into me, her warm breasts heaving a little in trepidation, her urgent breath in my ear. I imagined those blood red lips.

At the far end of the shop, the body of Tio-Tai came into view as a lantern gently came to life. He looked at me and then at Hina, and then at me again. No-one said anything, but Hina's breath eased a little. He walked towards us and stopped only inches from Hina. He was short and fat and very old with more wrinkles than face. Without any words, he raised one hand and began feeling Hina all over. She shrank further into me. But I knew this was how it always was. He spent a lot of time rubbing her breasts and then slid his hand further down. Hina was rasping as he touched her between her legs, keeping his eyes in hers as he did so.

Then we were drinking tea, and strange little cakes, very sweet.

Sixteen, I said. Tio-Tai nodded and then slurped his tea as his eyes wandered to Hina's breasts again. After the tea had been drunk, he beckoned Hina to a bed, about four feet off the ground. As she tried to climb on, he put his hand across her and indicated that she should take her dress off. Hina looked at me first and then undid the straps and let the dress fall away. Naked now, she climbed onto the bed and lay down on her back with her arms by her side.

The sixteen ornaments of love:

He started with her eyes. They were highlighted with kohl to make her appealing, or wanton, as I saw it.

Then he placed the **Bindi** on her forehead and decorated it with red and white dots around it and along the eyebrows.

She had to wear a **Nose Ring** but had no hole there. So he made one, and Hina winced and bled a bit. The ring itself was made of gold and worn on the left nostril. Then he connected a gold chain, which extended just behind her left ear.

Ear rings were next. They were quite heavy and, when she finally stood up, would dangle and flash in the light.

Various **necklaces** and chains of different lengths followed, made of gold and embellished with precious stones

Armlets were stretched over her wrists and then pulled past her elbows, up to her upper arms.

Tio-Tai then spent a long time applying mehndi (henna), **to her** hands and feet.

Next were **bangles** and bracelets made of gold and glass.

He put on eight **rings**, four on each hand, attached with a central flower or medallion that covered the upper part of the hand called hathphulor.

Silver **anklets with little bells** were tied on the ankles of my Hina and her toes adorned with **toe rings** made of silver. Both of these are fixations of mine and I felt like caressing her feet and kissing her toes.

Then, **itar** was applied. That is perfume, very earthy and intoxicating. Tio-Tai kissed her then, on the lips. She just lay there and heaved her breath with desire. I think she would have had any man right at that moment. He ran his hand right down her nakedness and rested it in her vagina. She moaned and slithered like a snake. I looked on, bemused, but knew this process was exciting.

Tio-Tai and I, then retired to the other end of the room to have more tea, and left Hina unfulfilled and hot with an itchy desire she couldn't fulfil.

There were still four more ornaments to go but now it was time for my Hina to undertake the most precious of practices. She would marry Shiva. After our tea, Tio-Tai returned to the table and began caressing Hina from top to toe, causing her to moan and shiver. He went on for a while until she was gasping for relief. He pinched her nipples hard and gently slapped her vagina, making her jump. When he was finally satisfied, Tio-Tai lifted Hina up into a sitting position. Her eyes were glazed and her face was wet from tears. Tio-Tai led her from the room gently, whilst rubbing her bottom with one hand, as they went. Hina looked pleadingly at me but I was impassive. All this was inevitable. I followed them into the back room.

Tio-Tai, led her to the stone phallus in the middle of the room. It was about a thumbs width at the top and widened as it descended to the floor, and was about 24 inches tall in all. Hina stood over it and Tio-tai lowered her gently until she could feel the coldness of the stone between her legs. She didn't need any coaxing and lowered herself quickly. Then Tio-Tai and I stood back and watched her pump up and down on the lingam until she was frantic. She came once but couldn't stop and then came again and then once again. Eventually, covered in sweat, her matted hair plastered all over her face, she raised herself off the lingam and collapsed on to the floor.

Tio-Tai cleaned the lingam, and scraped and collected all the discharge into a small cup.

Tio-Tai and I had more tea in the other room. After a while I returned and lifted Hina up and took her back to the bed to complete her ritual. She lay down on the bed and just looked up at the ceiling. I kissed her and then took my place, back where I had stood previously. Tio-Tai then applied the sindoor. It is a red powder that is applied on the central parting of the hair to indicate that the woman is now married.

Tio-Tai then indicated that Hina should get up and wear her wedding dress. She was careless now about her nakedness, but took the dress and stepped into it. It was a red coloured wedding dress richly embroidered with gold threads.

Then he sat her down and her hair was styled and adorned with **flowers** and jewellery. After that, makeup was applied to her face. The cheeks were rouged, and blood red lipstick applied.

A hair accessory called **maangtika** was fitted. It is worn on the central parting of the hair of the bride mostly made out of gold and embellished with semi-precious stones.

A **kamarband**, a beautifully designed gold belt, was fastened around her waist, studded with beautiful gems.

The sixteen ornaments of love were now complete. Tio-Tai gave Hina a plate with more of the small very sweet cakes, and she ate them vociferously, obviously tired by her previous efforts and all the time taken to complete the ritual. Then he gave her a drink in the same cup that he had collected her discharge. He had added some milk. She drank it down in three sips as is required, to indicate the Trimurti, the three faces of God; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Then it was time for our ceremony. We went outside at the back of Tio-Tai's home. There was a high wall all around so that no-one could see in. In the middle of the small yard was a fire pit, already with a wood fire burning in it. We sat down, Hina and me together, and Tio-Tai opposite us. The ceremony was pretty standard and went like this:

Pani-Grahan – I took the right hand of Hina in my left hand and accepted her as mine. I said:

Krishna said and I say now:

I am kratu (ritual)

I am yajna (sacrifice)

I am svadha (offering)

I am ausadham (Medicine)

I am mantra (chant)

I am ajyam (ghee)

I am agni (fire)

I am hutam (fire sacrifice)

Pratigna-Karan – We walked round the fire, Hina leading, and took solemn vows

Shila Arohan – Tio-Tai did this part. (Normally, the mother of the bride assists her to step onto a stone slab and counsels her to prepare herself for a new life).

Laja-Homah - Puffed rice was offered as oblations into the sacred fire while Hina kept the palms of her hands over mine.

Pradakshin - we circled the sacred fire seven times.

Saptapadi - Hina tied one end of my wedding scarf to her dress. Then we took seven steps representing nourishment, strength, prosperity, happiness, fruitful life, harmony and understanding.

Abhishek - We sprinkled water, meditating on the sun and the pole star.

Anna Praashan – we made food offerings into the fire then fed a morsel of food to each other

Aashirvadah - Benediction by the elders, (in this case we appealed to the Devis and the Devtas who would protect us in our coming ventures).

And after all that, all the processes and rituals, we came to the last part. Tio-Tai had Hina stand in the middle of the room. There would be

no groping now, not because she was now mine, but because she was married to Shiva. Tio-Tai went away and left Hina standing there in all her finery. He came back after a few minutes and, in his hand he had the amulet. I was allowed to stay for the speaking of the mantra because Hina was, after all, mine. On the other hand, I was also hers. The amulet was made of a black wood, round, with some unknown letters carved on it. It was on a black string and Tio-Tai put it around her neck, to nestle alongside the gold chains she already wore. Then he spoke the magical words:

OM DHRUM SOHA OM AMRITA AYUR DADE SOHA

This Buddhist mantra, guarantees that the person who speaks it properly will be free from rebirth in a lower form. Hina had heard how it was to be spoken, and so had I, and so we were now free from lower births. The reader will not be because you will not know how to say it properly. So, don't just try it and assume you are now safe from lower births. You must search out the person who can give you an appropriate mantra and tell you how to say it, or should I say, sing it.

Tio-Tai went away then and I led Hina back to the bed. We drank a cup each of a small concoction. Then, I lay down and she took off her dress and knelt by my feet. I told her what she must now do and she completed each part of the five stage process with diligence and care. When we woke up after some indeterminate time, there was food on the table where the tea had been. We ate silently, then got dressed. I left the offering for Tio-Tai in the food tray and we left, slipping out of the door and closing it silently behind us.

Part Four – The Music of the Bells

Wandering in other planes of existence is very exciting. It's like a child in a toyshop; there is something new at every turn. So, I decided I should have some time to reflect and rest, although when there is no

physical existence, rest is not required in the same way as when you are in a body.

I was reflecting on these matters as we sat together, Hina and me, in her room in the Paradise Café. She was different now, since she had experienced the sixteen ornaments of love, and appeared strangely calm, sometimes almost regal. She had never been a talkative sort anyway, but now expressed herself more in gestures and looks than words. Of course, words are pretty futile in some planes of life. When I say she looked regal, I mean in the princess sense, not a queen sense. Hina said she was hungry, something that surprised me because if you don't have a physical body, there is no need to eat at all. But I soon realised that her hunger was for music and incense. There was no music in her room, or anywhere else in these mountains, as far as I could remember. Then I thought of the first time I had brought her to Aksai Chin; there had been flute music travelling on the breeze.

I went into myself and projected back to that day when I had ripped off the heels of her silver sandals. I could hear the music of the flute. When I opened my eyes we were both back there. It took a few seconds to realise our new surroundings, then Hina bent down and picked up one of the heels of her sandals that I had thrown away. She just held it in her palm and said a thousand words to me without saying anything. I wasn't feeling any guilt at all and at that point in our relationship, the ripping off of her heels was the right thing to have done. She turned her head away to tune in to the flute music that still travelled to our ears.

Amana, she indicated to me, and I followed her towards the sound. We walked around the base of a mountain; Mount Kashi, I think, or very much like it. I noticed the girlish sensual walk of hers, suggestive, and challenging me to touch her. Instead I just followed, lost in the rhythm both of her hips and the flute music that wasn't getting any louder, or fainter, for that matter.

We walked for a long time until at once she pointed up, high into the mountain. There were a string of Buddhist prayer flags fluttering, and something shiny, indistinct, that flashed at us. I couldn't see any way up to the spot, so we kept walking, looking for a sign. The sign came in

the form of two donkeys standing idly by and unattended. We just knew what to do and soon were being taken along on the donkeys with tinkling bells around their necks. They seemed to know the way and so we let them wander along with us.

The route was twisty and turned back on itself and ascended and turned and so on. It was gentle, and then upon yet another turn we were at the entrance of a small temple, with its prayer flags hung across and around the entrance. The shiny thing I had noticed was a brass bell hanging down. I gave it a great pull and push and it broke the peace of the whole valley in a huge clang, then smaller clangs until it came to rest again. We both waited, listening and looking. Nothing. Hina took off her sandals and leaving them outside, walked through the entrance and into the darkness and shade. There was a simple shrine of the Green Tara, a Buddhist goddess. Hina walked around it four times clockwise, slowly and with reverence with her hands clasped in front of her. At one side there was a basket with petals, red and purple. Hina collected a few and scattered them around the statuette of Green Tara. All this time, I just stood and watched her. When she turned back to look at me, she had tears in her eyes and looked at me with a great sadness. I lit some incense. She inhaled it deeply and her eyes were misty.

We sat down then, against a wall and held each other. We must have dozed off and it was with a startle that we were woken from this reverie. The bell tolled loudly. We looked around but there was no one. Green Tara looked at us impassively. Then, when the sound had rung itself out into complete silence, a silhouette appeared of a young man, a bald Buddhist in red robes. He carried a tray that he set down in front of us. Tea and sweet cakes. There were no words.

We ate, but the Buddhist broke his cake in two and offered half to Green Tara, placing it reverently in front of her. She didn't eat her bit but looked on disinterestedly. His gaze then fell on Hina's feet, the soles to be precise. He just looked. I looked at him, but he only had eyes for her feet. He got up then and left the shrine to return with a bowl of water. When he put it down, I noticed there were flower petals that gave the water a fragrance. The Buddhist sat at Hina's feet

and then gently washed them. She looked at him at first with a frown of embarrassment and then with a smile of recognition. She said just one word to him as he rose to take the bowl of water away; *bhatu*. In my limited understanding that means brother in Pali, the language of Buddhism. He must have been a younger brother to have done this act, and could only be a brother because otherwise he would never have touched a woman, let alone her feet.

I realised then that I knew nothing of Hina, her background, family or upbringing. She must have felt me thinking and turned to me. I kissed her on the lips and she just smiled and said; *this is my home*. It made me wonder whether I had brought her here or if Hina had influenced me to bringing her here. This dimension was becoming strange. Hina got up and walked to the entrance, put on her sandals and started walking back down the mountain, apparently satisfied with the music of the bells and the incense. I followed and then heard the flute music again. Turning back, I saw the Buddhist playing the instrument, and then we turned a corner and he was not visible. The music accompanied us back to the room at the Paradise Café. When we got back, Hina's face was flushed and she looked radiant.

Part Five – The Pool of Past Lives

Hina's dream:

As I look at my beauty

The one that Amana* longs for *Jivenmukta

My

Image shatters in the pool

Every time a new drop

Drops itself into and disappears

In the greater truth of the pool.

Just like past lives crash into each other

And sometimes are mixed and merged

Into each other

Until no one knows

Which came first and which after that
An unreality of experiences.
When the drop doesn't drop
Is that my real face?
Or is it correct when
All my features are
Mished and mashed up
In the spreading concentric circles?

Amana: My Hina

Hina:

Amana: I call into the night

Hina:

Amana: She sleeps and is not dead. I can see the rising and falling of
her breasts

Hina:

Amana: With the rhythm of the night

Hina:

Amana: The owl and the snake are calling

Hina:

Amana: Your brother is dead.

Hina:

Amana: Yet you sleep on.

Hina:

Amana: Can you not see?

Hina:

Amana: Feel?

Hina: Is there water? My brother is thirsty. He goes on a journey but
needs water.

There is no water tonight, for disciples of the Buddha.

When Hina woke up, she looked for Amana, but he was not there.

Rising, she opened the door and saw him stretching his arms out and
bending his torso this way and that. He didn't notice her and carried

on. Then he called out, sounds she had hardly heard before, like a wolf or an injured bear.

Hold my hand, Hina, I said when I saw her in the doorway watching me. She reached out to my cold and freezing hand. I pulled her to me and held her tightly, until she almost called out for me to stop. I pulled her into me and whispered in her ear: we must return to the temple of your brother.

She closed her eyes and we were overwhelmed and suddenly we were there, still in an embrace, I could hear the pattering of the prayer flags in the cold breeze. In the night it was different, eerie, and there was no brother Buddhist to bring us tea. I waited in the dark holding Hina tightly in my arms. She looked from inside my embrace like a frightened kitten eyes darting here and there, looking for a brother that was dead.

I let her go, and she kicked off her sandals and entered the shrine where now, the eyes of Green Tara glowed and in front of the shrine a pool of brown, drying blood. She walked around the shrine and around the blood and she scattered petals without realising what she was doing. She put her fingers to her head and scattered her hair like a gorgon. Then she stopped in front of Green Tara, and fell on her knees, into the pool of her brother's drying blood.

I went into the shrine and sat down behind Hina, and entered my trance. I repeated my mantra quietly until it grew by itself and began to resound around the shrine. Hina came to sit by me, in front, cross legged. I reached forward and put my hands around her waist and pulled her into my lap. I rocked with my trance, and she rocked as well, forward and back.

Kali Ma, I intoned, even though this was a Buddhist shrine. *Kali Ma*. We were sinking into the ground, down through the rock of the mountain, and down. *Close your eyes*, I told Hina. We went further down and into a cave and then back into the rock and further down, in to another cave, and then down again through rock. At the bottom, where we stopped, it was warm and glowing. There was only silence. Except, I could hear occasionally, a drop like a drop of water falling.

Hina sat there, in my lap, and didn't move. I kept holding her tightly. She backed even further into me. We sat for a long time. Then, I think she also heard that occasional drip, like water and her face moved to follow the sound.

Water, for my brother, she said, remembering her dream. She got up and went over to a small pool of water. Small, but deep.

My Hina, look into the water and see your ancestors, I said. I went and stood by her as she sat down next to the pool entranced by the deepness and the shimmering surface. She looked deep and deeper until there emerged, faces of old people, children and a baby.

Your ancestors, I told her.

Faces swirling around as if the pool had a circular current. Around and around the faces went, sinking and rising, a baby, insistent on being seen, an old woman, old men, bald without teeth, more unknown ancestors, the nature of life and death.

My mother, my grandfather, my mother, my mother, she said.

Who is the baby? She asked.

I knew who it was but she had never been told. People never speak of babies that die in the first few hours.

And where is my brother?

We watched on and on, seeing a long procession of faces, who knows who they were? More old people sometimes punctuated by a young man or a pretty girl, all faces without bodies. And that baby that kept coming round waiting to be born again? Or what? Like a game show carousel.

Then, suddenly, she sensed something and turned around. Behind us, and approaching was her brother, the Buddhist. She tried to get up to greet him but I held her down, in her sitting position by the pool. He walked up quite normally and almost smiled at Hina. Then he simply, feet first slipped into the pool and disappeared into the depths. Hina held one arm out trying to grab on to thin air. The faces disappeared and there was nothing more to be seen.

Where have they all gone? She asked me.

They came to collect him, one more of their family. He arrived and they are now gone, back to where they remain, until another one of your family is ready.

Will they wait for me?

Yes. I simply said. And then we just waited. For what? I don't know. We just waited and listened and looked for the nothing that was all around us.

Part Six – The Song of the Mountains

The dreams that came every night to Hina, and the words, calling her to the mountain troubled her, and every night she paced up and down in the room at Paradise Café.

Amana, take me to the mountain, she asked me.

But I had no connection with that mountain, it wasn't part of my experiences. I looked at her pale and endearing face, and hoped she might get over it, forget these dreams. But I knew that the dreams were being sent to her, and the sender might not stop. Hina deliberately put on her bindi paste, and sindoor in her hair to show me that she was mine and so I had to help her; it was my duty. She was challenging me to dare to be remiss in my duty to her. She would caress my chest and arms and look pleadingly into my eyes at the same time; the wiles of a woman.

Tell me then, what the messages are. I eventually asked her.

She sat down on the ground just outside her room and arranged her dress all around her and put dark lines around her eyes, to emphasise the paleness of her demeanour. And then she sang out the words:

Mere dil mei aaj kya hai

What's in my heart today?

Tu kahe to mai bata du

If you ask me I'll tell you

Teri zulf phir savaroon.

I want to adorn your hair again.

Mujhe devta banakar
You made me a god

Teri chahatho ne pooja.
And your desires worshipped me.

Koi dhund bhi aye to hame
If someone looks for us

To hamme na dhund paye
They won't be able to find us

Tu mujhe kahin chupa de
Hide me somewhere

Mai tujhe kahin chupa du
I will hide you as well

Mere dil mei aaj kya hai .
What's in my heart today?

She had missed some parts out, I could tell, by the missing rhythm, but I didn't say anything. She just sat there then with her eyes cast down, making a pathetic picture. She knew I couldn't refuse her and so I reluctantly said:

We will go, tonight, when the moon disappears over the mountain.

She said nothing but gathered up her jewellery and started dressing herself for the journey. I took hold of her and sitting her down next to me, put on her earrings and nose ring. Then I raised her feet one at a time to attach the anklets and toe rings. She looked straight at me and my emotions of desire. I kissed her toes. Her lips drew apart. Then she put on her blood red lipstick, thick and obvious, just like I preferred.

She offered her lips to me and I tasted her mouth and then her neck and then her breasts. She put on a bright green dress with gold embroidery and then sat, looking at the moon, waiting for it to move on.

We arrived at the mountain without incident. As I acclimatised myself, I could see many shadows all around. There was a fire in the middle. Hina set off and walked past the fire to a kind of throne, and sat herself down. Just before she sat down, she wiped the bindi off her forehead. That meant that at least for now, she didn't recognise herself as being mine. I thought that this was too audacious but she simply sat there and looked around.

Then the same song that she had sung began to be sung by the shadowy forms and this time it did rhyme and was more complete. Four shadows set off towards her from around the fire. She touched each person on their head and gave them a coin. I recognised the practice. It was the ceremony of the four winds. Then five people approached her and she did the same thing. This was the ceremony of the five elements. Then three more came forward and these were the symbols of the Trimurti, the three faces of God.

Then there was a pause as the fire was built up. It was almost out and the new wood took time to catch on. The darkness was darker and I could only make Hina out by the flash of an earring or other jewellery. She had not said a word. Now she stood up and chanted the following. I think I have reproduced it correctly. It is a prayer to the Devis of the Himalayas.

Maa Shok Dukh Nivarini, Hai Sarv Mangal Karini
Hai Chand-Mund Vidarini, Tu Hi Shumbh-Nishumbh Sangharini
Hai Mahisha-Danav Mardini, Kaali Hai Tu Hi Kapalini
Hai Maa Tu Srishti Srijan Kare, Tu Hi Danavo Ka Kalan Kare
Durga Tu Hi Lakshmi Tu Hi, Tu Hi Saraswathi Ka Swaroop Hai
Kan-Kan Mein Tu Hi Samaai Hai, Tu Hi Chaav Hai Tu Hi Dhoop Hai

Hai Chintapurani Namostute, Hai Jwala Devi Namostute
Maa Shera Wali Namostute, Chamunda Devi Namostute
Kamakheya Devi Namostute, Minakshi Devi Namostute
Hai Sarv Shakti Namostute, Tu Hi Yog-Bhakti Namostute
Namostute, Namostute, Namostute, Namostute

After this, a body in a white shroud was brought out and placed on the fire. It must have been someone very important. The burning and the chanting went on for a few hours. I don't understand it properly because this is not a chant that is used in cremations. It had a different significance that I did not understand.

After the body had disappeared in the fire, someone approached Hina and set flowers in her hair. She sat impassively. After that, she got up out of the throne chair and the man who had adorned her hair sat in the chair instead. Hina scattered petals around him and put a bindi of ash on his forehead. The ash was from the cremation fire. Then Hina returned to my side and it was all over.

I realised then that Hina wasn't just somebody, but an important spirit of the mountains. I knew nothing of her and yet all these people recognised her. She never told me anything of this but that might be because she was now mine and had therefore relinquished her position. And this ceremony might be the last one she did.

She offered me a small container. I opened it and realised it was a turmeric mixture of the bindi paste. I took a little of it and reapplied the bindi to her forehead. She was now mine, once again. Hina never said anything further this night about what had gone on, and never referred to her status. I knew that it was impossible to be both married and a spirit. So she had relinquished a very great deal for me. That put a greater pressure on me to look after her.

We didn't return to the room of paradise immediately, but watched the sunrise instead. All the other people had disappeared and we were the only two around. Hina then took me by the hand and returned to where the fire had been. She collected ash in handfuls and spread it into a rectangle shape, the size of a bed. Standing to one side, she undressed and lay her clothes out very carefully. And in the cold

morning light we made love on the ash bed, on the remains of the deceased.

By the time we got back to the room in paradise, it was into the afternoon and we were both dirty with ash, although Hina's dress was clean. She looked so funny; like a dirty miner in a dress. We laughed then at each other, and stood there naked, washing ourselves in cold water, and laughing like school kids.

Part Seven – The Mixture of the Pastes

After our last adventure, Hina changed markedly. She stopped wearing red and would now usually wear mainly light blue or even yellow dresses. They were simpler in design and she walked with a looser gait, relaxed. She was very attentive to me and behaved more like an Indian wife than a spirit of the mountains. She never referred to that night again and I knew that she had surrendered her status to be with me. She was now a mere mortal, or would have been if she weren't an apparition.

She never asked me a spiritual question again and that was in line with traditional practice. It is the man's duty to enlighten himself and look out for the spiritual interests of his family. That is why Indian women wear the bindi. It is designed to block the third eye. It is unsuitable for a woman to seek out spiritual enlightenment or she might neglect her family. And so, it falls on the man to be aware of such things for the whole family.

For my part, I kept myself to myself for a while, trying to work out what was the best thing to do for us both. I decided that I should take Hina with me on some of my travels but not on all because it just wasn't appropriate any more, although we weren't going to have a family, were we?. On the other hand, I wanted to share the experiences. It would have to be an unorthodox relationship. Well, it was in any case because she was an apparition.

One day, I told her that I was going on a journey on my own. She remained silent but I could feel her disappointment. Just after

darkness fell, I went outside and did my stretching exercises. Then I realised I didn't have to because I was not taking her with me. So, I just departed to the Waterfall of Recollections. It was only about two miles away.

When I arrived, the waterfall was as ever. Actually, as a waterfall it was pretty disappointing. The water cascaded down from about 25 feet and it wasn't large by any description. At the bottom was a big pool and the river itself then went on its way underground. The magic of it though, was that there was a path to get behind the waterfall and then I could sit and look through the water, where images appeared.

I looked for a long time and saw only faces, of people I had known earlier in my life: my first wife, my children, parents, brothers, friends, and lost loves. It was a bit like the trailers you might watch in a cinema before the main film. Then I saw a desert, unlike any I had visited before. That was where I should travel next. I asked which desert it was and the answer came to me; it was the Takla Makan.

I should travel around the edge clockwise and there was a village near the town of Kashi. There I would find an old woman who knew the ingredients and could mix the ancient pastes of turmeric mixtures and bindis. I knew of only one other person who knew the formulas for these, and she was too old now and lay in a coma waiting to die, in Delhi. It was a mainly female activity and I knew I would take Hina with me so she could have the pastes applied to her and I could judge the efficacy of them. I needed these mixtures for my own Tantric practices as well.

I bathed in the waterfall then but there was no spiritual benefits of doing so. The reason for bathing there was because the water was always warm, even in winter, the waterfall never froze. It was one of the qualities of the waterfall, and some people even believed it could cure illnesses. I didn't think it could. But people all over the world attribute healing powers to anything that is out of the ordinary.

When I returned, Hina was already dressed and waiting. She sat with her eyes averted, not in complaint for not taking her, but in deference. It made me smile that she had taken on such a traditional role. She wore a green dress, the right colour to contrast with the pastes which

were red/brown. I did realise that she wore, and in fact only had one pair of shoes, the silver strappy sandals. That made me smile even more; worrying about the footwear of a spirit! I almost giggled out loud! And how did she know where I was going and that I was taking her along?

The Takla Makan desert is north of the city of Hotan and is in China. It is so hot that it is impossible to cross, and the route is around it, usually clockwise. If you imagine a clock face, Kashi is at 9 o'clock and Urumqi, the capital, is at about 12. We were headed just south of Kashi and I enclosed Hina inside me and off we went. We arrived just south of the village; it wouldn't do to suddenly appear in the middle of the village itself in case anyone saw us. So we walked the last half mile and collected some sand in our shoes and hair from the hot breeze, just as if we had trekked for miles.

The houses were mainly mud brick but also had wooden supports and they were very old. The woman we were looking for was Li Fen, and I think it means beautiful fragrance. Her home was at one end of the village, and consisted of a single room about 14 foot square and had a flat roof. She was about 80 years old and about 4 foot something tall, or should I say short. She gave us a milky drink, and left us alone in the shadowy room whilst she went out somewhere. Hina sipped her drink and looked once or twice at me. I hadn't told her why we were here, but thought she might know something about it since she did know to be ready.

The old woman returned with a tray full of little containers, and a few small plastic bags with powder in. She sat down and started mixing ingredients. She hadn't spoken to us and yet knew what it was we had come for. Then again, why else would anyone want to visit her, except for her exceptional skills in mixing the pastes? She was using a little water that she kept sprinkling in to keep the mixture wet. She looked at me, and frowned. Then she gave me a piece of parchment about the size of my palm with writing drawn on. This looked to me to be the recipe for the mix. She was giving me the secret. Why? For me? Or to give to someone else? I didn't know. Then she said the word: *Kunchen*. Then another one: *Pay-Mah*. I understood

and nodded at her. The lotus flower is called Pay-Mah but despite its use in Tibetan art, it does not grow in Tibet. There is a specific valley in the Himalayas that Tibetan monks go to collect lotus flowers, far from their own lands. And Kunchen was the name of the person who I had to find and pass the secret recipe on to. I nodded again, but this time to myself to remember and plant the information in my head so that I would never forget.

Meanwhile, Li Fen had moved over to sit at Hina's feet. She began drawing patterns on top of her right foot, and she beckoned me over to look. The pattern was very intricate and it took her a long time to complete it. It was the pattern of the lotus flower. Maybe she thought I needed reminding where to deliver the parchment, but I suspected it was for more complex reasons. Then she beckoned me to sit where she had been and told me to draw the lotus flower on her other foot. It is unknown for a man to be asked to do anything with a woman's foot, it is looked down on, but this must mean that Li Fen had seen something in Hina that she wanted me to realise. And the left foot in particular is not a propitious foot.

My efforts were not too bad, although it would never win a prize. Hina even moved her foot just slightly to put me off and we both giggled under our breath as I deliberately tickled her when Li Fen wasn't looking. Meanwhile Li Fen returned and drew a new bindi on Hina's forehead. It was like a light had gone out. As soon as the mixture was applied, Hina looked drab and plain. Li Fen said: *ahhhh*, as I realised the effect of the bindi. Then she rubbed it off and Hina glowed again. She was showing me the magical effect of the mixture. It was surprising and impressive and showed the importance of the third eye. The old woman brought us some little snacks to eat. They were vegetarian but beyond that I didn't know what they were. But they were tasty, a bit spicy, and easily eaten. Hina and I shared the plate and had soon emptied it. The plate was refilled and accompanied by tea to drink. Then the old woman went to a corner of her room and laid down, put her back to us and fell asleep. We just sat there not

knowing whether to giggle, wait, or leave. In the end we left, collecting a little box of the mixture to take with us.

Part Eight – High Command and the Flower of Love

There are some things that just turn me on like nothing else, and they might be simple but nevertheless, they are there. Hina was sitting on the floor just outside the room at Paradise Café facing inwards in a light blue dress, with one knee raised. She was drawing patterns of turmeric on one of her feet. Her concentration was complete and she was lost to the world. Her earrings were swinging gently to and fro, and she had her tongue out between her lips as she painted something particularly fine. Now, dangly earrings have always turned me on and the place a person goes to when they are in total concentration leaves them open to show their innocent side, their real face. I couldn't resist and had to just run my fingers through her hair. She just slightly pulled away but was more intent on her painting than my fingers. I ran my fingers down her neck and towards her breasts. Suddenly, her instincts clicked in, and she realised what I was doing, but before she could stop me, we were spread all over the floor, turmeric paste and all.

After peace was re-established, she looked in mock annoyance at me and straightened her dress, ran her fingers through her hair, and looked critically at her spoiled art work. I decided to become a bit scarce and so went off to wander outside.

The peace of the mountains that just sit there, and the silence of the road that hardly ever sees traffic, is sometimes oppressive. Like it was now. So I sat on a rock and pondered what I should do next. I still had the parchment from Li Fen to deliver, and I needed to check in with High Command. I always smile when I say High Command, or HC for short. There is a group of Tantrics that try to keep a sort of order to the activities of Tantrics all around the world. You see, Tantra has no place of worship, no holy book, no godhead or Gods except perhaps Shiva, no processes that are universal, and so on.

There is no order and so HC, as senior practitioners, do request that we let them know what we are doing. And in return they help with practices that we 'lower' practitioners cannot do for ourselves. It is purely voluntary. I use it myself but I don't have to ask them if I can do something. All I need to do I tell them what I have done; there is no question of right or wrong and they do not ask.

People have often tried to locate the HC but have never got close. Their 'address' is simply Varanasi, a city in India. In ages past, real practitioners found that being based in temples was not a good idea because people visiting the temples would interrupt important practices. So, you will always find the real centres of realised people nearby to a temple but never in a temple. The grand architecture, or the history is left to tourists to enjoy and the real business end of spiritual practice happens in a drab non-descript building nearby. But HC is even cleverer than that. They move around about five or six times a year, right up from the plains to the high Himalayas, and from East to West. And to look at them, you would never know that they were even interested in spiritual matters. Whenever I have met them, they have been about 7-9 people dressed very smartly. The best way to describe their appearance is like they are going to a wedding. They are about the same number, men and women, and the women are spectacular. They look so attractive! The group always listen very attentively and never question my motives. They just record my activity although they do not write anything down; perhaps they do that later.

If I want HC to do something for me, I never have to ask. I just state what I want, and it is done, consequences and all. And, by the way, they are not called High Command, or HC. That is just my name for them, and very funny, I think. As far as I know they do not have a name.

Hina interrupted my thoughts by standing right in front of me and pointing at her feet. I looked at the very detailed drawing on her foot, of a lovely flower. She was full of herself and had a glow. I kissed her then, and pulled her to me. She drew back and looked up and down the road as if a convoy of hundreds were about to come along. That

made me laugh; there were only about three or four vehicles along in a whole day, and there weren't any to be seen anywhere down or up the road at the moment. She took me by the hand and we went back up to the room. It just crossed my mind that I hadn't seen the young shopkeeper for a long time. The shop had been closed for weeks. Maybe the two hundred dollars I had given him had been enough for him.

She pointed to her foot and said: *It is the flower of the tree of love, Ashoka.* I recognised it and also remembered that Ashoka means *without grief, or that which gives no grief.* This meant that she had turned another corner and had stopped grieving for her brother and her spirit status. I kissed her. She just stood there and kept looking down at her handiwork and smiling. We sat then, and just enjoyed the moment. Then she faced slightly away from me, and began to recite a poem:

jiyein to jiyein kaise bin aapke...

If I live, how could I live without you?

lagta nahin dil kahin bin aapke

Without you, my heart means nothing.

kaise kahuun bina tere zindagi yeh kya hogi

How can I describe what this life would be like without you?

jaise koi saza koi badduwa hogi...

It would be like a curse...

main ne kiya hai yeh faisala

I've made this decision

jina nahin hai tere bina

I won't live without you.

jiyein to jiyein kaise bin aapke...

If I live, how could I live without you?

The poem spun me around and left me speechless. She had never spoken even one line of love like that before. She got up then, and went inside.

Part Nine – The Valley of the Lotuses

I didn't take Hina with me to the Valley of the Lotuses because all the people there would be men. The only people who went there were monks from the distant Tibetan monasteries and they would not even look at a woman let alone welcome one.

There is more than one valley like this one and basically they are on high plateaus that have their own weather systems because of the surrounding mountains. It can be strange that high up, there can be very lush valleys, with grasslands and fields full of wild flowers, and lakes with lotus flowers. I knew which one of the valleys to go to because there was only one that was relatively near the Tibetan monasteries.

When I arrived in the valley there was no one there and so I sat down in the lush grass and rested. Then I projected myself into the future and saw that they would come in the next few days. So, I spent the days in between just wandering and enjoying the benefits of the valley. The pools have very clear and pure water from the mountains, and some of the plants are edible. I remembered that at one edge of the valley there was a small hut that had been built for the monks to shelter in if the weather was bad, and sometimes it could rain for days. I went there but slept in the open because it was quite warm and the stars at night were beautiful.

It also gave me time to reflect on Hina and who she was, or had been. But mainly, I wanted to reflect on our future together because it was by any standards, a strange relationship. On the other hand, it wasn't doing anyone else any harm, and so, did it really matter that it was

strange? Each person has his own destiny and the concept of strange is subjective and can mean different things to different people. I have often thought that most people are strange. The way people live, spending all their time on material concerns, looks very odd to me. Can people really believe that they are on this Earth just to work and have tiny moments of pleasure and then simply die and have nothing else? On the third day, a single monk arrived first, and I greeted him. He told me that he was there to set up various things for the rest of the monks. He cleaned out the small hut, collected wood for the cooking fires, and scouted the valley for the best places to pick flowers. The monks were not just interested in the lotus blooms, but would pick a variety of plants and flowers for their healing medicines. We chatted about things and I asked him whether there was a Kunchen amongst their group. He confirmed that the head monk was called Kunchen and so I knew now who to give the parchment to.

On the next day, the group arrived and there were about twenty monks. I gave the parchment to Kunchen and told him how I had come by it. He was matter of fact and didn't express any great happiness or any other emotion for that matter. I stayed to eat a meal with them and then I left. I was a bit flat then, having not elicited any real warmth or expression from the monks. I don't understand why this equanimity should exist when all I can see is great opportunity and excitement in life. Buddhist monks have always left me thinking whether their calmness is genuine or whether they are simply playing a game with people not of their persuasion.

On the way back I loitered quite a lot. I missed Hina, but at the same time felt quite good being on my own. I wondered what she might be doing but then smiled at myself remembering that she was an apparition. Time passes differently for them because they live in a different plane from people. Years can pass in what we might call minutes, and for them, when they are in our world, it is like living in slow motion. My own guru used to tell us that he had returned to this world after 800 years away, although the time seemed to have been short.

Part Ten – The Desert of Emptiness
Part Eleven – The Cave of Mantras
Part Twelve – The Eleventh Happiness
Part Thirteen – The Shadows of the Night

Part Fourteen – The Ship of Dreams

I hadn't been to see Hina for a long time now, when suddenly I had an unstoppable urge to do so. I couldn't remember how long it had been. It is strange, when you pass between realities, to know if one day is just one day, or to know if one day is one lifetime, and sometimes one lifetime can be as short as one day.

When I got there, Hina was sitting in her room facing away from the door. My eyes fell immediately to her bare feet encased in her strappy silver sandals. She was also wearing silver trousers, very acute at the ankles, like a second skin. And she had on a deep green flowing dress that was arranged around her like a mannequin might be adorned in a shop window. She didn't immediately realise I was there, and so I stood, just admiring her legs and ankles.

Then she turned to me and tried to look but couldn't and kept switching her eyes around me, now to the left, and now to the right of me, into the middle distance and then up close at the floor. Her eyes were heavily made up with thick lines of black kohl, and her fine eyelashes, black. She looked like an angry devil but when she spoke she said just one word softly; 'what?' And then her eyes locked into mine.

Like 'what' do you expect me to do?

Like 'what' are you waiting for?

Like 'what' hmmm?

I just went over and sat down next to her. She looked lovely in her anger because I knew she wasn't really angry; after all she was an apparition. But, I suppose she was entitled to be frustrated; 'what' kind of man would leave me here in a 6x4 foot hut, in the middle of nowhere, for ages and without a word about the future? Her breasts

heaved and fell, and heaved again. I wanted to touch them then, but thought better of it for now. She looked at me as if to say: 'just try it!' After a while we both settled down a bit, she from her frustration, and I from my desire to have her. I moved forward imperceptibly and she felt my intention. She relaxed herself and I kissed her gently on the mouth. It was nectar. I got up and went outside and started my stretching exercises, facing away from Hina. And then, I turned to her with my arms outstretched. She got up and came to me. I enclosed her in my arms and she filled every atom of my being. I shrugged my body just a bit and then we were on our way.

We were at the Mehrangarh Fort in Rajasthan. It's called a fort but is in fact a huge castle that is perched on top of a hill overlooking the town it protects. You have to cross the seven gates to gain entry so we just went in over the top and stopped just below the roof ramparts. It was in complete darkness except for one room at the very top at the furthest corner that had a single candle blown gently by the pre-dawn breeze. We were in a huge bed, big enough for six, but there were only the two of us, spread out in the middle. We were just about ready to get up, or was it the Sun that was just about to get up. Either way, we were all waiting. Hina sat up and her nipples stuck out into the room, and together with her nose, it made me smile and almost laugh out. She was only little but had such a presence. She was insistent to be noticed. I touched her and she shivered delightfully, and so I ran my fingers all over her body and she fell from her dawn vigil, back into my arms and we rolled around locked into each other.

When the Sun decided to rise, we stood by one of the tall windows, looking out at the town below. I ran my hand over Hina's bottom as we stood there, and she leaned into me.

Amana, will it always be like this? She asked.

I quoted the lyrics of a song to her:

Sail upon a ship of dreams
Goes nowhere not all it seems
You out there might try to ask
A question about your daily tasks
But I look neither right nor left

Sail upon the dreams of death
The only boat you travel on
Is the one-way ticket home
And I look neither right nor left
Until all is said

Sailing upon the Ship of Dreams
It goes nowhere, not all it seems.

*(Hawkwind)

We were in the desert then, two camels leading with guides, and then a palanquin with Hina inside and I rode wide and just behind it. Behind were two more camels with supplies. A camel palanquin is like two chairs side by side, covered in bright curtains all around for the privacy of the young lady inside. I smiled at the thought of a camel carrying an apparition. Hina had insisted on romance and so, rather than simply flying there, I had organized a camel palanquin to take us to the nearby oasis where they sold the most orange of oranges. She was peeping out from time to time; a very illegal practice for a young lady, so I rode up close and drew back one of the curtains. She was radiant and had a huge smile that melted my heart and it dripped into the sand.

Amana, she simply said.

I reached across and we held hands as the inevitable pace of our caravan strode on to the oasis.

Yeh mausam bhi suhanna hai.

The day is beautiful.

Tu bhi khoobsuraat hai.

And you are beautiful.

When we arrived at the oasis, there were a few other camel trains there and lots of stalls with oranges. The guides quickly built screens in the sand, under the shade of palm trees, and my Hina and I lay back on the blankets and she peeled oranges for us both. We dribbled the juice down our arms as we slurped and sucked the rich oranges. Then I rolled Hina nearer to me and we lay in each other's arms, oblivious to the whole world. She ran her hands all over herself until her clothes

were awry, and then in a fit of orange madness I ripped all the clothes from her body. Her eyes were huge with surprise and passion.

After a long while, we lay there looking up at the blue sky through the palm fronds of the trees all around. There was zither music coming from somewhere and Hina got up and danced for me. It reminded me of how Meera had danced for Krishna, the most erotic and spiritual dance of all time. She twisted and her hair weaved like a snake.

As if she read my mind she said: Amana, we are near Chhitogarh. I will be Meera for you when you take me there.

Chhitogarh was where Meera had really danced for Krishna. Then she started singing one of the thousands of poems she had written for Krishna

That dark dweller

Is my only refuge.

O my companion, worldly comfort is illusion,

As soon you get it, it goes.

I have chosen the indestructible for my refuge,

Him whom the snake of death will not devour.

My beloved dwells in my heart all day,

I have seen that abode of joy.

Meera's lord is Hari, the indestructible.

My lord, I have taken refuge with you,

Your maidservant....

Nagin, I said. She was just like a snake, and twisted into my lap. I reached for an orange and squeezed until the drops leaked onto her breasts. I licked them off and she moaned with renewed desire. *Nagin*. It was late when we started back. The sun was sinking and the moon was already in the sky. I held Hina in my lap on the camel and the palanquin went back empty. She looked at me and the reflection of the moon shone in her eyes. Her torn clothes made her look ravishing, and her poor attempts at pulling them this way and that only led to bare flesh elsewhere. She had tried to make up her hair again but she had that 'just woken up' look about her. We kissed when the rocking of the

camel walk allowed and sometimes missed completely which made Hina giggle.

Part Fifteen

It was a few days later that I realised the time had come for Hina to dance the dance that Meera had performed for Krishna, and so I made my way to the Paradise Café to tell her. She already knew and was sitting there, looking away from me, and ready for the performance. She wore an elaborate green, red and gold flowing dress, embroidered intricately across her breasts.

Amana, she said. She turned and looked deeply into my eyes and then there was no further reason for words. I went outside and did my stretching exercises in order to accommodate her body inside me. I knew she was watching intently and her gaze burned into the back of my head. I turned and she stood and then in small paces, came to me. We arrived at a desert bereft of everything. It was just a flat, completely characterless place, with sand reaching until the eye could see no further, in all directions; no camels, no sign of human habitation, no oasis. And yet the sun in the sky was not relentlessly hot; instead it was gentle and embracing. It was near sunset though, but even then its heat was very strange.

I walked straight, 123 paces from where we had arrived, turned to look at Hina, and then slowly turned 360 degrees, ending up where I had started. Then I sat down. Hina hadn't moved at all, and was an apparition in the heat haze, in the distance.

She walked slowly towards me and stopped some way off. She had changed her clothes and now wore a body stocking of black, tight, that highlighted every curve of her femininity. Her feet were bare, and her hands, and her face from the neck up. Looking to my left, there, by my side, lay her silver sandals. Hina was combing her hair with a brush, loose now of any clips or encumbrances. She just brushed and brushed for many minutes until each hair was separate from its neighbour and

she developed a sort of frizz all around her face. She looked like a mad woman.

From somewhere, she had collected a fine silk cloth that she now rubbed her face with, until there was no sign of any powders or creams. She was in her original state. Raising her arms up and rotating her fingers again and again, she set off, sort of dancing, anti-clockwise from me and about twenty yards away. She jabbed her feet into the warm sand as she went and after a while I realised she was drawing a circle around me. It took her a long time to complete the wide circle and then she stopped and faced me.

The sun was resting on the sand in the distance, preparing to sleep for the night, and the moon was three quarters, already rising into the sky when Hina began to dance. There was no music or accompaniment, just her curves that made a rhythm of their own. She kept her distance and danced around her circle, coming imperceptibly closer with agonising slowness. I never turned my head to follow her around but could feel her dancing even when she was directly behind me. She was mesmerising me and I fell into a sort of torpor. This went on interminably. When the sun had disappeared completely, and I could see her only as an outline, Hina finally reached me and stood panting in front of me.

She slowly peeled off her body stocking to reveal her creamy nakedness to me. Then she fell onto all fours and crawled towards me. She lay her head on my lap, her legs splayed behind her, and I ran my fingers over her face. Her breathing slowly subsided. We entwined, like two snakes, and I shed my skin. We rolled in the sand, and I filled her hair and crevices, one by one.

After a long time, I cannot even guess the time accurately, she unwound from me, and raised herself on to her feet. Then she started dancing again, but this time there was a drum beat from somewhere, and her efforts were fast and aggressive, her hair wildly thrashing around, her legs kicking into the sand, her arms flailing around in a rhythm of their own. She hurled herself around, sometimes both feet off the ground, or stamping, her toes working into the desert. Most of the time she was just a silhouette against the moonlight, but

sometimes her face was only inches from mine and I could feel the drops of her sweat like a shower, on my body.

Suddenly, she turned away from me and stopped dead. I watched her bottom and ran my eyes down her legs to her exquisite ankles. She lowered herself on to all fours again and lowered her head to the sand. Then she began moving backwards towards me, ever so slowly. She progressed and ended up with her bottom in the air right in front of me. I had no choice....

The dancing and the sex resumed from time to time; moments of frenzy followed by exhausted intervals.

The sun was rising in the east when finally Hina collapsed for the last time and lay there, her body heaving for breath. I picked her up and kissed her on the lips, tried to breathe life back into her limp body. She was dead.

Part Sixteen

There was nothing to clear out from the room at the Paradise Café, but I went there to look anyway. It was still 6 x 4 foot, and the café downstairs was still closed. The desolation of Aksai Chin was still apparent. Back on the road, I crossed to the other side. I stacked a few stones up to mark the place and then placed her silver sandals on top. *My Hina*, I said.

Then I returned to my life, and as I passed, I dropped a final bribe into the greedy hands of the Chinese guard at the border.

END

