



Raw Whispers



We all know human life is precious...

But, I guess it's in our hands to make it
a meaningless human life or
a precious human life.....

-Rinchen Angmo

May you find solace soon...

May you find meaning in this inevitable void..

May you find the light within yourself. . .

You've given all a bittersweet smile.. .

The stars...now they shine bright with you



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Dear first friend in college,

They say never forget your firsts. Firsts are hard to forget, highlighted in yellow. The rest blurs into memory like a photocopy of a photocopy.

First day in school.

First time on stage.

First pay from part-time.

First love.

First time on a plane.

Dear keeper of my secrets,

We are lighthouses for each other in stormy seas.

Firsts because time seems to be linear.

Firsts remembered like post-it notes so that time makes sense.

Won't it be a relief to think of time as cyclic?

So that we will keep meeting each other at the corridor of anticipation.

So that we will sit under the tree in the lawn, many nights, turning back the hands of the clock.

So that we will spend many winter days of pearl-coloured skies on the white picnic table.

Because I can return to 'The Little Prince' anytime and always feel at home. I can forget and find myself in its pages any number of times because it reminded you of me.

Won't it be a relief to think of time as cyclic?

So that we will meet each other at these crossroads in every life.

Because our intertwined existence plays on repeat.

*With love,
Your first friend in college*

-Afnan



victory: realizing the light within....someday....someday

ཀུལ་མཚན་

-Rinchen Angmo



Love and other drugs

I like this movie because it tells the love story between a pharmaceutical salesman and a woman suffering from phase 1 Parkinson's disease, a rare disease for a young person.

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Could a normal, healthy man love someone like me? Is it sympathy or does he really love me? Would he get tired of me afterwards? Would he too leave? After all, no one wants to be someone's dependent, you know? In order to avoid all of this, why not be a little defensive from the start so that you don't feel hurt for longer. But hurt and pain are inevitable when it comes to love. We become vulnerable sometimes because trust is also built on how much you disclose your secret side to them. The more weaknesses you share, the closer you connect emotionally... And the more susceptible you become to pain because what if he doesn't reciprocate to your emotional side. What if he remains emotionally unresponsive or worse pretends to act nice to you.

What if your world crumbles down again?

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When Maggie expressed her emotions about how he stayed with her even after knowing about her health, I could feel her, understand her every expression and maybe relate this to my past experience. Maybe she did that to herself and to him in order to unconsciously remove the guilt of ruining someone's career or life. She feels vulnerable every time he says 'I love you' as if it was such an easy thing to say. I understand why she runs away from relationships and love particularly; because in some ways she wants to lessen the pain that she could receive after a breakup. It's better to stay casual from the start, she must have thought. But she anyway falls in love with him, they both fall in fact. It ends with a happy ending. It stays true to its romantic comedy genre.

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I don't remember when I first experienced pain in my knee, my arm, my wrist, my fingers. I felt like I was truly aging. I became more tired than usual and I became more nervous about myself overtime. I think that's when my social anxiety also started taking shape. My memory seems to be blurry, now that it's already been 5 years since I had this attack. I remember going to many hospitals and doctors from different branches of medicine, all the doctors explained the cause differently but none knew the exact explanation.

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Doctors from Ayurveda said it was a form of rheumatism, our local Amchi said it was chhooser, homeopathy experts did not speak the specifics but were still ready to put me on their pills, the allopathy doctors were confused because the symptoms matched but the blood test reported negative, some even diagnosed it as hypermobility which was a little unbelievable due to my inflexibility, which can be very well seen in yoga and dance classes. I soon started taking medication for it, to relieve myself of the tremendous pain that I felt.

But as fate took a twist, those medicines reacted negatively. During my ninth grade final exams, I experienced side-effects which later turned out to be side-effects of steroid medicines. I was devastated. For a person who considered studies and marks as the reason for their existence, this whatever-named disease just shattered me in a blink of an eye. My condition worsened as I entered into 10th grade, as the fear of board exams came nearer each passing day. Eventually as stress became a looming factor which I couldn't ignore, my hands started failing my expectations. As it was natural for it to get worse, I felt disconnected from everything.

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When Maggie was listing out her list of prescriptions and the number of medical diagnoses she underwent until Parkinson's, I was literally transported to my past in those few seconds. That's why I watched it till the end. I wanted to know her story as I irrationally started to look for answers which maybe Maggie could relate and understand. Although the movie focused more on their relationship and their healing, I wish they could have added more scenes related to her health. Maybe I desperately wanted to know whether she could continue in a happier state of mind and being. I saw our stories merging into one, not all but a few important ones.

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It feels immensely great to see that there are other people doing positively irrespective of their fatal diseases and syndromes. And movies like these instil hope in me. As silly as it may sound to most people, but such movies, biographies of such people or simple acknowledgment from peers really stirs us from within, for good reasons. It motivates us and makes us feel as if we are finally understood by someone. In this world, it is an honor to feel this way, to feel alive once in a while.

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When people ask me why I follow my sleep and itinerary schedule so strictly, or don't indulge in junk food like other college students, or why I take my time to walk instead of run for classes or let go of some activity just because of tiredness, or why I refrain myself from taking any potential stress-causing risk, I don't know how to tell them my story.

With all the medical history and psychological past, my usual answer gets limited to a sweet smile and a few random lines. It is not that I do not want to share these things, it definitely doesn't mean that they are unworthy of being trusted with such information, it's just that the retelling of our past sometimes leads us to think of our past history or trauma. Sometimes if the trauma has not healed, we start reliving that trauma in our head. Such narratives also bring sad energy in our surroundings, so not speaking about it, then becomes a reasonable choice. As a conversation starter, it obviously looks as a sad and boring subject to dwell upon. No, I would not like the other person to think of me as someone who has suffered a lot or someone who is victimized. Instead I would like to maintain myself as a healthy, normal being with some slight self-esteem and health issues. That's it. I think you can add social awkwardness too in the list. But only this much. No less, no more. Just the adequate.

-Sonam Chhomo

Spiti Valley Project



-Aditya

Traditional vs Modern Baskets



-Sonam Chhomo

Warning : read at your own risk !

“Only we riotous livers have imagined that this way was bad , and have invented another . And this other , – what is it ? It is this. The young girls are seated, and the gentlemen walk up and down before them, as in a bazaar and make their choice. The maidens wait and think, but do not dare to say: “ Take me , young man , me and not her. Look at these shoulders and rest.” We males walk up and down and estimate the merchandise, and then we discourse upon the rights of women, upon the liberty she acquires, I know not how , in the theatrical hall !”

- Leo Tolstoy (The Kreutzer Sonata And Other Stories)

“The personal is political”

- Carol Hanusch

The contagion called feminism has engulfed us all. It is like a disease, the vaccine to which has been ostensibly developed yet the virus within the vaccine has not been wholly inactivated , hence the ineffectiveness of the vaccine called feminism. As females, how liberally emancipated are we ?

Do we and can we call a young girl in a hijab an emancipated woman ? Or does the ambit of liberal emancipation only take into its herald young, cigarette wielding , scantily clad girls ? What of the inner republic of spirit ? Can a burka clad girl be “more -of -an -emancipated - female” than the club going apparition of liberality ?

Take for example , a young girl of 20 , who does none of the above because she finds the concept of making merchandise of herself a purely reprehensible idea . She is totally opposed to the idea of “ hooking - up”. Would you call her emancipated ? Would you include her in the bandwagon of your feminism ? Perhaps not . People talk about all types of inclusivity . Where do people like her go ? Society’s caricature of an emancipated young girl has become so incorrigible , that I fear it will not grant me an entry .

To Him :

“I am mine alone. I am not yours. I am no object, nor fancy merchandise. my vanity is already throbbing with all its glory intact , so I don’t need you to placate it for me. You tell me I am pretty, but all your efforts are doomed to fail for I know why such sweet meats drip from your mouth — mostly for self-gratification. I will not be an entity that furthers your quest to gratify yourself , thank you ! I will not be dislodged , sweet as your sweet meats may be. I am no Tess, Anna Karenina or Bathsheba even though you may be the cumulative whole of Alec, Vronsky and Sergeant Troy summed up into one human form: yours.

As I said the cup of my vanity is already filled to the brim, so I don’t need you to tell me about my beautiful eyes, my mirror can tell me that.

Who is more emancipated, the scantily clad young girl who is drunk in a bar , fondled covertly (if not overtly) by the relentless male gaze or the burka clad girl who asserts the republic of her spirit by upholding her vision of herself ? On a ladies night , in a club , on Saturday throngs of men literally lie in wait to covertly devour women . Do young girls feel at ease with this persistent negation of their humanity ? Does the jamboree of feminism not flare up in repulsion at this morbid and callous de-humanisation that pervades the clubs of each metropolitan city every Saturday night ? Do these ostensibly emancipated apparitions of liberality not feel just the opposite of what they preach ? Yes , the swanky clubs of the metropolis swim in the haze of patriarchy where females are just adorned mannequins , stripped of their humanity (not to say off their clothes) and yet each Saturday night all of us throng these clubs in the name of feminism. We scoff at the hijab clad girl , we call her backward , orthodox , conservative etc while we serve ourselves as garnished dishes for the ravenous men to devour . This is the essence of our feminism , yet we refuse to accept it and continue to persistently delude ourselves .

To Him :

“When I walk , amidst a throng of men , I look neither left nor right . I look only straight ahead , for my purpose lies neither to my left nor to my right , but straight ahead . You cringe as you behold my arched back , unbent , like an iron rod which refuses to bend in the face of your dehumanising male gaze . I am not a coquet , I don’t live for you . Do not expect me to dive into the sea of animation in your presence . When it comes to my aims and ambitions you do not matter .”



The head of our sports department at my school would lecture us relentlessly each time we would venture out of our safe little feminist haven , called Welham Girls' School for an out- station tournament .He would extoll the virtues of sports , namely focus , focus and focus . Somehow his words would stick with us , and we would remain just that - focused , looking straight down the track , toward the finishing line , at the rod above the high jump pit or at the ring of the basketball net . Other girls' would often dub us as arrogant , competitive , snobbish egoists , but we did not mind because we beat them anyway .A certain somebody once told me that girls who graduated from the school that I graduated from were undesirable and unattractive to the male gender owing to the fact that we had abnormally “high testosterone levels” (in retrospect he was debilitating his own “ machismo” by saying that we were more “ manly” than him and since he was clearly contradicting himself I refused to contradict him !). “High testosterone levels !”I thought . It was meant as a slur . But I did not take it as one . Yes , we are a notch higher than others in that we do not wish to be candy sticks for you to suck , so high testosterone level it is !

Now ask yourself , who is more emancipated ? The distracted , free , approachable , affable girl who has no reservations and is ready to hang out , never mind the fulfilment of her purpose or the focused , “snobbish” , ambitious girl who does not waste her time fitting into your vision of what a nice girl should be ?

To Him :

“If you invite me to clubs at night and I ask my parents before giving you an answer in the affirmative , you call me a kid. These are my moral values , I will not budge from them . Make any amount of silly catechisms . If I don't wear a short dress to your party , you say I'm conservative and orthodox , you tell me to look at the “emancipated” girl in the short dress , smoking weed . As I said I'm not merchandise and I'm not comfortable wearing a short dress with a plunging neckline in your presence .The day I wear a short dress in your presence I will have given you a reason to give yourself a pat on your back . You offer me a whole lot of alcohol. I don't drink , I say . You fume in exasperation . I don't drink with strangers , at odd hours , in odd places . Say what you will . Make me trust you and then I might share a drink with you sometime .”

To Her :

“I'm excommunicated from your feminist jamboree as I have not yet attained the desired “ liberal score” that you require as a minimum prerequisite for entry . I'm not “emancipated” enough because I don't stay out late , smoking weed , hooking up etc . I am not liberated enough . Never mind the fact that you spend hours in your trousseau on Saturday nights , you , who are so eager to please “them” —the very people whose hegemony you wish to subvert .”

To Him :

“Then you see me at a marriage in traditional cloths with my grandparents . All your doubts are confirmed . You spread the word that I am a marriageable commodity , waiting to have children . You say that I am on a husband hunt . You laugh with the “emancipated” girls at the club . I itch to tell you that the joke is on you . The girls at the club are praying and waiting for the very same thing , in a slightly different way . Trial and error is their method , not mine . I choose to leave such things to destiny . You exalt emancipated girls . They flit from one to another to gain succour and whatever else that comes with it . I choose to stick with myself . As I said, self-preservation. then you mock me . You tell me to learn cooking and wear salwar kameez . I pity your scope of thought , you who thinks that salwar kameez means manacles or going fully covered to a club means backwardness . It’s beyond me to even refute this . You say my school was “ backward” because we had salwar kameez as our uniform. Yet , to your dismay my school continues to top the list of the best girls schools in the country , even though we haven’t yet embraced the alleged “modernity” that short skirts bring with them .”

To Her:

Ask yourself will you include me , in a salwar kameez , just as I am , in your movement or am I supposed to change into a mini skirt to gain entry ?

To Him :

“I tell you , I have never dated . You are astonished , aghast , dumbstruck , appalled, amazed , delirious, exasperated confused . Then you Marr my continence by your perversion . You call me a lesbian , a prude , asexual , snobbish , a prig etc . When none of these are concomitant with who I am you say that my family is orthodox , backward , strict , patriarchal etc . It isn’t so , I tell you . My family is the most forward , free thinking family that anybody could have , but “forward” not as you and your kind take it as . My father loves me as every father loves his daughter , my brother loves me just the same , so when they read about one successive rape after the other in this country , they have a natural desire to protect me . When I hear about the multiple instances of hook- ups , one night stands etc I wonder relentlessly at the way sex has become the biggest joke shared by the youngsters of our epoch . I don’t see the humour in the joke you all share . Hence I will not share the joke, call me what you will !”

You must be thinking snob , prude , prig , egoist , even “sour grapes” . Well think what you will .

To Her :

You keep me out of your plush cause because I'm not plush enough . I don't date , I don't hook up . I believe in something deeper , but you dismiss this as melodrama . To further the cause of the "emancipated female" you have got to embrace modernity . To diminish patriarchy you have got to flout obsolete conventions . Randomly Hooking up is just one step . All this you wish to tell me .

But I will not listen .

To Him :

"Your perversion knows no limits . Your main aim is to convince yourself that I am just like you . You watch and you pry , you stalk and follow until you catch hold of some "dirt" . You spread rumours and gossip . You convert my platonic relationships into liaisons . You invent , you spread and you destroy . You poison and pollute what had hitherto been pure . You shall not share space with me , not now , nor ever . You don't deserve it . The spleen and dirt that covers you will forever keep me away from you . you call me an outdated behenji, while at the same time you sit with your boy gang and call girls who post "such pictures" sluts or talk about how "fuckable" they are . I don't want to be weighed on such scales by you . Your dirty mouths don't even deserve to take my name , let alone talk about me . My body is sacred for me . Dare you try and spray your dirty commentary upon it ."

I do not falter to call myself a philosophical anarchist in the face of such philosophy and you in your turn , are welcome to call me what you will , dear reader .

However you were supposed to have read this at your own risk.

-Harsahej Mann



-Sanjana Sharma Sahu



HER

Cannot put down

That Thing

Of restless tide.

Pure logic
Turns nose up
At a silly idea.

Ox bow lakes
Orbiting that
Stoic mask.

Meander through
Convictions
Of stone.

Oh

Come home
Come home
Come home.

-Chitee Lele

NAMKHAY RTSIMA

One of those fateful nights
I have seen fierce dogs turn into rats

I have seen mothers depart
I have heard the sky wail.

In all our empty rooms
cold silence awaits

What streets do we have ?

Will the woods dare ?

to crown their sterile heads and leafy hair ?

Will the fur exceed ? Its fangs so sharp and warm ?

The cirrus stabs...

The mirage delays...

Now will you be the serpent?

And do you hear the call ?..

Will you walk the leopard's stutter
when you pace the golden halls ?

Our world that Winter
the fires at the orphanage

The bittersweet surrender of that Summer

The severance of 1998

-Ruhail Qaisar



-Ruhail Qaisar



-Ruhail Qaisar

Holding binaries together

We've all been running too hard, too fast...to reach some place that exists only in our minds. But maybe we need to pause and see which place we are running from and what is the place that we are running towards.

What difference would it make if we ran harder and faster towards the mirage that we see in a desert, we'd reach our destination only to realize we're still in the desert, still surrounded by it, and nothing has changed.

Even if we found an oasis in the desert, we'd only be able to truly appreciate the oasis because the desert exists, and we'll only be able to bear the desert because the oasis, or the mirage of the oasis (that motivates us to search for it) exists. It's time we learnt to hold the binaries together, for neither would have existed without the other.

Maybe hope and despair too, need to be seen and understood in the same way. We cannot appreciate one in the absence of the other. Where there is hope, there is always despair...and where there is despair, there has to be hope.

희망이 있는 곳엔 박다시 시려니 있네
(방탄서년단 --- Sea)

Translation:

Where there is hope, there is always hardship
(BANGTAN Seonyeondan --- Sea)

-Amla Srivastava



THE BRAIN WAVE

We had just immigrated into our computer. The environment encircling the vicinity starts to *lag* because of the sloppy Intel processor, which was rather *ancient*. Inevitably, we managed to realise that we were in a *virtual* world rather than the *ever-chic* reality.

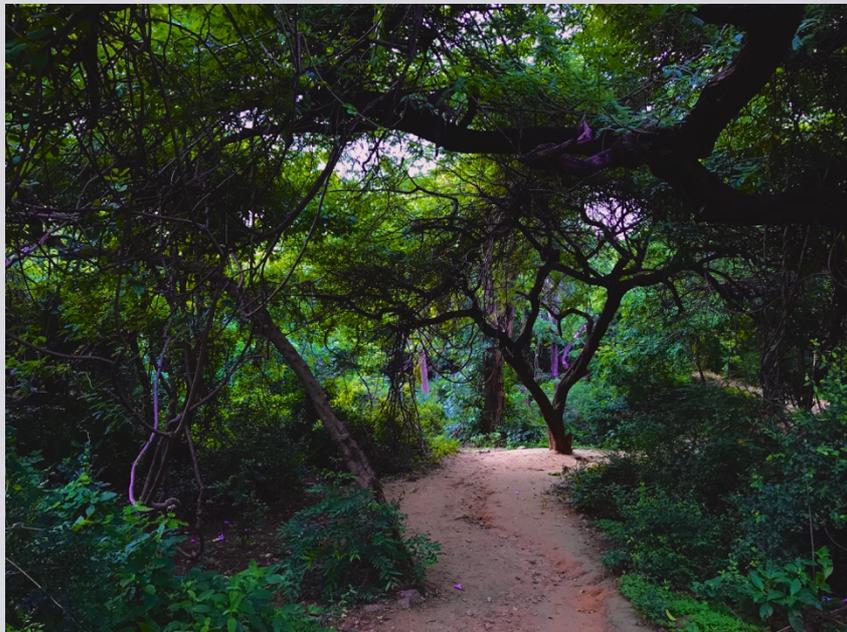
A compressed fog encircled the lawn which was foliated with a dense verdure. Thomas sits right in front of the Common Room's main door; holding a guitar and hums to the vibrations of the six-stringed instrument.





Lucy, oblivious to her surroundings, lights a cigarette in the heart of the lawns; notwithstanding the brisk wind, she could not feel cold. No sooner did she realize that it was midnight than the fog grew thicker. Three radiant lights complemented the vicinity with their alluring charm. Red, cherry lights in the middle, just adjacent to a tree with the shape of a heart glittering amidst the lights' reflection on the heart — the Heart of College.

*“Peachy glows on the right,
Glittering white towards the left;
Why do these lights look remarkably bright?
Vibrations infiltrating my mind,
Kind of soothing, I'd not lie.
Are they communicating with my subconscious?
While it tries to fathom its meaning;
Or are they thriving to make her nauseous?
Do you even understand what these words imply?
Because they're just simple words, compiled.
Lucy asks, “Why's the sky full of diamonds?”*



Nature replied, “Because you see things peculiarly, just like the sirens.”

-Robert Lianzathang Hangzo



Monochrome

A gasp of air,
A cry for help,
A gunshot,
A death sentence.
Only takes a second,
To change the course of one's life.

How an infinitely small unit of time,
Holds the potential to destroy the only thing,
Man will never be able to resurrect.
And yet we treat life so carelessly,
As an object of our prejudice,
Subject to our whims and fancies.
And yet we cherry pick who deserves to live and who deserves to die,
Because the melanin in their skin blinds our judgement.

Strange how we claim the right to destroy something,
When we don't have the power to create it.
And then raise our voices to justify these acts of atrocity as mere human folly.
What we don't understand is the ripple effect is already in motion,
And we are not prepared to bear its brunt.
Not today. Not ever.

#lifebeyondcolour

-Anushka Saha

A State of Mind



-Urvi Seth



Most Thoughts

I'm talking about
Colours that you try to imagine
But don't exist

You having a Conversation
That you are terribly trying to resist

When you think of nothing in your mind
And You only see blackness
The answer you're hoping to find
Is unattractively lifeless

The object that is lost
Just when it's most needed
A bad thought you had tossed
Which without warning Proceeded

How trivial were the thoughts you had previously feared
Just as the ending has neared

And Now that most thoughts have been Heard
It seems to me that the mind has been cleared

-Ananya Singh



Too many Worlds

Ever since I was a child my greatest talent and aid was my imagination. No matter how much I would like things to be different, I was never strong or brave.

I was always trapped behind locked doors and sky-high walls and so my thoughts carried me away, through countless other worlds where only I had all the keys.

But I have grown weary of my travels, for I have travelled so far that I have lost my way, and with it myself.

And so I wonder often who I am, and what I've become. I look in the mirror and I see a ghost that shies away from looking back at me. I look upon the people around me, the few who still love me, to whom I have nothing left to offer.

You see, reality is fate's anchor and arrow, and no matter how strong you think you are or how wild your imagination can be, you can never break free of fate's anchor, nor outrun its arrow.

I tried, and for a while it let me believe that I won, but once the line between what is real and what is not begins fading away, you will lose yourself, and you'll have to look in too many worlds to find it again.

-Dhruv Gupta



-Aditya

Iridescence in Solitude



-Rinchen Angmo



Green vale and the White Conch shell

Skalzang' s story chapter 2.

“Oh, but she has no problems... She can' t take things because she' s always had it so easy...always got everything...didn' t expect this from her...she won' t understand...she thinks she knows everything, when she doesn' t...why' s she so sad...she doesn' t have problems...she' s acting crazy...she just makes things up... she has no real problems...she has very extreme opinions”

Skalzang just had one question in response, “How do you know?”

There' s not a soul who isn' t dealing with dark days. Nobody has it easy. If she got things her way, ever considered how hard she must have worked for things to be so 'easy' ..stop expecting things from people, you may think 'she thinks she' s perfect' ..you' re right she isn' t. with each second our consciousness is changing. What is 'everything' anyway...the statement is redundant...really, just stop it... ' crazy' , she sympathized with all who had to deal with that stigma, it wasn' t fair... 'real' , what is up with the casual usage of such words?

This is why she and many others abhorred the t world ..

Initially she had cared...she hated nothing more than hurting others. But, the greatest healing could only be brought when one healed oneself first...anyway, wasn' t it enough...something in her decided that if she chose to remain in the green vale, it was her choice and no one need have a problem with it or make a judgement on it.

In the green vale she was by herself...in her own company...how much lighter things felt...sometimes she even forgot what 'things' meant...the sorrows still lingered in one corner of the mind...but there was room for acceptance...there was room for joy or at least stillness...there was a vast vast galaxy for her illusion of herself and nothing...

What was with the t world...lies mixed with joy...if you ever said what was true to you, they' d be shocked...because lies were better.. more pleasing to the already shut ears...that must be worse than being on a swing surely...anyway, she' d never know

But, the white conch shell had been sounded. There would no doubt be a wind of change. A sea of wind with the blessings of tarshoks (prayer flags).

She realized that all were suffering alike. .. only compassion was the solution..



And remember this is not her story...it's a story shared by many...at some level even by all...

But, when you hear the white conch shell it gets better...you get closer to the banner of victory... real victory: the light within...

“ the minute I stopped trying to run away, I ..my consciousness could rest at peace... in rare moments it even travels like air...and yes, this is not me... this is my consciousness...what exactly it means I don't know. One has to search tenaciously for such knowledge. I'm very grateful that I received some bits of the knowledge and guidance of Dharma from great practitioners and their books (Chhaksal!)..all the answers I had been searching for started to surface...I hope others find this or their own guiding light,” Skalzang scribbled in her journal.

She had always said, “I'm not I, but everyone”. It would leave everyone including her perplexed. But now she understood what it meant. Where had it come from though? Well, at least she had found a semblance of a way... at least she had received the knowledge that she must walk against the stream, slowly and steadily..... like a livable dream...

-Rinchen Angmo



A very big thank you to everyone for their tremendous support for the previous (first) edition. Hope this edition too gives you a semblance of solace and urges you to seek it within yourself.

-Rinchen Angmo

Feel free to share your pieces for the **next edition before 15th July 2020 at:**
rinchen.mountainwhispers@gmail.com

A lovely initiative that you can contribute to:

Spiti Valley Project by Aditya to raise funds to procure Sanitary kits for the nuns at Sherab Choeling Nunnery, Morang Village, Spiti Valley.

Aditya is taking forward the fund raising campaign through a collaborative photography and art project. He shares his photographs of Spiti with artists who create their own rendition of them. Two of the art/photography collaborations have been shared in this edition. If you'd like to contribute to the initiative through art or funds, do contact Aditya.

Instagram: @spitivalley - <https://www.instagram.com/spitivalley/>
(the art/photography project can be viewed here)

donation link: rzpy.givetomlpaditya00022@hdfcbank

more about the initiative: https://milaap.org/fundraisers/support-aditya-62?utm_source=shorturl