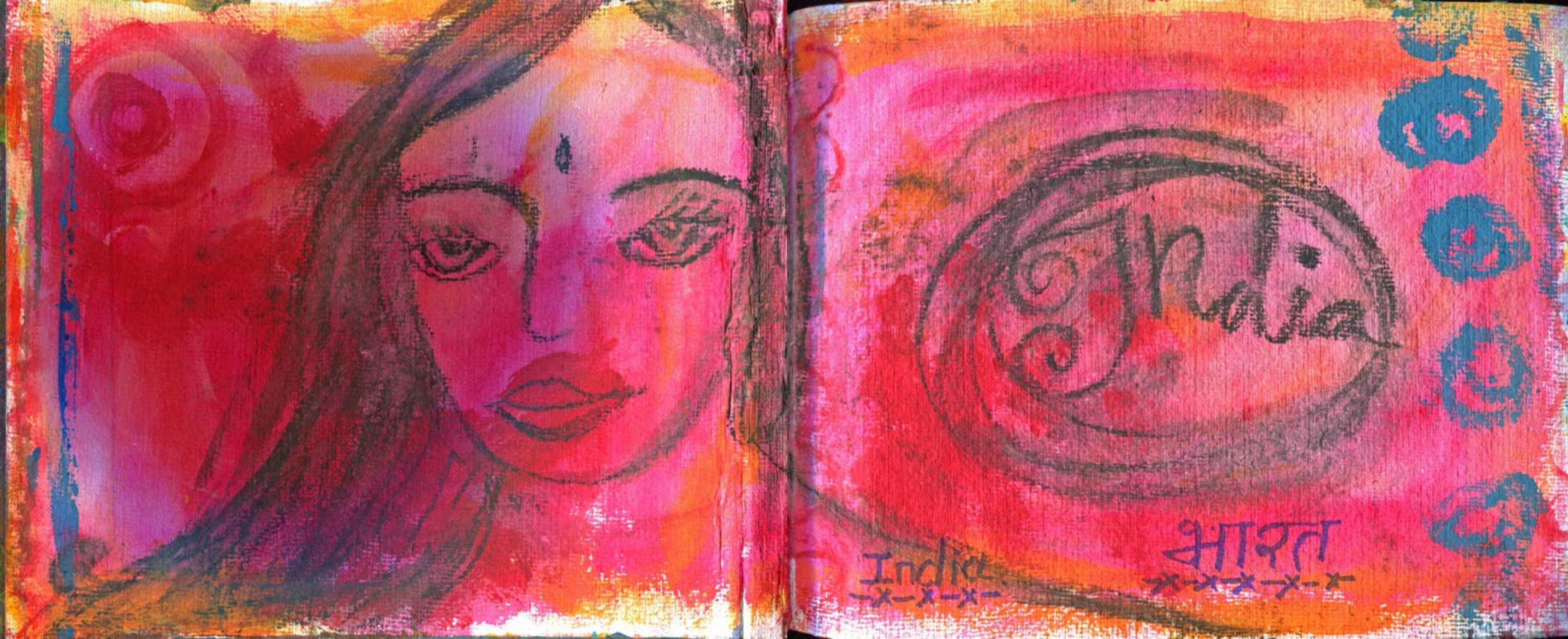


INDIA



Index  
—x—x—x—

ઇન્ડિક્સ  
—x—x—x—

Dear India, my love,

it is a restless spring day,

and you are in my heart already. ♡

I think you <sup>are</sup> already bringing MIRACLES

into my life... as soon as I  
sit down to write you a letter, the phone rings

to bear the first & GOOD

NEWS of the day.

Right now, dear India, I have no  
idea how we are getting to you.  
Only 3 weeks out, & our travel  
agent has gotten Delta-Belly in the  
head & messed up all our  
bookings...

OCTOBER 28th  
MONDAY  
2007



It seems the ADVENTURE has started before  
we even leave. ♡ I will trust that everything  
will work out perfectly.

But let's not detract from the issue at  
hand. Dear India,

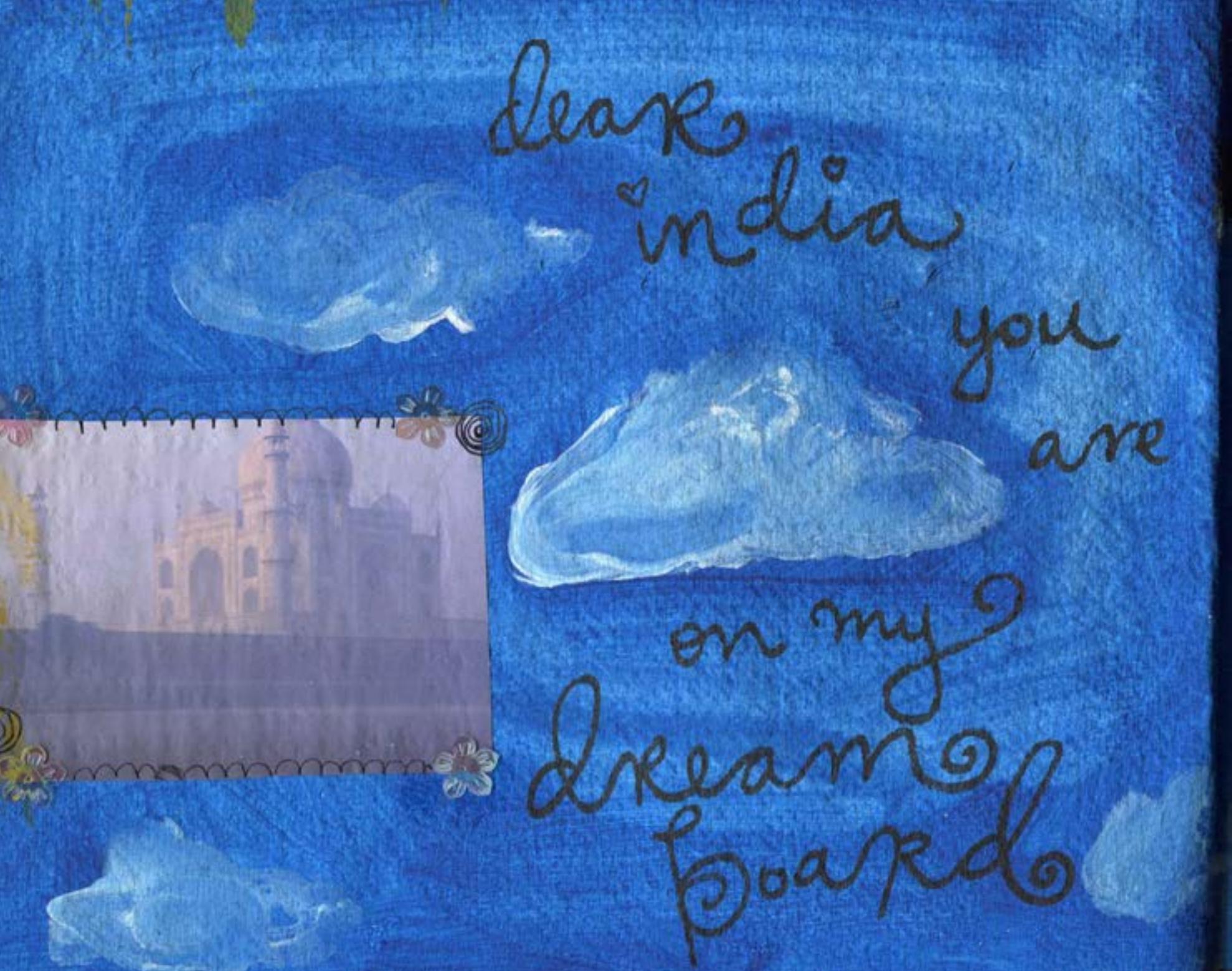
I have loved you for as long as I can  
remember. I don't know especially why -  
if I was asked to give a logical reason,  
all I could do would be to shrug my  
shoulders and say that

such matters of the heart &  
soul often have no words.

all I know is I need to be  
with you, discover you, find  
you & hear you.

all my love, some of  
the goddesses.

I am  
OPEN  
to all  
goodness



## unforgettable india

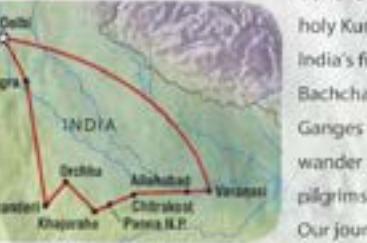
### ORIGINAL

01 Apr - 31 Aug  
AUS 925 - NZ\$ 1180\*  
01 Jan - 31 Mar & 01 Sep - 31 Dec  
AUS 995 - NZ\$ 1265\*

\*plus Local Payment 10,000 Rupees

- ● ○ ○ PHYSICAL
- ● ○ ○ CULTURE SHOCK

- Explore vibrant Delhi
- Admire carvings in Khajuraho's temples
- Take a boat ride on the River Ganges
- Wander among the temples of Orchha
- Experience mystical Varanasi



### 15 days, ex Delhi

Departs every Sat & Mon (Sep to Apr)

**ITINERARY**... Days 1-2 Delhi The labyrinth of streets and lively markets of Old Delhi are a perfect introduction to India.

Day 3 Agra The former capital of the Mughals is home to the 16th century Red Fort and the beautiful Taj Mahal. Days 4-5

Chanderi Get the celebrity treatment in the relatively tourist-free Chanderi. Explore ancient rock paintings, Jain temples and peaceful mosques before sitting down to dinner at our local friend's home. Days 6-7 Orchha Enjoy a guided walk around the temples and palaces that dot the peaceful and picturesque countryside. Day 8 Khajuraho The intricate carvings of the exquisite 1,000-year-old temples of Khajuraho celebrate Hindu legends, epic battles and the erotic Kama Sutra. Day 9 Panna National Park Head deep into the park in search of the elusive tiger and spend the night in natural hut style accommodation. Day 10 Chitrakoot Sprawling along the banks of the Mandakini River, Chitrakoot's temples, bazaars and bathing ghats are awash with pilgrims. Witness rituals taking place as they have done for hundreds of years. Day 11 Allahabad Home of the holy Kumbh Mela festival, Allahabad is also the birthplace of India's first prime minister and Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan. Days 12-14 Varanasi Take a boat out on the Ganges to see devotees partaking in morning worship, wander among narrow alleys past shrines, temples and pilgrims and enjoy a sunset flower ceremony. Day 15 Delhi Our journey comes full circle as we return to Delhi.



Taj Mahal, Agra, India

**ACCOMMODATION** Guesthouses/hotels (8 nts), basic hotels (3 nts), deluxe air-conditioned tent (2 nts), overnight train (1 nt) **TRANSPORT** Train, cycle and auto-rickshaw, small river boat, taxi, public bus, jeep **GROUP SIZE** Max 12 **MEALS** 2 Breakfasts, 1 Lunch, 2 Dinners **BUDGET** Allow US\$200 for meals not included **DEPARTS** Every Sat & Mon (Sep to Apr) **NOTES** It is essential that you provide full details of passport number and date of issue, gender, date of birth and nationality when you make your booking **TRAVELLER RATING** 4.74 out of 5

TRIP CODE  
HSU



Saturday, 10 November 2007

Dearest India, my love.

Today I said to chris

"We haven't even got there yet, but I feel like India is teaching us already."

It has been so challenging just to get to you. It has been a LABYRINTHine path trying to find our way to you. I have RAGED, unfurled my WARRIOR maiden and gradually lost so much faith. So many of our expectations have been STRIPPED from us. Things haven't gone to plan & I have wanted to CONTROL other people & our plans. It has been HARD. Really HARD. And a little bit nuts. Important documents lost in the mail twice. A crack head travel agent. Wrong tickets. A week out

from travel, 3 visas still haven't even been submitted. There is so much Drama around it... it is 7 Rings just to even write it down here.

Where this has all left me...

is that I just want to go to India.

I just want to be in you India, with my family & my lover. and then... just let it be.

let me be. Let us be whatever it needs to be.

I take deep breaths.

Dear India, please love me & teach me like a mother.

See you soon.

Love, Leonie

P.S. Today chris brought back Ganesh from India.

RO

RO



where i am  
in the week before I leave  
is a challenging, deep, learning  
place of my journey.

in the last month or two i have learned so much about

i lost a lot of

FAITH, hope, peace, sanity, calmness, expectations, security.

# LOSS.

i lost my mind about going to india when all our plans were  
again and again... (and again & again)  
and after i raged and raged and **RAGED** and got pissy and anxious and stressed out

i got to a place where the details didn't matter anymore.

i could only throw back my head in laughter, and  
walk in grace as best i can  
(even if that grace means swearing  
a lot & stumbling in faith)

I remembered that what  
Truly Matters  
is this:

i will be standing on the land of india.  
the place i have always deeply wanted to go.

• • • • •

i feel like india has already been teaching me on this labyrinthine  
journey to get to her. india is chaos and flow. india is hope and  
emotion and fracture and heart lotus flowers blooming from a pile  
of shit. india is dreams and pain and laughter and angels. india is  
madness and finding peace in that madness. india is all that is.

f R. K e N

i have been gifted with learning under the guidance of the goddess  
the goddess of transformation of destruction allowing for  
REBIRTH.

she is scary no more, she is tender  
and black and holds me against her bosom, she takes away so  
many things from my life, and whispers:

"I am clearing space for you my  
darling. Just wait. all will be well."

i lost a lot of expectations that i had around my partner.  
around my birthday. i lost a close friendship.

i lost going to a country i wanted to go to. i lost trust.

# Loss. Loss. Loss.

so much loss that i thought i would be bowed to my knees, stricken  
with it, with no legs to walk and journey on.

instead, i feel  
this soft  
pull of  
freedom.

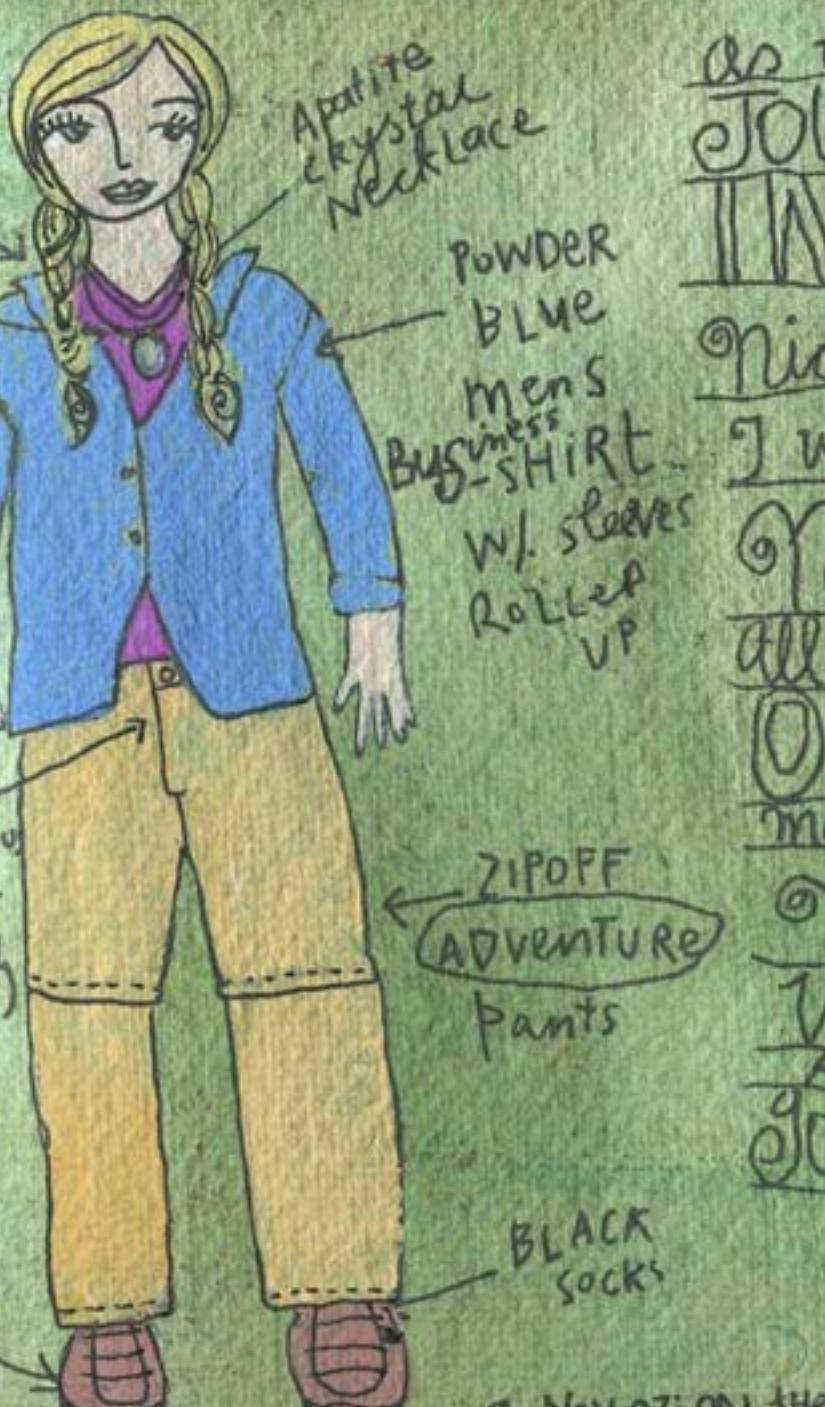
i am free. i am winged and i am flying.  
i acknowledge and honour all that is,

but I am FREE.

where things are gone, where there are hollow spaces in my life,  
i sit as gently and peacefully as i can.  
i wonder what will seed, what will ripen, what will come to be  
in this sacred hollowness. this hallowed hollowness.

until i begin my journey to india, but in reality, i have been journeying to her, to myself,

# Kali Ma



# What I WILL wear

as we get out on our  
JOURNEY TO  
INDIA, it is kind of  
nice knowing exactly what  
i will be wearing for the  
NEXT Month.

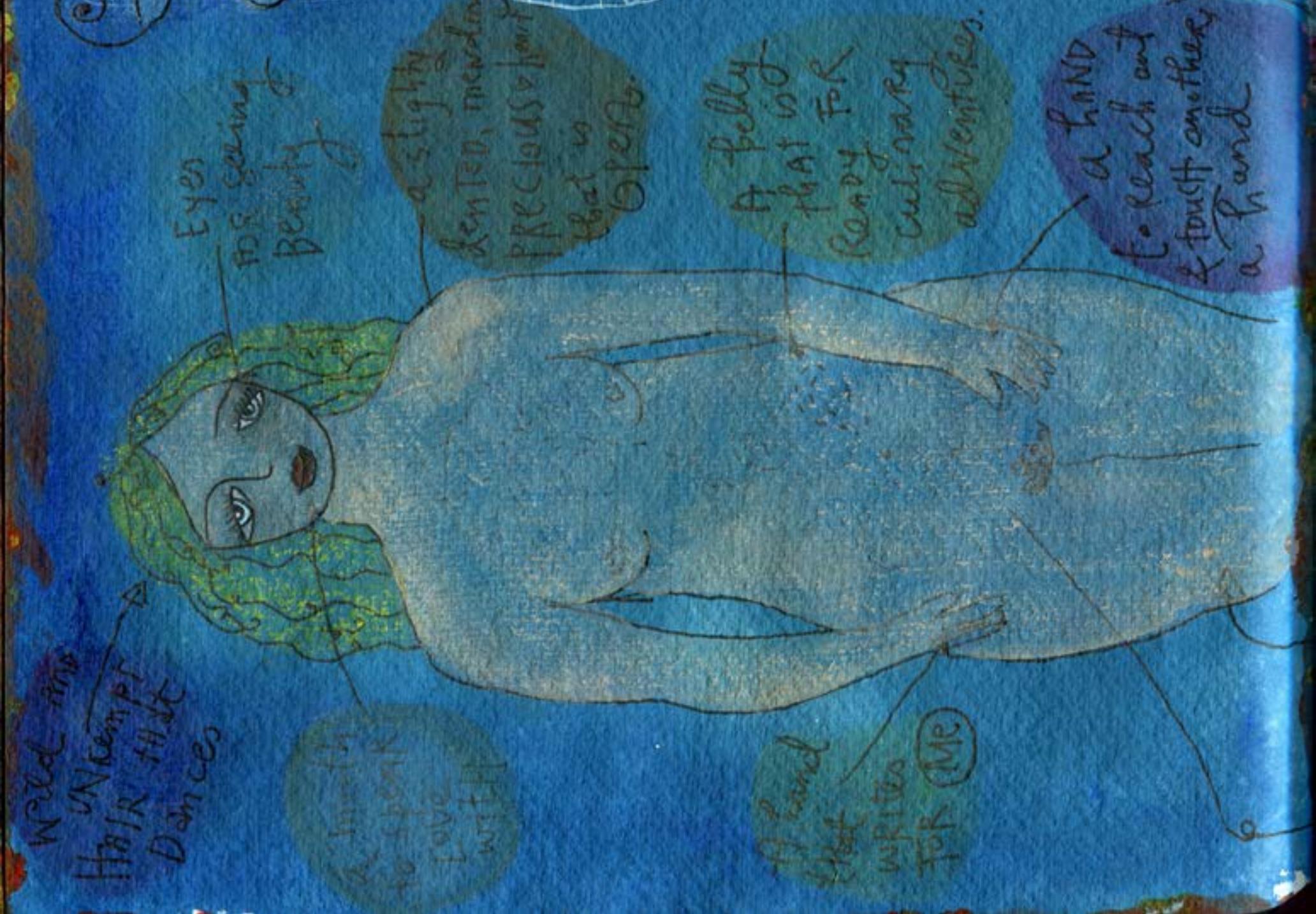
all of my life fits right into  
ONE bag, and, that  
makes me FEEL so very

Light  
We're going on an  
ADVENTURE, we're  
going to catch a BIG one.

# month

19 Nov 2007. ON THE BUS TO SYDNEY

But, in TRUTH, all 3



# Wild Winter Hail Dances

Eyes seeing  
the beauty

—  
as they  
lent me my  
precious chart  
and in  
order.

Polly  
At the  
Ready  
Dictionary

*adventures.*

to hold  
myself

First floor

tanfly? The man  
is a market

to my own  
BLESSINGS

and N.S.

317

ANNOV 2007. ON THE BUS TO SYDNEY.

But, in **TRUTH**, all **Re**

Eyes seeing beauty

a strong Lentil, meowing PRECIOUS & honest

A belly THAT IS READY for culinary adventures.

a kind of reach out & touch another

a hand that works for me

a hand that holds the book until it wears out

Wild the tempter Hair that dances

ally → Need is THIS  
(what I have  
already)

to hold  
myself

→ See to  
the Moon  
or planet

and, most importantly,

My spirit  
of my soul, to

To live life all  
to follow my own

To allow blessings and

To walk the journey of my

God-deed Self, and new life

Precious world through my  
own precious eyes.

it is more  
True  
than any  
thing else.

I will write  
this for myself.

Not for anyone  
else. Not for  
Logic. Not for order.  
Not for appearance. Not to  
prove. Not to show.

I long to just **BE**  
on the page. Just you & me  
page. With no one watching  
us **DANCE** our SACRED &  
gentle WILD monkey dance  
of exploration & finding  
& just being enough  
& having enough,  
right **NOW**.

Be more honest  
awake  
**TRUTFUL**  
**ALIVE**  
true  
**Possible**.

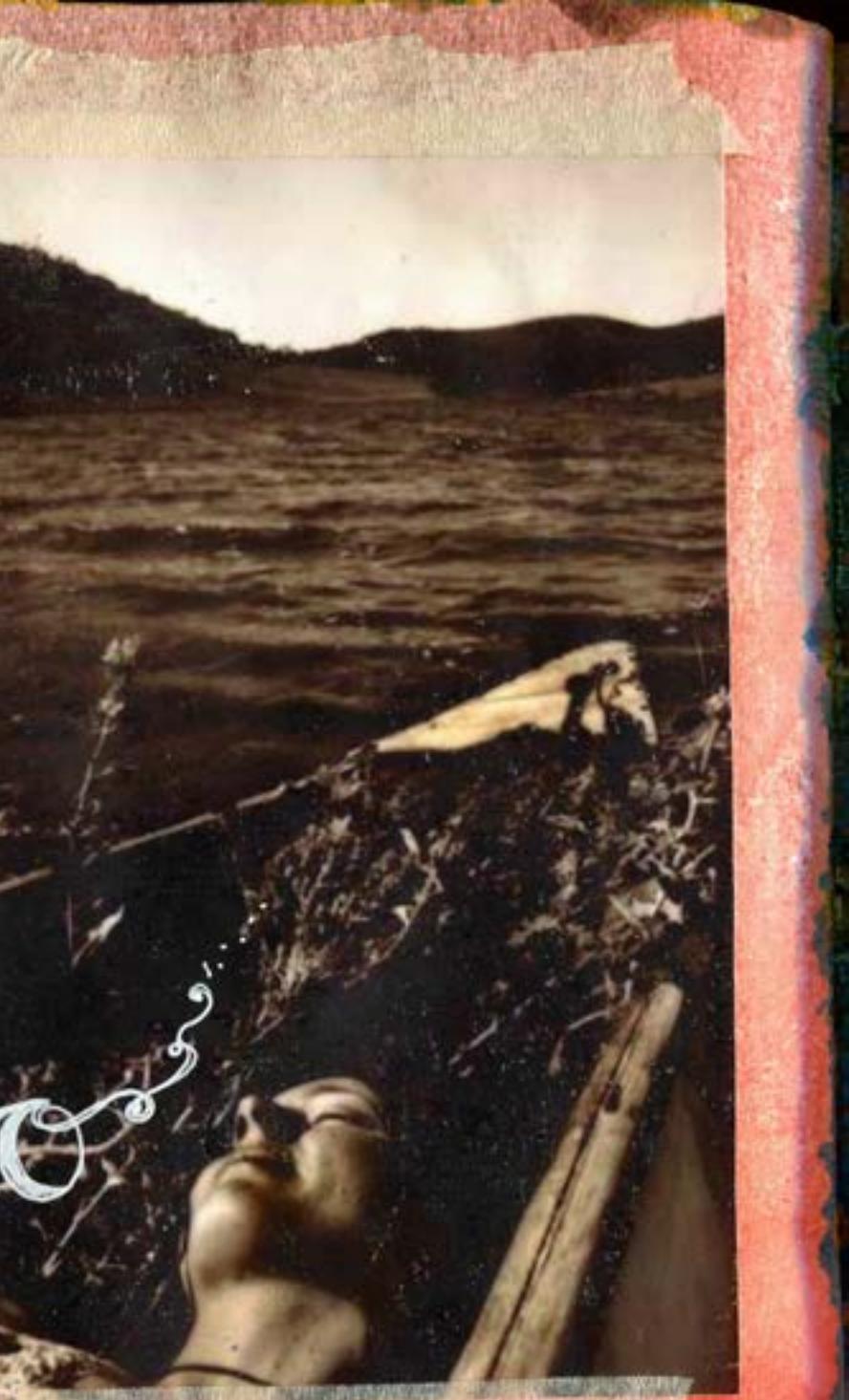
and **BELIEVE** in you  
& your work  
Believe in the biggest DREAM OF you

DEAR INDIA,  
what I have learned from you  
before we even ARRIVE is  
THAT to GET TO you is an

## INITIATION

all of its own. Thank you  
for testing my FAITH, calm,  
Resolve and peace. I set  
out on this journey already  
Fractured to allow you  
IN even more deeply.

To go to you  
is to get to you  
of the edges of land  
and float out onto the lake...

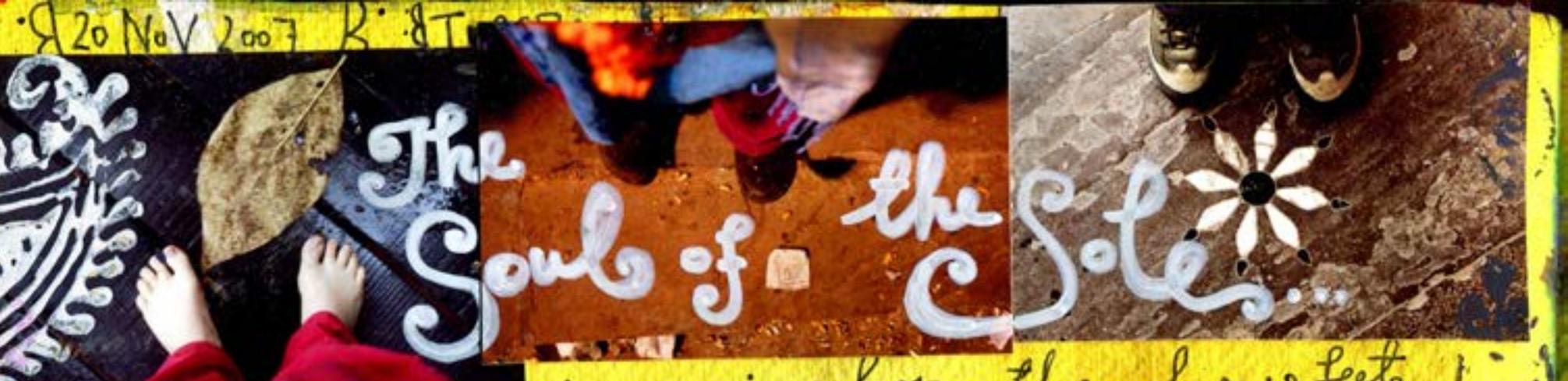


The Wild Nature carries the bundles  
for healing; she carries everything  
a Woman needs to be and know.  
She carries the  
Medicine for all things.  
she carries Stories and  
dreams and words and songs  
and signs and symbols.  
She is both VEHICLE and  
destination."



- CLARISSA PINKOLA ESTES  
"Women Who Run With the  
Wolves."

920 Nov 2007 R 8T



Today I learned about journeying lessons through my feet.

it must be near midnight in my body. We have been in that strange  
bit-tideland of travel today. This morning we awoke in Sydney,  
stretching our bodies in the morning air, drawing in our last few  
breaths of Australian air before we caught a shuttle bus to the  
airport. Our taxi driver plays loud, jubilant turkish music and  
I dance in my seat. We chased the sun around the globe to  
Singapore - jangly, industrialised & a tender, fluent, nutty blend  
of Asian & European.

I feel a little like I have returned home here - it is barely  
a kilometre from the mainland of Malaysia where I had  
my first overseas adventure, alone & wide-eyed when I was  
eighteen. I introduce Christian to giant pretzels, and we  
pretend we are Torville & Dean on the Kilometres of  
the Wellators. I lend Christian to the airport massage therapists,  
are the best thing to  
convince him that @xplRicncl buy when travelling

we are taken into a sanctuary  
of tea and bamboo and  
dark sumptuous seats to  
sink into. We are fed tea that  
tastes of jasmine flowers and  
honey. And then I meet her -  
She is a tiny, winged Asian  
woman with wide, alive eyes.

She speaks to me with her  
smile and exaggerated gesture  
and little, lithe fingers  
that begin probing my feet.

I feel so deeply connected  
in my soul to her ~ we speak to each other with our eyes,  
we delight in each other's smile. My feet tell her fingers all  
my stories, all my journeys, all the places where fear  
manifests as pain in my soles. There are no secrets with her. I  
give up trying to pretend I have it all worked out and SURRENDER  
instead to feeling it all & healing it with her. I am safe  
with my feet in the embrace of her hands.

How do I thank her for her gift, how do I tell her how  
her fingers have touched my soul through my soles? We  
speak no common language, so I instead glad my hands together  
and bow to her as I am want to do these days. I hope she  
hears this. I feel she already knows.



and there was a moment there, waiting in line for our flight to India, where my gut flinched, & I drew sharp inward breaths, & I said

"What if we don't like it honey?"

I don't think I'd ever really considered that thought. as much as I want to love India, as much as I want her to be a teacher - what if I don't?

moments later, just as we are about to walk through security, a woman is farewelling her elderly Indian parents, being pushed <sup>in our HEELMAGERS</sup> by airline crew. Her eyes are filled with deep love and wet tears. She speaks to him in Hindi, then as he is about to be pushed away, she bends, touching his feet. "Naan, naan," he waves her away gently, with an open hand that touches my core.

I am REMINDED of my friend Gitanjali telling me a week before how she finally understood & had a passionate wanting to touch & honour her grandparent's feet. May we celebrate the journeys of our elders.



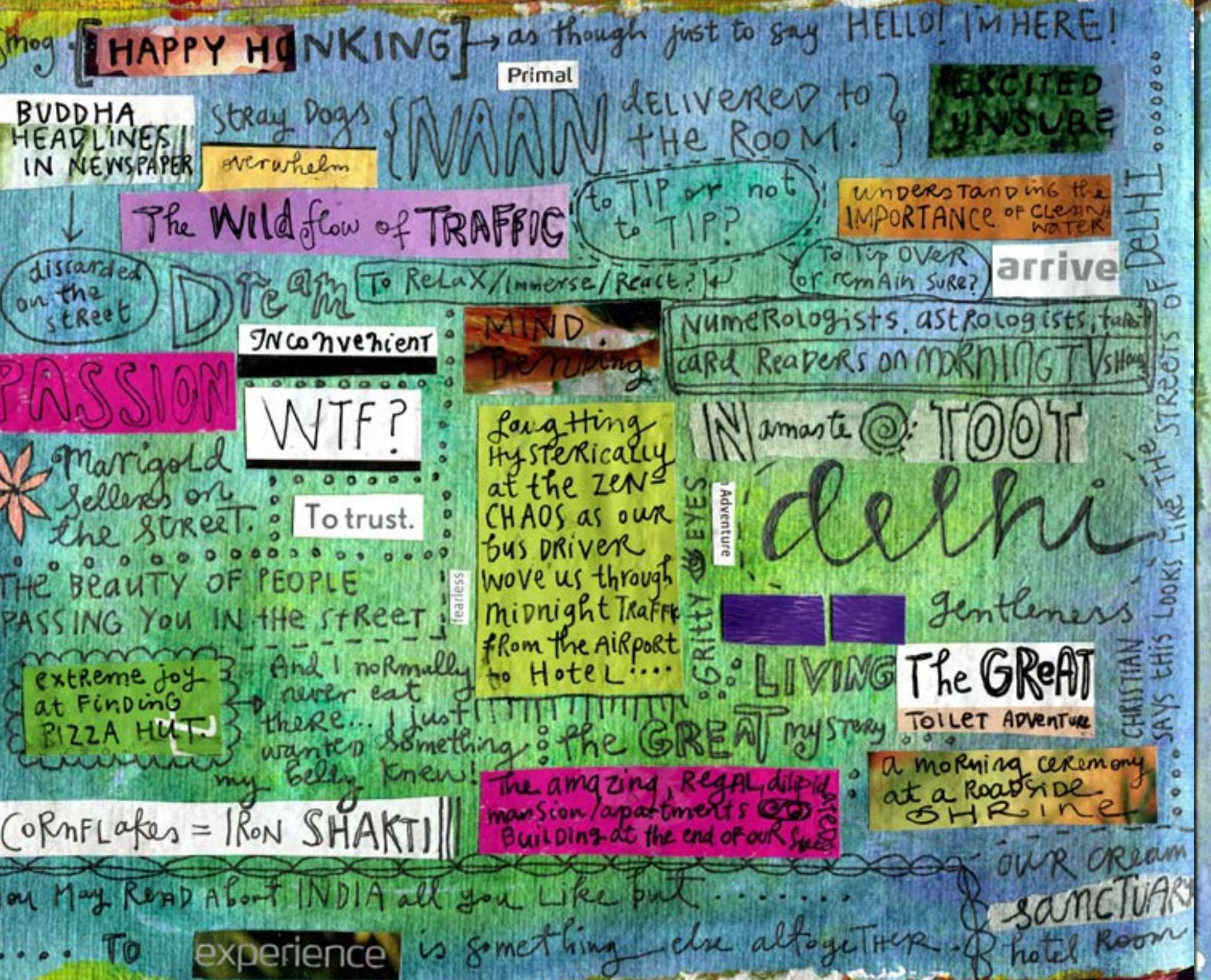
May we know these feet have helped find us & make us. In that moment of seeing such open Love and Honouring I knew I was going to the RIGHT PLACE.  
Dear great Spirit, just moments before we touch down to earth in INDIA, I THANK you for the gifts & Lessons of Feet... (LIFE)

yet to be found. I leave this page as white as wings...

we have landed.



Wednesday 21 November 2007. It is nice to just have some WHITE SPACE. a place





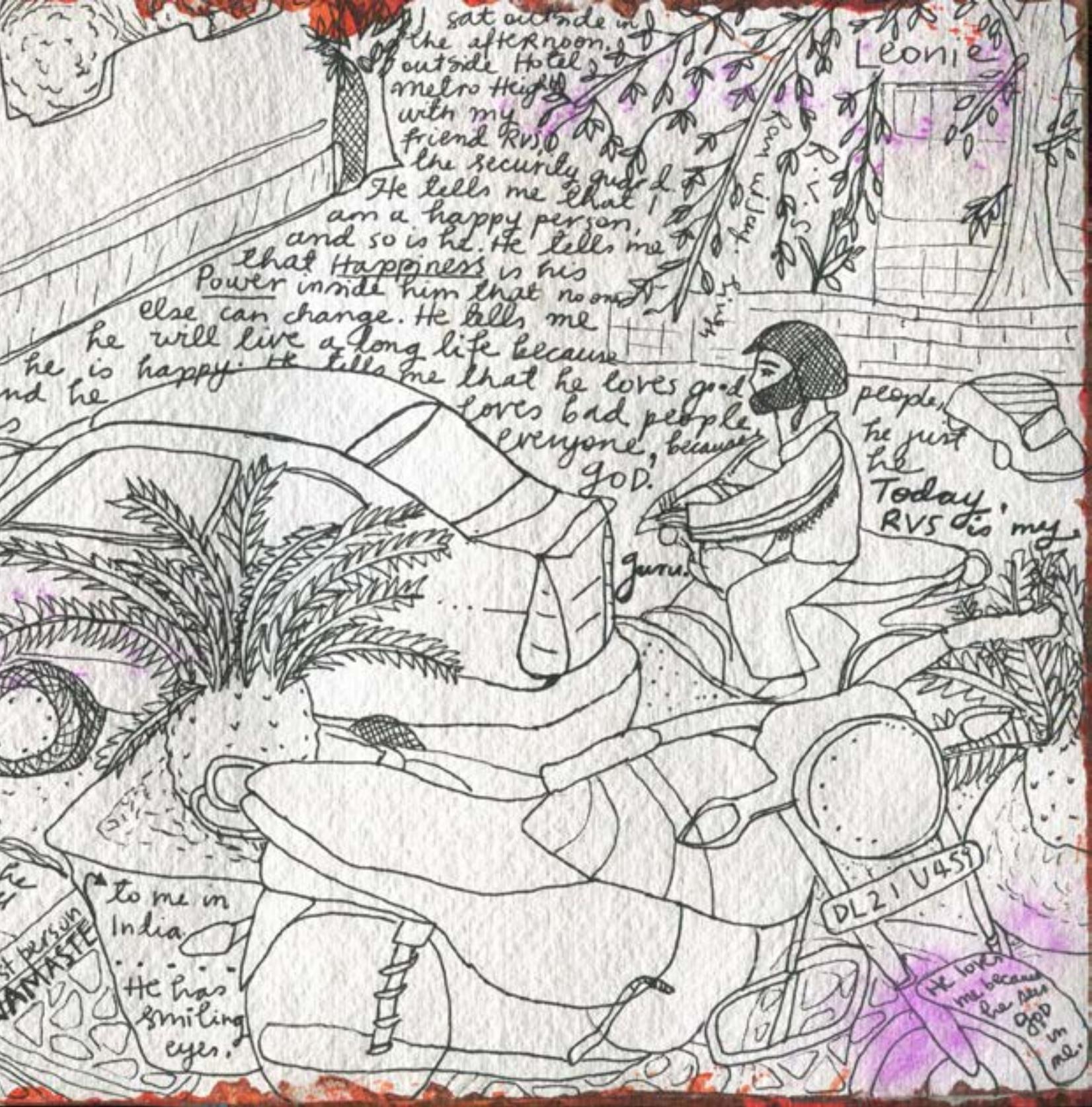
midst the chaos  
of life."

joga ad on Indian TV

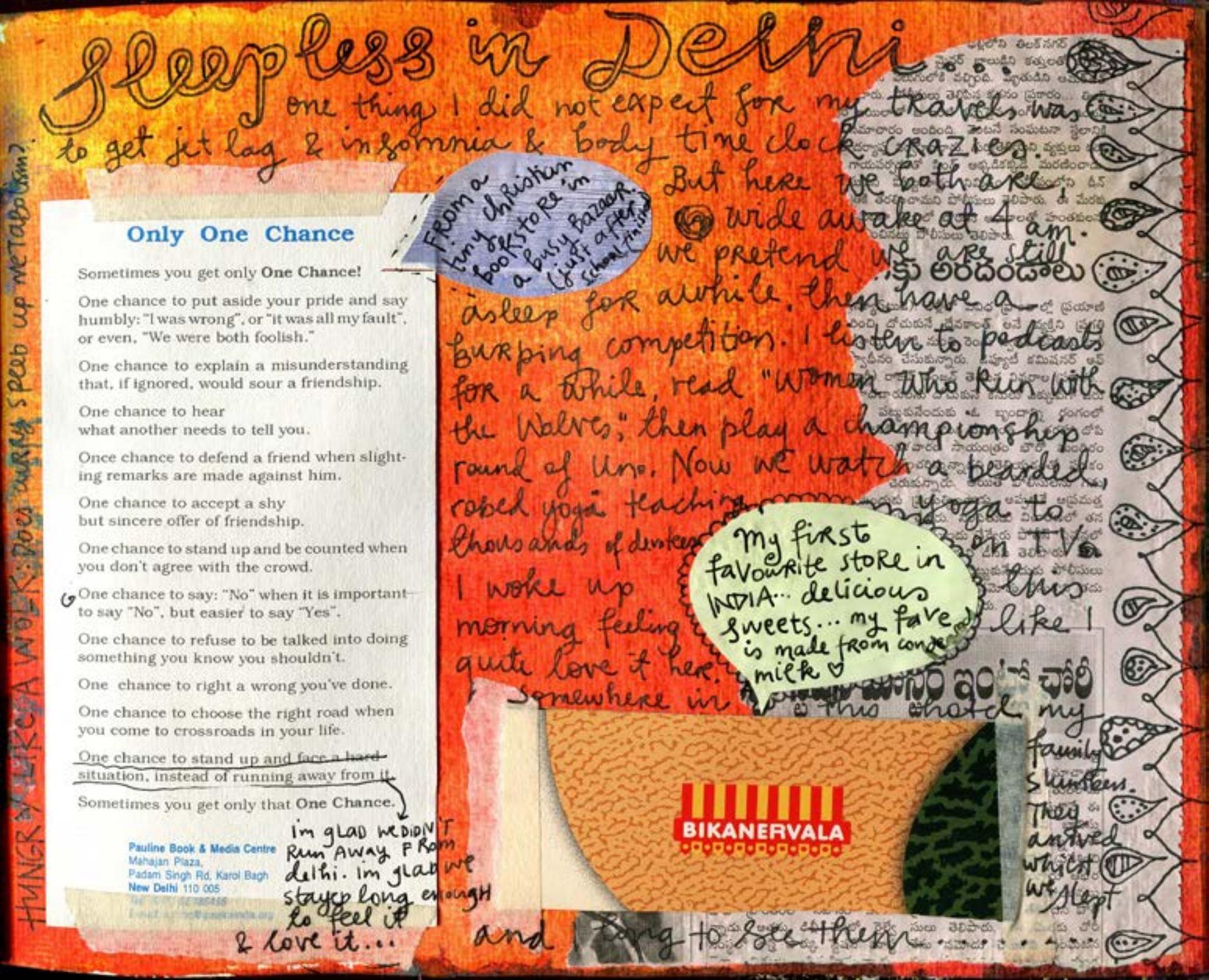
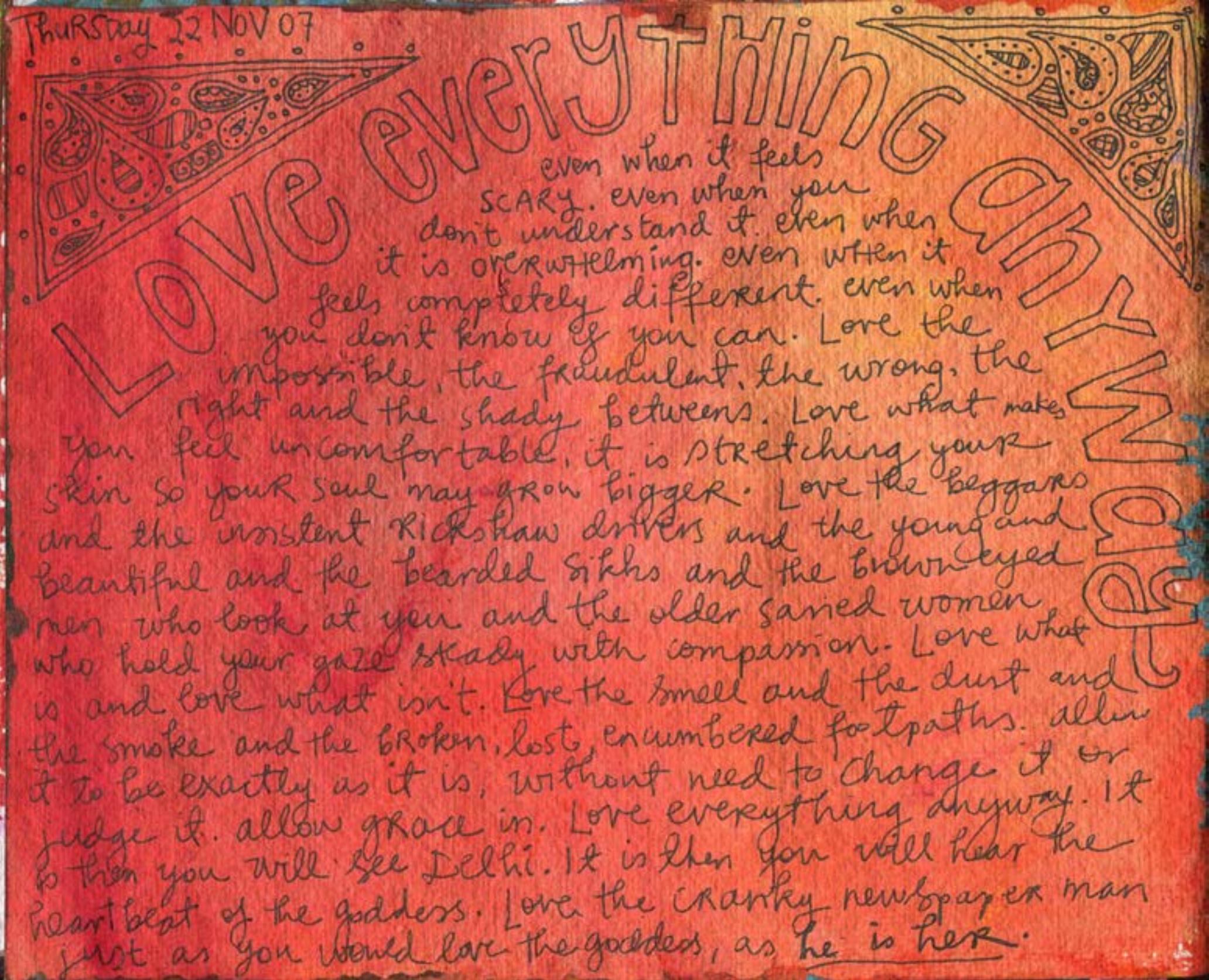
There is goodness here, but there is also pain & shadow lessons. Before I left home, I went & laid down in my backyard & soaked up the Sun & the blue & the grass and the Earth. I placed my ~~my~~ crystal necklace on the Earth and asked that it may carry the energy of home & earth healing with it. Arriving here, in Delhi, the air is thick with smoke & the smell of burnt rubber and cars so thick you can't see the air - it is coloured grey and brown. Whether being finished it is broken. It is hard to find one piece of nature to connect with. It makes me yearn & feel so grateful for the blue sky and green grass and air of home... and yet - this place pulsates with Root chakra shakti - with the desires of sexuality & security & money & home.

Last night I orgasmed long sleep thrice into the night sky, enveloped in dark, PROFOUND, crusting waves. I dream of a cocoa coloured goddess crowning the streets, holding all her children in the CHAO





Thursday 22 Nov 07



Friday 25 Nov 01

dear India,

I promised to write to you honestly, without needing to make things different than what they are. I do not know how to write this or what to portray, so I will try to tell you my truth from the young, innocent, open-hearted soul inside me, and the wise woman goddess who collects lessons & experiences for her medicine bag.

Today, I had a very challenging experience with Mum - we wanted to catch a tuk-tuk to Connaught Place, check out the markets & cafes there, then head back. Instead we got taken to odd bazaar after bazaar, accosted by men on the street taking us to other shops, lied to countless about directions and shops. It felt at times like every single person on the street was an agent wanting to push us into a store, a sale. It was impossible to walk where you wanted to go. Add to that our tuk-tuk driver who kept showing up to take us to new bazaars (so he could earn commissions), his drunk & abusive buddy who we had to tell to shut up or we were hitting it, and then our tuk-tuk driver refusing to obey our instructions to take us home. It was only when I looked him in the eye, asked him his name, introduced myself, and told him to take us home immediately that he did understand. Mama & I dutched each others hands, looking for signs of home the whole way back, ready to leap from the tuk tuk at the first sign of foul play. We were so relieved when we saw our sign for our suburb again. After we safely arrived, got out and paid, I said to him - "I need to tell you

something. You made two women feel afraid today. You did not listen to us and you disrespected us. You gave us a bad time in India, and you should not do that. You need to be better."

I looked deep into his eyes, and he understood - all the charades and the sales games were gone. I feel like he would feel shame about it - I'm not sure if it would stop him from doing it again - but when two souls can share how an experience affects them change can be made. I wonder what his story is - I believe in my heart that he is a good man, but he is in a situation where he is led by the need to make money & feed his family & adhere to Indian tuk-tuk madness than what his soul may ask him to do.

Dear India, today I had so many of my boundaries pressed by you! I feel like this is ~~leads~~ strengthening my NO muscle - I have to say No and mean it a hundred times a day. I have to stay in my energy always. Today I was pushed & prodded & harassed into a goddess who spoke the truth with honesty, boundaries & the fire of a woman maligned. May I never feel maligned in my soul - may I keep the power of alignment inside me. Today, with buttons pressed and on alert, I feel my hands gently shaking. Whoever I am when I am birthed out of India - I know it will be a different me. May it always be for the highest light & love of all.

Saturday 26 NOV 07



COME  
DAWN  
H  
Today I felt at ease in Delhi. Finally & thankfully & joyfully. In the morning hours, I sat on the hotel roof with Mama and watched Delhi shake & awaken around us while we were invisible. We all went shopping in the markets, and I felt brave & grounded. I bought a salwar kameez - turquoise & fuschia, and rainbow bangles. Tonight we met our tour leader. She has deep eyes and took us to dinner and we ate the most delicious food since we arrived. Walking back through the markets at full moon was divine - we joined in with a Sikh family on the street to celebrate Diwali with fireworks & laughter <sup>so very</sup> <sub>very good</sub>.





Sunday 21 Nov

I took many photographs today, I wonder if I can let them tell the story. We went to old Delhi by an amazingly modern train system, and caught a cycle rickshaw through the streets. Old Delhi feel like an even richer city experience - it is even wilder than New Delhi (which I didn't think was possible). The streets were filled with cows and monkeys and vendors and rickshaws and men bathing down town. Delhi, and I suppose India is ~~nothing~~ deeply more challenging. Ricketty, influential, horrible & exquisite than you can ever prepare for. I have Read all the books & seen all the documentaries but to Experience & LIVE the daily



great Spice markets!  
my first map of  
Hai

discomforts & grit & complete out-of-body and  
inner-body moments is a soul journey all of its own.  
just when I think I can't take it anymore, more  
happens - and I can take it. With my big thundering  
thighs & calves, I keep on walking. And I wonder if  
how can I be more of a service to this world?  
the only thing that separates me from the beautiful  
girls, baseball & begging, living in slums, is that I  
was born in a different country. a simple soul  
lottery has made me be who I am. I am deeply  
blessed - but how can I work to love my sisters &  
brothers, & earth even more? The pollution here is  
glum to the spirit & trees. i have not seen blue sky

Since I arrived, & mother of the goddess, I ache for  
it. I hunger for clean breath & a piece of green  
mama Earth and wise turquoise skies. I hunger for  
Love and affection & peace & understanding & equality  
& service & friendship. I hunger for us all to see  
this & know this & do something with this.

May all beings live in peace, and in connection  
to Mama Earth and each other.



Photos of  
Delhi



I also  
We also went to a large muslim mosque that was filled  
with pigeons & looked like a giant Russian fairytale.  
The meditation hall was filled with a deep quietness &  
bird poo. Later, we went to a Sikh temple. In both places,  
we needed to be barefoot & I feel closer to godliness with bare  
tender feet touching the ground. Sole meets soul. The Sikh temple  
really touched me, it had very peaceful, strong energy. Men were  
singing chants in deep, powerful voices that sang into my core.  
After the meditation temple, we visited where the Sikh community  
donates money & volunteers time to feed 5,000 people a day, provide  
accommodation for the needy & medical services. This kind of  
spiritual activism & servitude touches me greatly. There was also a pole  
at the temple where meditated that was on a peaceful, intense energy vortex.

TAJ



Tuesday 21 Nov 2007

yesterday we travelled by train to Agra - what an experience! The train car we were in was surprisingly comfortable, and yet we were looking out over slums & people crapping in rubbish heaps beside the train & endless, endless smog. It is the most gritty, humane, sour experience to not see blue sky. I am lost in a haze of human mistakes, looking to find my turquoise true MORITI, but I know its inside of me. We are on a train now to Chanderni. There is so much tossing & turning in me - thoughts about poverty, servitude, god, education, religion, tolerance, Mama Earth, her healing & conserving her. Thoughts about deception, honesty.

friendship, economy, acceptance, love, travelling, aloneness, togetherness. going to the Taj I AMPLIFIED these feelings. There is so much here - sadness, shit, wildness, discipline, history, ancient ages, desire & energy. The best place for me in the Taj was sitting at her back on the cool marble slabs at sunset, my loved one sprawled around me, gazing out over the golden Yamuna River. She felt holy to me, and deeply peaceful even as discarded strands of marigolds and trash floated down her. Seeing her naked more awe for me than even the Taj Mahal, which is truly a mystical & ethereal creation & presence all of its own.

Everything is everything like, and as much as I try to describe it, it is clutter and bullshit and not true. Things are just as they are.

# GOOGIE WEE

GOOGIE WEE

Come here so you can SEE.  
Come here to FEEL. Come here to love  
everybody. Come here to HATE it.  
Come here. Here you may know it, fit yourself.  
Come here to sit beside a GIANT SICK on a  
train bench for hours, smiling into his eyes  
because you share no common language except  
the feeling of hearts. Come here to laugh when  
his wife both begin to sing and he pulls a  
mobile phone from his pocket with his  
magnificent. JEWELLED, STUCK, TUCKED, at peace.  
Come here to be ENLIGHTENED, enlightened  
for you means watching a stranger sleep

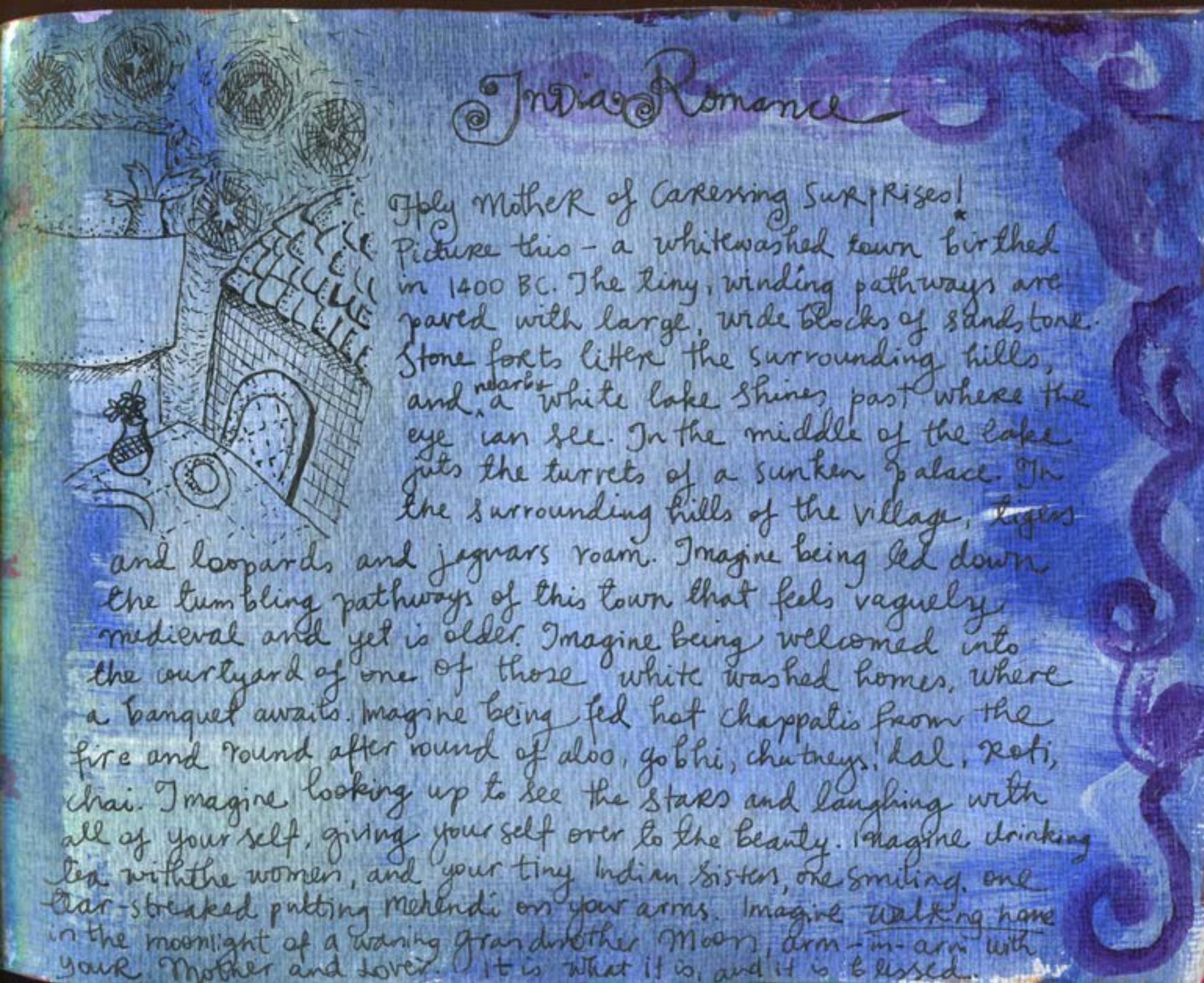
in front of you and being okay about  
it. Come here to be ENLIGHTENED if that means  
knowing you don't have all your shit together,  
and don't this lifetime and that's okay.  
Come here to be enlightened if that means  
at being enlightened in that shining, pristine,  
beautiful yet pants & pants yet tail  
smile. Come here to be held in the  
spasm of MONA INDIA. Come here to find  
yourself in the library of the streets and  
in the peace of the great woman RIVERS.  
Come here if you are called, OR don't come  
at all. Come here to get pissed off,  
make a change, make love, be family to  
make your meet, confront your feelings,  
all your this various parts. Come here  
to be a WITHING. Spending, please,  
to follow - Sparkle of RANTFOR MATION.



What I most want to say is this - this is not about India. No piece of writing, no book, is about India. It is always the writer's own experience of India, and we must OWN that.

India is only a great MIRROR of our selves, judgements, pain & healing. It is a goddess of confrontation - the confrontation of your self.

India lives beyond words, beyond books, beyond me.



## India Romance

Holy Mother of Cackering Surprises!

Picture this - a whitewashed town birthed in 1400 BC. The tiny, winding pathways are paved with large, wide blocks of sandstone. Stone forts litter the surrounding hills, and <sup>nearby</sup> a white lake shines past where the eye can see. In the middle of the lake juts the turrets of a sunken palace. In the surrounding hills of the village, tigers

and leopards and jaguars roam. Imagine being led down the tumbling pathways of this town that feels vaguely medieval and yet is older. Imagine being welcomed into the courtyard of one of those white washed homes, where a banquet awaits. Imagine being fed hot chappatis from the fire and round after round of aloo, gobhi, chutneys, dal, kati, chai. Imagine looking up to see the stars and laughing with all of your self, giving yourself over to the beauty. Imagine drinking tea with the women, and your tiny Indian sisters, one smiling, one tear-streaked putting mehendi on your arms. Imagine walking home in the moonlight of a waning grandfather Moon, arm-in-arm with your Mother and love. It is what it is, and it is blessed.

Here in Chandeki, we walk through  
forts & monuments & palace walls & temples  
& hunting lodges & ancient stone  
buildings.

They are  
everywhere here - they litter the landscape.  
They are on hills  
Sunken in lakes,  
in the middle  
of cows

or docks & in between shampoo vendors  
and goats rustling for food. Chandeki  
is finally feeling easy on the streets,  
of making friends everywhere you go in  
that pure not-wanting-anything-from  
cash-other-but-a-smile kind of thing.

Chandeki is a giant lake, cobblestone  
State Streets, village cricket and  
breakfast in the marigold garden.

Chandeki is being woken by  
descending wedding music &  
musical horns all night. Chandeki is smiling  
and life



It's  
okay?  
It's  
alright,  
it's  
all Right,  
She moved in  
mysterious way.  
-42

# Orchha

We sleep in luxury tents  
under 400 year old  
purple funeral temples.

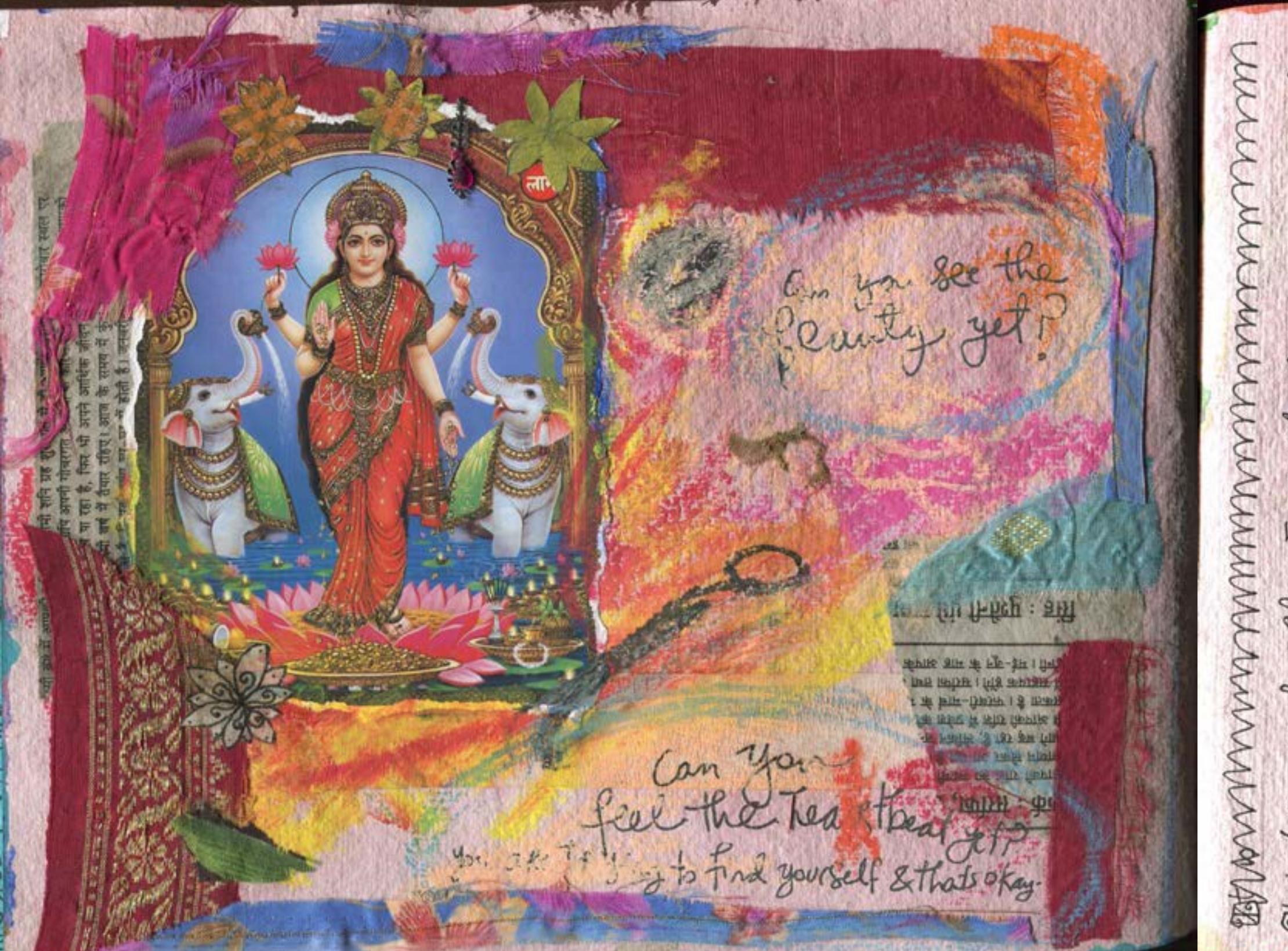
Everywhere here  
are huge & cream masteries  
of history  
& architecture  
& spirituality & power-  
and in between  
these palaces &  
temples,

families live  
in the dust  
with

only sticks  
& blankets  
making their  
home. Such  
a vast, vivid  
ridiculous  
contrast between  
the architecture & lifestyle.  
Yet, still here as I write  
this, beautiful eyed children  
named Lakshman laugh  
and I hear drums in  
the night sky . . .



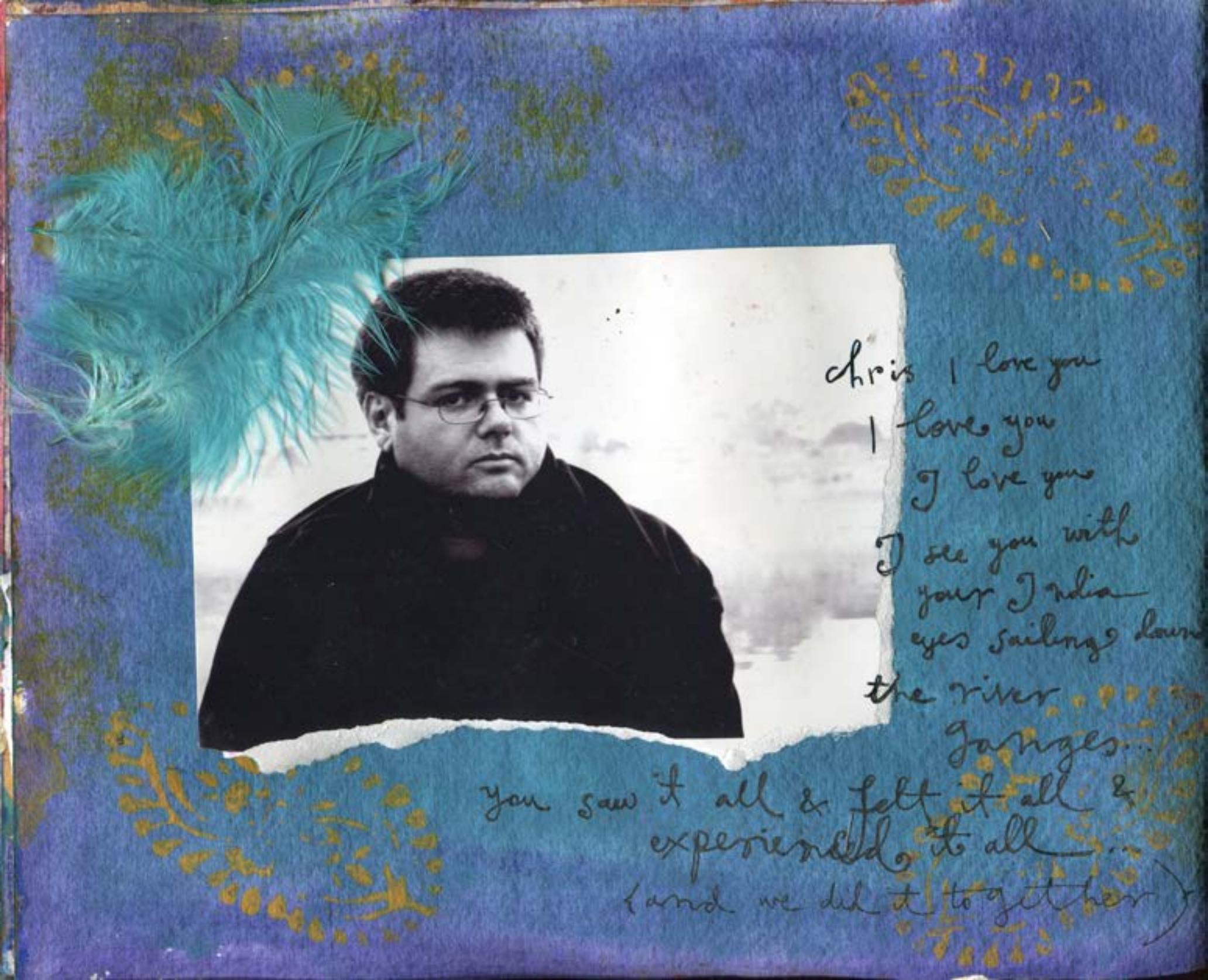
Sometimes I hear the  
**drums** & the  
and all I want to do is run away  
into the night, for my amazon legs to thrust me  
away into the darkness, the unknown, the oblivion, the  
void, the space between breath & stars. I would go  
where the drums led me, I would vanish into the  
mystery... to follow them is to disappear NJO India... instead  
I listen, take small walks in the evening & feel the Longings  
& call of the Wild & UNKNOWN...



I have that feeling again - of wanting to disappear  
and immerse myself into the very essence - air  
of India. But then something precious happens  
and it want to be far, so separate from  
it. The beauty & the city. In the distance,  
there is chanting & drums, & then there is  
a flute - a strong, lilting flute that  
travels down the river banks and calls me  
like a Pied Piper. Beside me, there is a  
dog fight, then I hear a man whipping his  
dog over and over, and its gentle yelp.  
Down the road there is a bridge over the  
river and we have been told not to go there  
because of the animals & people over there.  
Now it has become a place of curiosity - it  
has become a symbol of the unknown, and  
the river between us is a symbol of  
separation. Perhaps I am going a little mad  
and perhaps that is how it is supposed to be.

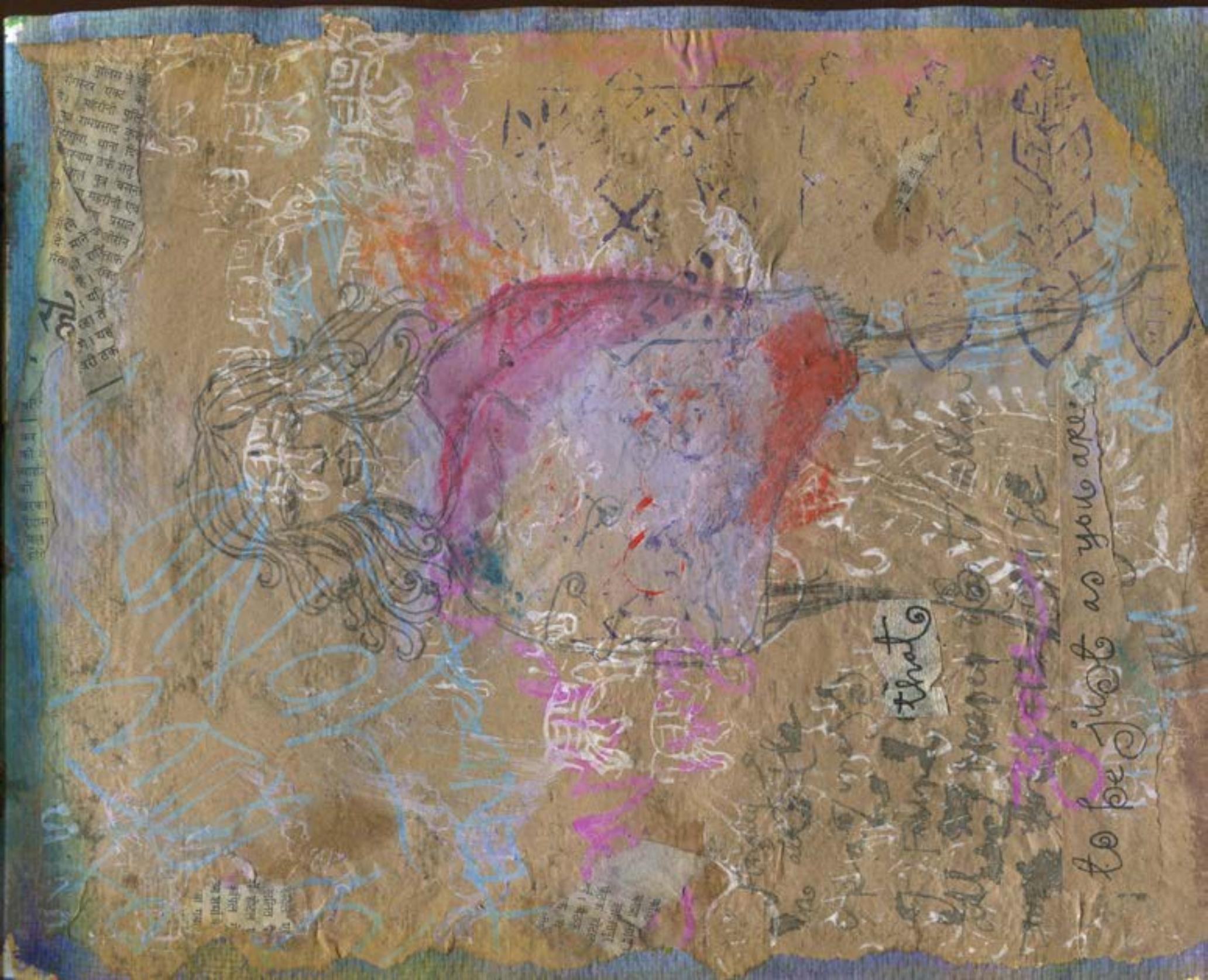
1. I want to be my self with you  
I want to read many books. I want to play inside  
my room. I want to be free & live I want  
to be healthy & consumed by you  
I want to stop anger & I want  
you to be yours & your prophet  
I want to be purified





chris I love you  
I love you  
I love you  
I see you with  
your India  
eyes sailing down  
the river  
Ganges

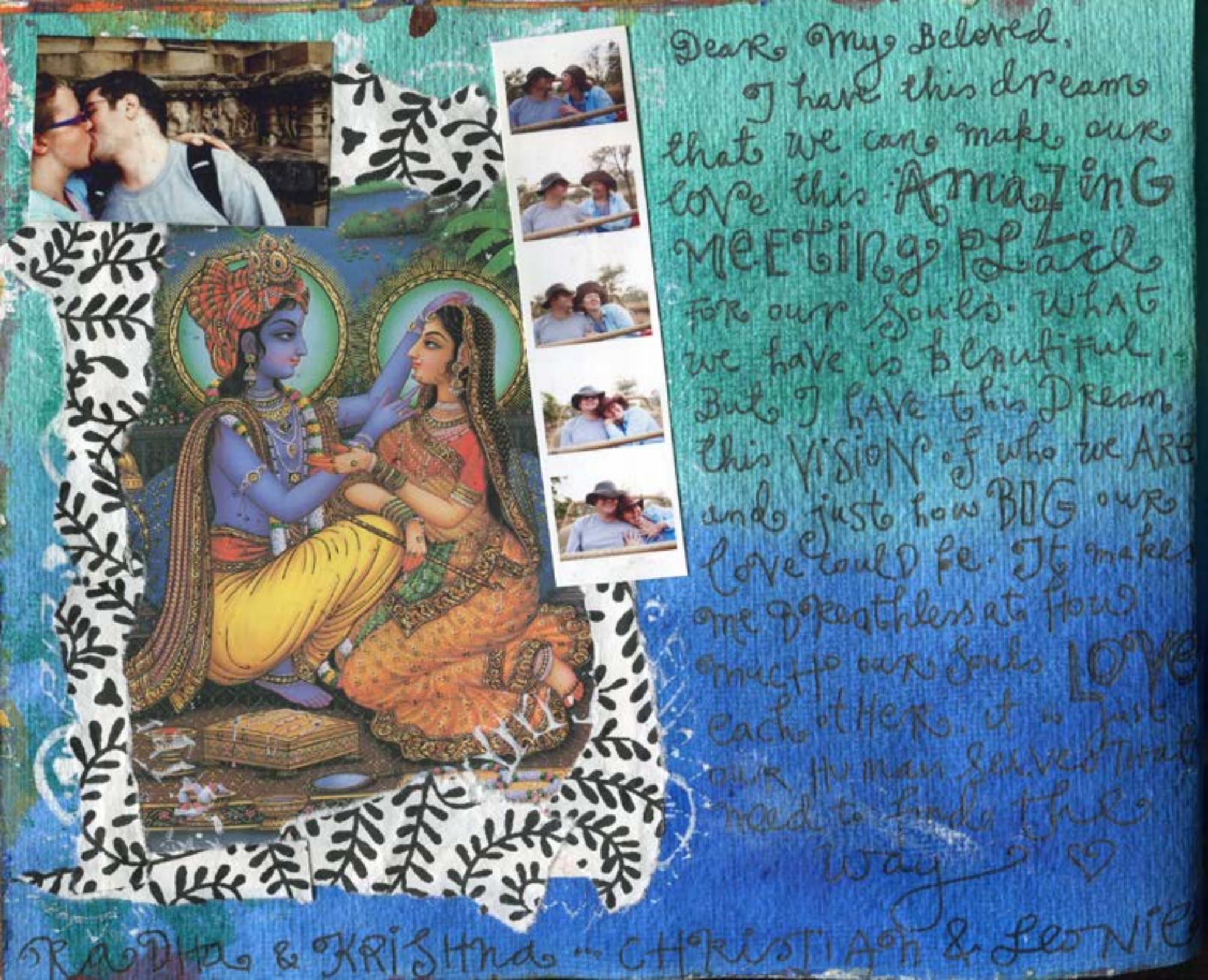
You saw it all & felt it all &  
experienced it all  
(and we did it together)



to be just as you are  
that's what I like  
to do

Today I visited the Western Temples at Khajuraho, where the Kama Sutra sculptures are. There was a temple devoted to the goddess Kali, my dark-breasted mother of teaching. I asked her to help me continue to let go of what did not serve me, what does not help me be my highest dream of self. While I have been here, my website has died. I feel like I have had my slate wiped absolutely clean, now I get to choose what to write again. What life do I want ~~know~~? How can I be my best self, just as I am? Who do I wish to be born as when I am ~~birtheD~~ born out of India? creative, free, soft, gentle, sacred, awake, alive, Red.







INDIA IS A  
PORTAL....

11/10/14



I do not  
know if I  
could ever  
truly know  
you. I only  
know you like  
I know  
myself.  
I think  
that is  
the  
magic  
about you  
deep India  
you are  
the  
teacher  
of ourselves



On 1/3/08, Marilyn Allan [marilynaallen@gmail.com](mailto:marilynaallen@gmail.com) wrote:

I was thinking last night that the local bus trip with the horn blaring best describes India.

The setting was a bus which had to be pushed to be started that morning, visible signs of perhaps vomit on the windows, certainly years of grim and goodness knows what on every corner of the bus. The window was adorned with religious idols and good luck garlands. These obviously worked because we all survived much richer for the experience. A helpful assistant calling out the destination to would be passengers. All local people entering and exiting the bus except for us gangly gaggle of gawking travellers.

I had quickly decided that the loud, incessant, grating horn would drive me mad if I didn't decide to love it. I thought of the ways I could love the horn and once you start that process it became easier. There was beauty and melody in the sound, blaring when least expected and for longer than thought possible. Just when you think you are getting the tune and the rhythm, the driver would change the format. Then, an extra bonus was when the Indian popular music added to the rhythm and crescendo. This was just too precious. The challenge was to try and write down the sounds I heard on your book. Not only was it challenging to write the sounds and rhythms but it was almost impossible with the two broken fingers incurred whilst dancing on the rooftop with a transvestite and nearly falling through a skylight. But THAT is another story!

Love mum  
1/2/08 ^"

I think in some ways, for the first time, I'm more okay with death dying. Just more able to accept it now.



I dream of Snakes, dear snakes of transformation.  
India - snakes of skins. Before I left for India, I felt like a snake eating its tail. I would dream of snakes, and stay centred and peaceful to allow them to pass by me. But then fear would grab a hold of me, and I would kill the snake, crushing it in my hands, then mourning what I had done. I felt like the test was to stay fully in peace and let the snake wear his transformation magic in my life. I awoke this morning, three days after being birthed out of Mama India's womb, and I am bitter. Last night I dreamed I let a python bite me on the thigh. Nothing will be the same again. Thank you for

EmBRACE the MYSTERY,  
the not-Knowing.

the not-fitting-in, the TREMOURS and the TREMBLES,

the perfect unperfection.

EMBRACE

the Wanting to go home, the wanting to stay, the  
not knowing if you could possibly leave or ever

want to come back.

EMBRACE the

unnameable, the lost and the poor and the

lost and the poor & <sup>unnameable</sup> inside yourself.

EMBRACE

the dreaming, the fogginess, the fear of being

the same.

EMBRACE India

like it is your shadow self, the one you hide

to

but crave unconsciously.

EMBRACE India

so as not being nothing like you thought it would be.

Embrace it



India is trying  
to teach you

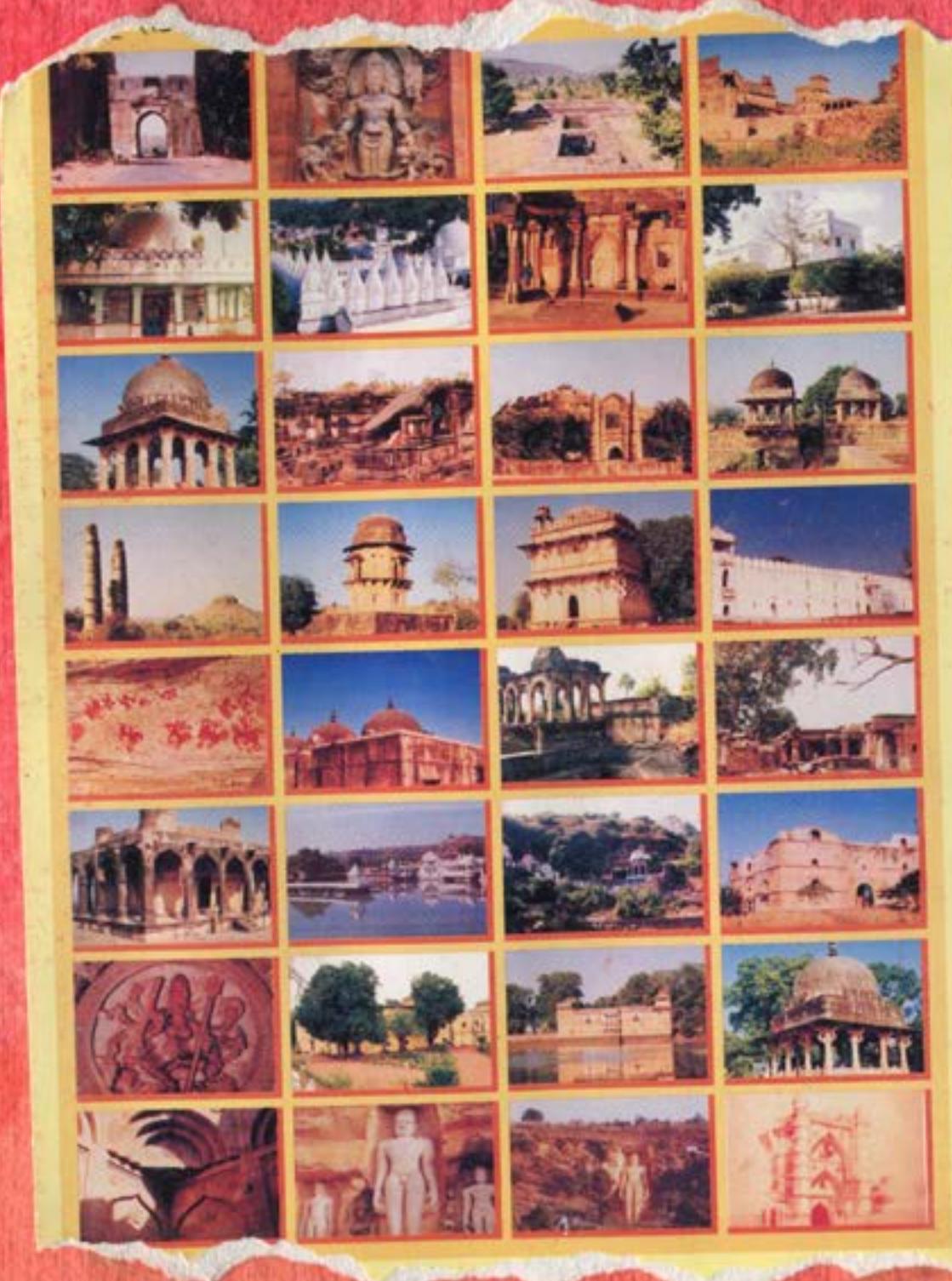
as amma's mama



“India is  
trying to  
teach you  
about the  
exquisite  
beauty  
in A  
**DUNG**  
Beetle”

—Annie Morris

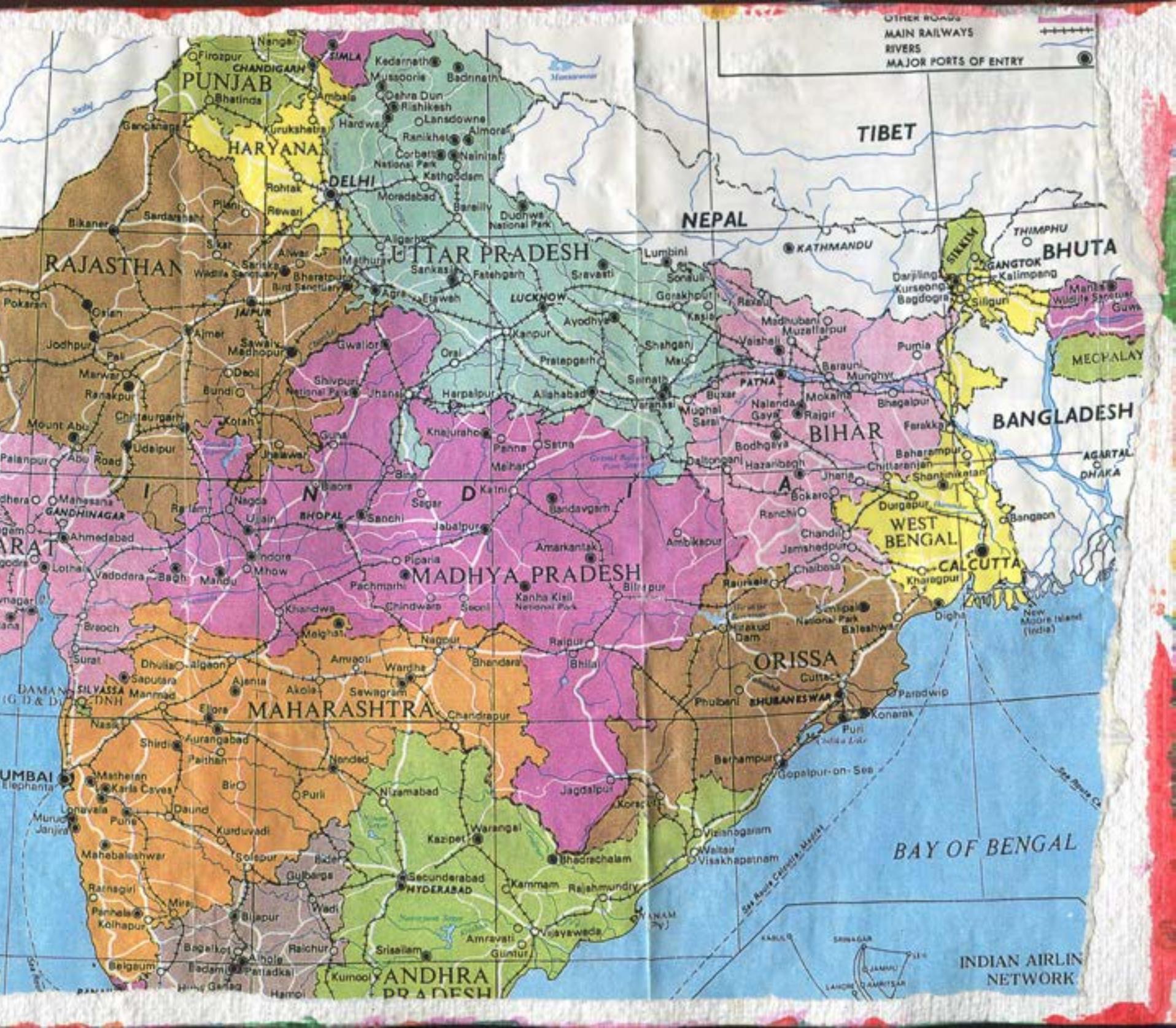




# UNO

## World Test Series

The thing about Uno is - I deliberately not win so we can keep playing.  
I love the game more than winning ~ that has to mean something.





# Drama V. Love

When we met one of the guys on our tour, he said to us "You are doing this all together? India is hard enough without doing it with your family!"

We all struggle in this funny little cobweb of love named family. Tonight it is my little sister's turn to feel vulnerable and out of energy with our cobwebs. Mama said she feels vulnerable because she sees things that aren't there — and don't we all. We spend our whole lives seeing untruths & believing our mirages of wrong-love. I wonder who we could be if we knew without a doubt that we were absolutely loved — there would be no more Dramas, there would just be a sea of love.

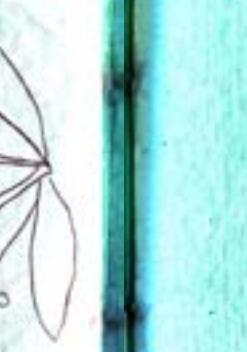


Dear You,

I don't know how I could possibly tell you of India.

She is the finest of suns now, slipping through my fingers, all around me she is, invisible & insensate but apparent.  
I reach for her but she sinks through me, leaving her silken crumbs like a snail over me. I am the same but I am changed - look closely & you will see the glittering lines trailing down my arms like a sun kite searching for spirit.

Nowly the words thread their way through me now. I have been haunted by the thrashings of over-exposure, over-compensating, over-connected and over-information loaded. Not here. I have not been alone enough, with my own thoughts and creator world. There is sanctity & sacredness in this - in having enough space within me to hear how god speaks through me



↓  
found it

Only the lotuses flower there - they focus us on the shift & reveal their perfect bond unfurling, reminding us of the beauty that can be found anywhere, everywhere, even in the caverns of human loss, complaint & mistakes.

She is the wind that breathes her fervent breath over me, I cannot feel her but not see her. I can only trust she is there, living out her dream as I live out mine, dancing in a sacred, tossed dance together. We are one now, intermixed in the hopes & stones & wisdom & tears & laughter of a billion others.

India is the hidden out in the night, sending out her shrieking hoot, waking you from your slumber. the weaving fine of a riverbed, restless against the sandstone, her watery womb giving birth to the country.

The tattered rags of all your senses. the huddled sky, hemmed with grey lace at the edges of her horizon and skirts. India is the dream of all you are frenzied and torrid, reckless and stilted, unbelievable and true. Luring the hope to sanity and having to find your burnt way home

No words could ever tell you what she is.  
Any words I do manage to spash forth from my  
tadly become untrue as soon as they hit the air,  
regardless of my intention. I suppose this is what  
it is to write of anything - they only pose a  
broken living at the woolly animal you find in the  
forest one summer's afternoon your wo~~o~~my woods are  
only of the woolly animal twig, not they are not the  
woolly animal.

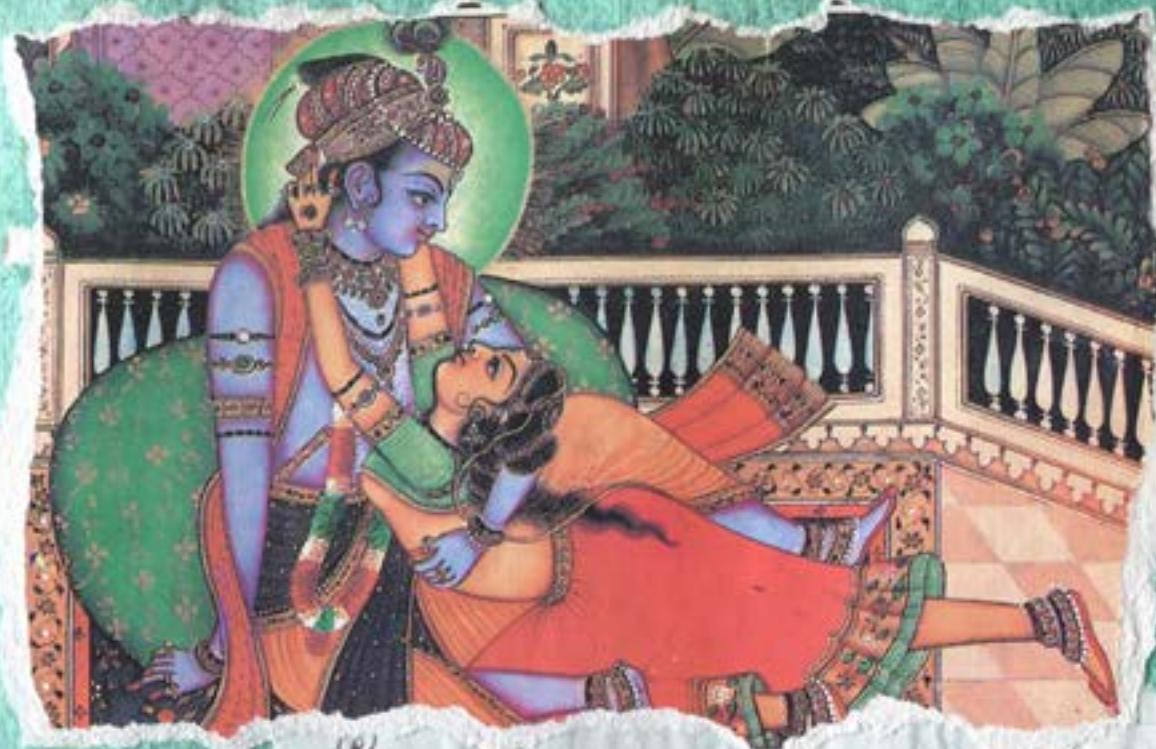
Dear India,

The greatest gift you gave me was being  
my mirror.

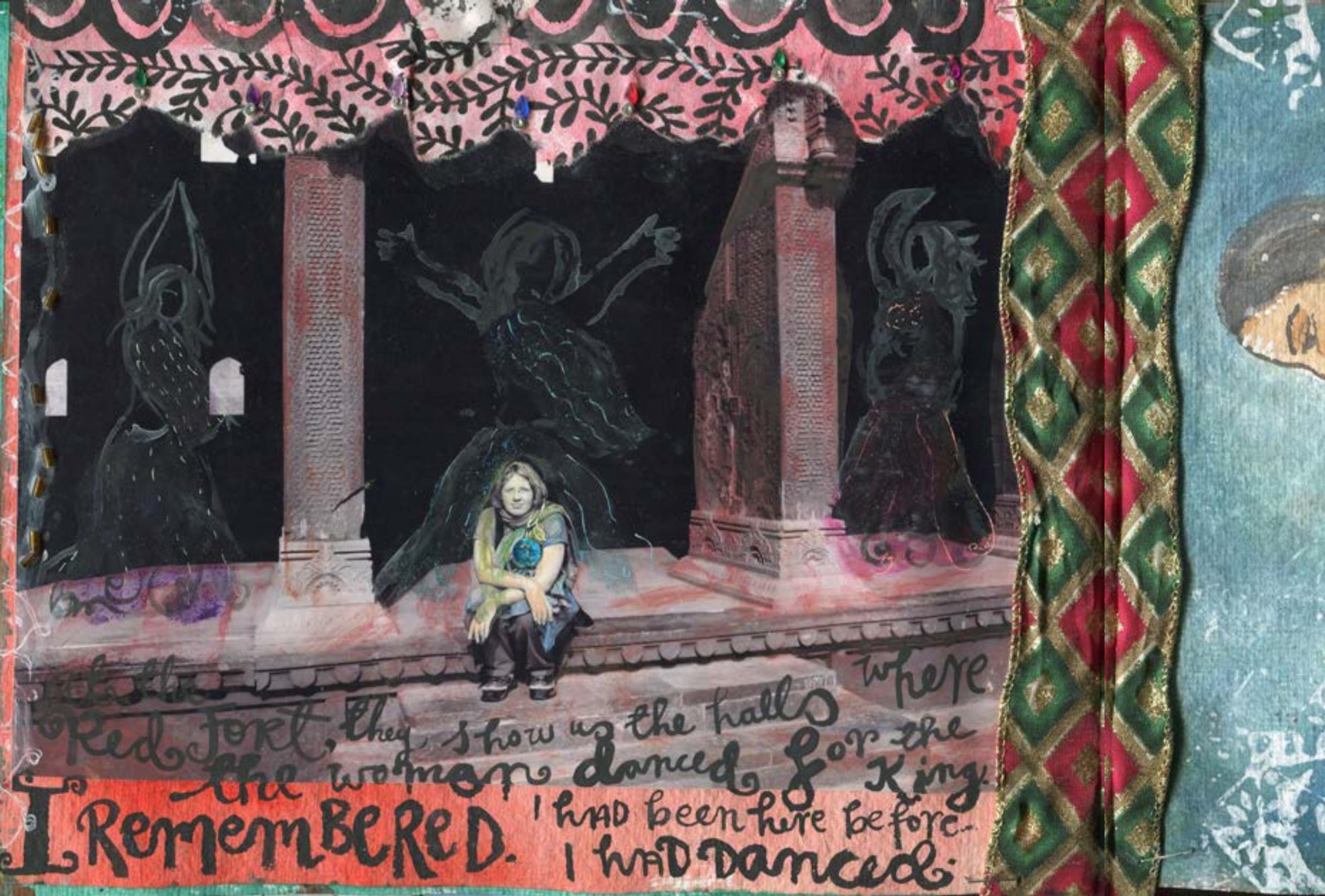
In that mirror I saw great pain and great beauty.  
Now I turn to love.

Love,  
Leonie



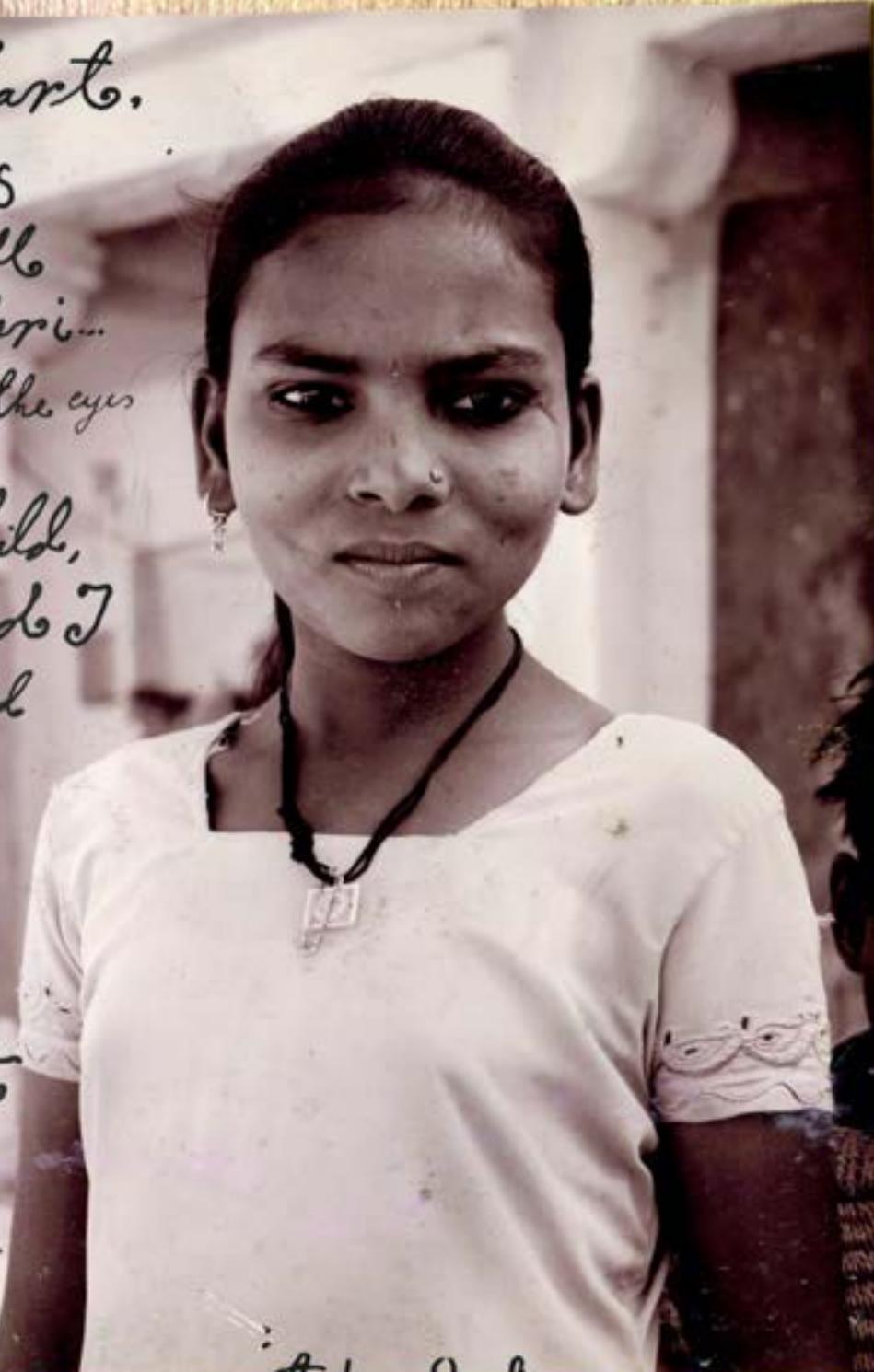


When I was young, I always believed that I would have to travel around the world to find my soulmate. I was surprised when to find my great love in my hometown at the age of 18. We have lived a thousand lifetimes in our relationship, but it was in India, I found him. Love. That big grand ship. The one that is unmistakeable when it finally sails into your port. (I want to go now to be by his side) ❤





I dreamed of you  
last night my darling heart.  
you, the girl woman Goddess  
that I met only for one still  
moment on a street in Chandernagore...  
you with the intense eyes, the eyes  
I saw myself in.  
I dreamed that you were a child,  
and I held you in my lap, and I  
struck at the man who wanted  
to take you, and hurt you.  
Then before my eyes, you grew  
into a young woman, pregnant.  
I realised then that we all have  
our own journeys & choices to  
make all for ourselves...  
I couldn't save you, but maybe  
you didn't need saving anymore  
than I do. My darling heart, my Indian girl self. I think of you today & honour you...





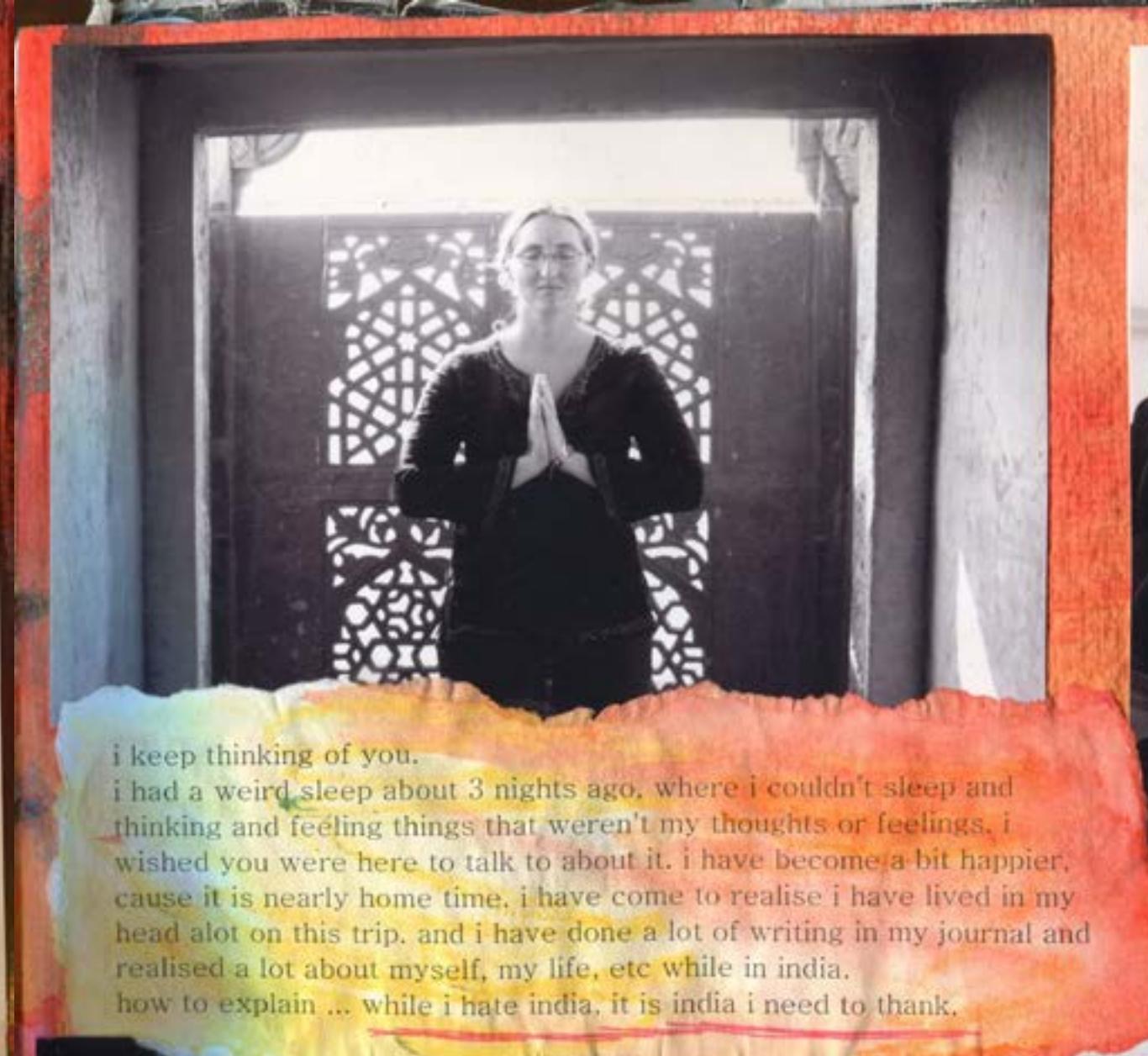
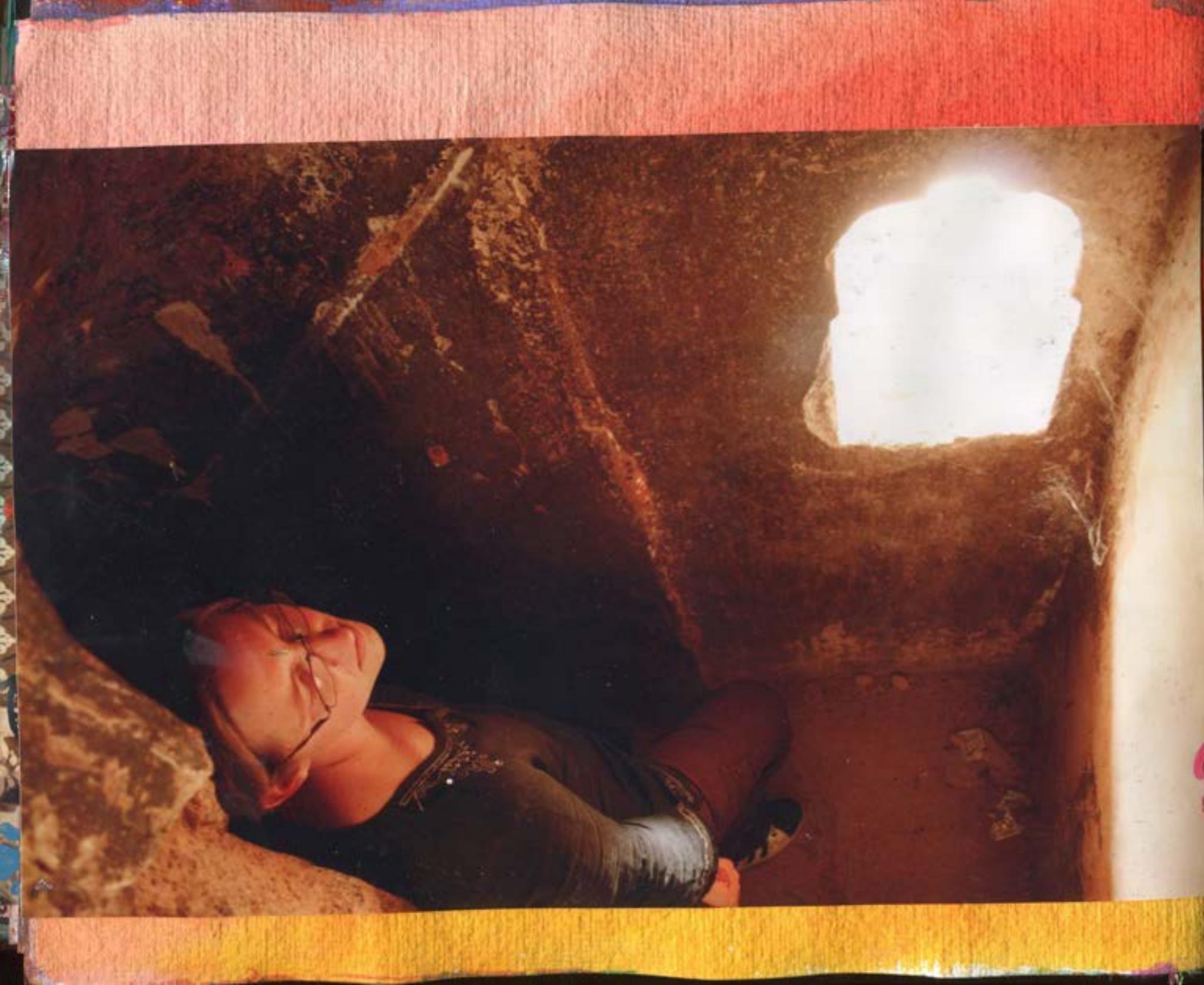
Dear India,

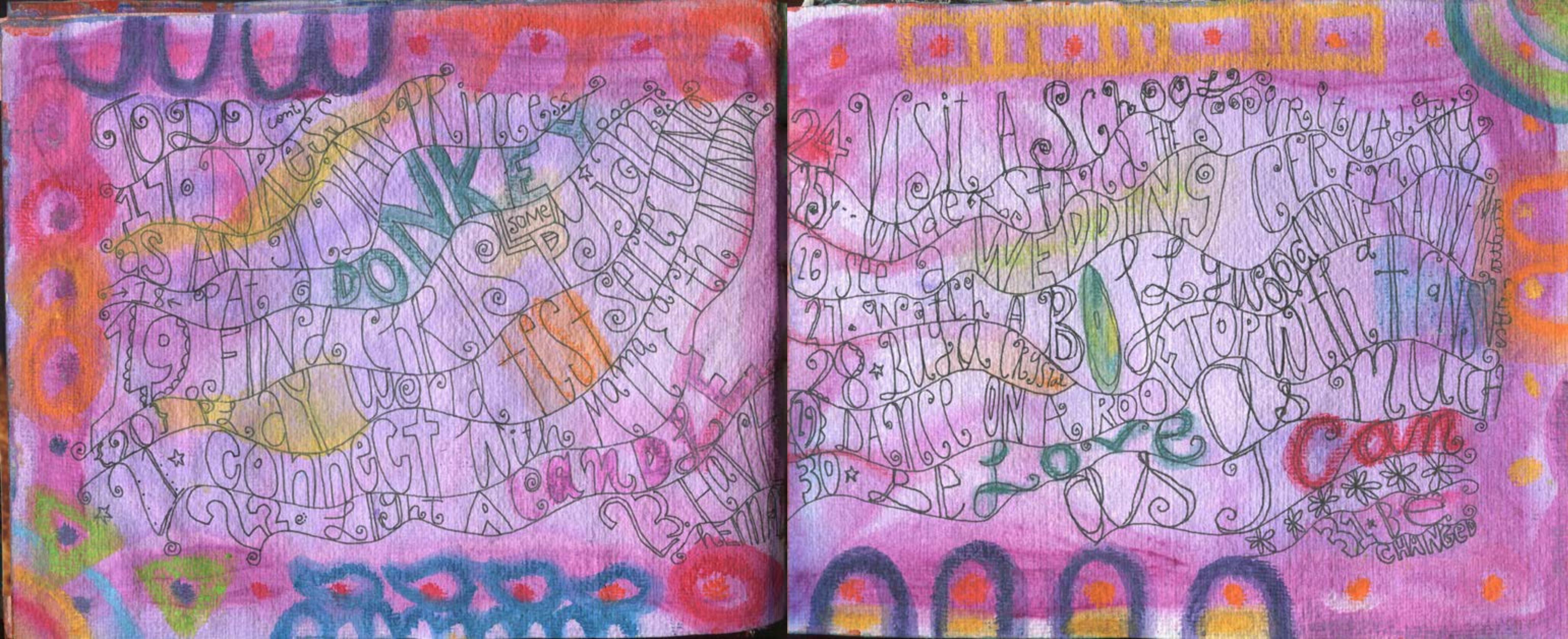
What I think I most learned from you is this:

## We are all human.

[especially me.] I find inside me now this welling back of compassion and understanding. Dear me, we are such tender little spirits looking for Love & Safety wherever we are. We fuck up and we get fearful and we grasp, but god, look at why we do. Let us be gods & goddesses and look at our tiny stumbling, fumbling, love-hungry selves with eyes of love. Purple, BIG, being held in the ~~dark~~-star-jewelled bosom of Grandmother-Sky LOVE. When human pains come knocking on my door now, I remember that I was forgiven when I was in pain & fumbling. So I love you India because now I love all things.. and in some ways you make me open enough to feel all of that. In you India Sister, my path was crystallised, and now I must find my own humble, human ways to Divinity.

I love you, Leonie







Mama Ganges, and perhaps India as a whole, is the **greatest teacher** of all. She shows you two extremes at exactly the same time so you may know about darkness & light; goodness and pain; humanity & divinity. She teaches by showing you How to Be and How Not to Be all in the one Breath.

This morning before dawn we took a boat ride on the Mama River. The mist rolled over us and I felt in between worlds. Once the mist parted, we saw the ghats & the funeral pyres. We saw people bathing & worshipping & meditating - all in various states of living. We saw them on fires, their final stage of dying.

Mama Ganga shows us How to Be - everyday people go to a piece of the Earth to worship Her.

To meditate, to begin the day with arms raised in celebration of the sun rising. This is how I want to be - my life as a sacred dance of my beliefs. And then Mama Ganges shows you How Not to Be - this holy place, so deeply loved, revered and honoured that she is referred to as Mother - this RIVER is sickeningly polluted. Her heavenly waters are stymied with sewerage and rubbish. Touching her divine body, is an act of courage & faith that your finger will meet an oasis patch of water free from poo and disease - sacred thoughts of Nirvana indeed! Mama Ganges teaches us that we need to love, and conserve and protect those parts of our selves that are sacred, and this Holy Earth. Love and honour not just in the spiritual plane, but in the physical one also. May part of our new spiritual practice be to cherish & conserve this incredible planet we journey on. May we know these teachings of Mama Ganga.



**INTREPID**

# Unforgettable India (2007)

Group Leader: Harpreet Malik. Phone nos: 09983382626/ 09414163626

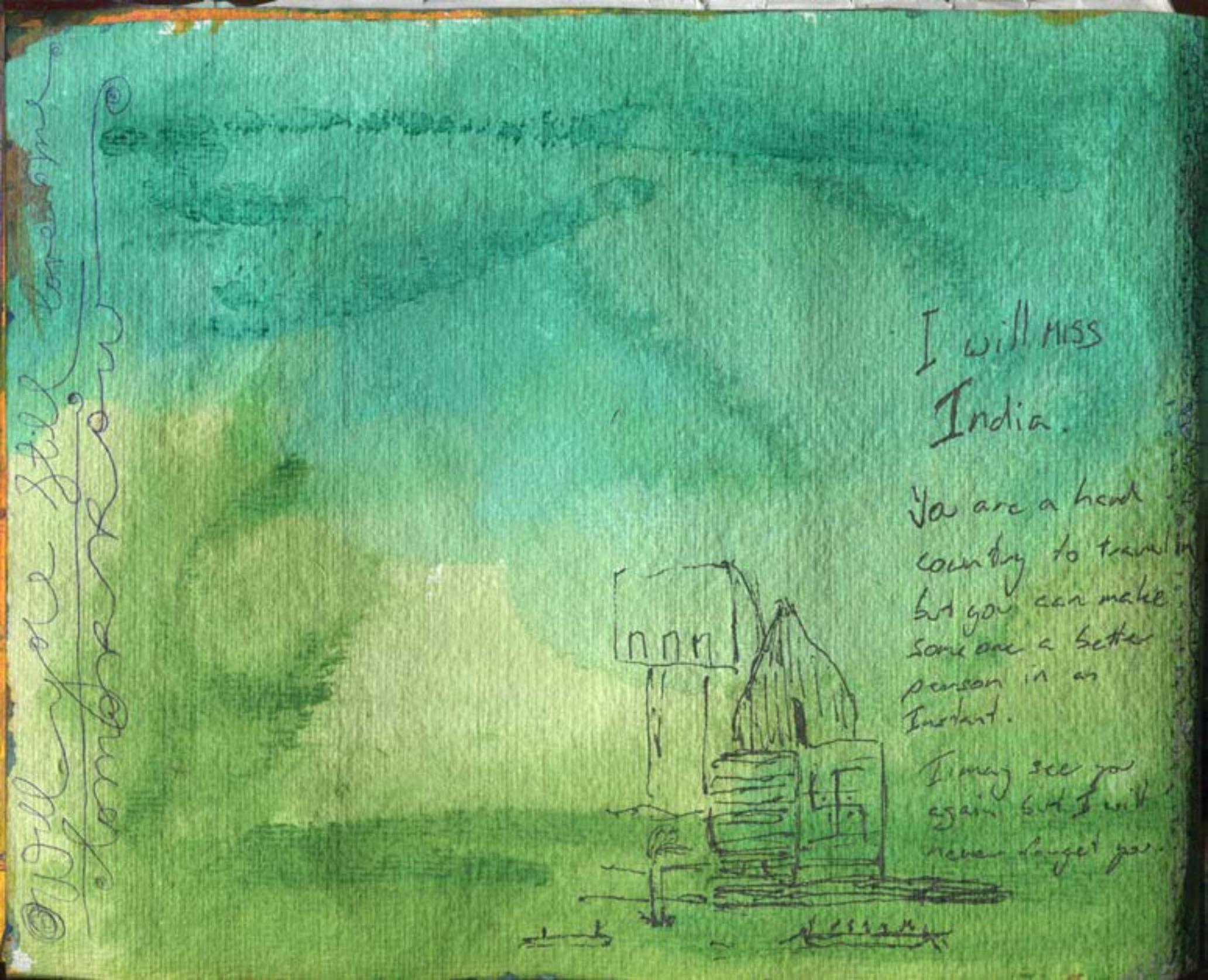
Date	Day	Operator Name	City	Activity	Optional Activities	Contact Details	Contact Name
24-Nov	1	Hotel Metro Heights	Delhi	Group meeting		(011) 28751704/ 7719	Sahil (Resv. Manager)
25-Nov	2	Hotel Metro Heights	Delhi	AM Old Delhi sightseeing; PM Free Time	Rajpath, Birla House, National Museum		
26-Nov	3	Pushp Villa	Agra	AM train to Agra. Agra Sightseeing – Taj Mahal + Red Fort	Boat trip / Scenic nature walk / Baby Taj / Sikandra / Carpet Factory	(0562) 3290267-8	Amir Ud (Manager)
7-Dec	4	Hotel Shreekunj	Chanderi	Train/jeep to Chanderi. Dinner with Kalle Bai			
28-Nov	5	Hotel Shreekunj	Chanderi	Chanderi sightseeing	Lakeside excursion to temples & rock paintings		
29-Nov	6	Orchha Resort	Orchha	Bus to Orchha & orientation walk		(07680) 252222-4 252678	
30-Nov	7	Orchha Resort	Orchha	AM Orchha sightseeing & TARAGram. PM FREE TIME	Cooking class / Village safari / Bike hire / Laxmi Temple / Ram Raja Mandir puja / massage		
01-Dec	8	Hotel Surya	Khajuraho	AM jeeps to Khajuraho. PM Western Temple Complex	Kandariya Dance Program / Sound & Light Show / Shilpgram / Jain Temples	(07686) 2741 27	
02-Dec	9	Ken River Lodge	Panna Nat. Park	AM FREE TIME. PM Panna N.P safari	Renew Falls / Boating / Fishing	(07732)	
03-Dec	10	MPSTDC Bungalow	Chitrakoot	Transfer to Chitrakoot & orientation	Boat ride on Mandakini River	(0761)	
04-Dec	11	Hotel Milan Palace	Allahabad	AM sightseeing. Vehicles to Allahabad		(0532) 2421109/2421505	
05-Dec	12	Hotel Pradeep	Varanasi	AM bus to Varanasi. Varanasi orientation		(0542) 2204963 2204594	
06-Dec	13	Hotel Pradeep	Varanasi	AM sunrise boat ride. PM FREE TIME. Evening flower ceremony	Ram Nagar Fort / Sarnath / Benares Hindu University		
07-Dec	14	Overnight Train		FREE DAY. PM train to Delhi			
08-Dec	15	Departure Day	Delhi	Day rooms Hotel Metro Heights till midday		(011) 287	



Hello; goodbye;  
From the divine  
in me, I honour  
the divine in you...

The thing is, I used to think that life was a straight line towards ascension. I thought that life was like a movie, where you would work out one problem and fall in love and then live happily ever after. I didn't know that we would have to face our own stuff over and over again. I didn't know that there is no such thing as happily ever after. There is only Happy Now, however you make it. I didn't know that wherever I travelled in the world, things would still be the same, because I am still the same person. The same person with the same fears and personality malfunctions and quirks and restless heart. I don't know where these thoughts leave me - either in a grey sky of depression or in the **freest** place I could possibly imagine.



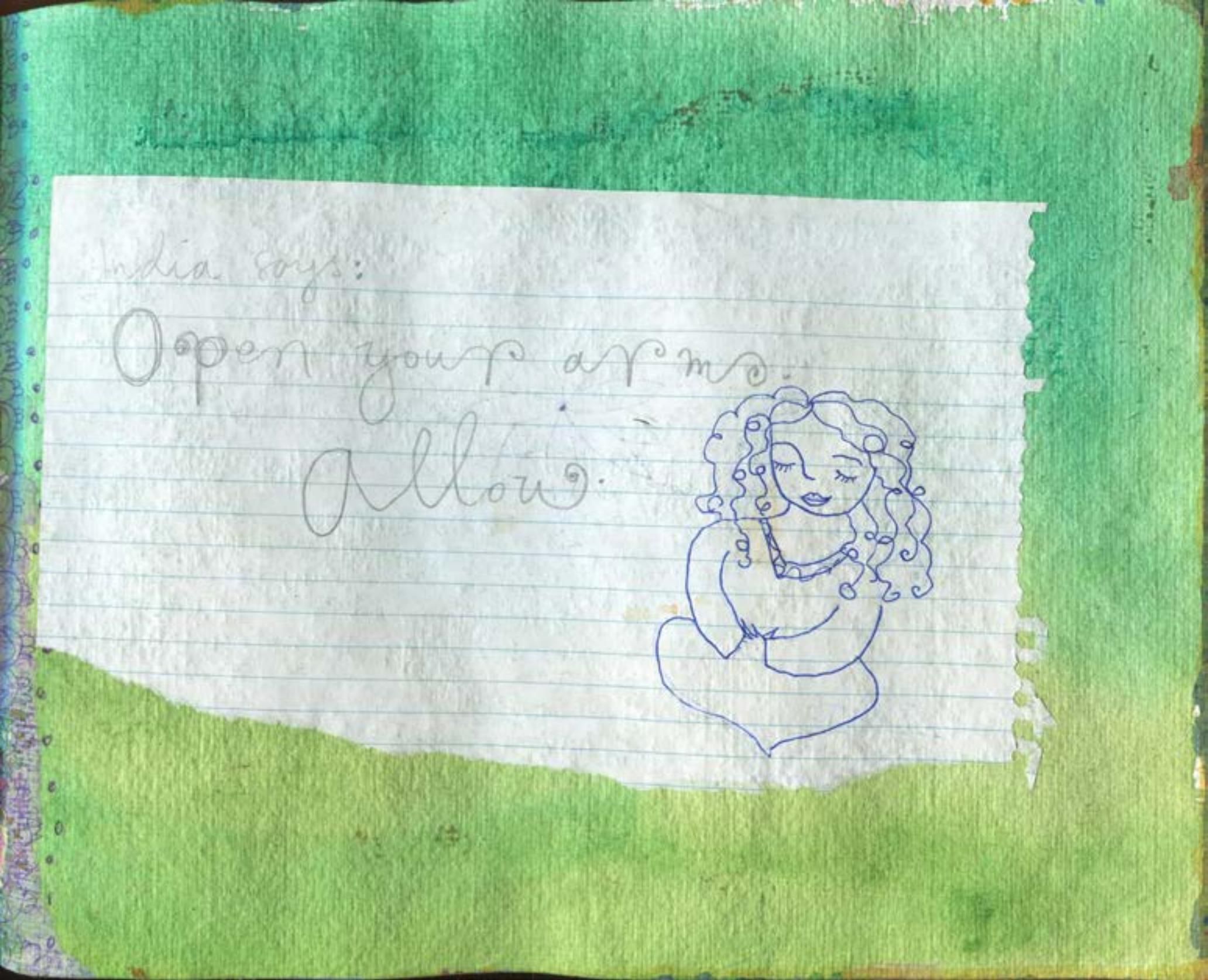


All good things come  
to an end

I will miss  
India.

You are a hard  
country to travel in  
but you can make  
some one a better  
person in an  
instant.

I may see you  
again but I will  
never forget you.



India says:

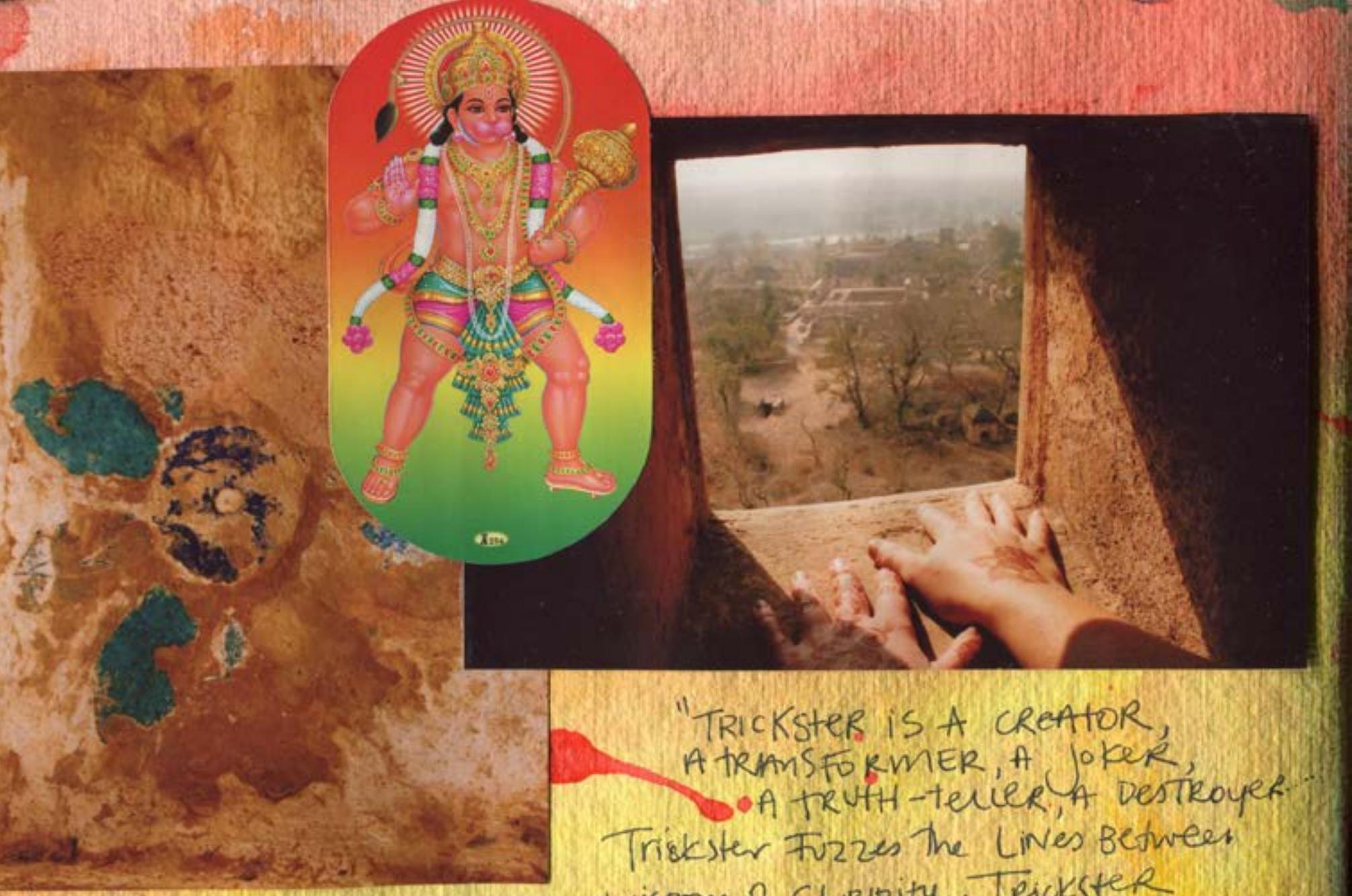
Open your arms.  
Allow.



on the road to Varanasi

I keep having these dreams that I am back in Australia and that I have missed India, that I never really have been RUNNING to try and left, that I have been AIRbourne, but I look down & realise I have never really left the ground.  
I have never really left the ground.  
We leave in 4 days, and  
I feel like the dream is coming true. I feel like this is the foggiest dream I have ever known.

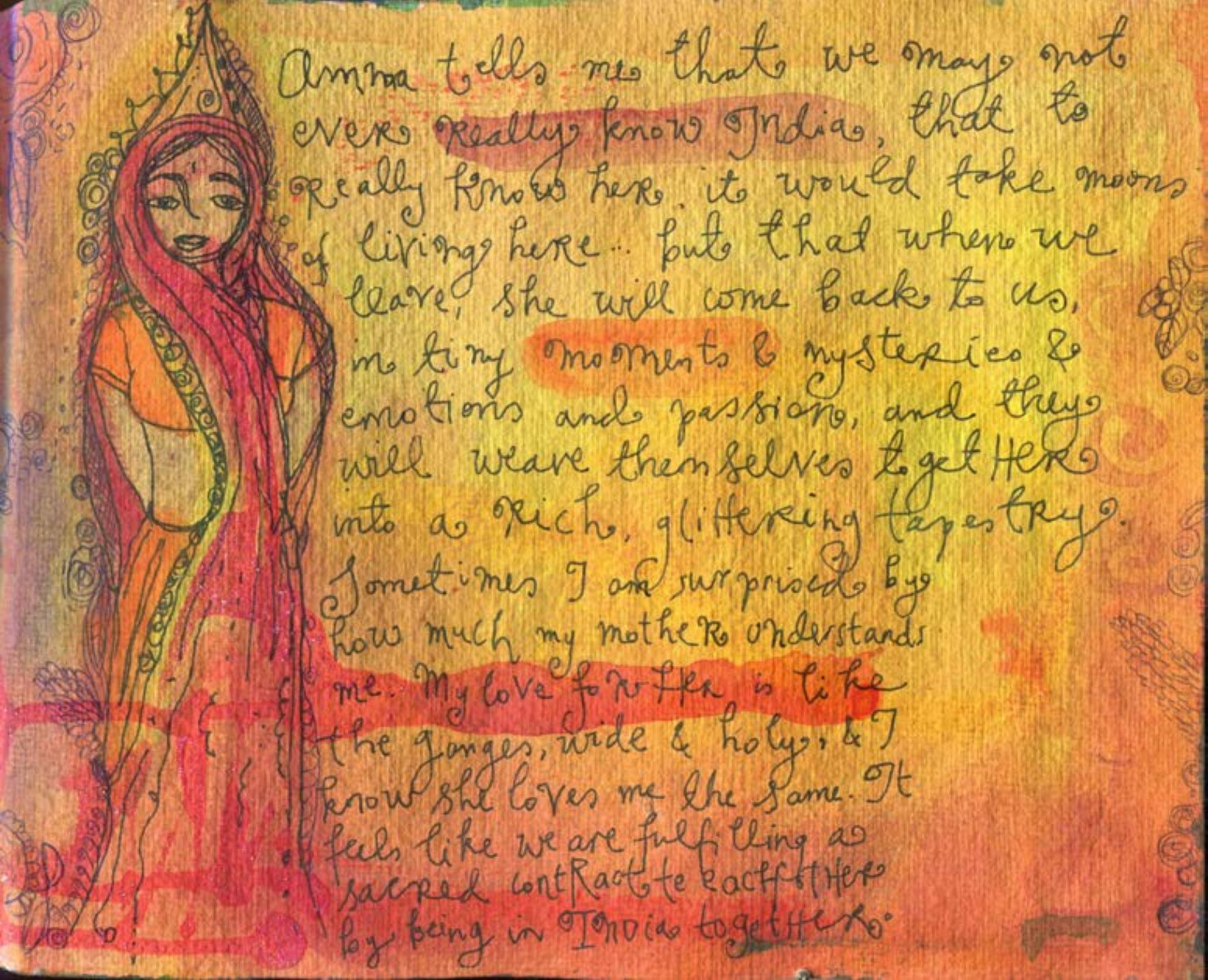
like I have never really been here. I feel like I do not know India yet, she is just a dark eyed woman in the crowd that I glimpsed before I had to LOOK down to see if I was stepping in shit.  
I have been waking up close to tears, that I might have been here but not left footprints.  
To breathe, and I wonder what footprints India may have left on my soul. Sometimes two footed, sometimes four, I must believe that it will take time to see and know these prints. It will take time to know how India has changed me.



"TRICKSTER IS A CREATOR,  
A TRANSFORMER, A JOKER,  
A TRUTH-TELLER, A DESTROYER."

Trickster Forges the Lines Between  
Wisdom & Stupidity. Trickster  
tells us the TRUTH ABOUT  
Ourselves".

—Thunderspud of Dragonflair  
(You could replace "Trickster" with "India")



Amma tells me that we may not  
ever really know India, that to  
really know her, it would take moons  
of living here... but that when we  
leave, she will come back to us,  
in tiny moments & mysteries &  
emotions and passions, and they  
will weave themselves into HER  
into a rich, glittering tapestry.

Sometimes I am surprised by  
how much my mother understands  
me. My love for her is like  
the Ganges, wide & holy, & I  
know she loves me the same. It  
feels like we are fulfilling a  
sacred contract each other  
by being in India together.

Dear Mama

This morning I was sitting in the garden at home watching the galahs & roses & my breath, and I saw my hand stretched long & languid over the chair.

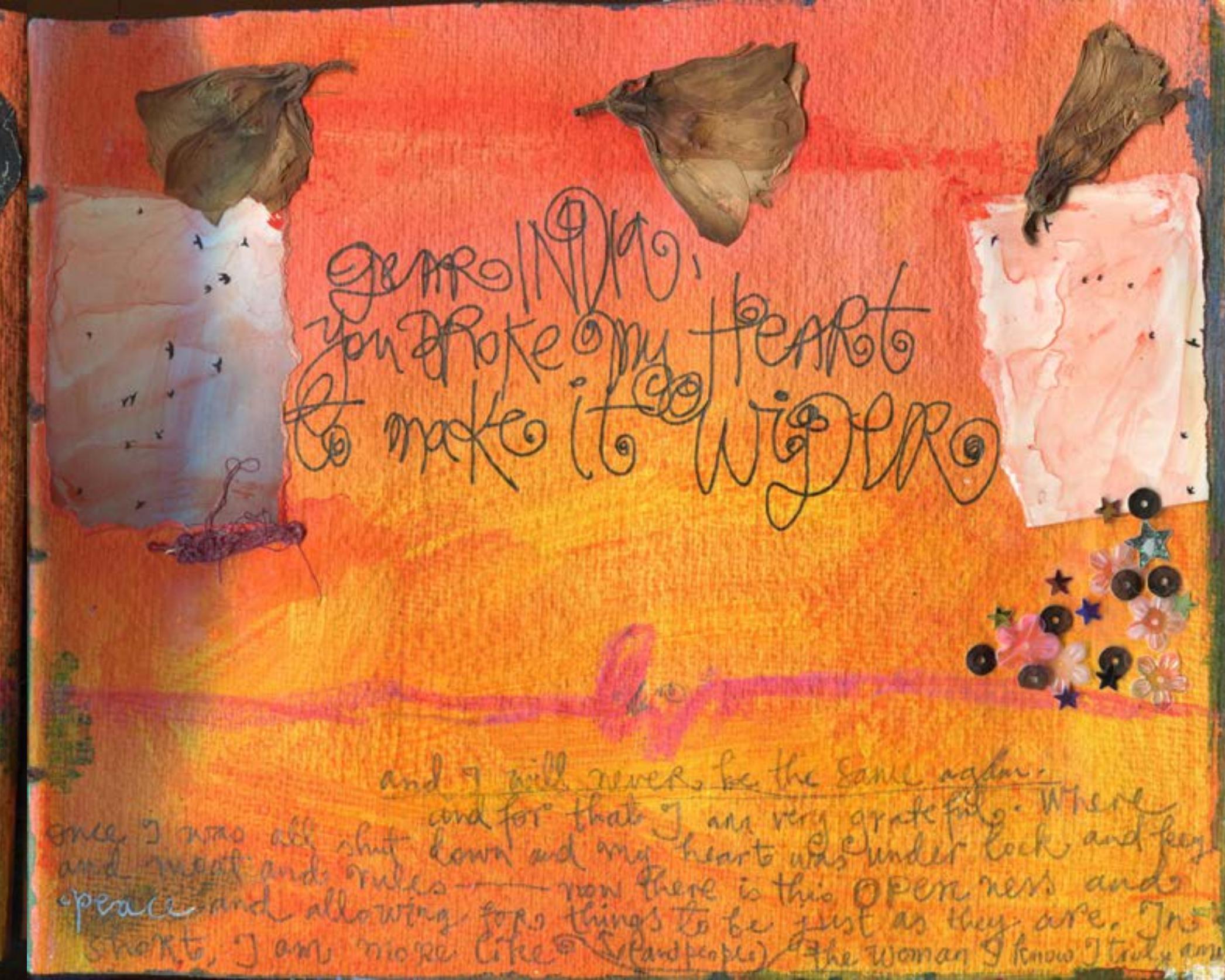
My hands are your hands, and they made me miss you - not just as my mother, but as my friend & companion & mirror to myself.

You are still in India, and I wonder where you are & how you are.

Dear Mama, I just want you to know how deeply blessed I am to be your daughter.



and then the roof burst and a thousand birds flew into the air ...





● लगने से पहले  
● विद्युत खाने

मैं सुनाक नहीं हो सकूँ।

सेष कहा जाएगा वा फिर  
वो लापरवाही कि  
जानूँ होते ही चाराब हो  
खें तगड़े ही गिरने लगे।

उपर रहने में बरसी गई

ये केवल कट गई।

अहिल कसबे से जुड़े चार-  
ल दोकड़ी गोली को एक बाह  
दृढ़ भी विद्युत नहीं भिल सकी  
गाड़ी के कारण घटभीणों द्वाप  
जान संग्रह अद्वितीय किया  
में पूर उन्होंने लाइए खड़े।

इन जिला मुख्यालय पर

विन लेकिन विद्युत विभाग के

जह नहीं रहे। हालत यह है

कि दिन में एक दो घंटे ही

को जारी है। वह भी कसबे

इस बड़े ऐसे गोले है, जहाँ

ज दिन के बाद वो विद्युत के

ए है। नवदुर्गी महोत्सव

में ने भी आवे

जुमे।

के की  
जब प  
जे स  
की



सहेत  
वी  
समय

विद्युतवासी, रमजान  
को है, लेकिन विद्युत  
हुई है। शायद अब  
विद्युत के अभाव  
अधिकारी प्रतिक्रिया  
आवश्यक देकर अब  
है।

कमबा महिला अ  
अपूर्वी लालचेट इ  
रहे, लोकन यह  
दूसरकर्म चाराब ह  
है। विभाग द्वारा  
बद बरसी में  
दूसरकर्म भाग्य  
के लापरवाही में  
जाओ-अहो दासप  
रूप गया। एक दू  
नहीं लाग जा  
लोक करने का ।  
दिन गुरुवर दिय

all the the  
beauty and  
glory and  
grandeur in  
sunshine

all the the  
beauty and  
glory and  
grandeur in  
sunshine

We are staying at Ken river  
lodge.

cream and ochre and  
timber and deep wooden  
and cool terracotta slate  
floors. I feel like we  
are in Africa.

There is a big clay  
fireplace & a kitchen  
that consists of a  
bench. I did expect  
to see a fridge cause it seems a little modern but still  
dated at the same time.

It is VERY dry & VERY hot, almost excruciatingly (but  
that is probably my temperature ☺)

I had a dream once, that I was in India.  
And this is the place where we stayed, but  
there was a family living here.



Very Beautiful .....

This feels like home,  
like one of those places  
I want to stay for  
a while. It is cooling  
& calmings & simple,  
with its eucalypt walls  
& muted tones. Whenever  
I stay in a place  
of cream colours, I  
feel so much solace...

and yet, I do not know  
if I could possibly  
live in a house without  
colour & ornate decoration

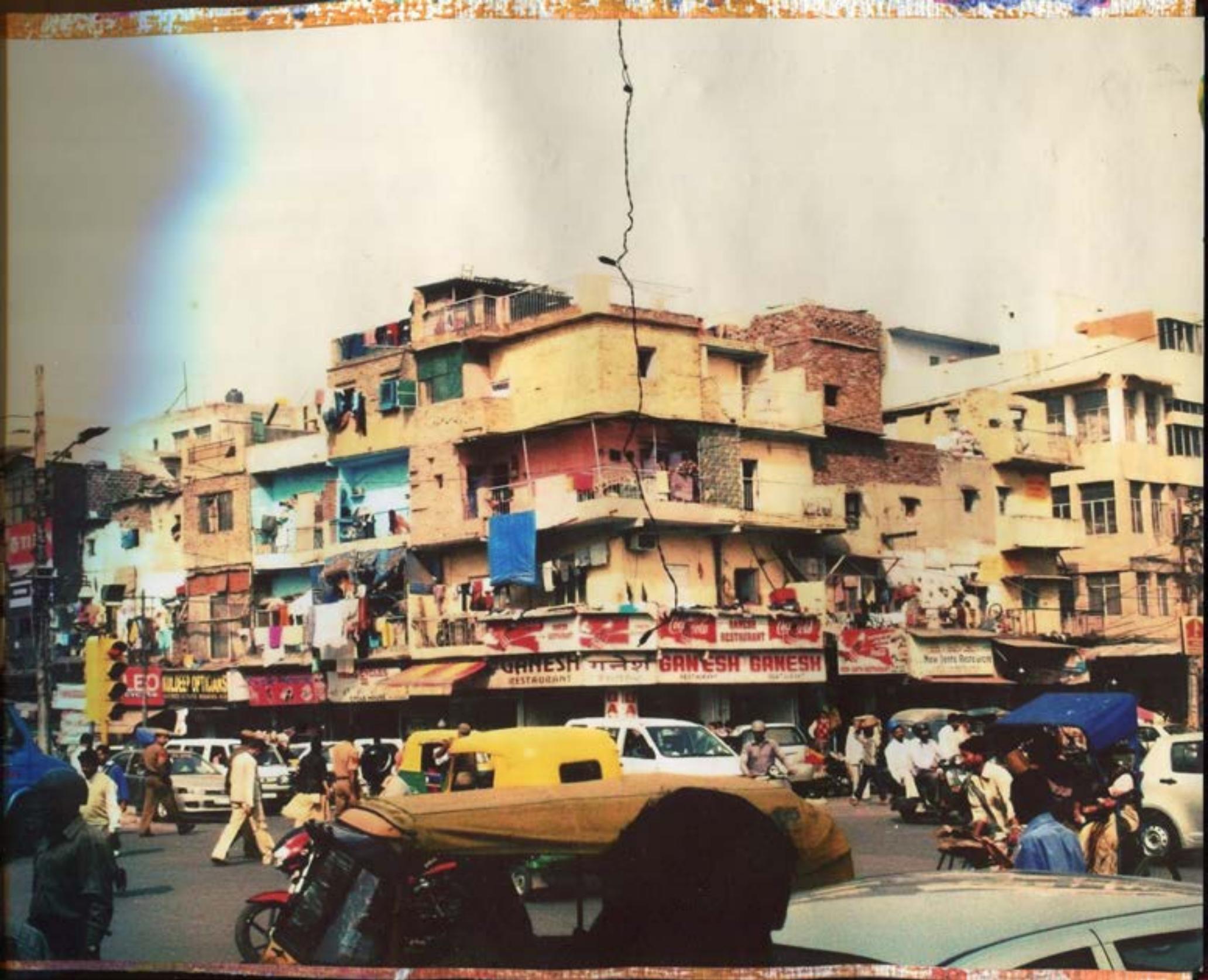
Maybe I could do both.  
Maybe I could be whoever  
I wanted to be...

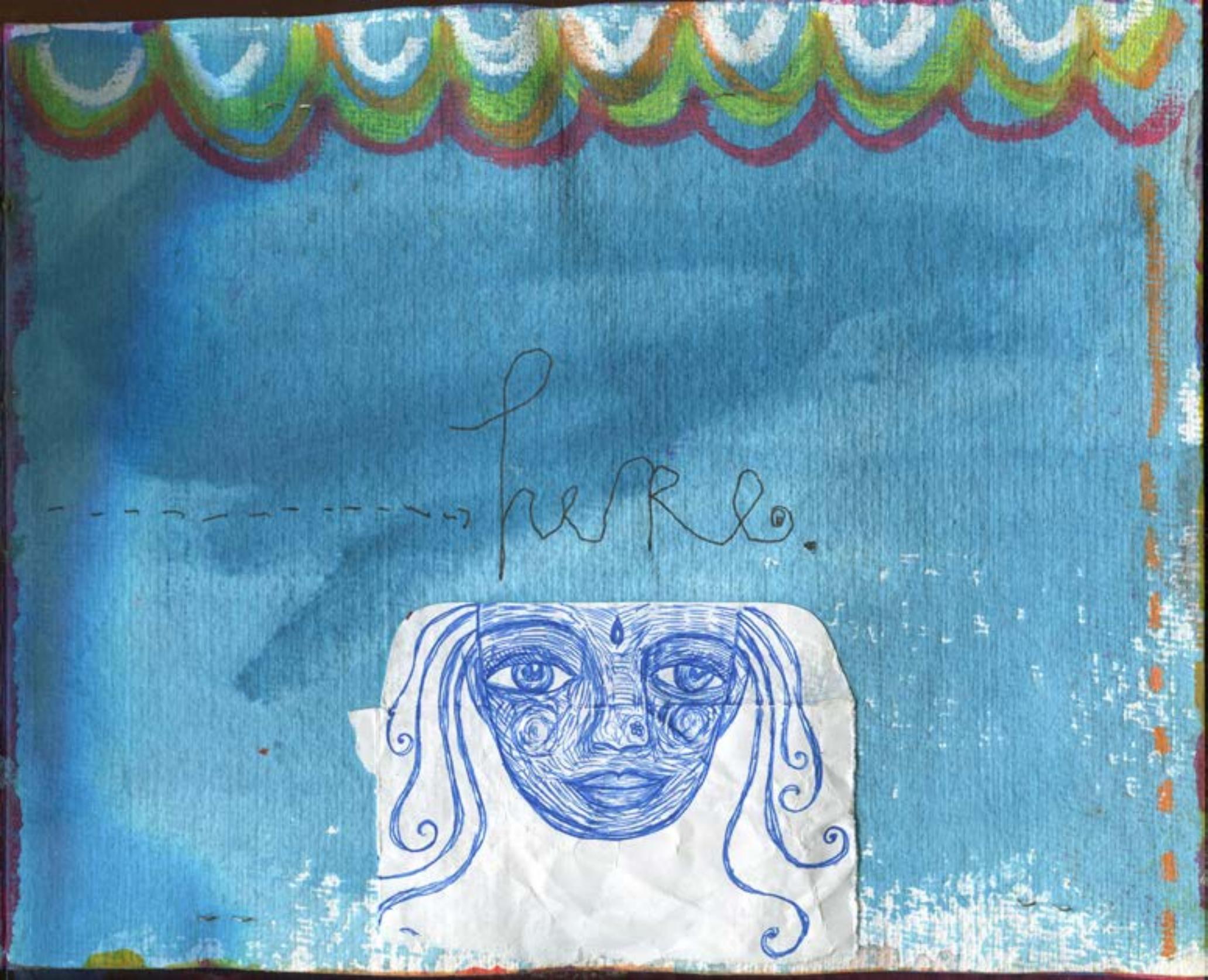
picture of candle  
in crevice

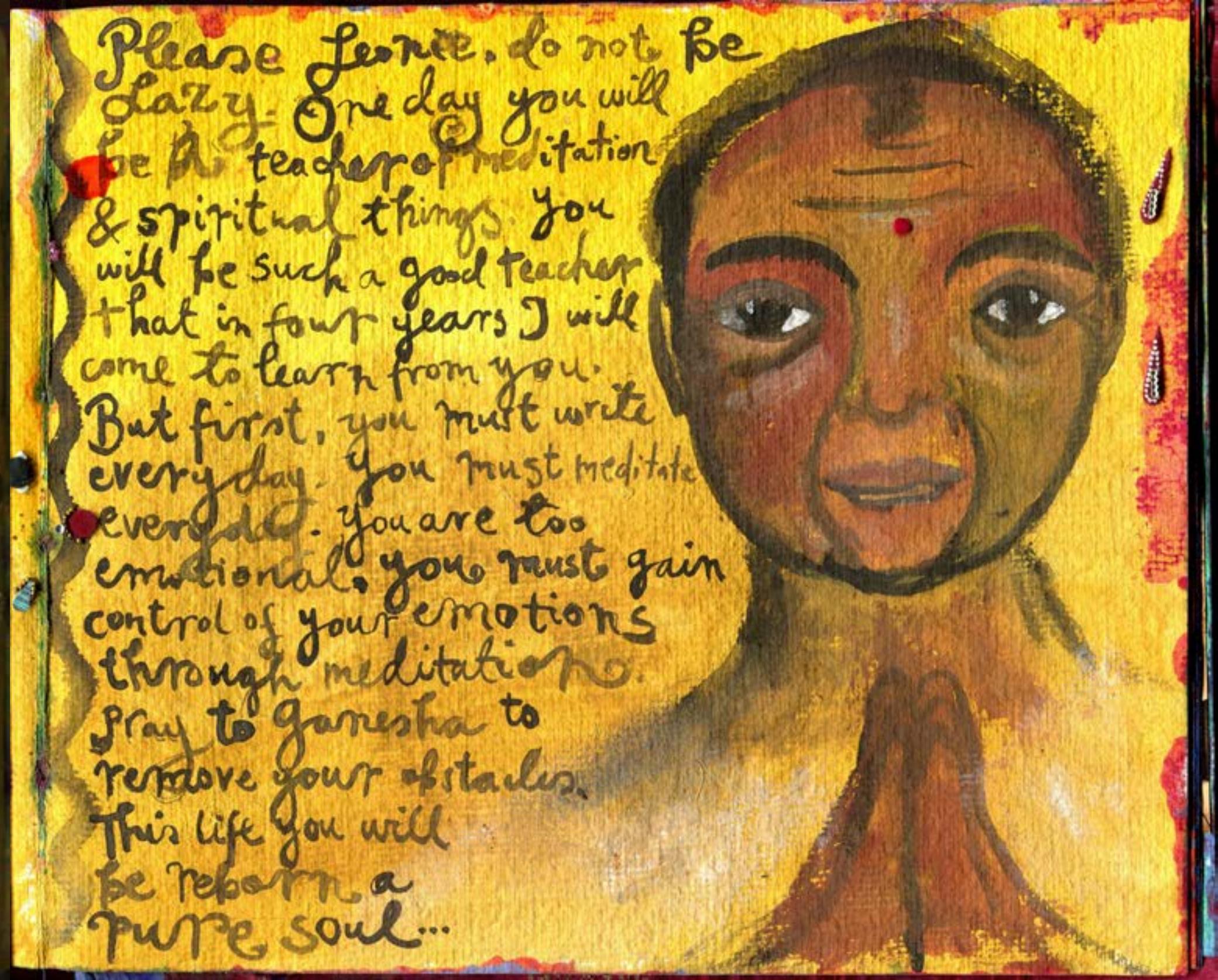


## ⑥ Returnees

- "Holy Cows: an Indian adventure" by Sarah McDonald @:
- "Women who run with the Wilds" by Chappix
- "Nanakla esterse"
- "Letters from a father to his daughter" by Jawaharlal Nehru &
- "Be Here Now" by Ram Dass
- "An auto Biography" or "The Story of my experiments with truth" - M K GANDHI
- "My Many Adventures That Ruined My Life" KAPPE

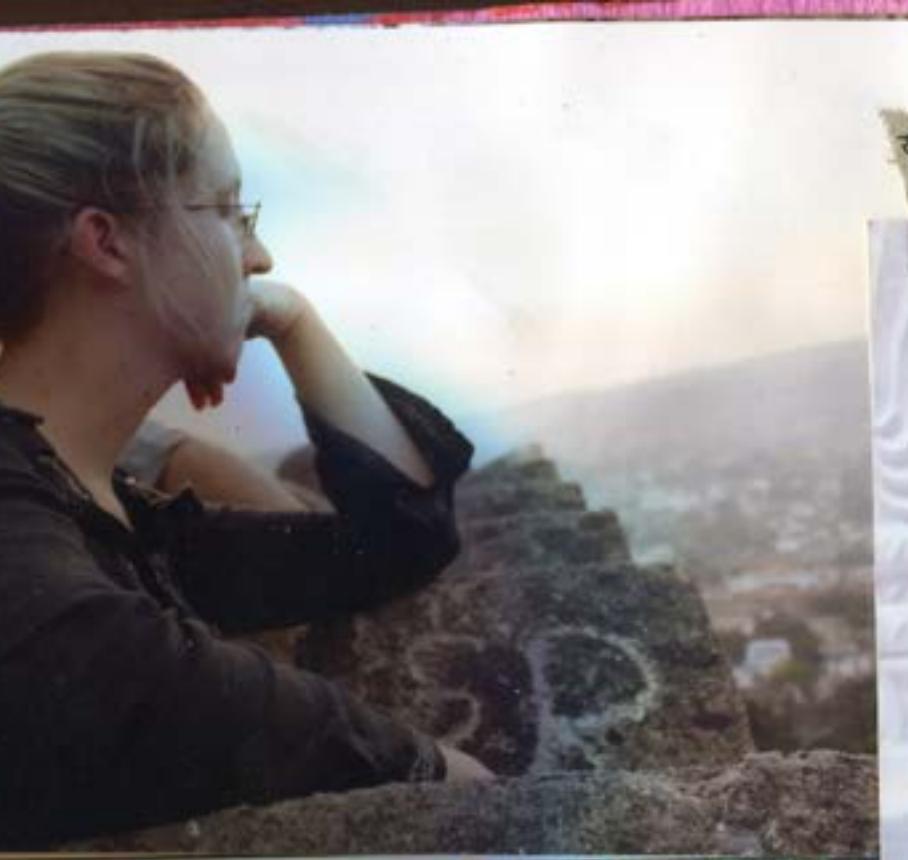






Dear India,

I have hated you and I have loved you.  
you have Ravaged and embrAced me. You  
have fucked me over & led me in a sweet  
tango of spirit. You have shown me how to be  
& how not to be. You have made me as angry  
as a lion, as gentle as a cow miandering  
through the markets. You are one thing, &  
many things, dear India, just like me, just like  
every fucked-up-beautiful-human-earth-angel  
on this planet. We don't take our shit together,  
we have it on show, and we are looking at it.  
literally & figuratively. Dear India, yesterday a  
shirt sales man groped my sister on the street at  
midday, and so I wanted to hurt him with a  
paze like a bushfire. moments later, a kind and  
man walks up to us. "Welcome to India" he tells us  
with so much love & joy in his voice. Dear India, you are  
so much more... so much more



Of all the things I most wanted to find in India, an astrologer was it. I wanted to find a man with a star down chart that told me the ley of my inner land. Or perhaps even a hand reader - an ancient crane dipped in swathes of red silk, pausing at my palm by the side of a road. Of course, I hadn't met India when I had those expectations. I hadn't known that to meet India is to lose all expectations, all preconceptions, all thoughts, all parts of my self. To meet India is to dip down the rabbit hole into the unknown, to become jumpy jumpy Alice in a world that you are oversized and overwhelmed in.

Of all my searchings in India, I did not find my grail. Not even in Varanasi, where our tour guide made calls on cell phones - calls to the home tour office, to other tour guides. She knew of someone, but she did not have a phone number or an office. To find her was only by chance. There was no way to contact her or visit her or make a booking. India offers the gift of chance without expectation, the happenstance gifts that pour from the lotus palms of Ganesha and Chaos in sequence.

So I left India with palms still left unexplored, birth planets uncharted. There is no way to predict what Mama India will give, take or withhold. I shrugged my shoulders as we flew homeward, east over the Indian Ocean. I resign myself to "next time," grieving the sudden loss of Her thumping, humming heartbeat, her base beat, energy boozing through my feet. I leaned for a strange, black woman who was as familiar and uncommon as a mother. I prayed she would not forget me, nor I her. I thought the mysteries of India were over now. I had left.

We land, blinking, like alien creatures just landed from one of the dirtiest, chaotic places on Earth to one of the most sanitized and conformed: Singapore. Down too clean, too quiet, carpeted airport passages I stumble. Where am I? And now I am not in India, who am I? In the bathroom, I am confused. After a month of careful foot placement in Indian squat, the world of Singapore bathrooms is hyper-sanitized and ultra-gleaming. I have no idea how to work the bathroom system here. I stare at a silver box on the wall by the basins. Is there something I am to do with that silver box? From the corner, a woman with omgy hair comes to my side. "Here" she points. "Towels." She smiles into my eyes, white teeth, lashes, shining cheeks. A red bindi adorns her forehead. "Here." She smiles again into my eyes, and returns to her corner. I wash my hands, pulling cream towels from the silver box, cheeks flushed from a miracle. Where Omgy was telling me of jewels, Mama India was whispering she would never leave me, she would always take care of me, that for the rest of my life I would hear the mysteries and magic that She is. When I least expect it, the love and miracles unfold. In the bathrooms and on quiet corners, there is India.

We stay in Singapore for a few days, drinking in her otherworldly cleanliness, her sweet, drenching monsoons, her skyscraper, sparkling hotels. We spend a large amount of time checking in to Singapore's bathrooms to pay homage to Mama India's worries, hygiene and water quality. Against our belly and bowel's wishes, we find ourselves on a bus tour of Singapore's highlights. After seeing the Merlion, temples and Little China, we are taken to the last port of call: Little India. My love and I stagger together. "We don't need to be here, we've just been to BIG India!"

We walk down the street, amusing ourselves with "This isn't India! I can safely cross the street here!" "This isn't India! There isn't enough human shit, dog shit and cow shit!" "This isn't India! Where are all the crowds and drums and beggars and chanting and sales people?" Little India, by contrast, is quiet, with flavours of Big Mama. In a market place, I make one last ditch effort to find the Ganesha stickers I'd been searching for in Delhi. Stickers of the Gods and Goddesses adorn every auto rickshaw and street altar in India, but when it comes to buying them, they are a mirage of astrological proportions.

I ask a vendor for them. "No, no, we not sell here." I sigh. "Just yesterday I was in New Delhi, and I could not find them there either." His ears prick with interest. "You have been to India?" "Yes, yes, very good - Varanasi, Delhi, Allahabad..."

"In that case, come with me." He leads me to another section of the market, speaks with the owners in Hindi, and they show me the allusive stickers I have been searching for. I laugh with delight. Not in Big India, but in Little India were one of my treasures! Not all was lost after all!

I show them to my love in the marketplace. We shuffle over our Little India find. Behind us, a man with soft round eyes speaks to us. "Excuse me, may I tell you a little of our Gods?" My love and I look at each other with surprise in our eyes. We hadn't found an offering in India that did not cost at least ten rupee - but here one was. Round eyes, cocoa skin gleaming, he drills us through the stickers, quizzing us happily on our knowledge of India's pantheon of divinity. We delight in his warmth, his openness, his enticement of us under his Indian knowing wing.

We shake hands. I ask what he is doing in Singapore.  
"Oh me? I just arrived from India. I am an astrologer."

Just when I thought I had lost India, everything was found. When I said I wanted to find something in "Here" she points. "Towels." She smiles into my eyes, white teeth, lashes, shining cheeks. A red bindi adorns her forehead. "Here." She smiles again into my eyes, and returns to her corner. I wash my hands, pulling cream towels from the silver box, cheeks flushed from a miracle. Where Omgy was telling me of jewels, Mama India was whispering she would never leave me, she would always take care of me, that for the rest of my life I would hear the mysteries and magic that She is. When I least expect it, the love and miracles unfold. In the bathrooms and on quiet corners, there is India.

We are on our way to leaving India  
on white wings, and she has never looked  
so beautiful, so open wide. India is  
Raw and Painfully Deep. It pushes you  
into all of your emotions. The chisel's open  
your chest of PASSIONS until you feel  
rugged and chopped and tender and totally  
unable to bear the possibility of living <sup>without</sup>  
your heart's desire. What India has given  
me is this - She has taught me that my  
greatest responsibility is that of fearing  
my own heart and honouring it. In India I  
have spoken my truth more truly & astutely  
than I have ~~ever~~ before. A month ago I was  
still on the cusp of maidenhood. Please  
India tonight as a woman.



*A few years ago, my womens circle had a month of Kali. To begin with, I almost felt repulsed by her: by her anger, destruction and ferocity. During my travels with her for a month, I came to a kind of deep and loving friendship with her. She was the mother who would destroy those things that did not serve me. She was the best friend who would clear away my path so I could move forward. She was the daughter who transformed my life over and over, upside down until I was right way up. She showed me the grace in letting go, the miracle of cutting away, the blessing of allowing death in so I could be reborn.*

*When we landed in India all I heard was the deepest, thrumming heartbeat of the land: the sound of Kali. She was everywhere there, mingling on the street corners between brahman cows and threadbare dogs and beautiful, adorned women and beggars. She swam in the Mama Ganges River, between the sewerage, and the funeral pyres and the thousands of lit candles wafting on the water like glowing prayers. She was the gossamer river of energy touching and connecting everyone and everything: clearing away, crumbling to destruction, loss, hope, possibility, newness.*

*In Khajuraho, near the Kama Sutra temples, our guide weaves us to a temple near the back of overgrown gardens. "This is the Temple for Kali," his yellow pan-stained teeth grinned. My eyes wide, I take my shoes off, and bare feet on stone, walk into the dark chamber inside. Kali seems only a breath away here, sitting enveloped in her silence and her mystery. I touch my head to the ground and whisper prayers to her. "Thank you for showing me the way of destruction to new life. Thank you for fighting for what is right and what is not. Thank you for showing me my path. Thank you for showing me how to be brave. Thank you..." There is a commotion at the door. Two silent guards stand at the entrance, white eyes shining, waiting to lock the temple. My love whispers: Time to go honey. Time to leave.*

*When our plane's feet left the Delhi tarmac, propelling us away from India, I cried. My lover cried. It was like being born from the Great Goddess: at once deeply blessed for having been within her womb and a part of her beat, but also the pain of being a breathless newborn, skin bare, in a new world. I now walk the path of remembering her lessons and living them in my own life. Kali has become a Goddess in my pantheon, a companion to my spirit. Her love and her gifts have changed me deeply, and for that I am deeply blessed.*



Dear Mother India,

Yesterday, in Singapore, I met an Indian astrologist and had my horoscope read. He told me many good & powerful things, including that my last life was in you. That makes you not just my friend & sister but also my Mother.

We landed home this morning and whilst I miss you and fear the loss of you in my heart, I know that Australia is my homeland. Walking through the grass & trees to the car park, I break in the rich red earth, the green bushes, the luminescent turquoise sky. I bent and touched it, blessing my福地 with it, wanting to pull it like an EMU. Dear India, may I always remember that this Earth is a great gift, that living on it is the Richest. I fear come Tepuk.

Love Janice



Dear India.

as soon as our plane wheels caught their first breath of air, I missed you. Your energy - intense and humid with emotion and honking and faith - does not become truly apparent until I left it. When we became airborne, I understood why so many sobbed on the plane when we landed on you. You are the madness we all crave & are similarly repulsed by. You are family. When I left you, I suddenly felt a void where you were - you & all the humanity & wilderness. I felt, and still feel afraid that I have left you. But then, in tiny, tender miracle moments I am guided by you still - you remind me with your presence that while I may leave you,

you may never leave me. A tiny bindi splashed woman shows me the way. I find the remaining parts of my India To Do List. Sweet synchronicities that tell me that you are still in my life, weaving magic & mystery. Dear India, you are my sister now. You are my lioness heart.

Love, Leonie



