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Raw Whispers



Intrigue in the illusion and elusion?
An ode to every Rimo.

-Rinchen Angmo

Rimo means drawing in Ladakhi, Tibetan, Bhutanese and a few other languages; but it means so much more.

Rimo also means mountain girl, ri meaning mountain and mo implying girl; but it means so much more.

The origin of the word is very interesting. Once a shepherd boy in Tibet witnessed a sun shower accompanied by a rainbow and a beautiful girl. He tried to approach the girl, but the spectacle disappeared. Since he couldn't find her anywhere, he tried to capture her by engraving her beauty on a rock. He'd refer to the engraving as a 'ri bumo' meaning: girl from the mountain. Over time the reference got mistaken as rimo, which then became the name for the engraving and now a word that means drawing. (the details of the story may vary.)

So rimo is not just a piece of art. It's what you mean your drawing to be.

Rimo means your wish to capture through art a feeling that cannot be captured. It's an attempt to find closure to a situation that belongs to a different state of mind. A wish to follow what you saw in or as a vision or dream, a wish to follow your heart. A wish to find a way when there's no other way.

Rimo is a feeling. A feeling that one is compelled to follow but cannot capture. And that feeling culminates into art, in the form of writing, art and so on.

This issue is about following that feeling and celebrating the search. Because beauty doesn't have to be captured, we should have the ability to celebrate beauty as it is.

Let's hold onto the beauty in feelings, the pursuit of a Rimo.

-Rinchen Angmo.



Voices and Visions.

Questions – Rinchen Angmo	5
What’s in my brains? – Wasim Yahya interviewed.	6-11
Dancing – Rinchen Angmo	12
What’s in my brains? – Sonam Chhomo interviewd.	13-16
Your film?	17
Fleeting glances, untaken chances. -Rinchen Angmo	18
Thank you!	19

Questions

Time flies by,

Memories, they become memories..

But the warmth generated in the heart has not extinguished

What could be the meaning of this?

Am I just lost in my own thoughts

While the rational world races ahead..

Or is there some reality to these

fleeting glances

untaken chances

-Rinchen Angmo

What's in your Brains?



Wasim Yahya le interviewed by Rinchen.

Wasim le is the poet behind the collection of poetry title 'the frozen echoes'. He is a BSMS student at IISER-Pune and is from Turtuk, Ladakh.

Your collection of poetry is titled 'The Frozen Echoes'. What does that mean to you? And do you think the process of writing 'melted' some of your 'frozen' echoes?

Yes yes, quite so.

Those frozen echoes have melted out in the form of poems, which have been compiled into this book.

This melting of thoughts would have required courage in more ways than one. What inspired you to go through the entire process of publishing your poems?

Definitely, it does require courage, I think.

Whether you're scribbling your feelings or opinions, you need to be fearless. And more so, if you plan to publish it and show it to people at large.

Writing oftentimes, and more specifically poetry, brings out one's deepest feelings, desires and thoughts. And that is something most people are not comfortable with. I think people do not usually like to confront their deepest self .

Because that consists of a lot of contradictions and provocative elements of different sorts. And to showcase it to people once you have penned it requires a different level of boldness, I believe.

I had published a shorter version of this book on Amazon Kindle last year which I now have unpublished. After that I met Tashi Namgyal, who is the illustrator of this book, and once, while chatting in a café in Leh, pitched this idea of publishing the book in print form and showed his interest in illustrating for the book. I liked the idea and decided to work

On the publication.

I think, however, my chief motivation for printing the book was to satisfy myself. I thought that printing it would probably give me motivation to write more poetry.

Do you think trying to confront your deepest self has helped you? Do you now feel satisfied and further motivated.. and has people's response played a role in that.. if so, in what ways?

Well, it's all too soon to give you a definite answer. I'm yet to see and hear responses.

Yes, it's definitely helped me insofar as bringing out these poems are concerned.



In one of the poems you compare yourself to the River Indus.. And in other poems too a sense of your regional identity can be perceived..In what ways did your upbringing in Turtuk in particular and Ladakh as a whole influence your writing?

I believe that one's writings should be reflective of one's society and surroundings. Although humans across the globe share many values, feelings and thoughts in common, the job of a writer is to exemplify them locally. That is to say, while speaking on a universal theme, one should employ literary and poetic devices which are local. That way one can connect with the surroundings more and the people will connect with the writings in a more effective way. I have spent a major part of my life in Ladakh and Turtuk and it is quite natural for me to use the local objects and places as devices in my poetry.

And I think that also adds an authenticity to one's writings. If I use a metaphor which is very Japanese in essence, when I have never been to Japan myself, to convey something to a local audience here, then it'll be utterly useless I think.

Right.. did being away for your education make you cherish your hometown even more, such that it became important for you to keep alive your hometown in your poems both for yourself and readers.. both as a natural response and as a way to keep alive your connection while away..?

It certainly did. My first poem was in fact written on my homeland. I had spent a few years outside Ladakh, without even visiting once, during my school education and I of course longed for my home a lot. And one day this intense longing finally culminated into a poem. But after that, I don't think I have written poems exclusively about my homeland. Ladakh, its geography and society surely do feature in many of my poems, albeit merely as references, images and metaphors. I don't subscribe to the idea of being proud of one's land, ethnicity etc, so I tend not to explicitly glorify these and write poems about them. But my connection with the land is quite intimate and it manifests, quite naturally, in various forms and layers in my writings.

What would you say to Ladakhi students who undergo similar experiences..And in what ways do you feel the process of looking within can help anyone going through a difficult time?

A vast number of the Ladakhi youth go outside Ladakh for higher education. A lot of students go for even school education too. And going away from the comfort of home means having to face challenges of various kinds at a very young age. Moving to bigger cities and living without parents' help can be extremely challenging and burdensome. Though our youths tend to acquire freedom at relatively earlier stages, they also acquire burden too, at an early age.



And one may suffer from anxiety and depression because of these. In such testing times, I think writing, including other creative activities, can help channelise that depressive energy into an artform. And it not only transforms a negative energy, so to speak, into something productive but also relieves one from such pain and suffering. I think that writing can be a very therapeutic process and can heal one from mental sufferings. So, yes, looking within and writing can help you clarify your confusions and know your problems better.

A part of your process of looking within has culminated into a published collection of poetry.. what words would you share with aspiring writers who are unsure as to how to go about getting their work put together or getting it published.. or even simply having the confidence to share it with the world in any form?

As far as publishing the work is concerned, I think there are plenty of ways to do that. One can try to post it on social media, or maybe maintain a website or publish in journals and magazines. That way one can build a decent readership I think. If one wishes to publish a book, there are traditional publishers which although rarely publish works of first timers, and especially poets. But one can go with non-traditional publishers too. In my case, I self published the book. In this, you have the freedom to make your own choices when it comes to designing, marketing and sales etc.



Now to answer the second part of your question; A poet can be unconfident in two ways. Either her writings are too private and she is not comfortable sharing with people, in which case I'd say she must develop that confidence. Or she is too insecure about the quality of her work. Many poets seem have this second kind of hesitation. I believe that by showing it to people, one can improve and evolve in some important ways. You show it to people, then you hear their responses, which can trigger something inside you and you end up writing more. So this kind of feedback loop and dialectical process can help us write more and more I think.

Through your journey so far, what has kept you going....and what is one thing that you've learnt in this journey that you'd like to share with others?

I think my curiosity to know and my passion for experiencing things in life and the world have been strong driving forces in my life.

As for my writing, it has been, like I have written in my book, a journal about this journey. It has been about these forces and the impressions they left on me.



Dancing because I be me

dancing to celebrate this precious human life

Dancing just to be

Dancing this dance

waiting for a dance?

dancing and dreaming

Words dancing

a chance

A dance

-Rinchen Angmo.

What's in your Brains?



Sonam Chhomo interviewed by Rinchen.

Sonam is an aspiring writer and poet from the Western Himalayas. She also draws, but is currently preparing to move out of her comfort zone and experience feeling alive. A postgraduate literature student at JNU, she is known to have the animal spirit of a sloth.

Hi Sonam, what is life like studying literature?

Life seems full of new possibilities and perspectives when I study literature. It teaches you to empathize with others, to think about morality, ethics and problems of life. It is like studying experiences that are not your own.

'Experiences that are not your own', you say. In what ways does that help? Also, do you feel that at a subliminal level those experiences become your own?

Experiences that are not my own- I think it really helps me to understand human psychology without learning the scientific methods. You get to acknowledge such a vast multitude of human psyche, environment etc

yes, after some time I feel that they become part of my self and knowledge system.

What role do you think knowledge systems play in people's lives? And what is the potential of individuals in building or contributing to various knowledge systems?



According to me knowledge systems are very important in this world because everything around us is governed by knowledge systems. People don't realize this because knowledge systems have a very subtle external appearance. But knowledge systems become very important in the process of accelerating narratives about people, culture, almost everything. So if one really wants to change the world, change mass thinking, or mindsets of people, then it becomes very important to understand that knowledge systems exist around us. The mere acceptance of that existence of knowledge systems is the way to break our ignorance of it. I think everyone should be aware of knowledge systems around them because they exist everywhere, even in the smallest forms. For example, the knowledge system in my village will be drastically different from that in urban areas.

Being aware of the existence of knowledge systems is itself a knowledge system, which can then equip one to bring about change.

Everyone wants to change for the betterment of either their individual future or their community's future. Since everyone strives for positive change, getting to understand knowledge systems and consequently eradicating differences, and learning from other knowledge systems can really benefit people.

Pondering over nature, ecological time etc. can put you back in sync with nature, and that's the ultimate goal: for humans to go back in sync with nature.

What are some ways in which you do your bit to accelerate narratives that have a positive effect on society? And how have you been inspired by other individuals or collectives?

I haven't done much really, but one of the most impactful ways in which I've accelerated narratives is by calling out the toxic culture amongst my classmates from middle school on social media. Ever since then many people have contacted and supported me and shared their own stories which they had until now been afraid to come out with. A simple act of calling out bullying and the toxic culture prevalent in schools, has hopefully made some people realize that the experience of most students in schools is not all that fancy.

As for inspiration, in JNU there are many political bodies and politically active people. Many of them, when given the opportunity, never fail to share their narratives with confidence; so I find that very inspiring. When one in general talks to people one finds great inspiration in their stories. For instance, in JNU I've come across many people who very openly share their experiences, which I think has made me let go of many stereotypes. I feel like being in JNU has had a great positive impact on me.



In your pursuit of standing up for people and also getting to know people you seemed to have found solace.. How do you feel students of literature can do their bit to make a positive difference in this world and how have you as a student of literature set out on your personal journey of bringing positive change for yourself and others?

I think as a student of literature I developed and continue to develop empathy and compassion for people's narratives. These values can itself create so much transformation in you. I think other students of literature should also follow this.

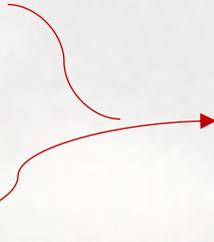


Your film?



10 Things I Hate about you.

Kiminonawa
(Your Name)



Pulp Fiction.

Chungking Express.

The Girl Who Leapt Through Time.

Mean Girls.

Emma.

Breakfast at Tiffany's

Maybe it's time for a wind of change, time to open up your mind a little bit.

Sentimental and haughty? Perhaps it's time to concentrate more on work and let the sentimental things follow suit.

*Contemplative and calm?
Why not something different?*



Fleeting glances, untaken chances.

Years go by
And then our ways cross again
Time flies by
I hope our ways cross again

One could say
There's nothing to begin with
It's just a play
And we're characters within it

But why do meet
And yet not meet
Again and again
And continue to pretend and pretend

there's nothing to say
Yet I'm getting used to crossing you on my way

Is there more to these
Fleeting glances and untaken chances?

-Rinchen Angmo



Thank you!

Open for submissions for Edition 12.

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