

# **Predator & Prey**

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# Predator and Prey

Only those who have beauty inside can appreciate beauty outside

## Prologue

The author is of the firm belief that art should be for art's sake without having any practical application in the outside world and that beauty should be for beauty's sake and has tried to make a case for his life by looking at it as a complementary contrast with its predator and prey.

It is better to stay foolish and continue than to become wise and stop

## Chronology of the Old Man's Life

1943: Born

1951: Separation of Parents

1952: Friendship with Indo-American  
Classmate

1957: Death of Parents' Paramours

1958: First Dance

1961: Separation from High School  
Sweetheart

1968: Leaving University and Becoming a  
Biker

1970: Sheriff

1971: Journalist

1976: Priest

1977: Businessman

1979: Travel to the East

1981: Back to Country

1982: To Italy

1983: Back to Country

1987: To Afghanistan

1988: To Moscow

1988: To the Banks of the Ganges

1989: Back to the USA

2003: Back to Hometown for 48 hours

Towards the End

## Michelangelo

The bloody sun hung low with only the tapering ends of two holy-white clouds aligned on an invisible horizontal line trying to touch the index fingers of their outstretched hands striking a discordant note in the middle of the solar intrados.

This reminded the old man who would pray on the grey mountain in front of which the sun was sinking of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and of the fresco *The Creation of Adam* by Michelangelo painted on it.

There would always be a distance between God and Man and they would never meet in the old man's lifetime.

It was time for sunset.

The soothing orange twilight tranquilized the vibrant green grass growing on the ancient mountain and the brisk wind brought a slight chill as silence reigned quietly over everything smelling of beauty and tasting like death.

The old man was about to die.

## Silent Discussion with the Predator and Prey

Black night with blue starlight slowly set in.

The old man quickly made a fire which slowly grew and soon from the pyramid of the yellow-orange fire sizzling sparks flew as they futilely tried to reach the stars and mingle with their fire; the spark of Man trying to reach unreachable blue gods in the dark sky.

The fuel of twigs in the fire chattered and the smoke wafted up with one burning on the earth like Man and the other reaching for heaven like his soul.

The old man sat warming his muscular hands in front of the red flower wrapped in a coarse grey cloak. He had a creamy complexion which soon became ruddy. He was sitting on the naked earth with his long legs crisscrossed with his three friends; one of feather, other of leather, and another with scales like powder; predator and prey; the eagle, the chameleon, and the moth. They were all neighbors.

Life was a complementary contrast, predator and prey, black and white.

The moth fluttered and went near the fire wanting to burn away but before it could self-annihilate the eagle's prey shot out its long sticky pink tongue and fastening its end onto the purple velvety moth snap-dragged the prey into its mouth and began to grind on it. The prey had become predator.

The old man wondered: *Aren't all men each other's predator and prey?*

The eagle's feathers remained unruffled. It was used to the sky. Man had brought it to the ground.

It thought: *He too should soar like me* and wondering: *Why does he keep on worshipping me?* exclaimed in its mind: *He uses me to prey on others! He is the most ruthless predator preying on his fellow Man with his different eagle-predator-gods!*

The old man's squinting emerald-green eyes kept gazing into the hot flames that would soon consume his mortal body. The chameleon had turned red to match the dancing flames and was engrossed in swallowing its food with its throat bulging in and out and the golden-brown eagle was lost in thought with its large hooked beak pointing to the brown earth below.

One was obsessed with death, the other with food, and another with thinking; inescapable death, food the basic necessity, and unnecessary thoughts that lead nowhere until death is found.

Suddenly a miracle!

The chameleon's protruding eyes closed and tiny dinosaur mouth opened and the scaled reptile coughed out the winged insect which though its purple velvety royal robes were disheveled still managed to flutter away; but again towards the burning and dancing flames!

This one was obsessed with both survival and death! Complementary contrast! Like Man!

The old man turned his thoughts to food and away from death but still thinking.

He wondered: *Is it possible to stop thought? Even when one is sleeping? Does one have to wait for the sleep of death for one's release from thought?*

He leant back and reaching his right hand into the pocket of his pants brought out a potato slightly smoother than his cloak and as brown as the earth.

He was one of Van Gogh's potato eaters though not gaunt like them. Also unlike them he did not have the luxury of a home to cook his potato.

With his fingernails, which had grown long but the insides of which he had kept dirt-free, he peeled back the skin as best as he could and fed.

## Diary of a Globe-Trotter

The fiery red-haired old man with emerald-green eyes which had always sparkled since childhood had penned in a black and white diary throughout his active life, but only when he had felt it was absolutely necessary, to order his thoughts which at the moment of his impending departure, from what men called life, on the grey mountain under a black sky filled with blue twinkling stars, was being read by his four friends, who were far away from his graveyard-cum-crematorium, with an uneasy heart.

He had thought of life as black and white which was yin and yang and had boiled down almost all he had understood into a predator and prey approach to it emphasizing a complementary contrast; he had used the pseudonym, *Darkre*, at the end of each entry in his diary, which stood for dark-ray; wondering if there could be a light ray, why shouldn't there be a dark ray!

Evolution, propounded by Charles Darwin, as understood by the Irish American, with its parasite, neighbor, predator, and prey, with the survival of the fittest, had influenced him from the very beginning, and he had slowly but steadily shrugged off the shackles of the faith he was born into after exploring it and also many other schools of thought in the world which he had trotted through, trying his hand at almost everything that he had considered interesting enough to help him understand himself in life, and had come up with his own philosophy which when the time came for him to die would stand by him and enable him to walk towards death with open arms and invite it into his warm embrace.

It had been an interesting life with its ups and downs, which he had realized could never reach a steady state, for life, yin, was simply too beautiful with its diversity, and had as its yang, death, which he did not know whether or not would answer the ultimate question of the existence of God.

As he sat immersed in his thoughts beside the fire, whale oil, and coffin which would be his pyre in a funeral watched by only his present imaginary companions, the moth, the chameleon, and the eagle, which had rejoined his mind after decades, he knew he had given life his best and had no regrets about approaching death.

## Man, Woman, Neighbor, and Desire

The red-haired, emerald-green eyed Irish American's parents had emigrated from Ireland, where his father had been a once successful robust potato farmer and his handsome mother a farmhand, both of whom had fallen in love with each other because of the qualities in the other opposite to those of theirs, and had become immigrants in the brave new world desiring more from life than what they had got in Ireland.

Within a decade of their child being born and each having constantly argued with the other as to who should have the final say in how best their new family should adapt to their new home, the father had fallen in love with a delicate young and svelte chorus girl and the mother with the rich owner of a Cadillac showroom, with both parents trying to blend into capitalist ideology and the natives wanting to hook up with foreigners.

The eight year old kid's parents had separated but had never divorced, and later their paramours, because of their desire for drugs and minds unable to sync with those of their immigrant partners, had quickly died after becoming fat, ugly, and poor leaving everybody in the quadrangle miserable.

The fourteen year old had inherited his mother's lover's Cadillac and had translated with a red pen in his black and white diary the dark details of his unhappy parents' life:

### *Diary Entry Six*

Man and Woman are predators, preying on each other because of lust and desire for gold. Both become prey to their desire, a predator.

The neighbor, predator, preys on Man or Woman with the help of one of the couple who desires more than what can be given by the other and believes the neighbor will be able to satisfy their desire; which the neighbor promises to because of his or her desire and becomes a prey to both his or her desire and Man's or Woman's desire.

Man or Woman is prey to their desire preying on the neighbor's desire.

Man or Woman becomes the predator preying on the neighbor.

Man, Woman, and neighbor become prey and predator because of their desire; desire being the hapless prey and the ultimate predator.

Man and Woman desire power over each other and when the coup d'état fails they turn to the neighbor.

Man had clothed himself since Adam and Eve and had become colorless; unlike plants and animals whose naked beauty had grown.

*Darkre*

The old man, whose last supper of a potato had reminded him of his once potato farmers father and mother, sighed, and threw few more twigs into the fire making it sparkle and thought:

*The world as I knew it was no longer. The fire wasn't kindled by love anymore.*

## Woman, Flower, Man

The ten year old red-haired white boy with emerald-green eyes who would become a man had regularly visited the home of his best buddy, an Indo-American, in a locality filled with brown immigrants having brown-black eyes with all sorts of black facial and head hair, covered and uncovered, fascinated by the culture, and on one special occasion, while tasting hot spicy curry and rice with a burning mouth and tears in his eyes, had almost burned his throat and choked after gulping too much upon hearing a mythical story narrated during dinner by his friend's mother, dressed in a colorful silk sari, about an Indian king who had had to marry a hermit's daughter because he had held her hand while saving her life as she was about to drown in the most unlikeliest of circumstances, which had at that time caused tears of laughter to well up and add to those already caused by the spice in his eyes, and later made him enter his adolescent modified version of the Indian story in his spicy diary:

### *Diary Entry One*

The pink lotus between green leaves on bluish-green water preyed upon lithe Woman with long lustrous black hair which had reached below her waist, and now spread behind her naked back, as after discarding her clothes she had got into the tranquil lake gingerly on her lotus feet to pick the king of flowers which had tempted her to pluck it from the water and adorn her hair with it.

Her feet and legs suddenly got entangled in the roots and stems of the lotus she cherished and those of its ilk surrounding it on the aquamarine lake.

She slipped on the soaked mud at the floor of the lake and floundered and screamed.

A knight in shining armor, who was with great thirst searching the enchanting forest for aqua, after getting lost during his king's hunting expedition having pursued a fast deer alone and losing his retinue in the process, heard the damsel's scream when he was near his goal.

Gallant Man rushed and rescued doe-eyed Woman from a watery death.

He was still gripping her naked hand, with both dripping wet on the muddy bank of the cunning lake, when he asked her to be his enthralled by her naked frame, whereupon Woman set a condition that he had to first get her the lotus she was after if he wanted her to be his.

Man who had preyed upon Woman, now upon being preyed upon by her, jumped back into the water and preyed upon the flower which had initially preyed upon Woman.

He plucked the flower and Woman became his; circle of predator and prey.

*Darkre*

The old man's eyes looked back into the past through the flames of the red flower.

## Complementary Contrast in the Garden of Eden

The red-haired Irish American white boy with emerald-green eyes had taken his best friend, the black haired brown Indo-American boy with brown-black eyes, to Sunday school to show him the wonder of his God after his buddy had made him worship the idols at his home.

After the teacher extolling the marvels of Eden with its Adam and Eve, who had tasted the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and asking the Indo-American whether he had understood as he was a pagan, had led to the boy running out in tears with his best friend left behind in confusion, as to whether to remain with his God or run after his brother from another mother, and the realization that knowledge was a burden for good came with evil and yin with yang, the teacher had admonished the fair boy saying that one should share one's beliefs but not gather others' as he was doing from the dark boy.

The knowledge of another God, gained from his brown friend, started preying upon the knowledge the white boy was gaining in Sunday school and also the God he loved and he therefore wrote with much anguish and foresight in his diary:

### *Diary Entry Two*

The red-leaved maple, the thin-leaved birch with its trunk of light-grey bark streaked with black, the towering poplar with egg-shaped leaves, the palm tree with its branches symbolizing victory, the mighty oak, the well-groomed spruce, the evergreen conifer, and others, all either short or tall, stout or slim, with leaves thick or thin, in various hues of green, with the background of a deep light-blue sky with shades of mild purple, had stood amidst healthy bushes on soft grass. The sweet fragrance of flowers and fruits with rainbow colors had danced with the fresh smell of earth in a spirited tango.

Away from the apple tree in this Garden of Eden had flowed the four rivers: Ganges, Indus, Oxus, and Sita; pure foaming-white, fertile-green mottled with red, yellow-orange, and earth-golden.

Beneath this apple tree of the knowledge of good and evil, naked muscular Man had lifted full-figured Woman so that she could reach into the branches and pluck the forbidden fruit.

She had, and both Adam and Eve had tasted the knowledge of good and evil.

Man and Woman, Adam and Eve, had been parasites in God's Garden of Eden, and had eaten His apple.

Immediately, God had become a parasite in the lives of Man and Woman and had begun to eat them insidiously because of their love for Him.

Man, Woman, and God had become the first parasites.

A moth, chameleon, eagle, lion, and lamb had surrounded Man and Woman when they had eaten the red forbidden fruit.

All seven plus the watchman of the Garden of Eden, God, would be prey, predator, and neighbor, at one time or another.

Adam and Eve, good and evil, predator and prey, proved that life was but a complementary contrast even in paradise.

*Darkre*

The thoughts of the old man in the cold night who would soon die were:

*Life's meaning cannot be found until death is found. Man will find God, if He exists, only after his death. Till then earth is both heaven and hell, and the search for God a futile effort by men. What a complementary contrast!*

## The Well-Frog and Sea-Frog

The Irish American boy was sitting on the red circular brick wall of an old well, dangling his scrawny legs inside and throwing the stones he had gathered in his large pocket one by one into the water and each time waiting for the plop inside the low water of the deep well before he threw another, while listening to his much older British American friend and his best friend the Indo-American talking about the intertwined life stories of the great Indian mathematician Ramanujan, who had been an intuitive and orthodox man, and his mentor the Englishman Hardy, who had been a man who believed in rigor and an atheist, after all three boys had played truant and skipped their mathematics class in school.

Becoming fascinated by the complementary contrast of the story in which Ramanujan, who had always credited his genius to God had become weak in England due to lack of proper vegetarian food, and the atheist Hardy who had brought the Indian to England to nurture his genius had been unable to help his discovery care for his body, all of which had led to Ramanujan returning to India and dying young, the red-haired boy with his emerald-green eyes which had started sparkling with a love for mathematics later wrote in his diary:

### *Diary Entry Three*

The stout and dark well-frog was poor on account of its limited territory, but dared to dream beyond its well and yearned to jump through the sky-hole in the roof of its home and reach the sea.

One fine day as it floated in the warm water amidst slimy blue-green algae, gently wagging its limbs watching the yellow sun blazing between tender white clouds through the blue sky-hole of its world, it saw a golden-brown eagle slit the shiny orb in half with its sharp outstretched wings.

Suddenly the eagle-god, seeing the poor frog-man wallowing in misery, sharply descended from the high sky with a shrill cry, which resounded as the giant bird of prey quickly dropped down through the round walls of the well, and plucking the fat frog from its troubled waters rose upwards flapping its large wings mightily.

Flying away, the bird gently carried the amphibian, clutching it between the sharp talons of its left leg taking care not to pierce its soft body, to a faraway sea and dropped it into cold waters after a pleasant sky-journey.

The sea-frog, thin and fair, which had no faith in the eagle-god as it had never seen one, came across the well-frog, shivering in cold alien waters, which tried to convince its fellow frog-man of its incredible flight which would not have been possible but for the eagle-god.

Within no time, the well-frog, with its story of its flight of brilliance and its snake-companion in its well, preyed upon the eagle-godless and companionless sea-frog which in-turn tried to teach the ways of the sea-world to its friend from afar and in a way preyed upon its beliefs; prey and predator.

However, both benefitted from each other's knowledge, but the well-frog finding little well-food in the sea and unable to eat sea-food soon became sick because of cold and hunger, and later going back to its well died unable to recover.

*Darkre*

The old man who was about to die thought:

*Ramanujan, the married Indian genius who credited his brilliance to God!*

*Hardy, the English atheist bachelor who discovered Ramanujan and helped him in England!*

*What a complementary contrast!*

*Life!*

## Gambler Prey and Statistical Predator

The red-haired kid with matching freckles, emerald-green eyes shining brightly, tousled hair held in place by a twisted baseball cap, socks below billowing khaki shorts sagging towards worn-out shoes, half-sleeved shirt buttoned neatly up to its white collar, wearing a red sleeveless woolen sweater to match his happy head, chewed on a bubblegum as he jauntily approached grimy ruffians sitting around a fire warming their hands and faces on a dreadful cold Saturday afternoon in an alley filled with grey dustbins in the midst of pure white snow.

When the kid, who aimed to make a few quick bucks during the weekend to spend on sweets after schooldays to make the sour aftertaste of the subject of statistics, a subject which he was unable to follow, being taught in his annoying school everyday go away, approached what he thought were his prey, the ruffians, who too like him were unhappy with their circumstances, welcomed, what they too thought was their prey, gleefully when they saw his hungry gleaming eyes and a few currency notes clutched firmly in his young hand.

The bearded men, with crooked stained teeth and thick dirty clothes, experienced in gambling, began a game of cards with the smart young man who had read up all he could on the vice.

They played until dark with money changing hands as quickly as cards were dealt and played; emotions running high and low; happiness and sadness; pleasure and pain; yin and yang.

Everybody won and everybody lost until a tall and hefty constable on beat, spying the rogues from a nearby street, pounced upon them, and scattering the older men dragged away the kid by his ear and firmly deposited him in his home with a warning to his mother.

The unhappy kid that night lay on his bed flipping a coin with its obverse and reverse. He had not made any money, but neither had he lost any; the unbiased game between gamblers innocent to the art of cheating had gone on long enough for the law of large numbers to take hold of its greedy victims. The fair coin in his hand if tossed enough number of times would land fifty percent of the time on the obverse and the rest of the time on the reverse.

Statistics had become the predator and preyed on the lusting gamblers.

The old man had through the course of his life realized something which had helped his sometimes troubled mind quickly attain equilibrium; every time.

He thought again:

*Pain and pleasure, sorrows and joys, all average out!*

## Sperm Whale and Man

Predator is good and prey is bad until roles reverse and evil is born

As a happy boy who loved to watch his goldfish swimming in its bowl, the red-haired lad had read *Moby Dick*, and fascinated by the enormity of its message, about a white mammal which had ensured its survival and freedom from the snatching arms of the black human mammal, had concocted and written a bleak scenario in his black and white diary:

### *Diary Entry Four*

Man stood clutching the wildly bucking bow of the wooden boat with his toes, limbs braced and harpoon raised, as the sperm whale breached, sprayed, and breathed.

Lightning fast he let loose his sharp iron, his harpoon with its other end tethered to a long line of hemp lying curled at the bottom of the prow, with his muscular right arm.

The thunderbolt struck the wrinkled whale's dark grey rectangular head, with white battle scars and upturned nose with a blowhole, at the back, beside its sad left eye.

The huge whale, which had happily swum up from the dark blue depths to quietly breathe on the sparkling sea surface, upon finding itself being preyed upon by Man, the predator, buried its dull square nose back into the cold water, and quickly dived, with its rough heart-shaped tail splayed upwards, into the sea, flapping its flippers, with the painful harpoon buried in its valuable head and narrow lower jaw with angled conical teeth wide open in hurt.

The long harpoon line at Man's rough naked feet shot and spiraled out in a fury as the hunted whale dragged Man and his boat over the sea; the hemp line cutting across troubled waters.

Man had become prey to the desire in his head for the precious oil in the whale's head and thus had turned predator.

Suddenly the prey, the whale, turned predator for Man, who quickly became prey, as the hemp rope snaked, snagged, his left leg, plucked him from his tiny boat and dragged him into the abysmal depths of the sea where the sperm whale swallowed him whole unable to bear the burning iron in its head; an irony for there was a desire burning in Man's head like an iron harpoon.

*Darkre*

The old man, who had whale oil with him to help his coffin burn, thought:

*O Moby-Dick!*

## The Undergraduate Student and Patient

The keen emerald-green eyed student who had thought of being a good doctor upon growing up, after looking at a picture of one of the Dutch master of light and shadow, Rembrandt's, early masterpieces, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, with rapture in a glossy book he had found in his large school library, and being further inspired by the image of a pale-grey corpse with its loins covered by a white cloth being dissected by a man in black and white with similar others peering closely at the exposed red of the internal body, which he had stared at for a long time trying to understand his brain which he had been told was grey, to be a surgeon, had later used his vivid imagination to conjure up an elaborate setting in a medical institution of the long Renaissance era, and scribbled in his black and white diary with vigor:

### *Diary Entry Five*

The desperate undergraduate student, anxious to learn the art of surgery, when the penniless patient approached him unable to bear the pain in his abdomen, and also unable to pay for the services of a professional surgeon, told the pauper in pain that he probably had appendicitis which was life-threatening, and that he could avail his services for free only if he signed a disclaimer absolving the young student of all responsibility in the case of his death on the operating table, thereby making the court ineffectual in prosecuting the undergraduate student of the long Renaissance era.

The patient agreed to the chance of life being presented to him by the would-be doctor on a shining platter.

The other students dressed in white shirts, black tailcoats, bowties, trousers, shoes sat on the hard chairs bending forward, to see their fellow freethinker conduct his first solo operation, from the inner balcony with multiple levels, of the circular operation theatre where there was in the middle a raised platform with a rectangular slab made of marble so that blood and other human matter could be easily washed off by the complicit nurses, who had been charmed by the handsome young would-be doctor into joining him on his adventure, after the operation and who were now dressed in white frilled caps and aprons reaching from their necks down to their ankles.

The inexperienced student with a blond bushy moustache and whiskers, dressed in a white coat reaching down to his knees with rolled-up sleeves, wore no gloves as he sliced through the epidermis, dermis, cut through the layer of subcutaneous fat, opened the lower right-hand side of the abdomen slightly and reached in to cut away the appendix, with shining surgical instruments, while the wildly screaming and struggling patient was held down by the burly friends of the inexperienced man in charge of the surgery.

The patient quickly lost consciousness unable to bear the pain, and the student stitched him up with the help of the charming young nurses after the operation, and left him stone dead on the cold white marble slab awash with red blood.

The patient had signed a disclaimer, nevertheless, the undergraduate student was prosecuted and sent to the guillotine by the judges who did not appreciate either his sentiment or that of the patient who had been in pain and was now dead. Both, who had been the victims of necessity, died.

The undergraduate student had preyed upon the patient's disease, pain, and lack of money, and the patient had preyed upon the undergraduate doctor's overenthusiastic and urgent need to improve his immature skill for both his benefit and that of his future patients.

Again the prey and the predator preying on each other!

*Darkre*

The old man had hidden something from all, and he was now about to die.

The moth had settled down on the back of the chameleon like Man after he has tamed a mustang, and the golden eagle was reminded of its friend, the bald eagle, whose men had tamed mustangs.

## Legless Predator and Dancing Prey

The fifteen year old young man, with slicked back red hair in a blue suit, pink shirt, and white bowtie swiftly driving his mother's dead paramour's red Cadillac, with an ear-to-ear smile setting off his sparkling emerald-green eyes, suddenly stamped on the brakes causing the twin fins of the speeding car to fishtail.

Driving back home after dropping off his high school sweetheart at her home, after their first dance together at a newly opened discotheque in their town, where he had impersonated Elvis by bending at his knees and bringing them close together and swaying to impress his girl, helped by his new snazzy dress and gleaming black pricey shoes which he had painfully polished, he had suddenly in the white streetlights at midnight lining a lonely uphill road caught sight of a man in a standstill wheelchair.

The young man felt sad at the plight of the legless man, and getting down from his car, swiftly pushed the handicapped man's wheelchair up the steep road with all the vigor of youth; despite the proud hapless man's indignant and vociferous protests that he had only been resting his arms and would soon regain the strength in them to wheel himself uphill.

After the red-haired youth with strong legs had left the legless man in his wheelchair at the top of the road, he walked back down to his car feeling happier than he had felt at the dance; proud that he had not cared about the creases to his leather shoes and silk suit.

As he opened the door of the Cadillac, he heard the man at the top of the road suddenly begin to curse his benefactor for being selfish; the angry voice being carried down the road clearly in the calm of the night; peace was disturbed by the result of the youth's pity.

The young man had then been shocked to realize that he had helped the legless man so that he could be rid of the guilt of having enjoyed his dance and could keep on continuing to be happy.

The old man wiggled his toes inside his worn-out sandals and thought:

*How selfish we all are!*

*There is no such thing as unselfish behavior; altruism!*

*All that we do is for ourselves!*

*For our own happiness!*

## Parasite, Parent, Friend, and Neighbor

The problem lies with the parent, friend, and neighbor, who are the society,  
but the power also lies in their hands

The impressionable Irish American young man had been neighbor and friend to a dark volatile girl who used to dress up with the aim of taunting everybody, and had witnessed her parents fighting and separating because of their daughter whom they had failed to bring up in a manner right for the society, after which the rebel's tired mother who had gained sole custody of her progeny again failed, but this time in stopping the enfant terrible from deteriorating into drugs, to pay for which, the young lady began committing serious crimes in the society while under the influence so as to procure more hallucinogens.

Because of the young woman, her old mother and the young man in the society had been badly hurt and deeply saddened, but had tolerated all with grim fortitude until the authorities had finally caught up with the public nuisance and sent the erring child to a juvenile detention centre with a drug rehabilitation program.

Everybody had been traumatized but had realized that it was the only way out of misery for everybody, and after some time had passed began to cheer up.

Unable to bear the loss of his friend and neighbor's company, the teenager had tearfully analyzed and entered the events in his diary:

### *Diary Entry Seven*

Man sometimes becomes a parasite on society.

The parasite becomes a predator preying on the prey, society.

The society is sometimes just a parent, friend, or neighbor.

Everybody is part of the environment.

What the parasite, the predator is, is because of the prey, the society which includes the parent, friend, and neighbor, which tolerates it.

That doesn't mean the predator has to be tolerated forever by its prey.

If it is, then it is detrimental to the evolution of the society with its parent, friend, and neighbor.

Evolution shouldn't mean progress for everybody; especially for the parasite predator.

For one to live another has to die; for the predator to live, the prey has to die.

The society with its parent, friend, and neighbor has to retaliate by becoming the predator and preying on the parasite for its evolution.

It will be doom for evolution the day the parasite predator prevails.

However, the only decent way at this stage of evolution is to isolate the parasite predator.

That is evolution for all; both parasite and society with its parent, friend, and neighbor; prey and predator.

When the parasite is isolated, the parent, friend, and neighbor may feel sad, but they have to eventually realize that it is only for the good of the society in which they have to be, and move on with evolution.

*Darkre*

The old man had had many friends and neighbors. He was reminded of them, his parents, and the society he was far away from on this grey mountain in the society of the moth, the chameleon, and the eagle surrounded by twinkling blue stars winking at him through the blue-grey smoke of the yellow-orange fire.

He was with his friends.

## The Lion and the Lamb

When young, the old man had been to a zoo, where he had at first fearfully looked with his emerald-green wide open eyes at a tawny lion with a blond disheveled mane in a metal cage through dark blue-grey bars having a rusty smell which had reminded him of the taste of blood.

The caged king of beasts had been softly pacing back and forth on its padded paws with its razor-sharp claws retracted between the toes until the young man had come and stood in front of its home.

Long before the young man had been near its cage, the unhappy monarch had first heard him with its twitching ears, and after smelling his scent with its wide flat nose from afar, had grimaced.

When he had come close to its cage, the crazed ruler had gradually stopped its melancholic walk. After pondering for some time, it had shaken its shaggy head, looked at him with large orangey-brown eyes, opened its cavernous jaws with their dirty-yellow fangs wide, and given a mighty roar.

Suddenly, it had been as if the gust of air from the ferocious roar had blown back the fiery-red hair on the young man's head. The curled hair on his neck had stood on end.

He had smelled the putrid breath arising from the rotting flesh between the lion's teeth.

Another time, when the young man had been working in a farm outside his town, a snow-white wooly lamb with meek brown eyes which was free in a gently rolling green meadow had bleated imploringly when the hungry young man had approached it out of a desire to make meat out of its flesh.

The lion had been the caged predator and the hungry young man the free prey.

The hungry young man had been the predator caught in a cage of desire for the flesh of the lamb and the lamb had been the free prey.

He had later written in his diary:

### *Diary Entry Eight*

Is that what happens between Man and God?

Doesn't Man, the prey, keep God, the predator, caged in places of worship?

So, doesn't it stand to reason that the prey is always free and the meek will inherit the earth?

*Darkre*

When the lion had roared, the young man had felt nothing but love.

The lion on his outside had appeared beautiful simply because he had been feeling beautiful inside.

The hungry young man had felt hate for the lamb as he could not bring himself to kill and eat it despite his desire. He had hated himself and therefore the poor lamb.

He had later understood and written in his diary once more:

*Diary Entry Nine*

It is not what is outside, but what is inside.

*Darkre*

The young man, when further down the line, had realized that it was the same when dealing with people and that life was a fable.

The old man, remembering his old realizations, felt at ease, and his pink face glowed in the orange fire as he stretched his limbs towards the warmth of the campfire.

## Full Circle in the Garden of Eden

The eighteen year old red-haired youth with emerald-green eyes, who had driven a red Cadillac and had had a first dance in a newly opened discotheque in his town with his high school sweetheart, who had been a doe-eyed blonde worshipping another God older than his, when fifteen, had recently parted ways with her, after she had chosen to strive and be a star in Hollywood, realizing there was no meaning to a long distance relationship, especially after he had unsuccessfully tried to stop her by impersonating the dance of Elvis many times and impressing her into staying.

He knew what had added fuel to her desire was the thought that he being a doubting Thomas about his own God wouldn't be able to adjust with her God, and therefore wrote in his diary passionately:

### *Diary Entry Ten*

The scaled reddish-brown snake, coiled around the brown trunk and branches of the tree of knowledge of good and evil with its red apples, could not blend in and hide from the sharp pale yellow eyes of the golden-brown eagle which could distinguish shades and see color more vividly than any other.

And, neither could the bright green scaled chameleon camouflage itself among the green leaves of the tree of forbidden fruit.

The eagle, the king of birds, with its plumage spread wide, which had been soaring and circling high above the Garden of Eden using the current caused by the storm enveloping the snake and the chameleon, had dived in with Apollo behind its back upon the reptiles blinded by the bright light.

It had ripped with its large hooked beak and the powerful talons of its strong muscular legs the flesh of the two reptiles to shreds and fed.

Woman, Eve, had been the snake; Man, Adam, the chameleon; both reptiles, and God, the eagle.

All were both predator and prey.

The moth was the prey of the chameleon, a predator; the chameleon was the prey of the snake, another predator; both were the prey of the bird of prey, the eagle, God, the biggest predator.

However, God, the eagle, was not free. It had been captured and put in a cage of worship by Man, the chameleon; it was full circle.

*Darkre*

Meanwhile, on the grey mountain under a black sky with blue stars, Woman had no vote in the Vatican, and the purple velvety moth trying to commit suicide in the flames of the fire was never in the equation defining the full circle.

The old man who was about to die stoked the fire with the moth, the chameleon, and the eagle beside him.

Woman and the snake were both long gone.

## The Nexus Including the Ant

The old man, who very long ago had gone to a picnic hosted by Indo-Americans in a place resembling Eden, had listened to how the Indians worshipped their snake and cow, and now, remembering how the ants had attacked their picnic hampers stuffed with goodies then, like they used to invade the homes in the native land of his best friend as he had been sadly told, he who had experienced more since that picnic day, wished he had his black and white diary to write about the black ant and the white cow, but since the diary was with him no more, he simply thought:

*The ant, predator, a glossy-black act in three parts, the front with pincers and the back with a stinger, had marched on its six legs with claws in an immaculate line, one among an army of its ilk, from the anthill, its towering conical home built with intense labor, towards Man's, prey's, picnic basket with the wisdom of ages sensing with its antennae its way to food; one intelligent, methodical, and strategic social being preying on another.*

*The ant, one of the strongest, fastest, and smartest predators, had not only preyed on Man's food in nature's garden, but also in his home.*

*In turn, Man had worshipped, unnaturally, the slithering, smooth-scaled, long shiny-black sinuous snake with round silver stripes, black beady eyes, and forked black tongue shooting in and out of its mouth by unnaturally offering it milk as food, obtained unnaturally from the holy-white cow which he also worshipped, unnaturally, by placing the milk in an earthen saucer made of soil like the anthill in front of the reptile's unnatural home, the anthill, which the snake had obtained by preying upon the ant's hard-built home.*

*Man had also worshipped God and Woman. The snake had preyed upon the chameleon. How could one worshipped being oppose another and save the chameleon, Man?*

*Darkre*

The eagle which had been angry at Eve for eating the forbidden fruit in its Garden of Eden and had hunted the snake and the chameleon wondered what the whole nexus was about!

The moth was blissfully unaware of the confusion, as after flitting off from the back of the chameleon, it had again begun dancing a deathly tango with the fire being worshipped by the old man who was about to die.

There seemed to be so much worshipping going around in the spectre of death!

## From High School Diploma to Master's Degree

The young man, who had a knack for viewing the world through the eyes of the naturalist Charles Darwin, decided to extend the curiosity he had about the animate into the inanimate, through the eyes of another of his idols, the physicist Richard Feynman, who talked about the contrast between the theological views and the scientific views often held by the same person, like the complementary contrast of the predator and prey in his diary, and being influenced by the scientist's voice of reason, which spoke of doubt with an open mind and unshackled imagination as vital for progress and learning, into giving up many of his prejudices, happily continued on with his education in the direction of becoming a physicist.

## Knowledge, Both Predator and Prey

### Philosophy is occupation not preoccupation

The young man with blazing hair and glowing eyes studied in earnest, though realizing that after gathering all he could, he would have to shrug it all off one day if he had to become wise; old and wise.

The child is the father of the man. A child is born enlightened, for it has the wisdom of innocence, and an old man dies enlightened, for he has the wisdom of age, having lost innocence.

A child is fluid, it holds fast and lets go. It cries one moment and laughs the next, forgetting the past and the future in the present; its wisdom of innocence helps.

An old man has to let go; his wisdom of age helps.

The red-haired Irish American with emerald-green eyes was neither a child nor an old man. He was neither innocent nor wise. He continuously thought about his past and his future; his present was shackled to the hindquarters of two opposite facing horses of time which were threatening to tear him apart into two halves.

He thought about his doe-eyed high school sweetheart with fears and desires; again being torn in half; she had been torn in half too because of her fears and desires.

He thought about his parents who had been torn apart because of their fears and desires.

This complementary contrast, the yin and yang of fears and desires, would end only after life had been almost exhausted.

Till then, knowledge helped; knowledge about wine and women helped too; it helped him to realize the futility of those pleasures.

He had the knowledge of love, however, it had not yet grown vast enough to encompass the universe and forgive all those who had wronged him. He would not realize that one can be kind to everybody, every time, until it was too late.

He was the pet of a physics professor who was also a philosopher. The older man saw in the younger the seeds of wisdom; however, the student would continue to worship the tree of knowledge of good and evil, yin and yang, for an unnaturally long time before wisdom came and contrast ended.

Knowledge was both predator and prey.

## Bartender and Socialite, Predator and Prey

The gregarious red-haired youth with crystal clear emerald green eyes smiled shyly as he was being led by a fellow student, a peer of his college, to the huge circular bar, situated in the middle of the immense fashionable restaurant, in which, at the inner circumference was toiling a lone industrious bartender, circling the circumference and attending to her socialite customers in a lightning fast, yet methodical and efficient manner.

The happy socialite customers were jostling with one another with empty, half empty, glasses in their hands, eager to grab the attention and services of the revolving moon, Selene, whose centre was the dollar and not the uneasy earth that was shifting below their legs, for a refill of their favorite brand of poison.

When the two ordinary youngsters, who had shelled out almost all of their cash in paying the unexpected and exorbitant gate fee of the star restaurant, reached the vast circular bar counter with just enough money for a few sodas in between them, and not any to spare for the bartender's tips, they were not even looked at, leave alone given service for their additional sodas, after their first, by the aloof bartender, who was understandably miffed after not being tipped right away.

The freshmen were lucky that, even though they had wanted to, they did not have the money to make fools of themselves, like the amorous socialites who were drowning in their hedonism, and later walked steadily away from the ring of death, and drove back, with sharp contrasting thoughts in their heads, to their dormitory, unlike the spirited socialites, who drenched in drink, would happily stagger home, befuddled, after wallowing in spirits.

While on the drive back, the joyful red-haired youth's surly companion had said that he hated the hedonists and their lifestyle. The Irish American had been confused as to why his friend should when they both had wanted to get sloshed too!

In the calm of the early morning hours that followed his and his classmate's failed escapade before midnight, the Irish American switched on his yellow bed lamp, and quietly wrote in his soft diary about what he had understood the previous electric evening, while watching his fellow student tossing and turning on his bed as if the mattress had been hewn out of rock:

### *Diary Entry Eleven*

The socialite customer, the prey, desperate to pay more than top dollar, for his rich poison, to the preying laborer bartender, preys upon the poor bartender, whose poison is her poverty, alleviated by the top dollar.

But the real prey is the have-not who tries to prey, with his weapon of morality, upon the immoral haves, who can afford the very thing which he loves but cannot have, and is therefore preyed upon by the haves, who could not care less about his morality.

However, once the fuse of the firecracker of desire in one's fist is lit, it will explode, and if the fist is clenched around the firecracker at the time of its explosion, it will destroy the hand that holds it. On the other hand, if the fist is opened at the right time, before the explosion, the bursting firecracker, in the open palm, will cause minimal damage.

It is impossible to have not had desire in life; however, it is a matter of letting go, opening the fist, as soon as possible, after holding fast, to the firecracker of desire.

*Darkre*

The old man lifted his head and, gazing at the shiny black blanket with sparkling blue dots the earth had pulled over itself, thought of himself and the fire he had lit as the heart and spirit of the world.

He smiled:

*This is the right spirit, not that!*

*Joie de vivre!*

## Teacher and Student

The twenty-five year old strapping fiery-haired person, whose mind's light shone green through his emerald eyes giving the go ahead for all branches of thought to enter it in spite of the red signal on his head, chose not to work in the university he had studied in disregarding all sincere requests of his professors asking their brightest student to be their colleague, for he had chosen to cut a swathe through uncharted territories of knowledge not heeding even the final desperate plea of his favorite teacher, and on the night before he packed his few belongings into a black and white leather bag and left the dormitory of his fresh alma mater to become a biker in search of adventure, he wrote in his black and white diary:

### *Diary Entry Twelve*

The human student, a predator, hunting for knowledge, preys on the wisdom of the human teacher; preys, because, the student very often interprets the knowledge gained to formulate a wisdom different from that of the teacher.

The student uses this wisdom towards his or her own ends; goals on a path diverging from that of the teacher.

### *Darkre*

The old man who would die, with his face glowing in the playing light of the fire, thought:

*How can two individuals be alike?*

*How wrong it was for my teacher to think I would follow in his footsteps!*

*We all have to die. We had better do it happily.*

*I am happy with my friends.*

None of the old man's present company, his friends, was alike.

He had followed in their footsteps and not that of his human teacher and had lived a life curtailing everything to a bare minimum; eating only when he had to eat, and that too only enough to survive; for all living beings, plants included, had feelings.

He would die happily like an animal; without possessions.

The chameleon stared at the old man with its monocular vision, one bulging eye staring into the old man's future and the other at his past, the moth executed a circle, and the eagle,

bending its head, raised its wings, and clawed the earth with the talons of one leg; all expressing their approval of the old man's thoughts in their own manner.

The animals of the fable had taught more to the old man than his human teachers.

## Biker to Sheriff

The biker, who without a road rage had still rode his bike on the thin line between law and disorder balancing on a tight rope stretched thin from freedom to order, decided to settle down and implement law and order in a predatory world that had preyed on his parents' paramours' and friend's addiction to drugs and the penchant of the members of his biker gang to gamble with the little money they had at racecourses to make enough cash for their cruises to rock shows.

The physicist had always been calm, but it had been the calm before the storm when he had decided to become a biker and cruise on dazzlingly colorful choppers with raked and extended fronts, lowered rear suspensions, and tall handlebars. He had quickly become one, and had entered the storm celebrating freedom, however, he had not become the storm, and his penchant for order and calm made him decide to take up law's gun; he became a sheriff.

## Man and Mustang

The twenty-seven year old sheriff, with his red drooping moustache adding to his downcast face and misty emerald-green eyes looking into the past of a colonized America, with its first colonizers and natives, rode his glistening mustang with a brown coat through a territory haunted by withered American Indians on his way to cross the border into Mexico in his fight against drug trafficking, after busting an illegal gambling ring controlling the betting on racetracks up north.

That chilly dry black night, after setting up a red campfire under the sharp blue stars on the border, as he would when he became an old man straddling the border between life and death on a grey mountain, he wrote in his black and white diary which was his constant companion:

### *Diary Entry Thirteen*

The conquistador, wearing a grey metal helmet, its front and back tips reaching towards the sky, its middle crowned by a red plume, his body enclosed in shiny full body armor, and sporting a short black beard with a pointy tip, rode on his Spanish horse towards the bare-chested Red Indian, who, with his lean chiseled body clad in deerskin, a brown eagle feather stuck in his long black hair, and mounted on a mustang, with a chestnut coat without the help of either a bridle, a saddle, or stirrups, clutching its flowing black mane, was galloping towards his foe.

The Red Indian's mustang once a feral horse had been re-domesticated by him.

The colonizer, predator, had preyed upon the Red Indian using his Spanish horse, and his prey preyed back using its descendent, the mustang.

The men of plume riding on kindred horses fought; both with a war cry.

Two mustangs thundered on the racetrack, using their strong legs whose hooves had been nailed with 'U' shaped iron shoes, straining their heads forward, with child-like jockeys upon their backs wearing helmets minus plumes who were nevertheless waging their own war.

Man, who had emptied all his life's savings at the rectangular betting window with iron bars in the racecourse stadium, sat tensed and hunched forward with binoculars glued to his straining eyes waiting for the outcome of the war between the two mustangs which would determine his fate.

The mustang which had been preyed upon by Man to wage war preyed back upon him by making him gamble and lose his peace of mind.

War is a race between men and a gamble.

*Darkre*

The eagle was reminded of its brethren's feather in the hair of Man who had waged war in a State which revered another of its ilk.

The old man in front of the fire had almost neared the end of his race with himself and had stopped waging war with himself and gambling with his life.

## Poppy Predator and Addicted Prey

Stop fighting against conscience which says stop and start fighting against addiction which yells continue

The blood-red poppy, grown for its opium in battlefields, had as its contender for power over minds religion, which was the opium of the people, but the narcotic had not been eradicated altogether as the struggle between men, striving for wealth and power with different Gods on all sides, aiming to spread their seed, had escalated over ages with more than a significant number making use of the wealth generated by fields of poppy strewn with dead bodies to gain power over minds of people.

With emerald-green eyes, almost blinded by the harsh afternoon sun, taking in the carcasses strewn amidst rocks and blue-grey Mescal plants not yet converted into liquor, the lawman with two Colts slung low at his hips on a brown leather belt adorned with ammunition, tilted his cowboy hat and fingered his drooping red moustache enhancing the masculinity of his clean-shaven stony face.

The poppy predator which was used by different mafia families to prey on the minds of its users had instead preyed upon the minds of its distributors who had entered into a Mexican standoff because of their avarice for wealth and power; an addiction which had overrun that of their addicted customers and goaded them into filling one another with bullets.

Predator had become prey.

Taking a dim view of the whole situation, the stoic man quickly set afire the drug and the bodies of the men who had carried it and killed one another in their race to be the only victor of the spoils of a dirty venture after heaping them into a pyramid and dousing it with gasoline from a can he had carried strapped to his horse.

Quietly then mounting his mustang, the young sheriff dug the spurs of his cowboy boots into the animal, and rode off into the sunset across the border.

The soft eyes of the old man staring into the blood-red fire did not melt further as the bulging eyes of the intoxicated chameleon, mesmerized by the silent dance of the suicidal moth addicted to its nemesis, followed its every move, and the eagle with its bent head turned sideward pecked at its feathers oblivious to the drama. Throwing a twig into the fire to keep it alive, the quiet man contemplated:

*Isn't it true that food for a hungry stomach cures almost all ills of society?*

*Shouldn't everybody have access to a decent meal free from wealth, power, and religion?*

*Why the intoxication of everything else and God?*

## Sheriff to Journalist

The sheriff, who had once cherished freedom as a biker and later brandished a gun to bring law and order, without being in the least bit trigger happy, thought that he could better add to the happiness of society if he wielded a pen as a journalist in a newspaper story, using the knowledge he had synthesized from his life's story about freedom through law and order, and brought awareness in a rapidly deteriorating society; he would become a journalist.

## Government Predator and Citizen Prey

The flower children, with long smooth lustrous hair covered by colorful bandannas and round sunglasses shielding their glazed eyes from the mild sun, protested against the conscription by gathering in a stadium, wearing sagging clothes whose pockets contained substances to help them expand their minds, and waving placards against the predator government while music blared forth from amplifiers on a huge stage over which their leaders and rock stars held sway.

Male youth had become the prey of the government as they were being forcibly drafted into the army for more than half a decade, and young citizens, both male and female, had begun taking desperate measures to survive desperate times.

Rock-n-roll under the influence was rampant among those who chose to make love and not war, however, the twenty-eight year old red-haired man with bright emerald-green eyes, who had shrugged off his black bandanna, leather, shades, and bike a year ago and now his horse, cowboy hat, and guns along with his facial hair to look smart in a crew cut, resisted what he considered to be totalitarianism in his own style.

He had secured a job as a journalist and did nothing but write about his views on the ugly events unfolding under everybody's noses, even though his whole body itched to mingle and struggle alongside his comrades and live a life of reckless pleasure; neither the prey nor the predator was spared.

The clean-shaven grown-up had become a predator preying on both the prey and the once predator. No one dared or could stop this man on top of the food chain from wielding his pen which had become mightier than guns and drugs owing to his dedication only to his work and nothing else.

The old man, whose only potato inside his stomach was craving for company but which would not have any, happily stayed on the course of his thoughts:

*Work and only dedicated work, and neither time nor anything else, is the great healer!*

*The only path to peace if not even slightly digressed from!*

## Soul and Spirit, Prey and Predator

The twenty-nine year old journalist, who wrote fiery articles like his red hair with truth given a green signal by his emerald eyes, had quickly crossed over to the side of the Vietnam War protestors from the middle of the bridge where he had stood writing for and against both the government and protestors, however, he now supported only those who peacefully opposed the Vietnam War with all their senses intact and not those whose had been scalded by drugs and others who protested violently. After the withdrawal of American troops from the Vietnam War, which took place when he was thirty years old, he protested vehemently against the wasted lives of tens of thousands of his fellow countrymen, which he regarded as the perfect example of wasted youth, through his powerful words in the print media.

The spirited man on a green mission in whom the fire of the human spirit burned bright red wondered what God would allow the souls of His children to be corrupted by war.

He began to wonder whether God and soul really existed and also about the human spirit in the soldiers which had been manipulated by government decision makers believing in the indefinable and the unquantifiable.

Soon the young journalist gained name, fame, and wealth because of his fearless writing which concretized the human spirit within him into an edifice, which as time progressed began to have less and less space inside it for the God and soul he could not see, smell, hear, taste, or feel, sometimes even in his heart, and on one reflective day during the course of his writing career he wrote in black:

### *Diary Entry Fourteen*

Man's soul, which is unquantifiable because it depends on an indefinable entity, God, preys on the lack of human spirit in Man, who is clearly defined, until the human spirit becomes quantified through his achievements and can be measured, leading to the human spirit preying on the soul and Man preying on God who had till then preyed upon him; however, separate predator and prey, God and Man, soul and human spirit, exist only if God and soul do, and if not, it is Man and Man's lack of human spirit preying on himself and his human spirit, and vice versa, before and after he becomes successful through work.

*Darkre*

The old man, who was now successful, wondered about the motto:

Until you are successful do the opposite of what you feel like doing

## Beginning of the fall of a Journalist and Physicist

After the withdrawal of the American troops from Vietnam, the journalist concentrated on covering politics and celebrities, where dirty politicians often became beautiful celebrities and pretty celebrities many a time turned into ugly politicians, with him seeing absolutely no difference between the two calamities.

The world as he knew it was slowly disintegrating because of the imbalance between crime and punishment, with crime weighing down punishment, but he also knew that it always seemed that way for the older generations looking at the younger ones, and realizing he was no longer young, began to make more money and save even more to pay for the times when he wouldn't be able to make as much, however, knowing full well that it went against his policy of living in the moment.

Unconsciously, the sailor had begun to weigh anchor in the port of journalism, and would soon drift away from science too, caught in the conscious currents of theism to its port where he would drop anchor and almost come to disaster because he hoped to find for mankind on that shore succor.

## Organic Machine

The thirty-two year old journalist, who had covered crime and endured punishment, with crime and punishment supposed to be yin and yang for criminals but were not as a result of mankind becoming almost completely black while overpowering white and degenerating into a kind worse than animals, decided to give up his career involving writing about politics and celebrities and immerse himself in the third and only other dimension left of life which he had refused to be involved with completely; religion, for the future of Man looked bleak and he felt it could do with a good dose of God in spite of his decision going against his reason.

The fact that Man had degenerated to a level below animals absolved him of his fascination with the predator and prey, however he wanted more than ever to help his fellow human which led him to embrace religion.

On his thirty-third birthday, the man's red hair was shaved, and he took to the white cloth and began visiting cold monasteries, housed in huge ancient structures constructed with coarse grey stones whose barren hallways echoed with the sounds of sick howling men and women, isolated behind thick dark rotting wooden doors with iron grills, in rooms at its sides, in order to try and teach the ill third world heathens the word of God in the hope that they would understand their original sin and repent and be cured, though his heart screamed that he was committing a great mistake.

The brotherhood of brothers, in third world countries, very quickly realizing that he was the most adventurous of priests, and also coming to know that he had once wanted to be a surgeon upon seeing a picture of Rembrandt's painting depicting an anatomy lesson, decided that he would be the solution to their schizophrenic patients' cure and sent him to a monastery in Paris to learn the art of lobotomy.

Once standing on a smooth white stone floor in a cold cell, illuminated only by a single naked bulb hanging by a wire from the center of a ceiling whose white paint was flaking off with the yellow light unable to reach the corners of the room created by similarly flaking walls, at the centre of which was a steel stretcher bearing an anesthetized patient, the would be quack, tolerating the stench of crime once again after his journalistic career, was instructed by his bald teacher who held a gleaming ice pick and a dull hammer:

“During the process of lobotomy, designed to cure schizophrenia by severing connections between different areas of grey matter which contain neurons, the task is completed by severing the white matter existing between these grey areas and thereby severing the nerve fibers connecting neurons through chemicals called neurotransmitters and electrical impulses called action potentials in the brain's prefrontal cortex. Formerly, this procedure was carried out by drilling holes in the skull on either side of the prefrontal cortex and destroying the connecting

fibers by injecting alcohol, however, it was medical barbarism which left the patients operated upon apathetic, therefore I am going to teach you how to conduct modern psychosurgery by going through the tops of the eye sockets with this ice pick and the hammer and twirling the ice pick inside to sever the fibers and cure the patient.”

The uneasy priest piped up:

“Now I know how alcohol destroys the brain and leaves men apathetic, for drinking it is almost the same thing as the lobotomy procedure practiced earlier, with the only difference being that while alcohol through the mouth is a slow poison, it is a fast poison if injected directly into the brain, and now that I know that chemical neurotransmitters connect neurons in the human brain, and that neurons are also connected by electrical impulses just like the latest advance in computing, which is the intelligent personal computer, uses electricity to process data, I think I would be right to a certain extent in saying that Man is an organic machine.”

The shocked Parisian doctor monk exclaimed:

“Do think about your soul priest!”

The sad priest, who had had enough of the order, walked out of the cold monastery and into the bright Lourve, where of all the wonders of the human spirit on display, the smile of Mona Lisa was foremost in bringing back to his mind which had become ugly, beauty.

## Grape and Man

### Past preys upon present until roles reverse

The ex-Priest, who had dressed in white, now sat wearing a black suit in a blue café in Paris, sipping a sweet white wine, with his black pen resting warmly in the folds of his black and white diary.

The Chenin Blanc, which had been uncorked with a flourish by the chic Parisian hostess wearing red, angrily, for she had suggested red wine and he had chosen white, was now half empty as he sat on a purple chair amidst potted greenery, with black and white memories of his life as a biker, in which he had looked with awe at satanic cults, and the last many months as a priest, until just a few days ago, when he had been overawed by God.

The man, whose red hair was growing back, wrote with emerald-green eyes penetrating into Aesop's Fables and modifying a story for an entry in his diary:

#### *Diary Entry Fifteen*

The man had eaten sour grapes as a happy kid and had drunk sweet wine as an unhappy young artist.

Today, the bohemian was broke, but he wanted to eat sweet grapes and drink bitter Cabernet Sauvignon; his taste having matured from sweet white to dry red; but he could not afford either the grapes or the wine.

He thought, "Grapes are sour; I remember eating them as a kid when I was happy; they made me unhappy," and became happy, until suddenly another thought, "Wine is bittersweet; when I drank it as an unhappy young man, it made me happy," preyed upon the first one and immediately made him unhappy, until the prey quickly turned predator, and in a jiffy again made him happy; this cycle continued until the bohemian almost went crazy.

The bohemian, finally escaping the vicious circle, and realizing that not being constructive at the present was the root cause of all misery, decided to raise a vineyard and grow sweet grapes to make bitter wine.

The grape had preyed upon the man until he became predator and decided to prey on it.

*Darkre*

The old man, minus the fox but with the moth, the chameleon, and the eagle of his mind's fable, thought:

*Memories, both good and bad, prey upon each other and the man, until his past, preying on his present, is preyed upon by the present through constructive work.*

## Priest to Businessman

The journalist, who had made enough money and fortunately not squandered any during his brief stint as priest in the gambling dens of God, made a new start as a businessman in a country which welcomed such heroes into the warm embrace of its capitalist fold.

## God, Man, and Satan

The thirty-four year old clean-shaven red-haired man with emerald-green eyes in the blue five piece suit was about to sign on the dotted line of the business agreement drafted on smooth white paper with his gold fountain pen filled with black ink; its stainless steel nib engraved with his initials glistening under the yellow light glittering between the crystals of the ornate chandeliers of the high-ceilinged chamber containing black marble statues of naked heathen gods beside furniture dressed in black leather amidst which he sat at a rosewood table on a high-backed chair.

More wealth for, or penury of, the businessman, who was still hung-over from the party where he had had too much red wine to drink with God, as a priest, depended upon the outcome of the contract he would sign.

His mind was caught between God and Satan. The man worried that if he prayed to God, became optimistic, and signed the document believing in serendipity, Satan, God's antagonized brother, would curse him to fail, and if he became pessimistic, prayed to Satan not to put an impediment on the way of his success, Satan's angry brother God would ensure that he failed for not believing that all was well with the world that God ruled and for believing in Satan.

As a young man, the businessman then a biker, with long hair flying in the wind under a black bandanna, the lower half of his red beard braided, wearing black leather from neck to fingertips and toes, emerald-green eyes shaded by black, had rode a monster of a bike in the gang he had lead, while following rock bands to rock concerts from town to town where satanic cults had ruled the roost.

He had, after a certain time, shaved all his hair, worn coarse grey cloaks and secluded himself in stone monasteries of impoverished countries, shivering barefoot in the cold as he walked from one bare room to another, tending to and comforting men with incurable diseases, kneeling and praying with them, seeking the Lord's forgiveness for original sin.

Suddenly, through a path of great suffering was reached a destination of serenity as the middle-aged businessman decided that he would neither be a theist nor an atheist, and would certainly not waver as an agnostic; existence, nonexistence, nothing known or can be known, of God, all not mattering to him anymore. He would not have anything serious to do with the whole matter from that moment onwards, choosing only belief in his own self converting right decisions into actions to exist in his life. He would not be either optimistic or pessimistic, but only a realist.

He then practically weighed the pros and cons of the agreement he would sign.

The old man calmly looked into the burning fire, as the godless moth, chameleon, and eagle looked fearlessly at each other and him, and thought:

*It is so beautiful without fear and desire, love and hate.*

*Just peace.*

## A Vengeful God

The old man on the grey mountain stoically remembered how his best buddy, the Indo-American, had told him long ago about an incident involving his soulful mother, in which two events, which had happened on consecutive days, had led to sorrow for a few days in their family.

The lovely lady, while cleaning the idols of her blue gods, had dropped one which held a spear, and she had just picked it up from the ground and replaced it on the white altar without a second thought.

The next day, while absentmindedly sewing a black button back onto her son's white shirt, she had pierced her finger badly with the sharp needle, which had lead to red blood staining her son's shirt.

Immediately, she had extracted the previous day's incident, where she had shown no remorse at dropping the idol of her god with a spear, and correlated the present day's tiny mishap of her finger being pierced with it.

She had then attributed the pain in her pierced bleeding finger to the punishment being meted out to her by her god with a spear, and imagined a disaster which would befall her son if he wore his shirt stained with her guilty blood.

The old man sadly remembered his friend telling him how his poor mother, feeling terribly guilty, had narrated all to him, and how becoming remorseful, she had wept for days.

He strongly said in his mind:

*There are no divine and satanic providences and vengeance; only the mind extracting, correlating, attributing, and imagining; all unnecessarily, meaninglessly, and absurdly.*

## Love and Hate, Predator and Prey

The middle-aged man, who had been a journalist and who was now a businessman about to set out for Frankfurt to conclude the business deal he had signed with a goodwill handshake, had accepted the dinner invitation of his much older British American friend, who was having a very bad marriage, to have dinner at his home cooked by the lady of the house, even though the dinner date fell on the night of his departure, for he wanted to help the unhappy couple, as he probably had been invited hoping that he would do so, and therefore, as all were quietly eating, he brought up the Vietnam war he had covered at home, and saying that they shouldn't have one in theirs, read aloud what he had already written in his diary as preparation for dinner table conversation:

### *Diary Entry Sixteen*

God spent twenty four hours, never looking at a watch He didn't have and didn't need, for He knew it took exactly one hour to fashion one rib for Adam he was creating in His Image and finally end up with twenty four for him; one fruitful day spent.

Muscular Man, being man, unfortunately got lonely and pestered fragile God for a companion, to which the hapless old white bearded gentleman responded by opening Adam's broad chest, plucking out a rib, and in another twenty four hours creating comely Eve; Woman with twenty four ribs.

It stood to be understood that since both Man and Woman had inside them the same bone, Adam and Eve from which the rest of humanity descended, there would be no conflict between brothers and sisters of Earth.

However, both love and hate would be part of the world; life was a complementary contrast.

Hate existed between the potbellied Man, who drank cold beer, ate hot dogs, and watched unruly football along with his mad mates on Sundays in crowded stadiums, chanting, screaming, and beating drums, with the colors of the team he supported painted all over his face, arms, and protruding exposed belly, with it drooping below the belt holding his shorts from descending further down his thick buttocks, his tee shirt rising high up his chest when he rose with others in a Mexican wave, and haggard Woman, with dark circles under her eyes, disheveled hair, stink of household chores defeating her perfume, who always waited for her Man to come back home from his games on Sundays, with stinking breath and tales of woe about his dirty team, so that they could have candlelight dinner, with the candles she had bought and food she had cooked, with the same crazy love that had once existed between them when both were young; he handsome and she beautiful.

The rebellious children, who had once loved their parents, had moved out with hate, and would not come to love their father and mother once more until they were dying or dead.

Man and Woman too, when age finally grizzled and wrinkled them, would once more find beauty in each other and would embrace with frail arms till dead.

It was love, hate, love, in case of Man, Woman, children and parents in the circle of life. Love would be a predator vanquishing its prey hate in the end.

However, if Adam and Eve could hate each other in their middle age, what can be said of their progeny, the people of Earth, who after growing up begin to hate? Everybody loves to hate what he or she loves but cannot have, giving rise to hate in the world.

As much as it may sound as stating the obvious, the fact that, all want only what they don't have, is a well kept secret.

*Darkre*

The old man, in silent solitude watching twigs like brown humans breaking, crackling, and going up in white smoke into the black night, wondered:

*Will humanity at least embrace love when near death or die in hate?*

*Will it finish itself off sooner than expected?*

*Which will win, love or hate, which will be predator and which prey?*

*Some never mingle and stay single to feel wonderful!*

*Maybe it's all God's fault as Adam and Eve were never identical because Adam, after God took one of his ribs to make Eve, had twenty three and Eve twenty four, Ha!*

## Predator Greener Grass and Prey Mr. Undecided

After the friendly businessman had softly finished reading aloud one chapter of his diary to the unhappy couple during dinner, they ate in silence, and later, while relaxing on a brown leather sofa with hot black coffee to perk him up for his journey, the diarist, in order to both lighten the mood and drive another happy nail in the coffin of the couple's unhappiness, by making it clear to them that conflict was not only ever-present between couples but also in every aspect of decision making in life, jocularly read aloud another chapter in his diary where he had sardonically made up the names of the protagonists he had once encountered in order to conceal their real names:

### *Diary Entry Seventeen*

Mr. Undecided had decided to purchase a house in the suburbs as he was getting married to a homely lady, and wanting to impress his fiancée by his gallantry by offering her a choice, took her with him in his brown jalopy, wearing a red tie with a brown suit and sporting horn-rimmed glasses, to an address where two houses for sale stood adjacent to each other like twin brothers.

The lovely lady, dressed in white, upon arriving at their twin destination, was moved to tears of joy, by the sight of the identical houses with walls painted in white and doors and windows in blue, and gushed to her fiancé that the house on the right with a garage for his jalopy was the more equal of the two as the car in which they had gone on their first date would rust in the rain having to stand in the driveway of the house on the left without a garage.

But Mr. Undecided who had talked with the owners, Mr. What I. Want, of the house on the left, and Mr. What Is. Right, of the house on the right, and had already decided that he wanted the house on the left as it was cheaper and with the money left in his bank balance he would purchase a new car for the day of his wedding to whose bumper would be fastened old tin cans, was suddenly caught in a region of indecision between his soon to be wife's simple love for old pristine and unsullied days of no desire and his desire which would empty his bank account.

He knew she loved green grass, and therefore walking her to the white fence dividing the green lawn flowing from the right house to the left one from the doorway of the house on the right where she had stood with love-struck eyes by her hand, he pointed out that the grass was greener on the other side, to which she replied softly that it always looked that way.

The undecided unhappy man found himself sitting on the fence caught between the devil and the deep blue sea; faced with the dilemma of choosing between what he wanted and what was right.

*Darkre*

The old man, who sat on the mountain in the night where the grass glowed golden-green in the light of the fire, wondered:

*Can't what we want and what is right ever be the same?*

*Why the unnecessary conflict?*

## Man, Canine, Neighbor

The happy businessman, who had signed an agreement of a lifetime which would make him rich forever, had flown to Frankfurt to conclude it with a handshake, and upon his arrival in the airport terminal had become sad at being reminded of his struggle till the present moment against drugs destroying other people's lives, which had begun with his separated parents' paramours' abuse of substances and then continued on in his hometown with a girl who had been his neighbor and friend and later went on through his days as a sheriff where he had crossed the border into Mexico trying to stem the illegal traffic of narcotics and his days as a journalist when he had seen the flower children destroying their beautiful minds with ugly drugs and which would end in the future with the unhappy death of his idol Elvis dying of a self-administered overdose of prescription drugs.

Clad in a white suit, the suddenly unhappy businessman had been reminded of his dark lifelong fight against drugs when he had seen the frenzied airport authorities, with the help of their canine units, scramble to locate contraband being smuggled into the country by mafia families while trying to appear cool so as not to frighten the travelers.

He, who had been loved by and had loved a puppy as a kid, had been reminded that cute puppies grow up to be formidable dogs and lose their innocence, like men, upon seeing the sniffing police dogs with glinting eyes, and later, after shaking the hands of his business partners in Germany, had logged into his diary in his hotel room and entered the way he had looked at the beginning of his day in the fatherland:

### *Diary Entry Eighteen*

In the spic and span white airport terminal, away from its smiling hosts and colorful bustling duty-free shops, grim-faced athletic Man dressed in light and dark blue including a white and black cap, a dull bulletproof vest, shiny black leather belt and shoes, with a jet-black submachine gun slung authoritatively over his shoulder, is pulled by a golden-brown grey-black furred German Shepherd with black leather straps around its neck and chest, guiding him towards where his neighbor has hidden contraband.

Man, the predator, preys upon the canine, enslaving it by putting it in a collar attached to a leash, to guard him from his neighbor.

The neighbor, in his mafia family, who thinks that *su casa es mi casa*, guards his sprawling white house, with tall marble columns and evergreen conifers behind huge stone-grey compound walls, with a canine, however, the canine is not kept on a leash, so that it can run down and freely hunt Man who comes to take the parasite predator neighbor into custody so that he can isolate him for the good of everybody.

Now, the canine becomes the predator, hunting his prey, Man.

When anyone tries to have power over someone, that someone finds a way to get back at that anyone!

Our downfall is of our own making.

*Darkre*

The old man broke into a sad smile when he remembered the puppy that had adopted him, and seeing its brown mug in the fire thought:

*Alas, dogs only live for dog years.*

## Black Subject, White Autocrat and Assassin

When the satisfied businessman, after completing goodwill gestures with his German business partners, had visited the neighboring *Heart of Europe* to admire the architecture of the lovely city, he had made it a point to visit Prague's National Technical Museum where he had seen Hitler's Mercedes, leading to the automobile of the autocrat saddening him beyond measure as he thought of the Holocaust, inspired by the fallacy of the supremacy of the Aryan race over all else, and later, wondering what it must have been to be both a Jew and a negro during Nazi conquest, when being one was sufficient to get one exterminated by Hitler's goons who did not consider either to be human, he had dreamt up a terrible scenario in his mind, on his flight to China out of the Czech Republic in order to tie up a few loose ends which had crept into his business, and shakily entered in his diary being reminded of the one by Anne Frank:

### *Diary Entry Nineteen*

A black armor-plated Mercedes, whose front had conical steel and glass headlights with a steel grill in the middle having as a bottom-line a steel bumper, in the middle of all which were two round horns with slits, with its wheels rotating furiously underneath high curved front and rear fenders whose curves fell sleekly and joined after travelling far by the sides of the long car in its middle forming flanking running boards, was without any bodyguards for the white autocrat, dressed in a grey and red uniform and wearing a pince-nez, travelling in it driven by his black chauffeur dressed completely in white except for the black synthetic beak of his cap, black leather gloves, silver buttons on his uniform, and black shoes.

The black chauffeur, prey, was the white autocrat's only black subject who had been given freedom and a job, by the tyrant who had overrun his country with many whites and a few blacks who worshipped a different God, solely due to his skill behind the wheel in navigating the harsh terrain of his native land, while the rest of his ilk were being hunted and killed by white assassins, predator, hired by the white autocrat, predator.

The white autocrat trusted this black native of the land he had conquered to diligently do his duty, as he was influenced by an old tale of the land which boasted that duty came first and ahead of patriotism for the natives, and therefore kept no white bodyguards around him.

The white autocrat, however, still had his white assassins roaming the country searching and eliminating blacks in hiding.

The predator felt smug and safe and chortled, as the prey, who had had enough of duty upon seeing his brethren throttled, suddenly decided to make hay while the sun shone and therefore throttled the car's engine and gunned it forward on the slushy winding mountain road

with black mud, on his path to redemption and patriotism with a nationalistic fervor and became the predator.

The predator drove the car off the edge of the road, and the car with armor flipped over and over again down the hill until it came to a standstill upside down in puddles of black mud at the bottom of the hill.

The black predator immediately died with a broken neck, while the white prey, still lucky to be alive, crawled out of his prized car and immediately floundered in the wet black mud which clung to his white face and made him another black.

As he got up, a white assassin, predator, of the white autocrat's own making, who had come running to the site of the accident, saw a black, raised his rifle and shot the autocrat in the head.

The predator had become his own prey.

*Darkre*

The old man sighed, and looking at the purple velvety moth, the golden-brown eagle, and the chameleon of many colors, exclaimed in thought:

*Man is a chameleon when it suits him and sticks to a color when it suits him!*

*What a fraud!*

*The animals are so colorful and beautiful!*

*So genuine!*

## Zhuangzi and the Butterfly

After wrapping up all of his business affairs in China, the liberated man had made a quick study of the philosopher Zhuang Zhou's writings, which had contributed to the philosophical tradition of Daoism, while relaxing on gentle mornings by a farmer's hut beside a soft paddy field near a mountain in a beautiful rural area, for a few days, and later wrote with a yellow bamboo pen in his black and white diary his view about what the philosopher had thought about reality:

### *Diary Entry Twenty*

The child Zhuangzi, cherubic with rosy cheeks, large slanting black Asian eyes, and smooth long dark hair flying behind him, as his legs, with their naked feet feeling the soft wet grass of the meadow in the early morning, pumped over the gently rolling hill with its fragrant and colorful flowers under a fresh and vibrant sun, tried with his chubby outstretched hands to catch the fragile purple monarch butterfly, flitting whimsically from violet to red flower with both a desire to gather nectar and pollinate the spectrum.

The breathless kid was mesmerized only by the fragile beauty, and nothing else of the monarch, as he finally managed to gently close the pudgy forefinger and thumb of his left hand over its purple wings which had folded upwards in grace upon its alighting on a China Rose to feed and help the flower to reproduce.

Feeling the gently struggling softness of the powdery butterfly between his fingers, the happy child walked back to his austere hut and confined the flight of the monarch to a small space in a yellow and green bamboo cage with closely spaced strips of the largest members of the grass family.

Zhuangzi, the child, was the predator, and the purple monarch butterfly, the prey.

Zhuangzi, the wise old man, the philosopher, after a frugal meal, having an uneasy siesta on his spare bamboo bed in front of his sagely home, with his long white hair tied in a bun held with a bamboo hair stick, wispy moustache and flowing beard all getting disheveled on account of his writhing owing to a purple monarch butterfly flitting in his mind-cage, dreamt.

When the old sage woke up sweating, he was confronted and confounded by a problem extraordinaire:

The dreamy philosopher could not decide whether he really was a man who had dreamed he was a butterfly or whether he was a butterfly now dreaming he was a man!

This conundrum troubled him, and it would also defeat other men of similar make who would step into the footsteps of philosophy over the following millennia; to no end.

The prey, the purple monarch butterfly, initially flitting in the bamboo cage of young Zhuangzi, had now become predator, flitting in the mind-cage of its prey, the philosopher, old man Zhuangzi.

*Darkre*

The old man on the mountain in front of the sizzling fire wielding its sword with the cold in the dark of the night watched by the amused twinkling blue stars in the sky wondered as he watched the purple velvety moth circle its fantasy:

*Isn't life a full circle?*

*Is not the child the father of the man?*

## Fertilization and Environment

Fertilization gives one power to eat, mate, and survive while environment controls how one does it

The businessman, who had successfully negotiated a business deal of a lifetime envied by one and all after being neither an optimist nor a pessimist but only a realist governed neither by God nor Satan and becoming filthy rich because of it, relaxed on the white sands of a beach in an exotic paradise, clad in flowery magenta Bermuda shorts and nothing else, sipping tender coconut water through a white straw from a freshly harvested coconut previously the property of one of the trees gently waving their green divided leaves at his back standing on leaning brown textured trunks like inviting damsels.

As the happy man looked at a few other fellow foreigners frolicking in the cool waves of an invigorating blue sea sparkling in the brilliant morning, he could not help but be a little sad at the death of The King, Elvis, who had died of a heart attack caused by prescription drugs, barbiturates, overdose in his bathroom as a fat unhappy man.

Relaxing under the tropical sun, the man, who could now take a permanent holiday from work as a result of one good decision, wondered about the addiction of the 'King of Rock and Roll,' the handsome actor who he had always wanted to be, who had died young trying to relax and get some much needed beauty sleep.

The crests and troughs of the white foamy waves at the beach, returning from the vast blue sea, brought a clear message to him that fertilization may give some good genes and others bad genes, but nobody is lucky or unlucky as everything averages out because of the environment; life is a great equalizer which levels the playing field.

There had always been a conflict between who he was and had wanted to be. It had now suddenly vanished like an ugly dream of the dark night fearing the real beauty of the bright morning.

From the moment of fertilization of his mother's egg by his father's sperm till a moment before through which the neurons in his brain had fired using electrical impulses and chemical neurotransmitters, both being continuously impacted by the signals from the environment his senses had transduced into energy and chemicals within his body, he had been building a stark image edifice of himself, with the bricks of neurons being held together by the concrete of

energy being cured by chemical neurotransmitters, which had been in conflict with the greenery outside his brain.

But on that sunny golden day at a white beach in green paradise, as he took in the naked organic scenery with fresh senses, he found inner peace in the message the waves had brought him; he would no longer have internal conflict.

The old man on the mountain looked inward:

*There is great conflict on the path to a place with none!*

## Retirement into Philosophical Environment

The filthy rich businessman with a clean mind decided to stop being worldly and enhance himself more spiritually, as he already had acquired a taste for the metaphysical in China, and therefore travelled to the East once more in search of the spiritual.

Once in the Himalayas, he took to foot, with fond memories of playing with his best buddy, the Indo-American, barefoot in school, and quickly made his way to a place where he knew that the views he had distilled from his many experiences would be more than welcome.

## Western Predator and Eastern Prey

The thirty-six year old western man had travelled on foot through ravenous valleys and over soaring mountains amidst blistering snow blizzards to reach the stone and wood monastery of the eastern mystic where triangular orange flags fluttered gamely in the gales and beckoned weary travelers of the world like him whose minds had been buffeted by storms of thought.

When the westerner, with long red hair and frizzy beard, sat kneeling and sipping hot broth in front of the contemplating bald and cleanly shaven easterner in orange robes, the monk told him, “Ask, for I am the world.”

The haggard man with soulful emerald-green eyes stared deep into the green broth and asked quietly, “By saying that one is the world, and that the entire world is within one, doesn’t it mean that how the world acts upon one and how one reacts to the world depends entirely upon one?”

There was no master or disciple at that instant.

The contented silence inside the warm chamber which was uniting the East and West was not to be sliced by the sharp winds outside.

Quietly the eastern monk posed his first question, “What does it mean not to steal?” to which the man trying to be a western mystic softly answered, “It means that one must not steal one’s happiness from oneself,” to which the excited monk quickly put forth his second riddle, “Why is it said that one must not kill?” at which the Irish American remembering his mother who upon becoming sad in her life had told her boy, “Never run with those scissors that cut your dreams son,” sadly replied to the monk who would become happy, “To tell that one must not kill one’s dreams,” and lapsed in to silence.

Standing up, the monk embraced the white man quietly for a while and in a whisper asked the western mystic to solve one final puzzle, “What will you understand if I told you to never utter a lie?”

The man whose eyes were shrugging off sadness and beginning to twinkle said, “That I must never lie to myself,” and happily walked out into the night with its howling snowstorm to allow the monk to resume the silence he had broken for his visitor from afar.

East and west were no more prey or predator.

The old man snuggling into his grey cloak in the cold night thought:

*That night in the frozen Himalayas was one of the warmest nights of my life!*

## Indian Subcontinent

### All are born with a clean slate

The western man, after visiting the eastern mystic in the Himalayas and feeling that he was now ready for more enlightening experiences, travelled south through the jolly people of Nepal to what would later be described by the Frenchman Dominique Lapierre, another globe-trotter who would at the end of the millennium write *A Thousand Suns*, as the city of joy, Calcutta, in the Indian subcontinent which was the birthplace of the Indian Hindu monk Swami Vivekananda, who had introduced Hinduism at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, and then further south to God's own country, Kerala, and then north again through Agra to Delhi and back west through Punjab and Lahore, sometimes walking and at other times bicycling or in third class train compartments.

The rich man had been fascinated by the slums in the city of joy and had understood the crying need for religion and philosophy by the people who had little of anything else, and had added to the bank of his philosophies another one, after modifying the swami's that happiness and sadness were yin and yang, that it was possible for man to be happy without sadness if one drew happiness from a non-corporal beauty like the setting sun which was free for all and repeated every evening without fail, drawing inspiration from Bertrand Russell's philosophy.

In God's own country, he had been reminded by the ubiquitous green coconut trees, framed against the blue sky whose reflections shimmered on the blue-green backwaters, of the tender coconut water from coconut trees he had sipped on a beach in an exotic paradise, and a message delivered by the waves of the sea which had added to his inner peace.

When he had visited Raj Ghat in Delhi, and seen the black marble platform marking the spot of the Mahatma's cremation, with Gandhi's last words *Hey Ram* inscribed on the marble symbolizing the simplicity of the man who clad in just a white dhoti had driven away the British from his motherland, the red-haired man had accepted that both the Mahatma and Vivekananda had been right about the fact that all men are born equal and potentially divine and that all were inherently nice, but had modified even the philosophy of Gandhi about non-violence, and had decided that he would not react until somebody physically assaulted him but if anybody did he would save himself.

Before catching a flight from Lahore back to the west, he had seen the Beating Retreat ceremony at the Attari-Wagah border between India and Pakistan, and had wondered about borders.

While on the plane being served spicy tea, he had wondered about the conflict between men, and had thought that only if they took God, who was different for different religions, out of the family picture of mankind, and nipped every bad thought in the bud, for even one negative pebble falling on the pinnacle of a snow-clad thought mountain resulted in a downward avalanche, and further stopped negative speech altogether, for talk and thought fed each other in a vicious cycle setting fire to the home of mankind, and finally, thought only positively about everything and everybody concentrating solely on their chosen profession, the world would be heaven.

The old man, now in his own world with only the moth, chameleon, and eagle by the fire for company, spoke for the very first time in a whisper that last night, disturbing its peace which had till now heard only the moth's flutter, the chameleon's tongue-snaps, the eagle's clawing, and the crackling of the wood in the burning fire:

“What a subcontinent!”

## Kohinoor and Kin, Predator and Prey

The westerner, with long red hair and frizzy beard, who had travelled down south from the white Himalayas to the brown city of joy to green Kerala and back up north to red Agra before he would travel further up and back west, had been accosted by a brown travel guide, who upon setting his glinting brown-black eyes on the foreigner, had decided to seize the day, and saying *carpe diem* had guided the white with emerald-green eyes and red hair through the red Agra Fort and the white Taj Mahal on the glowing-green banks of the blue Yamuna, while regaling him with their history and the myth of the black Taj Mahal which was supposed to have been built, and later the inspired westerner had written in his yin and yang diary using the yellow light of a candle in the dark night:

### *Diary Entry Twenty-one*

The bedazzling Peacock Throne, built at a cost of which only half would be sufficient to construct the ivory-white marble mausoleum, Taj Mahal, had a jewel studded golden dome hanging high above an equally glittering platform raised up from the ground, as far from earth as close to heaven was the dome, climbing the steps of which on it used to sit Shah Jahan, the emperor of almost all of the Indian subcontinent in what was known as the Golden Age of the vast Mughal Empire.

He, the prey, had been deposed and imprisoned in Agra Fort by his son Aurangzeb, the predator, who ascended the Peacock Throne after executing his brother, the prey, in the race to be the ruler of the Mughal Empire causing the once emperor to die slowly gazing at his wife's white tomb on the banks of the blue Yamuna wishing he could have built a black Taj Mahal to be his own tomb; yin and yang; black and white; female and male; wife and husband; life was a complementary contrast.

The end of Great Mughals had begun, for the Kohinoor, Mountain of light, the jewel of jewels presiding over the Peacock Throne, the predator, had cursed those who wanted to sit on it, its prey; it was the ultimate predator preying on humans who lusted for power.

Like the Mughals who had once ruled, the Great British Empire which acquired the stone soon, would lose power over the subcontinent they had ruled.

The Kohinoor stone would continue to prey on minds of men and governments who would keep on fighting bloodless wars for the gem looking like fire in ice.

*Darkre*

The emerald-green eyes of the old man staring icily into the fire seemed to reflect the hollow verses inscribed in emerald and green enamel on the Peacock Throne as he thought:

*Precious stones may have some practical uses but it is impractical to struggle for them and power!*

## The Old Philosophical Physicist, His Friend, and Audience

### Philosophies evolve out of personal fears and desires

The thirty-eight year old man, who had come back from the East, had red stubble on his head and bristles on his face after having got rid of the long hair on his head and face a short while ago, and clad in brown corduroy shorts, white tee shirt, socks and loafers, his emerald-green eyes fronted by rimless reading glasses, he went to meet his friend who was an old physics professor in a renowned university.

As he climbed the brown oak staircase of the red colonial building housing the prestigious philosophy department, where his older but like-minded friend had asked him to come for the meeting, he was innocently jostled by freshmen trying to outdo one another in rushing to and securing a place in the chamber of the head of the department which the old physics professor had commandeered for the day.

When the relaxed man gently pushed his way through the throng of happily innocent young men and women, searching for the truth by way of physics and philosophy, in the hallowed chamber and warmly shook the hand of his friend who gave him a beatific smile, the students anticipating a learned dialogue between the youthful traveler and the mature scientist cheered.

Both the older men, with the older leading the younger, went behind a large dark-brown polished mahogany table and relaxed on complementing chairs; the older philosophical physicist intending to prey upon his younger worldly-wise friend's wisdom and the students' adoration.

A pretty young thing with a shaggy bob cut dressed completely in white piped up, "Tell us the Ultimate Truth that you both have learnt," to which after a slight interval, the older physicist with brilliant wavy white hair dressed in a brown tweed jacket with dark-brown elbow patches having simply kept quiet with a soft smile, the younger of the duo nonchalantly replied, "No two humans are the same or live forever, and hence there is no universal, eternal truth."

A nerd whined, "How can we be happy forever then? Why are we studying philosophy? Answer us professor, for physicists are supposed to be the only legitimate philosophers."

Suddenly, the smile vanished from the older physicist's bright face to be replaced by a dark frown, as the student, whose adoration was being preyed upon by the teacher, turned predator with his question. The older physicist pleadingly looked at his friend, the younger philosopher.

The man, who had slimmed considerably courtesy of his journey to the East, sighed, “The cause of unhappiness results from wanting to be happy all the time. You have to realize that everything is finite; joys and sorrows both will end.”

A sturdily built handsome young man with clean features opined, “Many in war ravaged places don’t have the luxury of joy,” to which the older failing again to answer, the younger continued the battle, and looking straight into the eyes of the predator, pounced, “As life which is a complementary contrast progresses, the law of large numbers takes hold of it, and life averages out between bad and good, yin and yang, black and white, like a tossed fair coin landing either on its head or tail averages out to fifty percent probability of each after a while; life is fair, and,” the philosopher shot forth with red fire blazing from green eyes, “life and death too average out if you ask about babies killed in wars. They don’t have to suffer through a long life filled with ups and downs; even physics doesn’t have only one constant.”

There was suddenly a haunting silence in the brown wood paneled room glowing amber under the soft touch of the golden rays of the setting red sun which had quietly entered it along with the scents and sounds of the retiring university; there was a cool breeze which tried to dry the sweat of tension in the room that summer evening.

Softly, a doe-eyed blonde middle-aged woman, whom the red-haired philosopher had danced with in high school, asked, “What about religion and God?”

The middle-aged philosopher, suddenly seeing his high school sweetheart after an eternity, turned stony faced, and in a firm tone replied, “Nobody wants accountability and their fears and desires make them want to unload their burden on someone or something. I am leaving.”

“Wait,” shouted somebody at the back of the crowd, “If there is no God, what about heaven or rebirth?”

Beginning to push his way through the thick group, after having quickly exited his seat beside his friend, having squeezed the grateful hand proffered by the older physicist, the philosopher, managing to avoid the eyes of his female schoolmate piercing him, retaliated, “Woman fears losing the stuff she has accumulated in her life and therefore desires rebirth or heaven to keep on enjoying them. Woman also has a fear of not being able to satisfy all her heart’s desires in this life, and a desire to satisfy those which she cannot in this life in the next, and therefore, she wants, and believes in, rebirth.”

He quickly exited the university gates at dusk.

Older philosophical physicist predator preying on the adoring student had suddenly become the prey of the adorer who in turn had been preyed upon by the ultimate predator, the

middle-aged philosopher; but one couldn't help sense that the snake had gotten the better of the chameleon.

The old man in front of the fire with the flames of his past trying to lick at his heart was unmoved as he decided that at the ultimate hour he would not change the philosophy that had brought him peace. He told himself:

*Everything averages out!*

*Everything is finite!*

*One should take hope from the fact that pain will end but not lose hope because pleasure will too!*

*One should be happy during sorrows knowing joy will come!*

*Life and death, joy and sorrow, not necessarily respectively!*

## Eat, Mate, and Survive

The red-haired man had known the doe-eyed blonde woman since she had been a giggling girl in pigtails and he a scrawny little boy with a running nose who had danced with her as his high school sweetheart, and had kept track of her from afar through the days when she had struggled as an actress and made it big only to struggle again after losing her charm.

The innocent girl had stood by the sad boy when his parents had separated, and he had stood far away silently when she had lost her innocence by camouflaging herself alternately in garish clothes and bikinis during movie shootings to escape the predator of hunger and prey upon men, one of whom would possibly be a future mate, unfortunately to have men prey back upon her making her lose her charm and acting career, driving her to study philosophy while struggling through cosmetic surgery to regain her youthful beauty so that she could survive, eat, and mate again with money being the common denominator of the three.

She had not sought either his company or his money as both had followed their separate paths with her believing in fate and he convinced that it was what you yourself made.

He had started considering the possibility that there was no will to meaning in life and that the will to power was nothing but the will to pleasure.

So, as he took a taxi back to his posh hotel with his sad emerald-green eyes taking in the colorful lights of the night, which had quickly fallen, between which occupied men and women busily droned on like bees on night shifts in fancy automobiles on twisting roads beside which pedestrians soldiered on like ants on footpaths, he was amazed by the possible futility of it all.

He tipped the Asian taxi driver generously upon the cabbie pulling into the coach gate of his grand hotel, and the black doorman too who opened the ornate glass doors framed in gold leading into the soothing lobby, and had a quiet candlelight dinner of a little salad with himself, waited upon by a gentle Mexican woman who smiled at his generosity when he added to the bill a generous sum for her as he left the restaurant for his room.

As he relaxed alone on the luxurious bed in the honeymoon suite sipping a glass of warm milk, he began to find more peace than he ever had in his life as he slowly decided to shrug off the burden of knowledge which he had carried throughout his life, and ambled towards the understanding that there was nothing more left for him to achieve or prove.

The old man with his animal friends watching him broke into an impish smile and said in his mind to them:

*Your friends the busy bees and the worker ants remind me of my human friends!*

*But I am sure they don't seek knowledge and wisdom but only information!*

*They don't have any philosophies I am sure!*

## Fear and Desire, Love as Barter

### Fear that desires won't be satisfied is the biggest fear of all

However, when the relaxed man went to sleep, a melancholic dream took away his peace and made him toss and turn on the soft bed, and after toying with him for a while, jerked him up into a sitting position, where clutching the white sheets he began to profusely sweat.

The man, who was on a lonely journey on a long path, had dreamt that he was hugging the blonde doe-eyed girl he had danced with, beside a long lonely grey road with a white divider winding on the edge of a blue mountain overlooking others behind which the orange sun was about to set in an atmosphere which rendered white clouds pink and purple.

The man, who had decided to shrug off the burden of knowledge, could not decide whether it had decreased or increased as he came to the unsettling understanding that our dreams are nothing but our fears and desires haunting us forever with the unconscious being stronger than the subconscious and the conscious in that order.

He thought about his father and mother, who unable to take happiness from the other had decided that they would not give theirs to the other, and had sought to barter with others believing that their take and give business would not affect their child, with whom also they had probably done the business of love.

The man, whose sweat had cooled off, realized he and his high school sweetheart had not been any different, for their singular ambition to get more happiness from their diverging ambitions than the happiness they were getting from each other had made them give their love to their separate ambitions and not to each other.

The boy and girl in their search for a bigger better deal had taken away the happiness from each others' lives, and in the process had proved that love was indeed a barter system.

Fear of travelling alone further in his journey, after having the accidental encounter with the blonde doe-eyed woman, had brought back the desire to be with her, with the consequence that he had had the melancholic dream fueled by his fear and desire.

However, the man suddenly decided that he would not allow this knowledge to be a burden, for he had to continue his journey, and again realizing he would be able to do so happily only with minimum possessions of his mind, went back to sleep once more a contented man.

## I, in Rome

The relaxed red-haired man, the very next calm morning with the cool sun peeking from behind grey clouds, took the very first flight out of the brave new world to visit the site of the papal conclave in the city-state surrounded by Rome, and once he landed he would not do as Romans did but only admire Michelangelo's art for its own sake and not worry about the symbolism of *The Creation of Adam* or *The Last Judgment* for he was no more bothered by either his birth or his certain death.

During the smooth flight, he gazed at the orange atmosphere out of the oval window with a white frame, over the grey wing of the plane with its flaps and engines, without feeling that he was undertaking life on a wing and a prayer; he knew he had prepared and already succeeded.

When the beautiful airhostess brought the rich rugged man chocolate bonbons in glittering rainbow wrappings, he took only one, though the lady smiled and requested him to take more, and relished it slowly like he did everything in the only life he knew he had, for he had realized that everything is beautiful only when kept rare and that change should be the only constant.

After landing in Rome, and not worrying about passionate Italians for he too had been fiery once, he spent hours in the Sistine Chapel looking up at the ceiling and at the altar wall; coolly seeing nothing more than incredible paintings by a genius artist.

He was the Vatican surrounded by Rome. All roads had led to Rome.

He was something, who, desiring nothing, had everything.

He had everything except God of whose existence he had found no evidence of up to the present moment, but was perfectly happy simply because he wanted to have nothing to do with the whole matter.

The Irish American smiled all the way to Venice, where, wearing a white vest, slacks, fedora, and slippers, he lay back in a black gondola and floated under quaint bridges as he made a tour of the city of water on its canals, with the old gondolier whistling away a merry tune as he rowed.

The old man, remembering his younger days, saw shimmering water in the fire blazing in front of him, and pondered upon something impossible:

*Can one escape the 'I' and be objective?*

*Is it possible to shatter the subjective mirror of the self reflecting back the world?*

## David, Mona, Adam, and Eve

The globe-trotter, who had travelled from Venice to Florence, and visited the Accademia Gallery and gazed at Michelangelo's young and strong David staring at Rome with curly hair and veins standing out as he prepared to fight Goliath with a sling and rock held by rich muscles in a body with poor fat, and also Leonardo's jovial lady from Florence, Mona Lisa, in the Louvre Museum when he had visited Paris, where the enigmatic lady with glowing skin and kind eyes had bewitched him, later wrote, in his pristine diary sitting at a café in Italy, a mischievous tantalizing reflection:

### *Diary Entry Twenty-two*

The white handsome sculptor, in a windowless room whose inner walls, door, floor, and ceiling were carpeted with blemish free mirrors, worked feverishly on a superb white marble with no stains and a good translucency which would give the David he was sculpting, from his reflections in the mirrors, a depth in the look which he hoped would impress his African muse, whose smile overshadowed that of Mona Lisa and who now sat on a slender steel stool egging him on to finish early.

The lady was tired of his obsession with his finely sculpted body and her beauty and more so with his passion for art which was driving both her and him crazy.

Adam was preying on beauty with black Eve angry, and it was not long before his blood-shot eyes, flitting from one naked beauty to another, failed to focus on the sculpture and lost coordination with his sweaty hands working the chisel and mallet, causing them to inflict grievous bodily harm on the sculpture's loins.

Everybody screamed, as passionate Man, who was preying on beauty, without realizing that yang came with its black yin, became ugly and beauty's prey.

### *Darkre*

The old man, who still had his rugged looks, gave a bewitching smile to the fire as a thought rose with the smoke:

*Aren't we all a slave to our passions!*

## Farmer, Doctor, and Astrophysicist

It was 1983. The world traveler was back home. His best buddy, the Indo-American, had happily written to him that an Indo-American astrophysicist had been the co-awardee of the 1983 Nobel Prize for Physics. His friend had also included a sad bit about a sick relative, a farmer, of his in India; however, he had also voiced strong hope that the patient would be cured through modern technology.

That calm night, pondering a lot about the hierarchy of men in the world, and imagining a scenario, where maize grown by a farmer in India had been exported to the USA, and had landed on the table of an astrophysicist as cornflakes, the pensive man wrote on the smooth pages of his diary:

### *Diary Entry Twenty-three*

The brown Indian farmer, turned a glistening black under the harsh yellow Indian summer sun, sweated profusely with bulging veins, while ploughing his field to help his kharif crop, maize, make the best use of the heavily wet blue monsoon rains which would come, so that the astrophysicist, another Indian, who was in the USA, spending his professional life there, could have yellow cornflakes, the breakfast cereal made from maize.

The life of the astrophysicist, who waxed eloquent about truth, beauty, Shakespeare, Newton, and Beethoven, was far removed from the truth and beauty in the life of his brother.

The grizzled farmer, succumbing to his terrible conditions, fell agonizingly sick, and unable to bear the blinding pain, visited a good doctor in white, who quickly diagnosed a red blood clot in his grey brain, with the help of modern medical technology rooted in old physics, and made the miserable man happy by curing him.

The poor farmer had preyed on rich physics, whose young child was astrophysics, while the intellectual astrophysicist had preyed upon the rich food grown by the poor farmer.

However, in the world's big picture, there is neither predator nor prey, but only synergy.

*Darkre*

The old man, happily understanding his significant insignificance, smiled as he thought:

*Everybody is important, nobody is important!*

## Vice and Virtue, Yin and Yang

The calm traveler, who still had his finger on the pulse of the world, sat with two of his old business partners, an American and a Chinese, on golden-brown chairs surrounding a similarly hued lunch table, whose legs softly touched a rich red and blue Persian carpet so as not to dishevel its silken threads, in his club.

They were having lunch in the amber glow of yellow chandelier light reflected back from red drapes covering French windows through which the afternoon sun had been blocked from entering the plush room.

While the Chinese was delicately eating round white dumplings, the American was chomping on a flat red steak, and his Irish American countryman was nibbling a green salad.

By the time the blue and white china plates became free of the white, red, and green upon them, the burning ears of the red-haired man had made out more about the world from the luncheon conversation than many others', which had been privy to the conversations of men around the globe while traversing it, would have.

His two wonderful guests, whom he had let quietly converse with each other without butting in, had interacted happily, each telling the other about the honorable qualities the other possessed, albeit, each using either the word 'however' or 'but' liberally during the duologue to downplay every virtue he had ascribed to the other with a vice he felt the other richly deserved.

Vice and virtue had been the yin and yang of the conversation.

After the westerner and the easterner, having bid adieu to the Irish American, departed together arm in arm from his club, the twinkling emerald-green eyes of the globe-trotter, who stayed behind, looked down through the white steam of his hot black coffee at the white page of his black and white diary on which he was writing:

### *Diary Entry Twenty-four*

God preys upon Man, dominating him, and Man wants to become God so that he can prey upon another Man and dominate him, while the second Man too wants to become God so that he can prey upon the first Man and dominate him.

Nobody ever sees complete good in another and always has at least a little bad to say about even the best.

It is the will to power inherent in all men giving them pleasure and meaning.

Endless and meaningless circle of predator and prey!

*Darkre*

The old man, who had been fed up once, stoically thought:

*God of love, God of politics, God of profession!*

*One, two, or all three in each man's personal arsenal to help him dominate another!*

*The fourth God in each man's personal arsenal, by default and the most powerful, like the fourth dimension eternal time, a constant in life, God of religion!*

## Prison Guard and Prisoner

The emerald-green eyed man, who had been requested to come and visit a black death row inmate, waiting to walk the green mile, who had asked to meet the journalist who had written so fearlessly against crime, before his punishment, did so.

After the stoic man had been to the prison and back, where he had told the agitated man, who would be executed soon, that one has to wisely accept the laws of the region in which one eats, mates, and survives, or calmly accept punishment upon breaking them, he unemotionally wrote in his diary about the fragile mood of people which dictates every event in life:

### *Diary Entry Twenty-five*

The bulky prison guard, who was always unhappy and dressed in black, shoved the pasty meal, spread on a scarred and dented aluminum plate, over a coarse floor, under the iron-grey bars of the door to a cold prison cell, holding a new prisoner dressed in a white dress with vertical black stripes.

The grating of the plate was followed by a gruff, "Eat it up," from the unhappy guard, at which the happy prisoner, who had not yet been made unhappy by his prison cell, became unhappy; the predator, prison guard's unhappy mood, had preyed on the prey, prisoner's happy mood.

This continued for many days, until the prisoner one day, who had remained silent and unhappy till then, decided to go against the flow of the river of woe, and replied to his unhappy jailor with a happy, "Thank you kind sir," upon receiving his frugal food.

The dam burst, as the unhappy river started flowing in the opposite direction, in the direction of happiness, and made the unhappy prison guard happy; the predator, prisoner's happy mood, had preyed on the prey, the prison guard's unhappy mood.

The food, the plate, the bars, the floor, the cell, the jail, the uniforms, the prisoner, and the prison guard had all remained the same from the first day of the prisoner's incarceration to the present; conditions hadn't changed a bit; only the moods had changed.

The prison would become a brighter place lit by candles of camaraderie.

*Darkre*

The old man easily broke a few bunched up twigs with his strong hands and grimaced:

*Most of the times nothing except our mood changes!*

*And with it the world!*

*Who should decide where a person is born, lives, or the laws he should be subject to?*

*The person in the world, the world in the person!*

## Poverty and Misery, Free Will, Prey and Predator

### Arguing about free will paradoxically proves both its existence and non-existence

The emerald-green eyed red-haired capitalist had travelled to the religiously green and red sand hilled Afghanistan in search of something which he himself wasn't sure of, but which had been gnawing away at his insides for quite some time.

It was amid reforms, the announcement by the Soviet Union under the reformist leader Mikhail Gorbachev that it would withdraw its troops from the Soviet-Afghan war, which was actually a war between the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist United States, a so-called cold war, with the US backing the mujahideen in Afghanistan, that the rich Irish American, parched for that precious something which he probably didn't want to accept he lacked, came to the poor desert in search of an indefinable oasis.

He was probably trying to find freedom with a free will after a lifetime of philosophizing; through realizing love amidst hate.

There, amidst shells, shrapnel, and bullets, he saw an old rose amidst guns trying to help the war-stricken people in an attempt to vindicate herself; as he himself probably had set out to do too.

One night, as he sat in the chill on a soft sand hill under the dazzling stars of the desert sky in the dancing lights and sounds of crackling fires and the twinkling bells tied to the necks, knees, and ankles of camels, he took out his romantic black and white diary and wrote carefully:

#### *Diary Entry Twenty-six*

Free will doesn't exist in this world where the thought rudder of one's boat is buffeted by the waves produced by the thought rudders of six billion others' boats voyaging on the ocean of life. However, the social worker was the epitome of free will, a stark contrast to the world she lived and worked in with industrious passion. She, once an actress turned philosopher who had been in search of religion and God, had known that since poverty and misery prey upon the free will of the poor and miserable, there was no free will; however, she had decided that her free will would prey upon poverty and misery. She, who had realized that the beauty, money, philosophy, religion, and God she had sought hadn't helped her in the least, was now seeking to make peace with herself, her life, and life itself, by helping the poor and miserable; instead of keeping on

philosophizing about whether free will existed or not, she was calmly directing her efforts towards helping the poor and miserable; the only God.

*Darkre*

The old man's soaring thoughts suddenly encircled the slim waist of Lois Lane as he let two lovely others fly:

*Why philosophize!*

*One should liberate oneself even from one's own philosophies to realize complete freedom!*

## Mediocre People and Equality, Prey and Predator

The rich capitalist, after a hot meal of some soft lamb in thin gravy, washed his coarse bowl with the very little tepid water that was left of his share after drinking a little, surrounded by beautiful giggling freckled children in rough grey robes.

The man clad in camouflage, who was without a family to call his own, laughingly tousled the dirt streaked dry hair of the children with love, patted their cheeks which should have been chubby, but which were the exact opposite, softly, and without looking into their deep green, brown, and black eyes with his sad emerald-green ones, quickly boarded a helicopter, that had been put at his disposal by the army, whose slightly drooping blades had sluggishly begun to rotate.

The capitalist had contributed lavishly to a certain cause he now believed in. He had done his share for the equality he had always believed in; tried to make sure that life averaged out with a positive average for all.

As the whirlybird whirred towards Moscow, the once capitalist, looking down at a life which was both literally and figuratively a desert, remembered how mediocre men, American men of God, had tried to get their hooks into him, make him fall hook, line, and sinker for their agendas, make him equal with their negative values, and how the Moby Dick in him had survived their harpoons of myths, and also, how now he was pulling mediocre children, innocent but mediocre, Afghan children of God, up towards him, making them equal with his positive values; a great improvement, for he was helping the innocent young and not the criminal adult; fighting inequality with the help of capitalist money.

Even as a comrade tried to shout something to him over the din of the chopper, he, without paying any attention to the soldier, quietly drew out his precious diary along with a gold Parker pen from his knapsack, and all the while wondering whether he was the yang going to Moscow to her yin staying in Afghanistan, wrote quickly with his left hand in the diary whose pages, trying to flap wildly in the wind, were being controlled by his right palm:

### *Diary Entry Twenty-seven*

A superman brings equality into this unequal life. It is a fact that mediocre people preach, prey upon, false equality so that they can drag good people down to their level; however, good people, by pulling the mediocre ones up to their level, ensure that genuine equality preys upon the mediocre people, and prove that life is indeed a great equalizer; that life averages out.

*Darkre*

The old man wondered whether he had been the superman to her Lois Lane.

The passionate flames of the fire in his sight seemed to dance a spirited tango in the cool night.

A dispassionate question crossed his phlegmatic mind:

*Is anything worth anything?*

## Communism and Capitalism, Prey and Predator

The white red-haired Irish American, wearing a blue silk suit and sporting a shining gold Rolex, walked briskly with quick admiring looks at the brilliant white and gold Ivan the Great Bell Tower and the red Spasskaya Tower of the Kremlin beside which flowed the blue Moskva River.

He was in Moscow to meet Mikhail Gorbachev, of the glasnost and perestroika, who was trying to implement liberal reforms to end economic stagnation and democratize the government; the Irish American had an agenda.

However, the once capitalist did not owe allegiance to communism, or any existing ism for that matter; he had his own ism in mind; he was only human.

That night, as he curiously watched a Russian bear drinking one Bloody Mary after another in a restaurant as he slowly sipped a tomato juice, he, with the Towers of Kremlin flashing in front of his mind's eye, wrote about his own *Tower to God*, all the while wondering what the hell he was doing:

### *Diary Entry Twenty-eight*

People had to be controlled for their own liberation. Communism had to prey upon capitalism and then capitalism on communism so that the *Tower to God* could be built.

Man would become God.

It would start by confiscating each and every resource of the society from individuals, amalgamating them, and then redistributing the thus created total wealth of the totalitarian regime equally among everyone.

The now equal society would be then divided physically into two halves, choosing men and women for the two halves randomly, for what greater power to ensure equality than random selection?

One half, randomly considered the lesser, would have to live with communism and wouldn't be allowed to have any more children so that its people could live and die happily; without a trace.

The other half, randomly considered the greater, would be allowed to pursue capitalism for some time until equalized with communism, thus ensuring societal growth.

This greater society would be now divided again, but not randomly, into two contrasting halves based upon physical and mental superiority or inferiority of its people.

The lesser half, this time for real, would have to live with communism and without any more children so that its people could live and die happily; without a trace.

The greater half would be allowed to pursue capitalism and a single child for each couple for societal growth.

This greater half would now form the society which would be subjected to the very first step of this enchanting process of equalizing, separating, and growing super kids; constructing a tapering *Tower to God*, where the last person on earth would be a capitalist superman, God.

Communism would have preyed upon capitalism, equalizing, and capitalism on communism, whittling down communism and tapering towards supremacy.

*Darkre*

The old man suddenly felt tired.

The happily angry dancing flames of the fire in his sight seemed to engulf and burn the entire world he had known; both the inner and the outer.

A terrible thought marred his mostly calm ones:

*To hell with politics!*

## A Second Home

Something about his whole capitalist life in a material world had somehow always seemed wrong to the emerald-green eyed westerner to whom the world had seemed more alive when viewed through the brown-black eyes of his Indo-American friend.

After his self-pampering indulgence in Afghanistan and Moscow, he hurried to the banks of the Ganges flowing through the most ancient civilization in the world in search of that incredible someone who would happily corroborate his views on almost everything under and over the moon, sun and other stars; he could as his purse was still larger than most even after donating lavishly to his non-capitalist cause and he was white which gave him a passport to travel through lands of those who were not with wild abandon.

His search was fraught with danger for he was searching for a potent mixture of the modern and the mystical.

It took a long time during which he was forced to watch men, in loincloths, with long matted hair and beards, smeared with the ashes of the cremated eat the remnants of dead bodies, burnt and unburnt, on the banks of the Ganges; after which he would have to have watery saccharine tea in a shack and eat glucose biscuits dipped in it to regain his physical and mental strength.

However, he survived until the time his search took him to a lovely ashram which screamed technology. He parted with his capitalist money and entered the capitalist ashram.

Amidst greenery and flowers spanning the entire spectrum, a pyramidal structure, surrounded by gurgling brooks gurgling over soft round stones, constructed out of thick green glass which screamed that those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones, was constructed to initiate seekers.

Today was his day which had begun long before dawn. Now, as the golden rays of the rising sun entered through the green glass and brought golden-green vibrant life to a life which is usually sad, he sat, dressed in pristine white and wearing a garland of bright yellow flowers, on a soft pink cushion on the white flawless marble floor in front of the ashram's Guruji, draped in orange, who sat flanked by his similarly clothed three disciples on mats, woven with crisscrossed yellow and green straws, on a raised marble platform bedecked with fresh flowers and burning incense.

The westerner, in search of a potent mixture of the modern and the mystical, had been attracted to this ashram by his recently acquired knowledge about its Guruji, who looked like a movie star with his clipped moustache and beard, who had once been an engineer and a cricketer who had represented his country at the international level. Once in the ashram he had come to know about his three disciples, the beautiful middle-aged lady astrophysicist, the cute young lady doctor, and the calm Chinese farmer-sage who lived illegally and defiantly in India.

The silence was broken only by the chirping of the birds and the humming of bees.

The Guruji finally smilingly spoke:

“The Guru recognizes the Shishya long before the Shishya recognizes himself. For the transfer of Jnana and Bhakti there should be impedance matching between the transmitter, Guru, and receiver, Shishya, so that there is no loss of signal when it is passed on from the Guru, who should have the power to transmit his signal, to his Shishya, who should have the power to receive it; path of least resistance should be there.

“I am sure we all satisfy all the requirements.

“The search of the Shishya for a Guru cannot be a momentary pastime; it has to be a continuous struggle in his search for truth, a persevering effort, and when such a true Shishya is ready, the true Guru automatically appears to him.

“As I appeared to you.

“The Guru, who doesn't go to the world but to whom the world comes, knows the essence of his teachings, while the Shishya, who desires, the only real desire, beauty, freedom, and unconditional love which together form the only truth, God, with rapture, gets it; for we all get what we wish for with our whole heart; however, it is an unsettling truth that we should be careful of what we desperately wish for, as our deepest wishes more often than not come true; it is because we unconsciously program ourselves with our subconscious desires. We should always think, speak, and act right, for every single thought, word, and action gets fed back into our subconscious and unconscious, and results in conscious thoughts, words, and actions; a recursive feedback cycle; whether this recursive feedback cycle is positive or negative is left to us.

“Glad you desired sensibly and wished rightly for a person like me. You've got me.”

The westerner folded his palms and bowed his head as a silent wind rustled the quiet trees outside. The Guruji raised his arm in a blessing and continued:

“The real Guru acts just as a catalyst, and nothing more, to the profound chemical reaction in his Shishya; the Guru with his brevity points, the Shishya expounds. Brevity is of the essence as a lot of beautiful words more often than not obfuscate teachings and therefore fail miserably in their purpose. Only the spirit of the teachings is conveyed by the Guru to his Shishya.

“If the Shishya does not open himself completely at the feet of his Guru, Jnana and Bhakti do not flow into him; this work is worship.”

The Guruji fell silent, closed his eyes, and began to meditate. There was no worship of anything except silence, which had fallen upon all.

A little while later the calm Chinese farmer-sage whispered:

“The greatest Guru was Krishna. He was the true creator; like Tao; action through inaction. He never lifted a finger yet completely controlled the whole course of the Mahabharata war.”

The young doctor chirpily added:

“The noblest profession is that of the Guru; he teaches the farmer and the doctor who are from the only two other nobler professions. These three, the Guru, the farmer, and the doctor, form the trinity of society.”

The middle-aged astrophysicist tried not to wince.

Vibrant birds flew over the green pyramid without creating anything; just being, and keeping to, themselves.

The Jack of all, master of many, westerner, asked in obvious pain and withheld creativity:

“What are your views on creation and pain Guruji?”

The Guruji opened his eyes wide:

“Happiness and sadness cannot exist without each other, and therefore, reflect Yin and Yang relationship; they bring misery to life, crests and troughs in life’s ocean which ought to be tranquil.

“I look at creation, life, and death as a full circle, believing that one has to return home after one’s journey. Now, the questions arise with the use of the word ‘creation,’ as to who creates? Why creates? Why create this world where pain exists? How to find peace during life

before death ends both happiness and sadness? Answers to these questions are that there is a self-created Creator, who spontaneously creates Nature, action through inaction, and Nature, which incorporates both Yin and Yang, procreates because procreation is in its nature, giving rise to Woman and Man, sadness and happiness, and finally, drawing wisdom from my teachings, you can transcend this contrast, Nature, and find peace; become one with the Creator during life itself.

“Draw from me the power to believe that all streams flow into rivers which in turn merge in seas, and that, though one cloak of belief may not cloak all humans, the fire which warms all human hearts in a cold life is one, and try to add your own small twigs to keep the fire of hope burning in the hearth of the human home.

“You are a businessman. You know about synergy. It is the path to peace.

“Synergy characterizes life on earth, and each human affects the others in the world either positively or negatively through his or her thoughts, words, and actions.

“However, my thoughts, converted into messages, words, spoken and written down as teachings, and finally actions, leading by example, are profound enough to be positive, universal, and eternal.”

The westerner, thinking that the easterner was going a little too fast for his taste, quickly said:

“I am not sure that . . .”

The Gurujī sent forth lightning bolts without thundering:

“Everything, including philosophies, must evolve with time, to address the needs of the human, only needs and not necessities or desires, however, also comprehending that an evolving and towering edifice is best built upon the solid foundations of the past. India has a great past and therefore me too.

“I am the product of my motherland, a splendid assimilation of all schools of thought and harmonious amalgamation with nature. The beautiful music of my philosophical and spiritual voyage resounds throughout the world; a music which soothes the selfish, cunning, and savage beast that is man. I, without pausing or tiring, strive to perfect the human; guiding and transforming men by reminding them of a higher purpose in, and the true meaning of, life.”

The westerner tiredly asked:

“What according to you is the right thing for a human to do under any circumstance?”

The easterner energetically replied:

“Everybody knows what is right and what is wrong. One is happy when doing the right thing and sad when doing the wrong thing. Subjectivity and resulting irrationally obfuscate this clear truth. One should work through a refined scope towards world synergy; evolution of life as a single whole undivided organism.”

A breakfast bell from afar broke the spiritual monotony by chiming away.

Everybody was hungry. Breakfast was brought in. Everyone had eggs and coffee with cream.

In the satisfied aftermath of a good, though not hearty, breakfast, the Guruji cleared a few points, unasked but needed to be explained, for the Irish American, who had suddenly been rid of even the least bit of antagonism towards anyone following a warm feeling in his stomach:

“In the debate between vegans and the rest of the world, where the non-vegetarians contend that even plants have life, the world solution to this conundrum would be to keep everything to a bare minimum; only keeping to needs and not necessities or desires.

“An example of the difference between a need and a necessity is that transport is a need while personal vehicles are a necessity. However, needs too vary across space and time leading to hatred between men. Abundant understanding is therefore required; even when it comes to the common denominator of food.”

The Guruji was offered a glass of water by the beautiful astrophysicist, and as he slowly relished it, she broke her silence:

“One should only be a cog in a wheel, however, realizing that the wheel wouldn’t be without the cog. One cannot escape the descending facts that one is a part of the universe, Milky Way galaxy, our solar system, Earth, one of the continents, a particular race, a certain country, one religion, a single caste, two genders, high or low class, parents – finally a lucky species, but, it is honorable to start ascending and transcending boundaries.”

The cute doctor added her views slightly influenced by her field:

“The idea of duty initially depends upon fertilization but eventually expands into the environment; however distant. Man shouldn’t be judged by the nature of his duty but by the manner and spirit in which he undertakes and performs them; finally duty rising to work for work’s sake; one having understood all.”

The smiling middle-aged woman, as she took back the empty glass from the handsome ex-cricketer, said proudly:

“What makes a great man or woman? There will be billions of answers as there are billions of people on this planet with billions of different views. However, the answers which Guruji, who is one in billions, gives, never verbally but only by setting an example with his own

luminous life, is that, it is always the search for truth, with a questioning attitude, never accepting any knowledge without experiencing it firsthand, believing in equality, and finally, having distilled all knowledge thus gained into wisdom, serving humankind by boldly and selflessly sharing one's profound wisdom with the underprivileged, the ignorant, and the arrogant, like an honorable warrior fighting against sectarianism, bigotry and its evil clone fanaticism, to win the war for world peace”

The doctor, looking like an accomplished model regretting something, and who didn't want to be left behind, added:

“World peace is an overused term nowadays in world politics and beauty pageants, by politicians and physically beautiful people, most of whom are no more than actors, however, Guruji, whose inner light of conviction shines through his calm face, never plays politics or idle roles, but is instead the lead actor on the world stage, when mother earth needs one of her sons to stand up for her, and struggles as a humble monk for world peace.”

The atmosphere in the pyramid was charged with rays of love.

The suddenly unhappy Guruji, not wanting to be caught in the crossfire of flattering words, quickly turned the spotlight upon the disciple who was to be initiated that day:

“What do you call yours?”

The westerner had not lived for more than four decades trotting the globe without becoming wise:

“Since everything affects everything, both positively and negatively, everything is mine as I can affect it, and nothing is mine as I am left with no free will.”

“To whom belong your problems?”

“What problems?”

The westerner asked back with a trace of exasperation:

“What is it about the words infinite, eternal, and unvarying that fascinates men from time immemorial? Man has never seen the infinite, lived eternally, or been unvarying in his life in any aspect. So, why does he associate these words with the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute?”

The eastern Guruji, appearing not to notice a slight edge in the westerner's voice, hinting at the futility of any answer to his question, calmly replied:

“The answers are simple.

“Man has the tendency to get attached which leads to misery; misery because he attaches himself to the finite things of this world; finite in finite space and finite time; varying. As a result

his emotions are always oscillating. He is sometimes sad and sometimes happy. He is never at peace. The ocean of his mind always has the crests and troughs of thoughts; never calm, never tranquil. However, if he attaches himself to the unvarying infinite and the eternal, the Absolute, the Ultimate Reality, he achieves peace, calm, tranquility; attachment becomes non-attachment; hence the fascination.”

The westerner this time asked in clear anger:

“Why so many religions?”

The once engineer Guruji was still unruffled as he replied:

“An all-encompassing algorithm, one religion, for all men cannot be written. One algorithm, religion, will give the correct output, results, for the values, aspirations, of some men, men who follow that religion, inputted in to it; and others for others.

“Man has always searched for the unvarying infinite and the eternal, God, the destiny of his immortal soul, scared by his varying finite and temporary life; a perpetual search for something beyond his finite senses; with his evolution proceeding in that direction.

“However, with that evolution came religion, and, with as many diverse thoughts as men, there evolved many religions too.

“Religion and spirituality came into being as a result of the need for a constant in life with which one could correlate positively with the unvarying infinite and eternal and thereby ensure peace. Ethics, foremost of which was self-renunciation to achieve peace, were derived from religion and spirituality, which were a constant and held true for every man across all of space and time.”

The logical program of the green engineered pyramid into which illogical sunrays were entering was unraveling.

The westerner, who had not pursued a career based upon his education, and had had no time for sports, asked with a hint of amusement:

“Why did you quit being an engineer and a cricketer? Some sad reason?”

The beautiful woman quickly interrupted to protect the handsome man, and put the topic of discussion back on course:

“God and religion began with the beauty and the beast. Man was awed by and wanted to know the creative force behind the tangible beauty of nature; earth, sun, other stars, and moon which led to the intangible beauty of dawns, twilights, and nights. He was scared by the tangible

beast of the dead body and wanted to know the creative force behind a living body and its intangible beauty; the spirit. This creative force was an abstraction. This abstraction was its own creator.”

The calm man from the land of the Tao Te Ching added to the equilibrium being restored:

“What I have on the inside is what I see on the outside. It is the subjective world that rules the objective world. There is always a positive correlation between the within and without. I change the subject and I change the object. By believing a liar I make him truthful, and by loving a sinner I make him a saint. If someone miserable makes me miserable, it proves I am weak. If I become strong and help the other be free of his misery, I will be free of my misery. If I see Tao in my fellow human, it proves that there is Tao within me. In this manner, when equality is achieved among all, peace will reign; freedom for all is assured through selfless and courageous actions.”

It was time to uncreate.

The Irish American, who didn't want to be any ist of any ism, said forcefully:

“A view in which nature has no creator will have had no beginning and no end; no life and no death; just a flow; like water; nothing outside of existence.”

He then asked rhetorically:

“Then, wouldn't space be finite?

“Then, wouldn't time move in a circle with events repeating? Then, with the number of events being finite, couldn't time itself be said to be finite? No eternity?”

Everything seemed to become contained at that moment within the green glass pyramid.

Then, the beautiful astrophysicist, said with a lilting laugh to break free of the finiteness:

“Since energy can neither be created nor destroyed in our universe of space, time, and causation, and  $E = mc^2$ , there must have been a Creator, Brahman, beyond space, time, and causation, who created the energy and matter of space and time; Himself his own creator.”

The red-haired westerner flared:

“It doesn't make sense. I don't agree. Philosophy and spirituality are only for those who don't have anything else.”

The cute young thing said:

“Maya is the balancing of material poverty by mental happiness and material richness by mental unhappiness.”

“You are a rich philosopher who is full of human spirit. You are upsetting the balance!”

She then quietly asked with a quizzical look:

“What are you hiding?”

The westerner’s emerald-green eyes stared into space angrily as he shot out:

“My philosophy is no philosophy. Even that is a belief; however, man cannot exist without believing in anything. I would like to believe only in my idea of a universe which has not been created and is purely physical, with neither soul nor mind. I don’t agree with your beliefs.”

The Guruji sighed and replied to what would have become a diatribe:

“When there is positive correlation between ourselves and others, we like them, and when there is negative correlation, we don’t; however, one must be objective and not subjective. Different people on different points of the same globe at different times, with different gods, religions, ideals, and motives, have all essentially been moving slowly but steadily, along different radii, towards the same centre, the same God; we should not judge anybody.

“Now, you may ask when to be subjective and when to be objective. One should be subjective when it comes to spirituality, for spirituality is nothing but an entire good. With respect to everything else, for example religion, one should be objective; one should not judge others’ by one’s own standards.”

A few black clouds began blocking the sun and it started getting dark in the glass pyramid.

The angry middle-aged man started calming down a little as he said with only a hint of woe:

“Men are haunted by the questions: What is life? What is death? What is existence? All the material possessions that men strive for and accumulate throughout their life at the moment of their death are separated from them. What is real?

“What is behind all these?

“God?

“Who created the creator?

“Is He really self-created?”

“I don’t think so!”

“Tell me what is really behind your God?”

Darkness fell in the glowing-green morning.

The cynic was answered to cynically by the master all-round cricketer:

“Death is behind God, and God is behind religion.”

The suddenly ecstatic seeker, who would probably not be initiated given his rebellious attitude, gushed:

“Then, if death is behind life which ends in death, isn’t existence a full circle? Finite space and time like I said! Aren’t we immortal?”

It was unclear as to whose side the Guruji was on as he replied to the happy western kid:

“We want to be free, immortal, free of death, and therefore agreeing that the Atman, soul, which is the Brahman, Soul, does not have a cause, is by its very nature free, independent of anything outside of itself, conclude that death cannot act upon it; thus making us free and immortal. Since freedom and immortality depend upon the Atman, soul, Brahman, Soul, being beyond the law of causation, beyond this Maya, we say It is; we choose freedom and immortality.”

The red-haired man, who had been angry, then mildly woeful, then ecstatic, now freely asked:

“Where does our hate come from?”

The master of the green glass pyramid answered the emerald-green eyed man truthfully:

“It is a well hidden truth that one loves to hate what one loves but cannot have; people are jealous of one another, and therefore hate one another’s ideals of beauty, freedom, and unconditional love.

“There is herd mentality and groupism. Atheists hate the concept of God; a paradox, for how can someone hate something which according to them has no meaning, and therefore has no existence? How can one aim and fire at a target which doesn’t exist? The answer is simple: atheists do not hate the concept of God, they actually hate their fellow men: the believers, who are their target; and vice-versa; groups of believers hate each other; a vicious circle.

“This is hate between men; why bring God into the squabble?”

“In motion is friction, hate. One should move towards the goal of becoming an external witness; to be still oneself to understand world’s motion.

“He, who does, struggles and escapes all struggles and bondages: friction, hate.”

The emerald-green eyes of the red-haired Irish American could see that love had a green signal in the green transparent pyramid and hate a red.

The beautiful woman, looking at the handsome man, said:

“One’s traffic of love should be on a two-way highway; in the outer direction towards others and the inner direction towards the real ‘I.’ The one-way traffic of love on the circular road of the false ‘I’ goes round and round struggling with roadblocks like a parched man in a desert following his own footsteps in circles unaware of the oasis, the real ‘I,’ within, which can be reached by helping others.

“The winners live and love while the losers philosophize on the why and how of living and loving.

“The biggest, most well-hidden, secret is that one only wants what one doesn’t have. The people struggling for love and God don’t have either love or God within them: a pity.”

A loud sound from a gong outside entered the pyramid and reverberated between the Guruji and his disciples.

The man from the land of Zhuangzi calmly added:

“Zhuangzi says, ‘Happiness is the absence of the striving for happiness,’ we say, ‘Realization of Tao and love is the absence of the striving for Tao and love.’”

His calmness seemed to engulf all as the westerner asked softly:

“Isn’t this also realization?”

“There is a famous Zen story about a disciple, Riko, who once asked his master Nansen to explain to him the old Zen koan of the goose in the bottle. Namely, if a man puts a gosling into a bottle, and feeds the gosling through the bottle’s neck until it grows and becomes a goose, and then there is simply no more room inside the bottle, how can the man get it out without killing the goose or breaking the bottle? In response, Nansen shouts ‘RIKO!’ and gives a great clap with his hands. Startled, Riko replies, ‘Yes master!’ And Nansen says, ‘See! The goose is out!’

“I decipher this realization as follows:

“One is the goose in the bottle, one’s mind-cage. When realization occurs, one, the goose, is out of the bottle, one’s mind, without either the mind, bottle, having been broken, or oneself, the goose, having been killed; realization is possible during one’s lifetime having shrugged off the reasoning mind, without having smashed it in the process.”

There was a quiet murmur of agreement, after which, in a lilting voice, the beautiful astrophysicist spoke again:

“When the lover knocks on the door of his Beloved, and the voice inside asks, “Who is it?” and the answer is, “It is I, Beloved,” the door opens; lover and loved are one.”

The handsome once engineer and cricketer wanted to transform the statement of his disciple into a duet and therefore said:

“God, the Operating System, is to be loved and understood, so that Applications can love one another and run together. An all-embracing algorithm incorporates smaller ones.”

The astrophysicist continued in a singsong voice:

“The single universal thread running through all planet-pearls has been sought by Indian philosophers. Loving single planet-pearls, persons, one after another, for eternity, without loving the necklace, humanity, is not for the Bhakta, who, in loving the single universal thread, God, loves all pearls in the necklace; pearls, black or white, in this yin and yang world, are pearls, and the Bhakta, by loving the thread, loves all, bad and good.”

The once engineer was not to be made obsolete:

“The vast, constant, inner ideal of love correlated with small, varying, outer objects leads to misery. Man has to stop forcing his intellect onto those of others, and quietly worship the ideal of love within himself. For the Bhakta, the Inner Abstract becomes the Concrete Itself.”

The once cricketer quickly took a second run between the wickets:

“Madness and impropriety are the two star batsmen, on the pitch prepared by the servant groundman, smashing the ball of fear and desire out of the stadium of God under His floodlights to win the game of love watched by the peaceful umpire and the child in the crowd.”

This duet, which had no place for a third singer, was however barged into by the health care professional, with a lot of healthy wit:

“It was said that the sun never sets on the British Empire; however, it is India’s spirituality that moonlights as the sun in the west; India’s spirituality never sleeps.”

When three, why not four, must have thought the Chinese man, who firmly said:

“The material west may buy a plane to become happy, and further down the road of realization may become wiser and buy a good book, but the spiritual east is already wise, believing in the spontaneity of Tao, living entirely in the moment, and hence realizing eternity and infinity, freedom, beauty, unconditional love, the intangible truth, the One, in a moment. Gurus, like our Guruji, are transparent truths through which we are able to see the One, the truth.”

Since there is no stopping a middle-aged woman who wants to have the last word on anything and everything, it came as no surprise when the astrophysicist appended:

“Truth can never be measured as we do not have a standard with which to measure it against; it is not science; it cannot be quantified; it can only be realized with the help of Gurus, and not reasoned towards; truth is a sunset; if we do not enjoy the sunset in the moment, our whole past has been meaningless and our future will be useless.”

The black clouds over the green glass pyramid would be destroyed by the moonlighting red-haired sun from the west.

The emerald-green eyed seeker, who did not want to seek anymore, deciding that he would have the last word at what would be a failed initiation, got up from his cushion, and looking down at the sitting quadrangle from his vantage point of a head held high and proud, said crisply:

“I will tell you why there can’t be creation.

“Everything we perceive is the past. For example, the very moment a word escapes from someone’s mouth, it becomes the past, as it will take time for the brain to register it; even if a nanosecond. Therefore, all that we create are just permutations and combinations of past data. Nothing is original.

“Evolution only means the brain being able to form more and more complex permutations and combinations of past data.

“Knowledge wasn’t created, it evolved.

“Information has always been a constant quantity; however, with the evolving brain capable of increasingly complex permutations and combinations of all available data, knowledge evolved, increased.

“Thus, in existence, there is no creation, true invention, but only discovery and innovation. Inventions are just incredible permutations and combinations of existing data, innovations.

“This universe has always existed. It wasn’t created.

“This is the power of permutation and combination.

“And about your beloved Maya...

“Maya occurs because the subjective mirror of a newly born child, which is almost without blemish, ‘almost,’ because it is already blemished by its parents’ genes, gets blemished more and more upon keeping on reflecting more and more of the world as it grows, and this leads to each and every person having his or her own tainted spotlight, created by their blemished subjective mirror, reflecting back the pure light of the world on their own reality. This is Maya. There is no illusion. All is real; only there are many realities.

“Listen carefully to more of my scientific reasoning. I will take a poetic path, but with some repetition of my previous convictions.

“How can a man appreciate Shakespeare?

“When a child is born, its mental mirror is already blemished by the information that has been passed on to it through its parents’ genes. As it grows, the signals from its environment are transduced through its senses and form concepts, patterns, in its brain. When fresh signals are inputted into its brain, causation, these fresh experiences are correlated with existing experiences, concepts, patterns, to form fresh knowledge, through association, reasoning. Depending upon whether this correlation is positive or negative, following which there is positive or negative reasoning, the human will either like or dislike the fresh experiences. As a human grows, its mental mirror will become more and more scarred by more and more external input. The mental mirror of every human will reflect back inputted external light as its own scarred spotlight lighting up a reality for itself different from the realities of other humans.

“Thus, a man may or may not appreciate Shakespeare depending upon whether he is a gentleman or a cannibal.

“Now, finally...

“Fiction is the amalgamation of permutations and combinations of sensible thoughts having a concrete existence in reality; like a useful hybrid tomato grown by thinking about various wonderful varieties of pedigreed tomatoes. However, fiction is not the amalgamation of permutations and combinations of absurd thoughts having no concrete existence in reality; like a fantasy written by thinking about fairies and goblins.

“Philosophy, love of wisdom, tries to make sense of reality; it is based on reality like fiction.

“Therefore, philosophy is fiction.

“Religion is love of wisdom too; a love of following the right path, one of wisdom to liberation; liberation being the goal of love, philosophy, work, fiction; your Bhakti, Jnana, Karma.

“Therefore, religion is fiction too.

“Since Truth is stranger than fiction, Truth is stranger than philosophy and religion too, and therefore, if God is Truth, He cannot be arrived at through either philosophy or religion.

“This is my line of reasoning.

“I am leaving.”

The Guruji, who was younger than the Irish American, quickly got up, and told the older man – who had the habit of abruptly leaving, as he had abruptly left the chamber of the head of a philosophy department long ago – in a calm voice:

“Wait, son.

“The best teachers show us the path on which we can travel to find our own paths to the same ultimate goal. The child clutches the father’s finger, learns to toddle, and then runs away on its own path, wearing either sneakers, or loafers, or formals, to wherever that it has to go as a boy, young man, and man, until the tired man realizes that it is time to stop running and begin introspecting. I hope to be such a teacher.”

The impatient man grudgingly said:

“All right, but prove yourself first.

“It is the firm opinion of many of my fellow westerners who study Sanskrit, the language of the gods, that, it was bestowed upon man by God, and did not evolve. We westerners gave you Charles Darwin along with his evolution, so how does the scientific Indian think? I came here thinking you were an engineer and would be able to troubleshoot my issues. But you are keeping on going about an indefinable something outside this universe along with your disciples. How do you intend to troubleshoot this issue of mine?”

Even the versatile poetic language of Sanskrit couldn’t describe the silence that fell inside the glass pyramid.

The Guruji, looking at his disciples, who too had got up and were looking at him pleadingly, finally replied softly:

“We, the easterners, think, like the Tao sage, that out of the Non-Being, the nameless and the formless, the Brahman, came the formless Being, chaos, and, out of this chaos arose the ordered universe tending towards equilibrium, and out of the permutations and combinations of

this universe arose ordered Sanskrit tending towards a beautiful equilibrium with mankind. This shows that even though Sanskrit has evolved, behind it is the Brahman.”

The smooth sloping walls of the transparent pyramid allowed no bird to perch on them; birds had to keep flying and be free.

The Irish American laughed and rebuked:

“You are only now singing my song of permutations and combinations with your own abstract composer behind you.

“Let me educate you further Guruji.

“Organic matter is the output of permutations and combinations of inorganic matter under the influence of energy. Again, our reality is only one among many, but we think that what we experience is the only reality. We are just a flow of matter and energy. We will exist as long as matter and energy exist. There is no mind or soul. I clearly realize now that I came here only for corroboration, to see if I had any comrades. I was a fool. Good bye.”

The emerald-green eyed white Irish American turned his back to the orange-clad brown Guruji and his disciples and, tearing and throwing away his garland of yellow flowers which were no longer bright, stalked out of the green glass pyramid in the Garden of Eden, with its Adam and Eve, on his long and powerful legs into the blazing Indian sun.

Rivers of sorrow flowed everywhere.

The pure Ganges was left behind and forgotten.

## The Start of the Slippery Slope

The Irish American globe trotter, feeling like a lost alien in a rigid world, returned home to the United States, thinking, 'home sweet home, and charity begins at home,' however, he would soon realize the bitter truth that a cosmopolitan freethinker is an alien in a rigid home too.

It was the start of the slippery slope, which, however, felt like the start of a holy pilgrimage.

It was initially great as he began helping orphan children, innocent victims of an irrational life, who he realized had been needlessly thrust into the pain of a miserable world, of course without their consent, and deserted by their procreators.

The philosopher had completely realized the futility of philosophizing, as one philosopher can easily tear down another's philosophy with his own reasoning, leaving both the thinkers and the rest of the world bereft of any real benefit from the whole egoistical venture. He had also deeply felt that since he was neither a teacher, nor a doctor, nor a farmer, this was the only way he could make himself useful in a sad world and pay back his debt to a society which had given him pleasure.

He, the benefactor, lavished money, love, affection, and tenderness on the primarily benefitted, the children, and received in return love, affection, and devotion from the children. It was barter, as he knew it was, with his inner voice telling him that he was doing this charity work solely because of his selfish desire for further pleasure, which he happily heard and accepted. He had once wondered whether true altruism existed, and upon discussing it with a German artist and philosopher, had been told that true altruism was one which was done spontaneously, a spontaneity he had associated with spontaneous joy, with the spontaneous creation of the universe by Tao, as it was told how the Tao had created the universe in the Tao Te Ching, with the realization technique transferred by a Zen master, and therefore, going by that supreme standard, his present altruism was definitely not true altruism; it had not been spontaneous; it had been an elaborately thought out process like all his profitable business ventures; with pleasure as the goal.

And this venture too was highly successful like all his other business ventures, which attracted detractors, and who, quickly becoming his rabid enemies, poured black oil on his slippery slope. He was hit with lawsuits claiming that this freethinker was negatively influencing innocent children and should be segregated from them. His enemies won the long drawn-out legal battle which the successful businessman had fought tooth and nail every inch of the way till the last moment; however, the result had been a foregone conclusion in a world where ninety-five percentage of the population opposed freethinkers.

The defeated Irish American felt victorious; liberated.

The second-handers had tried to grab his money too, but they hadn't succeeded.

The Jack of all, master of many, vanished into the ethereal heights of his own freedom.

## Art of the Heart

I was never an also-ran, but I also never won the race, because I ran alone,  
against myself

The man who had meditated on life, but had been told by his detractors that he had never learnt the art of meditation, had maintained his silence.

His silence was his supreme meditation; the silence of a sunset.

He knew that there was somebody behind his varying emotions; a calm unvarying entity; an entity with which sunsets were always positively correlated. From where the entity came in what was probably nothing more than an organic machine, he was unsure of; however, he was certain of how it came, and that science would discover and isolate that organic entity in man one day.

That entity in him, which ignorant men called soul, would come to him after his human spirit had made him work meticulously and diligently till exhaustion, and, after having held fast, he would let go, in the presence of beauty; his frame would then float without name or form; he would become a nothing and gain everything.

But, a continuous silence, a nothing, even though everything, means death in society.

Therefore he would speak. From becoming a nothing and gaining everything, he would move and moderate himself into a something; a man in society; his personal definition of the middle path of the Buddha.

He knew that those who were true sages lived in forests on fruits and roots, away even from themselves; free from the misery of needing to exert power over another: Alfred Adler's and Friedrich Nietzsche's *will to power* inherent in men.

One day he would be free too.

However, till then, Sigmund Freud's *will to pleasure* was needed, only sometimes, and too in moderation, to ensure that he did not lose the *will to live*.

## Revisiting Sadness and Happiness

The beautiful man, who had refused to completely stop at the red signals, the color of his fiery hair, of sadness speed bumps, over the happy road of his life winding through various pit stop towns of jobs, and had accelerated each time after slowing down by quickly making the red signals turn green, by looking at them with his emerald eyes through which his indomitable will shone, wrote in his diary about sadness, happiness, and the non-corporal beauty he had experienced during his long journey:

### *Diary Entry Twenty-nine*

Sadness sister sometimes preys upon her happiness brother and the joy sister sometimes preys upon her sorrow brother as the yin and yang twins of complementary contrast have the same father and mother: the human.

For the human to live a life giving up both his twin children, after realizing she cannot have one without the other, and therefore sacrificing happiness so as not to be beheaded by sadness, is to become a stone and lead a meaningless life.

However, there is no need to sacrifice need along with fear and desire which should be.

The need to be happy can be achieved during the course of life, when the parent of the brother and sister sits with his family and watches glorious orange sunrises and sunsets, both of which are free recurring non-corporal beauties in space, during which the contented family is made up of the happiness brother with his joy sister and happy parent.

However, it is stood to be understood that the glorious siblings, mornings and evenings, wouldn't be glorious in the least if not for their inglorious cousins, the harsh hot afternoons and cold dark nights.

The best beauty of life is found only in non-corporal beauty; this is life.

*Darkre*

The old man, who had been more happy than sad during his life, considering himself lucky to have had a positive average so far, happily said to himself:

*It was the non-corporal beauty of the long Renaissance era art that matched the sunrises and sunsets of my life the most and gave me happiness!*

## Inner and Outer Paintings

The man of beauty who had loved the long Renaissance era paintings since his childhood was in the habit of doing so simply because, like all kids, as a kid, he had loved to wield his mighty colorful crayons over white paper; a love for art which had grown and persisted.

Rainbow crayons in his pudgy hand had given way to paintbrushes painting watercolors in his thin one; watercolor paintings had then made way for oil paintings as his hand matured, and finally everything had turned black and white when he simply began to sketch with lead using his hand which was turning gnarly.

The artist had kept his art to himself like a lover possessed, and as he was sketching the circular yin and yang, with its two black and white fishes, one with a white eye and the other with a black eye, on the first page of his black and white diary, which he had kept empty for a really personal entry, he began formulating what he would write below his self-portrait, and later wrote under his emblem:

### *Diary Entry Thirty*

To the innocent child, which used its spectrum of wax crayons, the multihued world was vibrant underneath a multicolored circular arc; this beauty it happily and duly represented on ordinary white paper.

The child, as it grew into a young adult, realizing that every facet of life mixed with one another and flowed together like different streams in a river, began to experiment with watercolor paint; painting on watercolor paper.

Standing crying in the rain one day with a watercolor painting, and seeing the paper too weeping colors, the adult decided to go in for oil painting, which was more forgiving as mistakes could be painted over, and began painting with oil paint, for a richer representation of life; painting on canvas.

After the child had stopped using crayons and the young adult had begun to use paintbrushes, there had always been a contrast between every painting of the world the human artist had painted in its mind of the world and the self-portraits the world artist presented it with.

There had always been conflict as the paintings of the human artist and the world artist had been predator and prey to each other.

However, as time flowed, the human artist, slowly realizing that life was but complementary contrast, began sketching using black lead on white ordinary paper; soon the human artist became old and a child once more, however, with the difference of experience.

Conflict had vanished; predator and prey had become one.

*Darkre*

The old man, whose face still spoke volumes about beauty, looked up at the twinkling blue stars in the dark sky and let fly three blazing arrows from his mind:

*There is always a contrast between what we think is and what actually is!*

*A contrast between what we want and what we get!*

*Dreams and reality, a complementary contrast!*

## Back Home before Final Journey

The rugged man, who would set off on his final journey, decided to do it from his hometown, after visiting his best buddy, the Indo-American, who was lying sick and bedridden in his palatial house which he had built in their hometown after struggling and succeeding against all odds.

He landed up, sad and tired, directly at the front door of his long-time buddy after his long journey, but immediately became happy when his smiling wife opened the door of her home herself and welcomed him in.

The happy old Indo-American lay on his huge white bed in the middle of a spacious white room with large open windows facing tall beautiful green trees whose tops were on level with the heads of his laughing children sitting around the sick bedridden man.

The spiritual Indo-American, who was playing with prayer beads while his grandchildren played on the floor beside his bed, gave a broad smile when his best buddy sat beside him on the bed and held his hand.

The family quickly left to give privacy to the two old best friends who had never let time and distance separate them from each other and had kept in close touch, however, the Irish American, for more than a decade, hadn't seen, or heard about, either the British American friend, the doe-eyed woman, or the friend and once neighbor, the woman who as a girl had been sent to a juvenile detention centre.

While sipping hot spiced tea which had been brought in by the Indo-American's phlegmatic butler, the two men happily swapped stories, however, the Indo-American's dancing eyes lost their spirit as they looked at a future which his friend was preparing for himself; without a word about it being exchanged by the two.

Therefore, the spiritual man who understood, decided that he could help his buddy to travel light by telling him about the three other people in their lives who mattered to both and with whom he had kept in touch.

He showed the recent glossy photographs of all three beautiful people to his glowing friend and told about how melodious their voices sounded on the telephone even though life hadn't exactly been the same for all.

The Irish American smiled and smiled throughout the time he spent in the lovely home of his friend with his family, and was still smiling when he reached his own home in the town where he had spent the best days of his life; a home he had maintained in excellent condition from a long distance.

While digesting the hearty Indian dinner he had had in his friend's home, on a soft old sofa in his which still had a spring in its step, he took out his black and white diary, which he would post to his best buddy before he left town so as to spare both the sorrow of a final goodbye, and wondering whether life truly averaged out for all men and women, like it had averaged out between joy and sorrow for him, decided to recalculate his observation.

## Averaging Out

The average man recalculated his observation by choosing a small sample containing himself, who he represented in his black and white diary as IrA, for Irish American, his best buddy, the Indo-American, as InA, the doe-eyed woman as DE, the much older friend, the British American, as BA, and the friend and once neighbor, the woman who as a girl had been sent to a juvenile detention centre as FN.

He decided to leave out FN for the time being and arranged the remaining four in four columns, giving each a rank descending from eight to two in steps of two, with eight being the rank assigned to the person who was on the topmost rung, and two being the rank assigned to the person who was on the lowermost rung, of a ladder which stood for a particular quality present in all four.

The four stood on the rungs of the *Ladder of the Human Spirit* from top to bottom as IrA, InA, DE, and BA.

On the *Ladder of Good Genes* it was BA, DE, IrA, and InA, while the *Ladder of Peace of Mind* was ordered InA, IrA, DE, and BA.

The last *Ladder of Health* on which the four stood looked like BA, DE, InA, and IrA.

The Irish American, who would die earlier than his best buddy, the Indo-American, who was sick and bedridden, was at the bottom of the *Ladder of Health*, while the doe-eyed woman, who had been sick for sometime but still active, was above the Indo-American, but below the British American, who was still as healthy as an ox and stood at the top.

The Indo-American, who had always been spiritual, was followed by the Irish American, who had tried his best to be like his best buddy, but whose philosophy of life had never stood on a firm rock, and then the doe-eyed woman, who had tried to have her philosophy of life, but had never succeeded, initially because she had been too materialistic, and finally because she had given up after trying – only once – and failing to do good to the world and herself, in the rankings from the top of the *Ladder of Peace of Mind* to its last but one rung, while the British American, who had never tried to have a philosophy for his life, stood on the lowest rung of the ladder.

On the *Ladder of Good Genes*, the British American who came from good stock and was still almost as handsome as Elvis, and the doe-eyed woman who was still beautiful, stood above the Irish American who still had his rugged looks and who stood above the Indo-American who had never been fit or handsome.

When it came to the *Ladder of the Human Spirit*, the Indo-American had bravely struggled in a culture different from that of his ancestors and succeeded, the doe-eyed woman had succeeded too, but she had struggled more and succeeded less when the culture she had struggled in had been her own, while the British American had simply given up and struggled for most of his life in an unhappy marriage.

At the top of the *Ladder of the Human Spirit* stood the Irish American who had lived a life filled with love, heartbreak, danger, and adventure; the love of his parents who had separated, death of his parents' paramours which had caused further heartbreak, separation from his high school sweetheart which had added to his pain, the danger of a reckless life as a biker, a legally dangerous life as a sheriff, a morally dangerous one as a priest, a financially dangerous one as a businessman, and finally, an adventurous one as a student, journalist, and philosopher.

When the man, who instinctively knew what the outcome would be, calculated the average of all the four contestants over the four qualities, he smiled as everybody in the race of life ended up with an average of five; life was a great equalizer; but then again, the sample, though diverse, had been too small.

Meanwhile, FN was just a red butterfly addicted to the poppy flower, and was beyond life's calculation.

## Case for Life

The next morning, before he would post his black and white diary to his best buddy, the victor wrote in it for one last time:

### *Diary Entry Thirty-two*

The defendant, Man, dressed in black and white, sat quietly at the defendant's table on the left, while the plaintiff, God, dressed in white, sat agitated at the plaintiff's table on the right, both facing the judge, Man, dressed in black and white, who sat at a raised bench.

The defendant was being tried for blasphemy which the plaintiff had accused him of.

The advocate for the prosecution, God, dressed in black, and the advocate for the defense, Man, dressed in black and white, stood between the judge and the public: Woman, who sat dressed in red at the back of the courtroom along with the priests, dressed in white, who were to be the witnesses for the prosecution.

The judge, tapping his gavel on the sounding block, both made from the brown wood of the mighty oak, began the proceedings.

The advocate for the prosecution called the priests, one by one, to the witness stand, and made them testify to the existence of God, who was plainly visible to all except Man, which they did.

The advocate for the defense took over next, and calling the priests one by one to the witness stand in the same order as they had been previously called, asked them to describe God, which each did in his own way in a manner completely different from the others.

The judgment was made.

The Woman in red, startled by the outcome of the trial, hastily got to her feet, but was immediately ordered to sit down.

Because of the conflicting testimonies of the witnesses, the judge had given the defendant the benefit of the doubt, and acquitted him.

The judge announced the end of the proceedings by tapping his gavel.

Man had argued the case for Man's life in front of Man and won.

God had argued for Himself with the help of priests and lost.

Man had decided.

Woman had only been the public who had had no option but to just watch.

The plaintiff, who had tried to prey upon the defendant with the help of his advocate and witnesses, had been preyed upon by the defendant's advocate and the judge.

*Darkre*

The old man, remembering the last but one entry in his diary, smiled:

*That is the case for my life!*

## Start of the Stop

It was a beautiful spring dawn with soft birds flying on the cool fragrant breeze when the old man left the glowing place of his unchosen beginning towards his chosen end; he had heard about the expression, *where elephants go to die*, and had chosen his own graveyard-cum-crematorium.

He arrived at a bustling village near a grey mountain whose top he had chosen to be his final resting place and bought a coffin, a matchbox, and a potato with the remnants of his pocket. The pauper then swapped his good clothes and shoes with a beggar for his bad clothes and sandals; at which the grateful mendicant asked for a cloak from a derelict comrade and generously gifted it to his new brother who looked as if he would need it on his journey.

Putting the can of whale oil, which he had obtained long ago and stored in the cool basement of his home, and which he had now brought with him to the village, in the coffin, the man on his final mission latched the lid of his coffin shut, and began lugging it towards the grey mountain which he could see at a distance from the village.

## Power, Pleasure, and Meaning of Four Austrians

Adolf Hitler, who had been the ultimate symbol of the *will to power*, which according to his fellow Austrian, Alfred Adler, and German, Friedrich Nietzsche, was the primary motivational force driving an individual, was probably a prey to his *will to pleasure*, which according to another Austrian, Sigmund Freud, was the primary motivational force, and in all probability, both the *will to power* and *will to pleasure*, had preyed upon many a man's search for meaning in his life inspired by the last Austrian, Viktor Frankl, advocating Soren Kierkegaard's *will to meaning* principle.

However, the old man who would be dead soon, now considered the possibility that Man was no more than an accidental organic machine, adding *accidental* to the *organic machine* he had thought Man probably was earlier, who fueled by fears and desires was travelling through a narrow path in a huge forest, being both predator and prey, thinking that the path he was on was the only path and the reality he knew was the only reality; if every mammoth tree on every narrow winding path through a giant rainforest could be different, what to say of reality!

Suddenly, a detracting thought objected that he was the one who believed that there was a reason behind everything, and yet here he was thinking that man was accidental, unplanned; however, another thought spontaneously provided a solution to himself, clarifying that, even though an automobile accident has a reason behind it, it is definitely not planned.

There wouldn't be an accidental death for him. It had been long planned.

The old man's thought about Man probably being nothing more than an *accidental organic machine* had become the predator to the prey of the three Viennese thoughts; Man was both predator and prey.

At these moments of epiphanies by and to himself, the contented man, who was on an ocean cruise, and till now had called in at many destinations and varied vocations, being both the captain and the last deckhand of his ship sailing over the deep waters of life, which had set sail from the home port of a birth in which he had had no choice and would dock for the last time at the port of an inevitable death whose time, date, and place he had already chosen, knew that the sailor in him had always been on a quest for the holy grail of living and being completely happy in the moment unshackled from past and future, fear and desire.

## A World in a Diary

The old man, who had written in his black and white diary from the time when he had been a bright boy till he had become a wise man, was now glad of his decision to have focused his concentration and written a distilled predator and prey approach to life which had enabled him to understand the complementary contrast of the world's big picture in black and white.

The diary of the globe-trotter had managed to encapsulate the world within it with the leitmotif of predator and prey because of the yin and yang of the diarist's thoughts which had fallen and risen like waves, and now that the sailor who had voyaged through the ocean of life, sailing on the troughs and crests of his thoughts, was nearing a shore where thoughts would come to an end, he realized that though his negative thoughts had sometimes been the predator preying on his positive ones and at other times the tables had turned with the prey becoming predator, soon there would be no more contrast.

## Another Realization

Suddenly, as a shining blue butterfly with thin black streaks fluttered away from him, a lightning bolt flashed in front of the old man's mind's eye, and the thunder in his mind reassured him that since he had always been right about there being no free will – which the *butterfly effect* proved – he could not be held responsible for the death he was heading towards at that very moment.

## Base Camp

The mountaineer who had reached the pinnacle of life's mountain made base camp at the foot of the grey mountain which he had reached at night; he would begin the long journey to the mountain-top of death at dawn.

There were no dreams on the penultimate night as he slept soundly and woke up happily refreshed.

As the uphill climb of the energetic old man began with him lugging his coffin, the whale oil can in it rattled and added its whale song to his cheerful whistling, the buzzing of bees, and the tweeting of birds on his last morning; soon the moth, the chameleon, and the eagle, who had been away for decades, rejoined the old mind of the young man who sought a stop; there wouldn't be a downhill back to the base camp of life.

In the twilight zone between life and death, the old man wondered whether the bliss of ignorance wasn't the one which was attained after gathering all knowledge and then shrugging it off!

## End of Search for Atman, Brahman, Tao

### Reinventing the wheel with a twist – Permutation and Combination

The realization was spontaneous, though a long search had preceded it. He had held fast, now it was let go.

He looked at the strong moth, the smooth chameleon, and the walking eagle. They slithered, whispered, and led him by his willing muscular hands to the underside of a huge boulder, balanced precariously on a pointed rock, on the upward track.

The peaceful old man found a dirty blank yellow parchment, weighed down by a black stone, with a piece of lead on it, in the shade of the boulder giving him respite from the blazing afternoon sun.

The probably enlightened man wrote the final entry of his diary, using what was probably an old page torn from a diary, and the broken tip of a pencil which had been used to write that diary, both in all probability left there by another traveler, for another, on the journey of life.

#### *Final Diary Entry*

Our false outer self makes its own happiness and sadness; these are just emotions. Underneath is the peace of the true inner self which doesn't change.

Other people can control only the sadness and happiness of our false outer self. Nobody can touch the peace of our true inner self.

Our false outer self is a point, on the circumference of a circle, the source and destination of its own joys and sorrows. It imparts its joys and sorrows to other points, other people's false selves, on the circle of life, on its circular journey of life.

Our true inner self is the centre of the circle; the source and destination of our own peace; the shortest distance between two points being zero; the same point.

All are actually the same centre in the same circle of life.

This circle is Maya, and the centre is Tao, Brahman.

This Brahman, Tao, is not God, who is supposed to be outside of this universe of space, time, and causation, and hence a mystery.

The universe has no creator; it has no beginning and therefore no end; a finite circle; no real life and no real death; just a flow; like water. There is nothing outside of existence; since there is no outside, there is no inside, and hence, all is one. We are just a flow of matter and energy. The number of events in the circle is finite; therefore nothing really changes; therefore time is also finite. Infinity and eternity are myths. However, we are immortal in the circle.

The energy captured within organic matter is soul, Atman, which escapes upon organic matter dying and becoming inorganic matter – because of the continuous flow of matter and energy in the universe. The soul, Atman, then becomes one with the universal energy, Brahman, Tao; energy is energy; all is one.

It is an endless repeating cycle; repeating, hence finite.

We are the universe.

*Darkre*

The old man, as he replaced his last diary entry under the black stone, realized that he had been right to visualize everything in terms of a circle, but it was a human circle, finite. There was no need of the absurd infinite.

He was finally free, but he would go through with his planned death, for he had known about the disease that had entered his body, one he hadn't allowed anybody to become aware of, not wanting their pity, himself not indulging in self-pity, and had wanted to escape the pain and suffering it would inevitably cause. He had been right to have decided to end his life.

However, he now had absolute right to a release as there was nothing left to prove; not even to himself. He had arrived.

It was orange twilight when the traveler reached the top of the mountain; soon he was lost in thought gazing at the bloody sun and two holy-white clouds.

## Final Thoughts

The old man, to enable his coffin to catch fire with the help of the remnants of the campfire he had built when night had descended upon the previous day, doused it with the whale oil.

The brown potato, which had been his last supper, the dark-brown matchbox which he had used to light his campfire on the mountain-top with, the dark wood coffin, the whale oil, the frayed clothes on his back, the worn-out sandals on his feet, and the grey cloak had been his only possessions over the last few melancholic days he had spent reaching his graveyard-cum-crematorium.

In the dark invigorating chill before dawn, on his chosen ground in the penultimate hour, there was no existential crisis for him as he knew that there was nothing more to be understood, and hoping that his loved ones would find it easy to live without him, he knelt and put into a prayer for himself these final thoughts so that he could die happily with what he had understood:

*This life is no dream.*

*All is real; but it is not the only reality.*

*Dreams are the products of fears and desires acting upon one another; all drawn from life.*

*The environment, however distant, has influenced me from the moment of fertilization of my mother's egg by my father's sperm to this present moment, and determined where I stood on the ladder of evolution.*

*Signals from my environment, after transduction, have flowed as energy and chemicals inside me since the moment I was conceived, and made me what I was.*

*Consciousness is just an electrochemical reaction in a universe of innumerable realities.*

*I am just an organic machine acting randomly in a chaotic universe.*

*The order in the universe which I perceive through my senses could be different and need not include me.*

*My animal friends have their own order.*

*I have worked the way my animal friends have hunted; I worked for money and they hunted for food; money is nothing more than a medium facilitating synergy between humans enabling them to grow, hunt, and eat food in order to survive.*

*My human spirit was just survival instinct.*

*Some have it, some don't; it is determined by evolution.*

*Those who have it, survive, and those who don't, don't; again evolution.*

*Some have good genes, some don't; evolution.*

*Nobody is lucky or unlucky.*

*Everything averages out like the toss of a fair coin.*

*One does good because one feels good by doing good and not because of the milk of human kindness.*

*Love is just a word; sweetening, redefining, and explaining away bartering. It begins with parents on being born and continues throughout life with others depending on availability and not because relationships are made in Heaven.*

*One fools oneself into believing that there is a higher purpose when there is nothing more to life than living to eat, mate, and survive, as long as one can, so that one can eat, mate, and survive; all over and over again with money being the single thread running through these three pearls of pleasure and power; there is no meaning.*

*Gold and precious gems are only glitter having great value simply because they are rare: they have no genuine benefit for humanity other than facilitating synergy.*

*There are no divine and satanic providences and vengeance: only the mind extracting, correlating, attributing, and imagining; all unnecessarily, meaninglessly, and absurdly.*

*There is no such thing as free will.*

*There is no universal, eternal truth.*

*Every act is to escape the inevitability of death.*

*Death and its fancied aftermath rebirth are governed respectively by fear and a desire to continue on with life; wishing to regain all that one has accumulated throughout life and all of which is snatched away by death.*

*One should liberate oneself even from one's own philosophies to realize complete freedom!*

For the man, the only measure of success had been happiness: happiness achieved through work among other humans contributing to synergy and thus enabling him to survive; happiness was just survival.

He was successful because he was happy and happy because he had survived till now like the moth.

Knowledge was a byproduct; a burden.

There was neither fear of life nor of death anymore; no desire for either, either; but it was time.

His final thought in prayer:

*Black and White are becoming one!*

It would be glorious dawn in an hour. Sensuous nature was waking up. The old man's bright eyes in his rugged face couldn't see much, but his keen nose could smell, his sharp ears could hear, and his sensitive skin could feel her waking from slumber.

However, for him, it would be night.

The old man, who had been kneeling in prayer in his threadbare clothes having forsaken his cloak despite the cold, got up, took one last look at his friends who were watching him quietly, and walked towards the coffin which smelled of whale oil and death.

Bending down, the old man, stronger than ever, pulled his coffin, soaked in oil, on the smooth grass towards the dying fire, tearing out chunks of earth embedded with grass in the process; positioned the foot of his deathbed towards the remaining sputtering flames; straightened up and walked slowly, completing a semicircle, to the opposite end of his last home; its head; bent down again and pushed his would be funeral pyre into the flickering fire; then, finally, watching the flames lick the feet of his wooden shroud, calmly settled down in it and closed the lid of death upon himself.

The body of the old man began its dance with fire like the suicidal moth.

## Would There Be Light?

And then the purple velvety moth of the night, clad in the shroud-robe of a monarch, entered the coffin-cocoon of the dying embers of the fire and emerged from the ashes-chrysalis, like a phoenix, as a purple monarch butterfly of the day.

About the man, for him, who should say:

*Let there be light.*

## Epilogue

For the dead man, life would not be life.

Space and time would not be space and time anymore.

The reality he had known would not be the new reality.

Everything, as he had known it, had been finite.