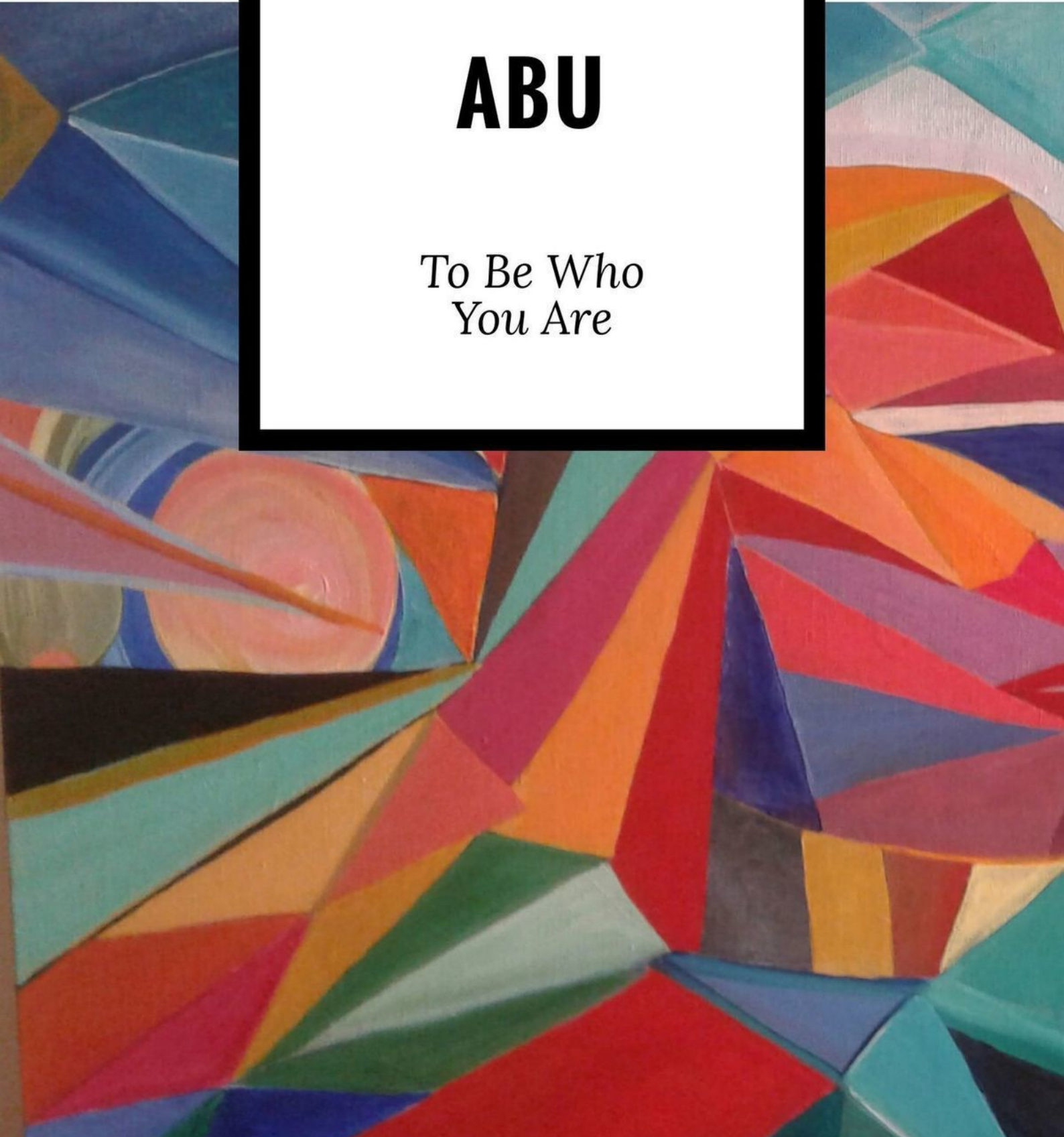


A. Manvayler

ABU

To Be Who
You Are



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Abu. To Be Who You Are

«Издательские решения»

Manvayler A.

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It's a story of real love and tragical loss. A choice between good and evil, life and death. The novel shows us the course of a half a century history of ex-colony- Goa – trough the example of simple human Love between two mature people Abu and Alyona.

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Abu To Be Who You Are

A. Manvayler

ABU. To Be Who You Are

COMMANDMENT

Editor Maria Felderer

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If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream-and not make dreams your master;
If you can think-and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,

Or walk with Kings-nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And-which is more-you'll be a Man, my son!

R. Kipling

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1 – ALYONA. RETURN TO MOSCOW

Alyona, a pale, tearful girl of Balzac's age, who had lost ten kilograms during the last month, did not consciously wish to be anywhere else. She surrendered to the flow of life, and life's vicissitudes ceased to attract her. She did not have any desire to start afresh as she had no other goals. She needed an urgent transformation, but she could not concentrate on anything. So, she went along the stream. Life was going by apathetically, and to gain any satisfaction from it was like waiting in vain. All the resources were exhausted. She no longer wanted to listen to herself or look at the world from the outside. All the same, there were no new horizons for her, and the current ones only vexed her more.

She got rid of the prejudices and became disenchanted with the freedom that she had endured. Now she felt like a doll, a robot programmed by an unknown puppeteer.

Not only her black curly braid was dangling lifelessly on her shoulders, but seven happy years were also left dead behind her, and only through sunglasses flashed a memory of a bright, sunny past in which she was really happy. Alyona was in despair: nothing went the way she would have liked, although in her condition, it was pointless to talk about any desires.

The day of departure arrived. February 15. The husband of Abu's sister insisted to drop Alyona off at the airport in his office car, as just a day ago he had given his own car for repair after the accident on the day of carnival. On the way to the airport the familiar landscape was flashing in front of her eyes. Here she had been happy with her beloved ABU. With his death all seemed lifeless to her. She was in no mood to talk, she was far away with her thoughts, and her eyes relished the last sun and endless brightness of the landscapes of this affable country, which, perhaps, she would not see soon. Will she?...

She was pulled out of her stupor by the screeching of the brakes and the scene of the accident, unfolding in slow motion, as if in a movie, right before their eyes: a huge yellow truck painted under Khokhloma, wildly screeching with brakes, flew into a blue Suzuki subcompact. Thank God, there were no victims. Raj began to get out of this abrupt traffic jam, reversing, cutting through the cacophony of signals of surrounding scooters, subcompacts and rickshaws.

Finally, escaping from the dense stream, they drove up to the airport building. Coming out of the car, as Alyona watched Raj retrieving her things, Alyona suddenly broke down into tears, remembering all her ordeals of the last few weeks: that she had lost Abu, that this was the first time in several years when it was not him, who was coming to see her off to the airport. She tried to stop the flow of these thoughts from her last efforts, coaxing herself and frantically searching for answers to questions she had already asked herself long ago: "What next? Will I return? How will I live?" Just in time, she became aware of the fact that the ability to bear loneliness is a sign of spiritual maturity, that we are at our best when we are alone. If love changes a person quickly, then despair – even faster. And one need not succumb to despair.

She alleviated her imminent return to the cold motherland with the motto phrase, which she had read from Coelho:

"Getting lost – this is the best way to find something interesting".

Having parked near the terminal, Raj, after unloading things from the car, hugged her heartily and said: "Come back, definitely! We'll all miss you and wait for you".

She took out the passport and e-tickets that had to be printed out in advance, or you won't be allowed inside the airport. She approached the armed guard standing at the entrance, scrutinizing the papers more than the faces, they did it regularly, but very meticulously.

Alyona moved to the check-in counter.. It's funny, but the surcharge for the excess baggage was more expensive than the ticket itself. But there was nothing she could do, and Alyona had to hand over last of her rupees to the boy handling this task at a special counter. Praise the heavens, after that, all the formalities were over, and in front was – Waiting Hall.

There were a lot of people in the hall for domestic flights. Alyona had agreed to meet there with her friend Amrita, who had specifically booked a ticket for the same date and the same time, only – to Delhi. She, along with her mother and sister Aparna, waited for Alyona to get over with her check-in. Amrita even ran to her several times and watched over the progress of her queue.

At this moment Raj called Alyona and asked her to give her keys of the apartment back, and although the relatives of Abu already had a whole bunch of his keys to all the apartments and bikes, for some reason, he still needed Alyona's key. The feelings of abandonment, crushing, uselessness and futility of life overwhelmed Alyona with new force. Of course, she understood that such treacheries would never cease. Only through the strength of her will, she drove away her suspicions, clutching to the hope of finding something human in these people, and locked these thoughts inside a dark closet in the deepest corners of her soul, forbidding herself to ponder over it, so as not to torment herself further. "Accept everything as they are! – she told herself. -That way it will be simpler and easier"...

Finally, passing all the remaining checks and procedures, she found herself alone with Amrita: alone at the airport, amidst the crowd of departing people, all alone. They hugged each other and cried. Until recently they were such happy and full lives, today they were two widows- shattered, tired and desolate.

Raj, as if confirming the absurdity of the world around them, had already called Amrita requesting her to collect that key. With some inevitable apathy Alyona gave her key to Amrita, and she also silently accepted it.

To shape a person God often has to test him. Alyona had earlier wondered at the strength of Russian women to endure such incredible suffering that she had read about in the classics or seen in movies, but now she herself could feel that this source of immense energy existed right within, as well as outside. One only needed to find a way to the productive metamorphosis of this energy, rupturing out of it.

It seemed as if the wound, blanketing the shroud of the eyes and stuck as a lump in the throat, would soon explode, but it did not happen. She really wanted to throw up, suffocated by this lump, but it stayed inside. And when the crescendo of the heartbeat rose up and reached the very throat, the convulsive rhythm of thoughts about the loss, separation and grief, went away buzzing, and the spasm unexpectedly released itself and tears rained over Amrita's shoulder. They stood embracing briefly, exchanging friendly emanations and concerns, saying goodbye to their happy life gone by and getting ready to fly off to meet the new, the unknown, full of mysteries, riddles and, perhaps, great achievements. It was at this moment that Alyona realized that her Way, her Power was – in humility. Regardless of who they are, everyone faces the similar events of life and death. She thought that if she were to survive all this, then she must without fail share this knowledge with other people. Maybe it will help someone to "open eyes," and perhaps this experience of her would help someone to know the world of other people.

“Be yourself,” – Abu said to her on this New Year’s Eve. Maybe he meant exactly that? As soon as the answers are found, the questions change. Finally Alyona, without any fear, with humility in her heart, without fear and pain, was able to reveal to herself, answers to all her long-settled issues. The questions changed within moments, as soon as she accepted them with her heart. Whenever she lost hope, a new one kindled in her, which, like a guiding star, showed to her next goal.

Fate continued to be consistent throughout: the flight to Mumbai was delayed. Amrita and her family’s flight had already departed, whereas she was still waiting for half an hour, even though her flight was rescheduled to fly 30 minutes early. In fact, this is normal for Indian domestic flights. For example, trains of Indian railways earlier used to delay for a day or more. Anyway, Indian railways – that is a different tale altogether: can you imagine “train-surfers” hanging on our Moscow suburban train from head to toe. This they have in the order of things: not enough seats, but everyone wants to ride, so one can just latch on to whatever it’s possible.

Four years ago, when Abu was going to meet her in Delhi on a train from Goa, his train got delayed by six hours, because in Indian state of Rajasthan it had knocked down a camel. Abu told Alena that he witnessed with his own eyes how the waiting and clearing exhausted the passengers, and they jumped out of the train and at the very same place, skinned out the still warm camel. Someone kept the meat as reserve stock, someone there itself lighted a fire and started cooking kebab on-the-spot! Incredible India. Every day there is something to be surprised: for example, their friend Leila took a ticket to Delhi spending the last of her money and a week before the end of her visa: there is such an extreme of our tourists rely on the “Russian Avos1.” Well, Leila did not leave, the train was canceled because of some strike in Gujarat where people just came out and sat on the tracks like birds on wires.

I blind trust in divine providence; blind faith in sheer luck; blind trust in sheer luck; counting on a miracle At last, the boarding started. Luckily, the plane was not far, and everyone settled in rather quickly. The girl got a place at the aisle. Quickly placing her little backpack on top and the folder on her lap, she again got attuned to wait. There was noise all around, racket and a continuous bacchanalia. Have you ever seen how they show local flights in movies, with whole chicken coop and piglets right in the cabin? Well here, of course, this was not the case, an earnest flight to Mumbai. Some bulky passengers brushed her by elbows, packing airplane lockers to the gills, talking loudly and buzzing like bees in a hive. She sat silently, thinking about the fickleness of fate and the very meaning of life.

The most important words in our lives are spoken silently.

Lost in these thoughts, Alyona spent almost the entire flight, thinking that she had finally grabbed by tail, the very same answer, the question to which she had asked for a long time but could not find a solution. Sometimes you need to die before you start living (P. Coelho). Something in these words was true, touched those same strings of her wounded soul, which eagerly responded, absorbing them letter by letter, drop by drop, as arable lands soak in the long-awaited rain. That Black Hole, that abyss of frightening darkness that had taken roots inside the girl with the passing away of her beloved, gradually began to shrink, expelled by some confidence. Confidence in what needed to be done further and what to strive for. In each of us, there is a Black Hole that obscures the way to the Light, to the true realization of one’s genius in this world. While in contemplation, Alyona didn’t notice how the time flew during her flight. In India, generally, time flows otherwise.

Coming out from the airport in Mumbai and getting her luggage, she looked around and realized that she had landed to the wrong airport. Terminal, where they had arrived, was intended only for domestic flights, so she had to urgently rush to the international airport.

Dragging her suitcase, that was getting heavier with each step, down the street, the girl tried not to be distracted by the pain in her back and her eyes searched for a rickshaw that could be hired to travel to the right airport. Behind Alyona someone called, she turned around and saw a taxi driver who was offering her his services as the carrier.

– No thanks! – The girl responded briskly in Hinglish. – I’m looking for a rickshaw!

– There’s no rickshaw! – The taxi driver shouted. – Not Available!

Seeing, how he was losing his next money-victim, the taxi driver spat directly on the roadway with red-yellow saliva.

Saliva had such a shade because of the betel. It’s a kind of Indian nut, a legitimate drug for the poor. It causes profuse salivation and a slight narcotic effect, many who chew it, are gradually addicted to it. The gum and teeth become orange-red, the whites of the eyes turn pink and turbid, then the teeth start to fall, and their eyes gradually begin to lose vision. Every second taxi driver in India chews or intakes already powdered form of this cheap potion, so as to not to fall asleep behind the wheels. In fact, the effect of it was akin to intoxication, so Alyona was wary of such drivers.

Luckily she soon stumbled upon a rickshaw stand: 14 kilometers along a noisy, dusty, loud, gassy, smoke-filled metropolis for someone, probably, would be very interesting. It scares some, and fascinate and attract others, but certainly leaves no one indifferent. This creates an effect of an exploding cultural bomb, the effect of a complete immersion in the very essence of the country, in its life and realities.

Upon arrival at the international airport, Alyona paid by the meter, out of her last remaining hundreds – 84 rupees. In Goa for such a trip, she would have paid a minimum of 500 rupees. Here, although it’s the second capital, but still not Goa, so the prices are different, more humane, but this applies only to taxis.

At the counter it suddenly became clear that the Brussels Airlines’ ticket allows you to carry only one luggage with no more than 23 kg. Alyona began to panic, definitely, this was not her day. But what to do now? How to pack the travel bag with things necessary for her such as: brushes, stands, palettes...? It won’t just fit in an already jam-packed suitcase. Here the panic gave way to the already gone tears, and Alyona got hysterical again. The girl left the queue, trying to gather her thoughts and understanding that the issue somehow needed to be resolved.

The solution was as usual banal with no place for any novelty, resulting in the sum of 7100 rupees for the second luggage. She was forced to change money at the ugly rate.

Hardly managing to stand, she paid, and finally, getting rid of unbearably tiring suitcases, she got two tickets at once: Mumbai – Brussels and Brussels-Moscow.

Sitting on the last row with double seats in front of the toilet, the girl cringed under the blanket. She was feverish from the extreme bitter cold of her native land and from the thoughts about her future destiny. The stress suffered over these weeks and from the events of the previous day, took its toll. The girl spent the whole flight half-asleep, half-delirious. It was dark in the porthole. All the way it seemed to her that Abu was so close, that he was hugging her and singing a lullaby, comforting

her that even nine hours passed like one. Abu came to her dreams, talked to her, joked, smiled, she broke away from this wishful dream to refuse the food offered on the flight, to cry a little and to again fall into the sweet oblivion, where her man was – so alive, so close and cheerful.

Finally, the plane landed in Brussels. The frosty air forced the lungs to exhale the steam – a long-forgotten and unpleasant feeling for her, along with an instant allergy to the cold, it made all her essence shudder from the fingertips to the very top. As if a thousand frosty needles pierced her whole body at once, causing her shoulders to jerk convulsively.

A hours later, after accelerating, the plane took off from the land of a calm sleepy Belgium. In the porthole the dawn was already peeping, and one could see huge electric windmills, green grass interspersed with monograms on the road. The sun, appearing from behind the horizon, heartily blinded through the porthole, but warmed-it did not. The senior pilot announced not a happy news: in Moscow it was minus seventeen. After two hours of flight crystals of snowflakes appeared on the window's panes. They sparkled beautifully, like white stars against the blue sky, and the sun lit them up like a theatrical ramp. They were so beautiful, even tender, but so cold. At that moment Alyona thought that not in vain, apparently, Schopenhauer had said:

“Of all the worlds available, the world, which we live in, is the worst”.

And that it was not for nothing that he was called a pessimist. Probably, he suffered in this life too.

2 – DISCOVERY OF INDIA

For happiness it is undoubtedly more important what is in a person than what a person has. Schopenhauer And there is nothing new under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9

From the beginning, knowledge is present in every man. The game is how to extract them, these fossils of a soul? There are no guidelines. Therefore, you must deal with the rationalization of your own “I” yourself. In the process of creating a new avatar of yourself everyone has to face a lot of doubts. This is normal. The only thing I have not learned to cope with is my own lunar dependency. The most powerful full moon in my life has always influenced the course of events. Bioenergetics and astrology are powerless over simple human life, as it is impossible to systematize in synthesis.

During different phases of the moon, my sensitivity is aggravated at times to physical pain. Emotions are at peak. It becomes impossible to curb my morbid emotionality. I become harsh, hostile and resolute. The full moon causes the greatest ups and downs. There is a persistent desire to reach the top, even if this choice is a mistake. I want to seek and take risks. Impulses are incorrigible. It is time to realize the most hidden desires and plans. It is beyond me to stabilize the emotional condition at such a time. How else can I explain the miracles and my visions coinciding with the full moon?

Like the ones of Jorge Luis Borges, who became my favorite writer. Since the moment his books came into my hands, I came to believe in a network of diverging, converging and parallel trails. The illustration of these labyrinths was my own life. His characters, like me, never sought the meaning of life, they never forgot that the likelihood of a person finding his justification or some distorted version of it is nil. They simply lived and enjoyed life, avoiding any kind of system and rules. Do they have their own hierarchy? No. They are free from systems. Languages? Any spoken syllable in one of the languages means the mighty name of God. When I read the plot “The Rose of Paracelsus”, it became clear that my society, family and surroundings made some hideous medical history out of its life, and from its gifts – some misfortunes. It’s foolish to change the world that was not created by us. Revolution must be done in our own evolution.

The day you were born doesn’t matter, but the day when the light appeared in you. As soon as I formulated for myself a specific goal, a task, miracles started happening. There were means, opportunities and time for its implementation. No doubt, we ourselves draw our own lives, and no matter what kind of artist you are, the color of thoughts is important.

Before my first visit to India I had already managed to get two educations (middle and higher) – direction and acting; to get married and divorced; to give birth, raise and send a son to the army; to work in different theaters as an actress; to leave the theater for nowhere. I tried out my strength in film crew and as a film actress. The entire search did not give my longings the desired effect. More often, I would close my eyes and concentrate on efforts to stop the shaking from the irritating reality that surrounded me. It would seem that I was surrounded by an apartment with European-quality repair; I had my own foreign car, an interesting and well-paid job, a lively and healthy husband, a son serving in the Airborne Forces, the prestigious armytroops, and a happy stable and prosperous life. But that is an outsider’s view.

I began to dream more often of a distant country from school memories, where fantasies do not masquerade as real people, but are quite real, and I can interact with them. Dreams became more and more colorful and filled with new details until I finally came to believe in them and did not allow

myself to take them as the reality itself. The illusions of my sandy sea shore, colorful exotic trees, unusual entities, metamorphic characters – all weaved into one and enjoyed life with me. Reflecting on dreams opened a desirable and exciting world and led to a flow of thoughts that triggered my intentions to be where they existed. I liked their mystical captivity. There, in my fairy-tale country, birds flew; the light was so pure that it seemed to resonate within me, ringing like music, echoing “OM” in velvety low-frequency male voices.

And coming back from my dreams, I again found myself in a worldly Moscow, on a flat land. Here nothing took off, and the noise quickly wore you down with its cacophony of roaring cars on the Moscow Ring Road, the growl of aircraft landing in front of my windows, the creaking of the metal structures of the garbage truck, people’s voices, squealing of children and slush under the dark low gray sky. I blinked not from the bright glitter of my dreams, but from the monotonous repetitive reality of the urban technogenic world of robots.

And I again got behind the wheel and went to work, on shooting area to pretend to be alive. Avalanche of hurry-scurry filled another day, weeks, and months. One project was coming to an end, a new one was starting, and they had shot one TV series, and were already preparing for another. And I was already feeling nauseating during the process of script reading, perhaps from saturated, material and quite safe creative work. My soul was hungry; I strengthened my subconscious union between dreams and determination to rise up to the purity of light and no return.

My soul demanded change. I, apparently, had a completely prosperous and comfortable life, that would make even my mother happy – like others, I had everything. I lived in a separate apartment in the capital city with my husband and son, worked in a creative sphere, changed cars, communicated with friends and acquired a standard set of entertainment. I went to rest around the world as part of package tours or sightseeing tours and excursion routes of different countries. I visited Europe, Africa and Asia. In some countries, not just once. BUT. I was already infected with the Sehnsucht. Mom did not understand what kind of haunting ghosts there in her daughter’s head were, instead of joy of her well-being.

I was feeling so cold, suffocated, cramped in the largest country of the world. The realization of the imperfection of the world around me did not get along with my agile mind. I needed to be convinced of everything myself or to be challenged in an experienced way. In the present experience, I could only agree with Saltykov-Shchedrin: “If I fall asleep and wake up in 100 years, and people ask me what is going on in Russia today, I will say drinking and stealing”.

But there is another world: the world of books, where every human life is a personal book of everyone. The number of possible books is unlimited, as is the number of stars. Each new heir adds a new chapter or rules the page of the predecessor. I found temporary salvation in reading, books held my steady interest, where through the word I could travel in time.

Any hero chooses one of the paths from the numerous ones in his own life, dismissing the rest, but there are all-rounders, like Ts’ui Pen, choosing everything at once. He simply did not believe, unlike Newton and Schopenhauer, in a single, absolute time. He believed in the innumerable series of time, a network of diverging, converging and parallel times. I could boast not of my own books, but of readings like Borges. And I felt like his heroine, striving for the impossible, trying to unravel the mystery of being, to discover my potential, to create myself a laconic book. A book where novelty arises from a combination of words, rather than in a new message. Even Plato knew it: “All knowledge is nothing but a memory”.

Most importantly, I was still ready to give up everything for the sake of Love, which I had never found. I was ready to throw myself into the ocean and take on the face of a mermaid for the sake of a man I loved, or become a bird, and then the only possible direction would be up. Only in dreams, I was so exalted and so full of delight that reality in contrast became increasingly unbearable. Especially when the cold came – and what’s even worse for me – frost. Travelling teaches you more than anything else. Sometimes one day spent in other places, gives more than ten years of life at home.

Another movie project was finished. I worked there not only as an art-decorator, but also played the episodic role of a forensic laboratory assistant. Despite the success of the movie and the decision of the producers to continue our series, my decision to change everything became stronger. I had several months of comfortable freedom left, and the hated period of cold was setting in, then there came the opportunities to escape from it. Already in the final shootings and preparations for the “shapka” (a cheerful occasion marking the completion of the film project, accompanied by drinks, snack, dancing, calm communication of colleagues and discussion of new plans in an informal atmosphere), my determination was reinforced by talking with Lucia. The rather strange and rare name of this girl confirmed her eccentricity and suited her well. She was special. She worked with us on the project as a barmaid, as she couldn’t care less what role she was playing. She just wanted to get acquainted with the filming process, take part in this:

– You know, Alyona, we’ll finalize the last shift now, and I want to return to India again. I watched the film and the filming process, and I did not like it.

– To India? This has been my dream for long. Cold is here, and I am going to get sick again. – With surprise and curiosity I entered the conversation, sipping hot tea from a plastic disposable cup given to me by Lucia.

– Dreams should be realized. My guru taught so, when I lived six years in the Osho Ashram in Pune. And the Indians said that people get sick from unfulfilled dreams, – she continued smiling.

It’s hard to describe my emotions after her two simple phrases. I worked with her for a whole 16-series project, for days and nights she gave me lunch in plastic boxes, poured tea and coffee, having studied my taste (how many sugar cubes to put), and amid all the humdrum of work, I did not notice such an interesting person in the barmaid?!

I felt dying worldliness in myself and immediately was overwhelmed with interest. Like a guenon monkey, eating candy, I began to question her about India, and with each sip the taste of tea changed. The search for traces of my legendary quest of self over the past few years suddenly began to manifest as my footprints on the wet sand of the shores of the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, in the snow of the Himalayas. India!? Ashram? Osho? What does it mean?

– Meanings change depending on the country and the era, – Lucia said with all the same calmness and a simple smile. – Like earlier, the path through the desert was considered safer until ancient meteorologists learned to determine the time of the monsoon, how to use the wind and how to sail. Knowledge, which they used to go only with camel caravans, floated across the seas beyond the oceans. The methods of movement vary, but there is a risk in any way.

I made further discoveries equal to the launch of the first man into space. During the short conversation I reincarnated in different images: I was a religious pilgrim, a lonely traveler, a messenger of God, a preacher of dogma. The lines I had previously wrote down for myself from the book Bhagavat Sri Radshnis and Lucia guru Osho turned out to be the same person. In order to measure the fluctuations of my body from the information received – that simply seized me and influenced me deeply – I was involuntarily folding the short candy wrappers into bundles during the entire conversation, without giving any importance to it. I was fascinated by her stories. And at the end of the conversation, Lucia introduced me to Knot magic.

– What? What magic? – I exclaimed.

– Knot magic is a form of magic using specially tied knots. These knots, as you have now at hand, are a reflection of your abstract ideas, concepts and thoughts that are soon going to acquire a concrete physical form. Look, – and she lifted the snake intertwined by me while I was fiddling with wrappers, and kept it between us at eye level.

– What does it mean, Lucia? – I have been weaving such wrappers throughout my childhood in the curtains of the doorway.

– It is believed that the number, shape and location of knots can affect the effectiveness of a particular goal. The power and intensity of influence can depend on the material. These paper candy wrappers are just wrappers for the implementation of the plan, but I can see that you are already in the flow.

On these words, I had to agree with my cine colleagues who considered Lucia to be more than a strange girl. However, the minstrel Lucia breathed into me, the melodies of renewal and interest in life. She pushed me to the vector of the direction so much needed by me.

After the conversation the images of towns and villages lined up in rough concentric circles and radial roads, deep rivers and bridges of strange structures, while driving home along the well-known roads of the city rushed inside my head. On the waysides I noticed cooing birds and hissing snakes, bright saris with contrasting patterns and faces with red dots on the forehead, ornamented elephants and stone bulls, conical taqiyahs and colorful turbans, motley carpets and camel's humps. And with all the abundance of unfamiliar images, harmony followed, my path was determined. Lucia became the catalyst for the process long neglected inside me.

That night I did not sleep well. Thoughts swarmed like bees on a field with a sweet clover. Images preferred to remain vague. Moonlight streamed into the room. It beat me in the face and seeped right into my visions. How could I forget to close the curtains? I went to curtain the window and found myself transparent in the moonlight, whereas, in the reflection of the window, I was with flesh, exchanging places with a ghost of myself. And one mirage obscured another. Fading, I sank into my own dream, into my other world, trying to become less and less, like Alice, hoping eventually to completely disappear here and appear there. I closed my eyes and climbed under the blanket on the autopilot, trying not to frighten off the mirage.

I woke up, as if I had emerged from an oblivion, where it was so good, with full confidence in the plans of action. Only the delicate scent of the jungle with the rich aroma of exotic spices (coriander, cinnamon, turmeric, cloves) did not leave me, although I did not yet know how they smelled, but there was this self-created olfactory power. The real world disappeared, as if dissolved, and the beauty

of the moment of the world of dreams, which had not yet been forgotten and from which I did not want to come out, forced me to hold my breath, so as not to frighten it away. I turned to my faith.

Everything disappeared as soon as the phone rang, which brought me back to reality. But now my everyday life of ceased to seem insignificant. Conversation over the phone, pronounced names, events in the conversation became an empty sound. The people around me began to talk and move with some kind of mutual disdain, possessed by oppressive silence. The process of washing with icy tap water turned into ablution.

I would prefer to be entangled in a sequence of awakenings and dreams, to perceive them not as two forms of existence, not as two contradictions, but as states constantly flowing into each other and creating a relentless series of magical sensations.

Go to bed with a dream, wake up with an aim. You never know where exactly you are going, only – where you hope to come. “When you are doing something, do it now. Otherwise you ll never do it.” – Goethe voice whispered in my ears.

Oscar Wilde wrote: “Knowledge would be fatal. It is the uncertainty that charms one. A mist makes things wonderful.”

And Leonardo da Vinci specially smudged the space, creating riddling images in which there are no exact forms, and we must think them over. I made myself an interesting proposal or rather challenged myself to a duel.

Leonardo da Vinci outpaced not only science, far ahead of his time, but time itself. Living in the XVI century, he talked already about “life air”, and 300 years later, Lavoisier discovered oxygen. He built a glider model, and in 400 years aviation was beginning to develop. Leonardo himself was borne of Catarina, a young and merry beauty, in a peasant hut in Florence. His mother dies, and he lands as an illegitimate son to his father’s house, the notary Piero da Vinci. He is taught reading, writing, arithmetic, Latin and music. But the best he can do is drawing and modeling. Already at the age of 20 he was proclaimed a master. Art for him was always a science. He traced the correlation of painting with anatomy, optics, physics and mathematics. The world for him was a giant laboratory. He drew knowledge from dreams. I felt the connection of times and worlds, my angle of vision changed, freed myself from the long-drawn down attachments and immersed myself into joyful world of my dreams. Irritation was replaced by gratitude for the end of already travelled path. A new era was beginning.

In my country, at the higher Faculties of Humanities, we are taught knowledge of the history of cultures starting from antiquity. I also wanted to start with the Indian jungle. From the oldest Vedas. Throughout life, all the signs indicated to me my personal direction. So, in France, the artist Paul Gauguin fled from Europe to the island of Tahiti in his search of “primitive paradise”. Many thinkers saw the path to the spiritual renewal of life in the return to nature. Leo Tolstoy called for “interrogation”. American transcendentalists R. W. Emerson, G. Toro, T. Parker linked their spiritual quest with nature. Jean Jacques Rousseau contrasted nature with society, the conflict of “naturalness” of the natural state with the “unnatural” culture and civilization. And Mahatma Gandhi made a domestic spinning wheel – a symbol of salvation from “Machinism”.

I was certain that I will find my India in myself whenever I want. I read the signs of my own parallel world, dreams and fantasies that took on a clear form. My Abu waited there for me, the time has come. Away from vain suffering, tension, fatigue.

I'm coming to you, my angel. You are waiting for me, and I even know how you look, but I feel you! In my imagination it was my Leonardo – the ancient physique of a participant in contests and tournaments, an excellent swimmer, jester, narrator, orator, a gracious Knight, dancer, singer, thinker. Such people appear on Earth no more than once in a thousand years. What do I expect, in my short life? So, I not only supported the intrigue and interest in alluring obscurity, but finally opened these astral gates for myself. I started writing my book of life.

Leaving the cinema, I left behind the static repetitive frames, despite the everyday vanity of being. Before me, at last, a full panorama unraveled. I ceased to be interesting audience of others, they failed to evoke any further emotions in me. I was done with “creating” for someone, it was time to create myself.

I was tired of the nightmarish dreams of reality, where I'm pushed onto the stage, when I do not know what to do there, what to say, without knowing the role, and the public is waiting, full hall of people, gazing and craving for artificial spectacles. When the basis of all religions, Vedic truth (derived from the words: to know, to tell, to explore) is replaced by film feed, I needed to wash my heart, and not tear my breasts in front of the crowd.

What is it? Is it consciousness and wisdom? Or emptiness and self-esteem? There is no difference. My eyes are wide open, I see some visions. Visions turned into reality: I go to the ramp of the plane with a friend Polina at the small military airport of Goa – Dabolim. Polina, out of breath with the first breaths of tropical air, looks unhappy, and I, taking the first step, is pulled into the whirlpool of delight: “I'm home”.

I flew to the desired formula: one plus one equals one. Unity.

Life does not always give you what you want. But if you look closely, you will see that it gives what is needed for growth. The main rule of reality is not to get lost in your illusions.

3 – MY GOA

Everything that has to happen will happen. At the right time. At the right place. With the right people. Everything that you relay to the world inevitably comes back. Louise Hay.

Checked by me personally.

The ultimate purpose of progressive human development is the complete mastery of the mind over the material world. Intuition is something which transcends knowledge. N. Tesla

I have never been so drawn to anything else. Nowhere for me was there as much interesting and unknown as in India. Every day is full of surprises and impressions. And this is without going to theater or cinema, there is no need to artificially seek emotions. Everything is there and appears continuously and on time. You should make the choice only if you can really fulfill it or just let it go, but what is beyond the power of thought or imagination – should be accepted as it is. And you have to awaken your dried flowers of spiritual joy, just watering them with good emotions and kind words.

Personally, for me, India revealed its rich spectrum of senses, which allows nerve cells on an unconscious level to experience the truth, even when it is not yet accessible to definitions and conclusions. I began to realize my own delusions and limitations through intuitive enlightenment. Intuition is something that's impossible to learn. All our shortcomings and virtues are inseparable in us, this is the essence of everyone. But what echoes in the soul and that will resonate, depends on the fullness of the person himself. India just unveils us.

I had never experienced exercising freedom in full confidence to achieve what I desired. This was the first decisive challenge to me – to start learning English from scratch at the age of 40, to change the way of life and even the country. I started living as if I would never be as young as at the moment, today and now. I was not afraid of love, although I already knew that it could throw many surprises. Maturity was dawning, and I was already an “experienced lady”. Why run away from the past, if thanks to it I had become wiser and could use it in the future.

Goa, India. Presentiments did not deceive me, considering the decor of the small military airport at Dabolim, crammed with people arriving in a full Boeing. Under the lop-eared fans instead of air conditioners the crowd chaotically moved in a close flow. My friend Polia, ostentatious blonde with a nice figure, snorted and announced her demands. She needed to visit the toilet, to get out of her warm clothes, change shoes, drink something cold – and all this had to happen immediately, or she was ready to go back to Russia from the airport itself.

My motivations were different from hers. I came to India not just for vacation like her, but to live, not to seek love, but to love. My inner voice confirmed that it was here that sweeping changes awaited me, and mysticism began. The magic of the parallelism of the world embraced me and caressed me. The tropical smell of Goan air satiated my lungs and transmitted signals to the brain to breathe deeper. This is like get away from the frosty street to land in the warm foyer of the theater expecting a good performance.

After all the necessary formalities, everyone boarded the bus and set off. The usher was broadcasting something on the microphone. Few people listened to him, I did not sleep, like many,

but did not listen. Delight of anticipation took my breath away. It was bright. I looked out the window. Polina slept next to me on the seat.

The traffic is left-sided, and I, out of the habit of a Russian motorist, looked out the road signs on the right and did not find them. The billboards dazzled with English letters and white people. On the road, the situation changed every second, surprises on the road were lurking from all the sides. Calming imperturbability of the driver testified to his high professionalism. On the roads, motorcycles outnumbered the cars. The average speed is 40 km / h.

Colonial architecture of houses, white crosses in courtyards or strange square flower beds with a lonely bush. I found out later, that from these signs at the entrance you can learn about the religion of the owners.

School-going children standing along the roadside in the similiar uniforms, girls with bows inpigtails, as in my childhood. Women in contrasting patterned multi-colored saris and long light scarves. Everyone was smiling at me, caressing my eyes, with a kind of long-forgotten tenderness.

The pictures quickly changed, and I tried to even blink less often, so as not to miss the frames of the first acquaintance with the magnificent moments of the lingering dream.

Here was a man in a vest with a toothbrush sticking out of his mouth and white patches of paste on his swarthy skin explaining the way to someone. Not far away, the other at the same time across the road was urinating, not hiding and not embarrassed by anyone. “Poor thing”, – I thought, feeling sorry for him, – “quite ill, perhaps, he had to go before everyone”.

Someone from the window of a car, overtaking and clipping our bus, threw empty tin cans and a plastic bottle on the roadside. “Idiots are here, too”, – I muttered. “Black and yellow rickshaws, I’ll have to ride”, – I decided.

Here some Indian man was spitting red-orange liquid on the road. “Perhaps drank too much, and now vomiting, he’s not well”, – I sympathized.

Here a whole bunch of women was carrying loads on their heads, and rags strapped over their shoulders with naked and dirty children in them. “So, there are a lot of gypsies here”, – I observed.

And in the middle of the road there were cows with camel hump. “What strange things, – I observed carefully, – that’s why they are sacred here, maybe they have special milk”, – I thought.

And there was this dog, lying right on the sideway, and everyone was going around it. “Silly dog, someone may tread on you”, – I frowned.

And here was a wide, full-flowing river with two bridges over it, and cars were scurrying along each of them. “Wow! What a beauty, – I thought, – it’s strange, why do they need two parallel motor-bridges and with two-way traffic? “ – I was surprised.

Fanciful temples, colorful houses, people and animals flashed before my eyes at the speed of the advertising clip. The sounds of horns, the smells of fish and spices – everything turned my head, and I looked up and started looking at the sky.

A clear, bright November sky, without a single cloud, blinding with the light of the endless space. Suddenly a huge eagle with a wing span of not less than one meter flies into my picture! Oh, prince of the forces of air! We caught sight of each other, exchanged places, and I did not descend from heaven anymore. As though he was specifically sent to me by someone: he flew in circles in front of my eyes, without leaving my sight. He infused a feeling of real freedom into me, encouraging confidence and soaring over all this mundane life. I began to see through his eyes, I became a bird in human form. I understood that in India you need to look at the sky, not to the ground.

The morning dawned as quickly as my hopes. A silver thread of light flashed from the sun, connecting my soul with the body.

It was early in the morning, but the streets were crowded, roadside barbers were already working, they were sweeping and watering near tented camps. “So, we have entered the tourist zone”, – I realized.

All were going, walking, standing, talking, crawling and jumping on the same road, there were no sidewalks. “Dangerous”, – I remembered.

Nearby lay unburnt garbage and ash on the red ground. “What is this red color on the ground, does it become like this after fire?” – I asked myself.

Here, right in front of the bus, a few multicolored piglets ran across the road following their well-fed mother. This animated me so much that I wanted to show them to Polina, but she was still asleep.

Shabby old buses, carrying dark-skinned people and heads protruding from open windows and staring at us with plain curiosity and a smile, rushed past us.

And the children, in chorus, waved their hands at us, smiled and shouted “Hi”. Some perplexed tourists did not know how to react: someone timidly tried to repeat the movement of the hands of children and shout “Hello”, only a pitiful and tired smile came out. And some stared through the window with growing irritation and horror in the eyes. Indeed, beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. Candolim, Calangute, Baga – areas of North Goa flashed outside the window. We had arrived.

Our world is a magical and inspiring place. It is enough to believe in it. Instincts did not disappoint me: here, among the exotic sounds and smells, the novelty of the sensations, my “I” showed an amazing response – it immediately acquired a confident sense of direction. So, we settled down.

The only thing that turned out to be difficult for me to adapt to Goa was to have relentless prime-time coverage with the audience and listeners of your individuality. Everything and just everything in real and it does not end with the long-awaited “pack-up” call of the film director. There are no secluded places, nowhere to withdraw, there is no private space either. There are no

distinctions between the stage and the audience. Knowing that India is an overpopulated country, and that there are only 7 women for 10 men, I began to understand the wild need of women among the male population. But for me, there were quite enough of the obvious signs of my real desired existence here, without their heightened intrusion. “Calm down!” – I demanded of myself.

In no other country I have experienced such emotions, nothing like that, it was the first time. Brodsky had said: “Every new aesthetic reality makes one’s experience even more private”. Polina found the environment as punishment by exile, and I landed into my fairy tale. I had already had the experience of traveling with her, a brief tour covering all the cities of Morocco.

Fez, where a Muslim without flinching changed his wife for a camel, and our guide said that this was the order of things, as she herself was to blame – either she was of loose morals or barren. Marrakesh with snake charmers in the central city square. Casablanca with a mosque, where even women are let in for the sake of tourism. Agadir, where I drowned my favorite sunglasses, and where we drank sweet hot tea, that is poured into a small glass from a teapot raised high to form froth. Where we met with two greedy young and beautiful vagabond Arabs who wanted to fuck us and use our money, they spoke three languages, since it is a former French colony. In general, the trip was informative, but the desire to return again had not arisen.

The road from the hotel to the beach went through a dump to a human growth. Here it had its own hierarchy, a caste system of fauna. Some of the cows were with unnaturally bloated bellies, drooling and dirty, but not aggressive. They were silently, orderly and diligently chewing everything that could be chewed. Plastic bags, paper from pies and even foil. In the bushes a pack of dogs lay, lazily waiting for their turn for breakfast, left over after the cows. Above on the trees crows were drooling appetizingly. Polina experienced a cultural shock from everything that was happening:

– Where on earth are we?! This is a medieval Russian village among palm trees!

– Not just the palms, look, the Indian tamarind. Evergreen, a family of legumes. Tropical tree. We do not have such, – I tried to distract her from irritating thoughts, but she did not yield:

– Not only that, we have to live three weeks in this shed with cold water, without air conditioning, with shabby furniture, two hangers for two, with pipes from the wall in the toilet, plastic jugs, with candles instead of electricity. And to add, breakfast means toast with tea and jam from a plastic matchbox, or even less! And if that’s not enough, there are ants and flying cockroaches in our hut! And to the beach you have to make your way through garbage landfill stinking of cows and dogs. Some ghetto! Where have you dragged me? I’m even afraid to imagine what awaits us at the sea...

– Polinochka, do not exaggerate. Look around! Trust me. This is the hegemony of natural laws. And we together have a chance to continue smoothening our rough edges of compatibility. Believe me, we will turn all our holiday fantasies into reality, – I convinced my friend.

But I was already thinking that people who have nothing in common with each other, are forced to mingle because of the circumstances, and I felt some incompatibility in myself. I had neglected Hemingway’s advice for nothing: “Never travel with someone you do not like”. No, my attitude did not change towards Polina, but I could not call her my close friend. However, her company was better for me than being alone, and I did not have any choice. In a word, Polia unlike me, was not fascinated by Goa, but rather disappointed:

– Yeah, it’s better to jostle in the metro subways. It’s better to be in a fucking frosty Moscow under the cover of a gray sky with smog and without the sun more than three weeks in this God-forsaken stinking international resort, – she ascertained sarcastically. The paths intertwined around us, twisting like snakes. We reached the beach in anticipation of each of its own seas.

The beach was strewn with pieces of paper, bottles, cigarette butts, and further – a clean caressing morning sea and a bright sun on a cloudless sky. The water was warm and pleasant, calm. But Polia could not swim, like Indians.

Next to her, a whole family was kneeling in the water, dark-skinned people in clothes. Two men, holding hands, were jumping joyously through the crests of small waves, smiling under mustache, shaking with no longer small age-bellies and flashing their bald spot. Adult uncles were building sand castles from wet sand. Some boys were playing cricket.

Out of all the seasonal beach structures, thousands of black eyes were looking at us, and the barkers were running across the sand and each offering their place and a sunbed under the umbrella, each one touting his business in broken Russian. We did not speak English at all, and random words like “hello, look, small business, here -here, later” did not have any effect.

As soon as we had settled, the process of processing customers immediately started. Couldn't wait to rest from the very first minute. Those very same black eyes followed us since we first appeared on the beach. And the whiter the color of your skin, the more chance is there to divide you into the maximum purchase amount. A fresh guest, who has not yet become a tourist, is the most lucrative target for getting separated from his money.

“I've erected myself a monument made without (human) hands. To it, the people's path cannot be overgrown”, – Pushkin came to my mind. But on the Baga beach pretending to be a monument seems a useless occupation. The first one was a lady with costume jewelry, pestering like a leech. We bought anklets. But it had the opposite effect: instead of leaving us alone, as we decided to buy from her, her desire to sell something else became even more active. The lady began to obtrusively urge us to go see her little nearby shop of her brother – we must help, business was in bad condition, and if we buy now, we will help not only her, but her children and her family.

Next came the traders, right on schedule like the metro: sellers of booklets with a map of Goa in different languages; discs with Bollywood music and track of “Jimmy Jimmy Aaja”; corn hawkers; ladies with baskets and fruit on their heads; drum sellers with drums hanging on them and beating rhythms in front of you.

Then it was the turn completely unexpected services: ears cleaners; ladies with threads, offering you instant depilation right on the beach; masseurs of any parts of the body or the whole body.

Next, the guys with mountain like hairdo, shaking different sized bed-sheets of Indian gods. Boys with metal-bucket selling masala tea in tiny disposable cups. Sellers of figurines made of stone, wood, glass, plastic, metal; tattoo-masters with catalogs of designs; girls in sari with henna tubes offering mehndi.

“Everything was in confusion in the Oblonskys' house...” L. Tolstoy

As soon as one was sent off, the next ones came to replace them: “Ma'am-ma'am, look”. Neither the closed eyes, nor the disregard, nor the shouts of “no-no” – absolutely nothing helped. There were even roving acrobats with performances evoking pity. Everything happened compulsively, unceremoniously and, most importantly, without break.

Even in Indian cinemas there is an intermission, but not on the beach. I have never seen such a thing and never got tired of being surprised. Polina was irritated to the limit and did not want to stay at the beach for a minute. And we moved to the pool of our hotel.

I had to adjust and compensate her in everything. Besides, she was very limited in means, and I helped her not to be frugal on vacation. But everyone has different understanding of leisure. I so much wanted to see everything possible in this amazing country, to learn a new world, culture, religion, customs, rituals, people's way of life, attitude to life and death. But, alas – I could not impose my interests for a simple reason – I paid for all the entertainments, I was also the initiator of the trip. I had to pay for Polina. Clubs, hangouts, parties, restaurants, discos, revelry are not interchangeable with something else, but with each other. We tasted and become addicted to quite popular and cheap rum “The Old Monk”. Sometimes it would hit me, and I would remember my intentions, saying :

“Despite some personal discomfort, we are already here in Goa, and let's not just find the minuses in our abode, but also the blessing. It's a privilege for me to be here. Let's go somewhere”. Polia replied categorically: “Was the bus ride across the country to Morocco not enough for you? Relax”. And we continued to hang out. And explored the state on our own in local buses.

The independence of judgments is the privilege of a few. The rest are led by authority and example. I tried to be calm about everything, as I already knew that time will put everything in its place. I've had enough of examples around me in my 40 years, and I did not want to follow any of them. I was looking for myself, I was looking for my Way. In this atomic age, with its secret fears, man seeks guidance.

“Consciously or unconsciously, we are searching for God” Carl Jung.

In India, thanks to the tolerance to faiths in the country, there are millions of Gods. Representatives of all confessions of the world coexist together. But Goa is a predominantly Catholic state, since the Portuguese brought and forcibly imposed Christianity.

We got to Old Goa. The mass of parishioners in the church was the first thing that struck me in Goa. Crowds of dark-skinned people flashily appearing in bright satin shirts and dresses, branded shoes, carrying shiny bags and haughtily marching along the dusty roads cutting through the resting cows and the chaotic movement of everything that can move. Mario Miranda, a local cartoonist, became the most popular for the accuracy of the displayed farce. Even without comments.

To my surprise, Goa turned out to be an Asian Vatican, the center of Catholicism throughout Asia.

But in the churches, garlands of fresh orange flowers were hanging on the statues of saints and near the entrance you can see dozens of pairs of slippers lined up by pure memory, Indians tourists, entering any temple, take off their shoes or footwear, be it Hindu temple, Sikh gurudwara or Muslim mosque and, according to their usual customs, go inside barefoot. Therefore, there is synthesis of religions at every step. Despite the pathos and the endeavor of the Goans to look Christians, they are more like Mario Miranda's parody of believers, masquerades, clowns. The fragile Christian traditions of 451 years of colonization, imbibed historical Vedic roots.

Comicality began with the naming of the Basilica of Bom Jesus and ended with Saint Ignatius of Loyola, a holy libertine, to whom the phrase “the end justifies the means” belongs. It is enough anecdotal. It seems that this is the Russian 101st-kilometer, where all the “undesirable elements” were exiled, or Portuguese Australia, where the condemned Englishmen served their sentence. However, the city of Tula is famous not only for samovars, gingerbread, gunsmiths and harmonics. Here, 101st

km from Moscow, Peter the Great sent the famous Lefty, “who nailed the flea”. I’m used to it. But the analogies amused me.

Goans give away the satanically suspended upside down five-pointed stars, for the Bethlehem star, indicating the birthplace of Jesus. Christmas installations on dirty dusty roads and in the doorways don’t go well with the widespread signs of Swastika and Om. It reminds the Catholics that there is no need to wait for the judgment day, it takes place every day.

Darwin discovered that the plant and animal world does not exist by themselves but adapt to each other. St. Francis Xavier, and then the Inquisition converted the heathens into Christianity, not hesitating in the means as long as the goal was justified. Likewise, the Goans, opportunists, took the European names for themselves and decided that this was enough for a demonstrative change of faith in order to get their privileges from the colonialists.

Before the arrival of righteous Catholics, local residents of Goa managed to live peacefully under the Islamic Sultanate of Yusuf Adil Shah. Local residents since 1510 migrated, others died, while others descended from barren money trees, like the Darwinian dryopithecines, and adapted to life on earth under the names of others. It is not surprising that now Muslims, in particular, have fun at the expense of modern local Catholics.

Catholic Goans funnily, they look like colonial atavists. After all, in Goa, no one speaks and more so does not think in Portuguese. And the native language is considered the one in which you can think. By the way, the services in the temples are held according to the schedule: either in Konkani, local Goan language, or in Marathi, the language of the state of Maharashtra, or in Kannada, the language of the neighboring state of Karnataka, and even in English.

In fact, the first visit to Goa, apart from delight, surprises and a lot of impressions, brought me the first scars on the body. One of our Indian acquaintances, speaking fluently in Russian, volunteered to show us the northern beaches of Goa. We were delighted and agreed.

In the darkness, the full moon was shining brightly diluting the darkness so that one could feel like a cat, since visibility remained good for the human eye. We bewitchingly looked at the moon. Suddenly something like a black velvet curtain blocked the moonlight along with the moon itself. Eclipse. It was a bad sign, so I felt. Polia did not attach much importance to this. But I became anxious for some reason. The moon had nowhere failed to influence me.

Suddenly the Russian-speaking Indian returned, but not alone. Explaining to us that we will go on two motorcycles, so he had invited a friend. Polia liked the friend – big-eyed, with long thick black eyelashes. And she jumped decisively on the seat behind him: “Excellent! Let’s Go! A new adventure! The northern beaches of Goa in the night”.

I agreed in silence. Where? Who cares! This was an opportunity to see something new. On the way we came across a Hindu temple, where the service was going on. This I could not miss: “Stop-stop. Give me some time. I want to see this pooja”.

For the first time, I actually saw the Hindu temple from inside. There were people sitting on the floor, a pleasant aroma from the visible smoke swirled from the entrance doors into the night, the brahmin was at the center, the only person facing the entrance. I sat down next to everyone on the floor. I caught the sounds of pleasant meditative and at the same rhythmic music and started swinging

alone everyone to its beat. I wanted to mew, like a valerian cat, inhaling the aromas of incense. I did not understand a single word, just got some information from outside. Well, sound waves and aromas do not need a sense or translation. I was always very perceptive to such rhythmic streams of sounds.

For the mystic, the world has two grades: the sacred (sacral) space and the space of everyday life. The mystic connects these two worlds with some sacred action. He is between these worlds, at the crossroads of two worlds. I got there where I had longed to be.

But then Polia appeared in the doorway, started to grimace and waving her hands at the exit. I had to obey again.

It happened on the way back, somewhere in Anjuna. Already considerably high on the Old Monk rum, I insisted on driving the motorcycle. As a result, my speed did not go well with the turn and I left imprints of half of my face and part of the right side of the body on the lateritic sidewall. My passenger, the Russian-speaking Indian, who was sitting behind me, jumped in time, unhurt. My friend Polina with the second guy stopped dumbstruck. While I was lying unconscious, my co-passenger panicked and went hysterical with flabbergasted eyes and waving his hands like a propeller: “Everything is over. We need to scoot, urgently! We have to get out of the scene, otherwise we will be in a lot of trouble, problems with the police. I can lose my job and respect. Let’s just sit on the bike and get out of here! Someone will soon notice her, identify her and deal with her. We cannot stay here, they will drag us to the police. This is a huge problem!”

Polina, standing in a silent stupor, at this time was having other thoughts. How will she tell my mother and son about what happened, how will she take my coffin, or will I be cremated according to Indian tradition? And only the second friend turned out to be sane and adequate. He came up to me and began to feel my pulse. And when I opened my eyes and even stirred a little, then Polya calmed down and exhaled: “We take her with us, – she decisively gave orders to her friend. – We are going straight to the hotel”. The driver and Polina’s hands encircled me so that I would not fall along the road like a roly-poly. My co-passenger was still a bit upset about the scratches on the motorcycle, shaking his head, clucking, lamenting, and after calculating how much repairs would cost him, he followed us.

I was lucky. I just lost a little blood. Shattered, but not broken, I laughed at myself and my recklessness. Well, for the first time in my life I had sat on the pillion seat of a motorcycle, without a helmet, drunk, in the night, after a two-minute briefing, where the gas was and where the brakes were. But I drove this iron horse through speed breakers, pits and potholes, as if all my whole life I was not driving electric cars in the park or even my cars with right-hand drive, but like a real biker-girl racer. This led to the tragedy, when I did not want to be overtaken and accelerated without knowing the road, but the sharp turn left no choice: either directly into the ditch with a hot stream and snakes, or risk completing the maneuver. I chose the second one. And, of course, there was no time to choose. Obviously, I could not manage the controls and did not even slow down.

Fools should be taught. I got off easily. But even two weeks had not passed under the sun, I was already living a nocturnal life. The proximity of the hotel from the famous and most popular street of northern Goa – Titos lane – made things easy for me. It’s like the Arbat street in Moscow. At every step, there are hangouts, cafes, bars, restaurants, pubs, clubs. The street ends with an exit to the sandy beach of Baga with its shakes and music.

All day long, sitting alone in a hotel room by the windowsill, gazing at the beauty of nature through the window, in entangled thoughts, with fresh wounds, I remembered my childhood on the

windowsill of the hospital in anticipation of my mother. Only now everything was fine with me. Everything was put to good use. It was a forced retreat this time for me, vipassana, meditation period. I do not know what else to compare it with, but I silently thanked fate for its outcome. This experience gave me the opportunity to reflect on my whole life. Circumstances seemed to be striving for this only. The days were followed by clear, fragrant nights with looney smile of the Cheshire Cat smiling at me.

By the end of our three-week vacation I already knew not only Titos lane, but also the Dudhsagar waterfall, Anjuna Flea market, two Saturday Night markets, Arambol, Morjim, Mandrem, Vagator, boat station at Sinkerim, Fort Aguada and much more. The main conclusion was – I fell in love and appreciated my life, because it is love of life that effectively helps me moving forward. Now I was convinced of the correctness of my choice and I knew exactly what I wanted and what I deserved.

In India, at last, I learned to trust myself and my own feelings, to live my own life!

For years, I have been waiting for my life to change, but now I know that it was life that was waiting for me to change myself. If you think that for happiness you need another person, you are mistaken. For happiness you yourself are enough. Another person is needed so that you can share your own happiness with.

Never and nowhere else in my life I have felt more at home than in Goa. Many people do not even have a homeland. This may sound strange, but it's a fact. Someone may object, they say, I was born in Russia or in Ukraine, which means that my homeland is Ukraine or Russia. But this is just an illusion, my dear readers. The fact that you were born in a certain country or you have the corresponding citizenship, as well as a passport, does not mean that you have a homeland.

“The homeland is a specific place. And this place must be on Earth. That's all” V. Sinelnikov.

Now I understand that God saved me for something, gave lessons and showed that we must learn to read signs. I began to understand the degree of danger from which I was saved. It could have been worse. You need to listen to your intuition and not be led by circumstances, to think about yourself and not deviate from your goals. In Russia it would have taken another 20 years, but in India I was completely transformed within 20 days. Every person creates affliction for himself. My former self flowed out of me, along with the blood and scabs of healing wounds, leaving only scars on my skin as a reminder. Inside there was a creative process of growth, filling each and every level inside me. The change of darkness and light ceased to matter.

The second time I came alone. Now I was more circumspect. I should not have taken the risk. I rented a charming little house and lived for my own pleasure. “To suffer is a lot easier than change. In order to become happy, one needs to have courage” Bert Hellinger. I realized: nothing will happen until one experience is replaced by another. Until new impressions are gathered, their critical mass will not push everything else out of memory. For me, India definitely has healing properties. To each his own. I managed to find in myself the much needed potential, perhaps at the very last moment.

By the time of my second visit, I was no longer afraid of an exotic uncertain life, because I knew that no matter what happened, it would only make me stronger and more confident. Self-study of English was not easy, there was no one nearby who could help, even though I was in the language environment that I needed. But I was not going to part with my dreams just because there are some difficulties. I was striving to fulfill my dreams and not forget about them.

I was returning home via a wild beach in that part of Baga, where a river crosses it, when a friend called me. I took the mobile phone out of my pocket and focused on the conversation when a bunch of Indian kids shouted to me: “Snek! Snek!” (which means in Russian “snow” – editorial). I paid no particular attention to them and continued the conversation, going to the stairs with columns to the second floor of the building.

“Snek! Snek!” – children were screaming with startled eyes even louder and no longer alone, but with an adult woman running out onto the balcony “Strange children, – I thought, – where did they see the snow?” Perhaps it would be there in a February Russia, and not a piece of ice from the refrigerator. Or they have seen animation “Ice Age” enough. But the woman already were hanging from the balcony, leaning forward pointing at my feet: “Snek!” The behavior of an adult woman was startling. And I looked down at my feet. A large snake was wriggling before me. One more step, and I would have stepped exactly on it.

My reaction was lightning fast, although I was disoriented in the direction, but I jumped so far that I could be envied by an Olympian long-jumper. And the shrill shriek that I let out was probably heard all over the Western Ghats. My veins around my neck were swollen, but I was out of danger. Thank you, dear children and kind woman, for your concern. It turned out that the word they were shouting to me all this time was not “snek (i.e snow)”, but “snake”. Peculiarities of studying English not only in the language environment, but also in tropical Goa are taught quickly. From that day I stopped mixing-up the pronunciation of “beer with a bear” and “bag with a back.”

Being on the beach, among the palm trees, under the sun, I lay and looked up at the sky. In general, I was absolutely happy, no matter what. I was unflinchingly moved forward by my dreams. Thoughts about moving became more and more real and clear. I counted my savings.

In the end, I was not the bewildered heroine of “Eat, pray, love”. Because I had already two marriages behind me and a son, I just wanted to have the right to live carefree, without any plan and calculation, without any constant thought about how to find stability.

I decided that the most important thing is to try as much as possible to do what you like. And try everything that I once wanted. Where I will do this, it was decided. Goa, India. Probably, if I had not known myself so well before, I would not have achieved anything in life.

And I had nothing to complain about, to cry, nothing to regret. And there were no thoughts that it could pass very soon, like everything else passes. There was no thought that if you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans. I decided to go through everything, absolutely everything that mother India would offer me.

Only after my arrival in India I did suddenly understand what was happening to me. The long-awaited period of freedom was here for me. I want to be a child. To study the world again. I want to get that experience that was lacking, because I was born an adult. Because it was always necessary to be reasonable, hard-working, rational, to rely only on yourself. Because at that time, the hungry and terrible time of the beginning of the 90’s in Russia, I gave myself the word that till my son becomes mature I will live for him, forgetting about myself, I took this responsibility. And in my forty years I finally got my right to bright clothes and irresponsible behavior. Refreshing gulps of freedom greedily fed my imagination. I can be myself. Without obligations, work, children and other complexes and attachments.

I, myself, had always been my own enemy and struggled all my life with myself. And now the struggle with self was over, it has transformed into love. You cannot argue with your needs and desires. And if for some reason my thorny path was needed, it was so that all my desires now are accepted as the only correct ones. All this became clear from my first visit to Goa. The state that gave me my female rebellion, showed me firmly: denial and vanity are over. All the doors are open, just push, do not look for the key.

The plan of what I want to do next was getting ripe in my head, and this plan was much more interesting than any film sets and the stage of theaters. I thought of everything because I remembered all the signs that life showed me. And I accepted myself as I am. I will go to any extent, if I must.

Goa seemed a paradise to me, a place of immortality, but I was ready to die in it even when the hour of deliverance from the tyranny of the body came. The feeling of deficiency had vanished. And I enjoyed my favorite summer, the sun, to the hilt.

My sweet memories of childhood here were not only about the summer holidays in Kaliningrad, but also of the earlier creche days: when at a quiet hour I was lying on a cot in my pajamas under a blanket among the children peacefully sleeping and snuffling, and I looked at the clouds. Everyone was asleep, and I, with open eyes, quietly played with my imagination. These animated images from the clouds, changing and reincarnating into evil, and then again in good characters... And I was not afraid of either, realizing that the crumbling picture of one plot is the beginning of the next one. And I liked their unpredictability, innumerable variations and their speed. The happiest times and events in my life came back to me from my childhood dreams, I again found it interesting to live. I returned to my happy, long lost and almost forgotten self.

Here I wanted to whirl and whirl, drowning in the new emotions with which the Goan land is so generous, over this warm, divine coastal sand, surrounded by aroma of spices. The game of life continued. The interest of the explorer of the world around and the world inside himself was set off and turned into a plot without a genre. Whirling. So, I allowed myself to have everything I want. Never say "never".

All happened long ago, all will happen again. Only recognition of the moment is sweet.

4 – ABU – THE FIRST MEETING

– Impossible. -Possible, if you believe in that. Alice in Wonderland

There's no any sense to waste all your life for only the one path, especially if this path has no heart. Do this as if it's just a dream. Act bravely and don't look for excuses. Before you embark on any path ask the question: Does this path have a heart? If the answer is no, you will know it, and then you must choose another path. Carlos Castaneda

You're never given a dream without also being given the power to make it true. Richard Bach

The journey from Moscow to Goa took place without incident.

“And, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.” Paulo Coelho.

Life always waits for a right moment to start acting. And I began creating myself consciously.

With full awareness, that it's impossible to refill a full cup if not to get sorted out the baggage of the old stuff in the form of my past experience, outmoded conceptions and the loose ends to tie up, I've made a cleaning of my life in all three dimensions: the past, the present and even the future, in which I had already had the loose debris- my hardened view regarding the future. Looking at my own mother, I stopped living as if I had two hundred years more ahead. The reorganization has brought me remarkable force and new energy. I've brought to an end each and every open issue to avoid even a hint of the possibility to stop or cancel my plans. I've handed out all my winter shoes and clothes to my friends, gave away some of the furniture, utensils, technique and the souvenirs I brought from my trips. I've even cleaned my virtual space by deleting all useless files and photos based on the principle that purification releases the energy. I've had enough even of the unreasonable stereotype of creative disorder covered by some art tendencies. It's time to speed up, and a big load means less speed. The old accumulated information has become unnecessary for me now, it has might be atrophied completely the ability to hear the voice of my soul.

Any information tend to accumulate, it goes nowhere out of our subconscious, we have to filter it, otherwise, it inevitably trashes our channels and portals, creating enormous info noise. Because of that, we can easily make a lot of mistakes, and I've already had more than enough of them.

I've cleaned all the garbage out of my life in the physical, energy and mental layers. Without a deep searching of goals, senses, missions and destiny, or in another case it would take me twenty more years of my life and plenty of energy. So I've divorced my unloved husband with no regrets. Surely it hasn't been without scandals, but with my son's blessings too. The first time I've been married by my mother's order, and the second one by my son's request. Now I could live not for my mother, not for my son's sake, but for my own. Burning my favourite Indian incense I've also been burning all the bridges, and I couldn't help bursting into tears when I'd got a letter from my son in the army.

By that letter, he informed me, that when he's back, he was not going to live in the illusory family any longer. He was going to rent a flat with a friend. Also, he saw how I suffered because of him, as my marriage, after all, was his idea and it wasn't able to make me happy as he wished. He was thankful to me for my best years given to him. And in conclusion, he said: “Mom I will be happy if you become happy!” Those words have become the real blessing and the guidance from my son.

Didn't it look like some kind of mysticism, when 18 years ago I gave myself exactly that quantity of years for my liberation?

It's impossible to love forcibly, with the best of intentions, by the fear of being alone or by order. It's much easier to live with no love but what's the sense. "Till the time you vacant space in your life for someone important to you, that you are, you will always seek and lose." R. Bach. Now I was to find. I knew that love is tough if it's true love, but where insecurity and risks are greatest there hopes are greatest too. Initially try to hear yourself. Learn to feel joy in your own company. Become happy enough that you're not bothered anymore by the fact whether someone comes to your not.

I was already in love with India and was ready for any risks. I was very careful with my thoughts as I knew they create the reality. I've preferred India for my country or any other. I felt like a migrant or like a migratory bird. A person can do whatever he or she likes if he accepts taking responsibilities for that. Summing up my life by the age of forty, I've realized that my life was just beginning. The biggest resistance comes because of fear- the fear of the unknown. I wasn't afraid as I was convinced that the Heavenly Powers never judge or criticize us, they accept us as we are, and afterwards only reflect our own beliefs automatically.

When I observed my countrymen in different countries, I've noticed that wherever Russians would be settled down they never leave their country, except the cases when they fell in love. A refugee, an immigrant, an exile for Russian man it's a dream of a glorious coming back. It's an eternal paradox: looking to the future with the eyes turned back to the past. For many of them, it's just another country, some abroad, a nation of strangers with the comfortable warm climate. A house, ordinarily rented, as a waiting room for the chimaera of dreams or, in other words, it's waiting for an easy death in comfortable conditions.

Among other things in Goa, I paid attention to the enormous quantity of females of reproductive age, who brought themselves to the country with male outnumbering and still stay so naive to think that they can accomplish their maternal instincts. And in doing so they remain certain that their rights are still valid without any changing of the patterns in home-grown responsibility. Whereas truly happy international marriages, not arranged marriages in India, can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

I've also watched another category of my countrymen in Goa, leading a life of committed followers of "Dao De Dzin" on the theory of treatise Wu Wei attributed to Lao Tzu. More to the point, it's non-action in which you can attain the Heavenly, or in other words, contemplative passivity. There's a lack of motivation for an action due to the absence of causes. When there's no thinking, no valuation, no desire. So they follow this lifestyle, completely forgetting that such existence is true only for enlightened people, whose mind is soft and disciplined, and totally enslaved by the human's deep nature. Convinced in their progressiveness and enlightenment, they turn themselves into an alive fossil, creating their own system of discrimination on external appearances, feeding habits, areas of residence, but also they reproduce, preach and sell something.

Due to my age and experience, I preferred not to be considered to any category. I like the members of the cat family: tigers, lions, cats. They're people with their own convictions, ideas, opinions and the way of thinking; people who like cats are always on their own, and each of them is unique and special; people who are not flocking in a pack, a crowd, a political party, a caste, a tribe or a family united by the same sound in the family name.

India has awakened me from forty years of sleeping when I first got to Hampi. There came an understanding, that the world is fragmented and impermanent. I felt like a tiny puppet among the centuries-old granite rocks of bizarre shapes looking like some giant decorations in a puppet theatre. Even casual conversations, advertisement on the way, insignificant small things were influencing me. I know myself the puppet systems, already had the experience of controlling them, but in Hampi, I've traded places with a puppet master, found my place of strength. And I've cut the threads from an illusory puppet master, artificially imposed by the modern repressive traditional world, as I'd got realized that even without them everything is interconnected in this world. I just need to pay attention to every detail, to tune in and surrender to Nature.

I understood that it's useless making plans for the life or thinking over big changes, but I need to act here and now inspired by new emotions and fresh impressions. We all tend to change as time goes on. I am individuality who is able to model my movement trajectory on my own, but not passively accept whatever, trying to fit in some stable prearranged order.

Exactly in Hampi, it struck me, that our personal greater good comes not from limitations and social roles we take, but from our bright and radical ideas, which undermine all social conventions, pushing forward the boundaries of our mind and its opportunities. Yes, I've decided, great changes are about to take place. Keep on moving forward! No plans!

Sitting in a really warm and comfortable Moscow apartment with uninterrupted electricity, gas and water and looking through my recent photos from the Indian trip, I've been smiling to the future. By that, the Universe was sending me its signs. All that was left was to read them and to decipher with a help of my intuition. What a strange meaning the words have taken! Almost twenty years ago when I was clawing my way into the metropolitan life for me and my son, I worked according to my vocation of the puppet theatre actress, lived independently avoiding the manipulative controlling from my mother and it used to be enough. That time I've been convinced, that everything was going according to the plan. And now the question arose: "What kind of job could I possibly get in India to have the opportunity to stay there?"

While still in sunny Goa, I had bought at the bookstore the entire series of children's books "Akbar and Birbal" for my further self-study of English, and that's when I've made the optimistic decision- coming back to live and work in India. I've certainly been an optimist. "Optimists have their dreams come true, and pessimists their nightmares." B. Show. I've myself set off some remote control at me, and with my own hands was switching my programmes. And all the programmes were showing only my sense of purpose. In any source of the information I used to find only the confirmation of the rightness of my decision.

"The only way to live good is leaving those places where you feel bad. Don't change your dreams only because you don't know how to make them true.

Only three things make a person happy: love, an interesting work and an opportunity to travel." Bunin. Listen to your heart and act how your intuition tells you and you will find your way.

"Life is like a blank canvas. It's up to you how you want to paint it. Just paint what you want. And don't listen to those who don't know how to paint. Not that one is happy who has all the best, but that one who extracts the best from what he has." Confucius.

Even opening my diary from two decades earlier, I got into the pages with the Victor Tsoy quotes from my youth: “There’s no prison more scaring than that one inside your head”, “I am a free man as I always did what I liked and never did what I didn’t like”, “Our hearts demand changes”. Yes, life would be very tragic if it were not so funny. I was laughing. Browsing through never-ending advertising websites in search of work, I’ve come across the right vacancy. A new job as a tour guide. I felt quite capable for that role, and also it seemed an interesting job to do suited to my mentality and character. All things were incredibly successful. The biggest part of obscure issues of my future has taken the form of a happy ending. That’s for sure, to there where someone is waiting for us we arrive just in time.

Soon I’ve been invited for an interview. I wasn’t surprised by that. Who searches, always finds. That was bound to happen. After the meeting, the place of my work has been defined- a tourist guide in the North Goa. Hurrah! The training course has been started, it added to my English lessons also daily classes on India culture and history. The reading list I was searching all over Moscow, rare books I ordered over the Internet. I read and wrote down all the information, systematized dates and events, discovered for myself so many new things. I was running all over town from one training to another, barely remembering to fill the car. In order to catch the happiness, you have to know how to run. Success in life and self-realization are possible only at a fast speed.

I approached the completion of my plan knowing that its realization would definitely change my life for the better. I had no doubt in its achievement, unconditionally believing in myself, my own strength and courage. Also, I’ve held sacred my faith that I’m able to fight for my love. First of all, I’ve made my bet on true feelings for making my life complete with a true relationship.

“Any human will bring us sufferings. We just need to find someone worthy of our sufferings.” Bob Marley said. “A relationship is not a goal and not a reason for living, but just an instrument for a full healthy life. The only purpose of communication is collaboration, co-creation.” V. Sinelnikov

I’ve started taking each day of my life as a precious gift offering to me. I’ve simply accepted the game with my arising wishes in the same manner as the Arabian Sea was playing with its beloved waves in the vastness of the Indian Ocean. I believed, that a real and decent man inevitably would feel me and wish to stay with me until the end. Just because.. I’m such woman.

A happy free woman!

“Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.” Confucius.

According to your faith be it done to you.” – those are words from the Bible. Jeff Foster convinced, and I join him, that we are bound to get in this life those things in which we believe. We must know that we not always will have answers to our questions, but it doesn’t mean that we’re lonely in this world. We must understand that the life not always will have a meaning or go according to our plans, but it doesn’t mean that we won’t be able to find what we’ve been looking for so long. Whatever we wanted will find us in right time, when we are destined to get it, and when we’re ready to accept that gift. We just need to let go, to clear the way, to have faith. And allow what is meant to be ours, find us.

Life is not necessary a soap opera with endless drama and troubles. There is always some space for changes at any time, any moment of life, and I’ve become to notice that the range of new opportunities and unexpected chances around me expanded. Daily lectures on India history and culture were held by two instructors in turns, they not only knew the theory perfectly but have also done not only one season themselves.

Already on “getting to know each other” stage at our first lesson in Moscow, in Arbat where our training took place, I’ve realized where I had got into. I was surrounded by absolutely not random people. Each student introduced and told about himself in a few words. Here was a guy who worked as an army translator during six years and knew English and Arabian languages, the girl from Sakhalin who taught English and knew Japanese, two guys knew English and Spanish languages and they have graduated from MSU; teachers, interpreters, flight attendants, tourist guides with over seven years of work experience, journalists..

Initially, I was seized with an admiration from a new generation, and suddenly an understanding that I was among them by some miracle has come over me. I’ve become convincing myself that I belong to the group of those rare lucky guys, who are able to turn their hobby into the work and to use their skills from the previous jobs for the present activities. I need to become more productive, effective and happy. “The work of a tourist guide only will help me to reveal my creative side as a theatre actress” – I’ve decided, and tried not to puss out.

Focusing on the development of my own emotional and spiritual levels, I didn’t compare myself with others. I started training my memory skills, to awake the sleeping talents, the improvisation and the ability to think rationally in any situation. Before, I would be overwhelmed with doubts, beat myself up with the question: “what am I doing here among these young achievers?”, I would be terrified just with the thoughts about big changes in my life, was doubtful even of the correctness of my dreams. But now I’ve had faith in myself. My own journey has begun and I followed my own heart desires. I’ve transformed my current thought stream and intentionally turned it in the right direction: no panic. The things you take easy don’t control you anymore. And I haven’t given up.

“The highest pleasure is to do what others say you can not do.” Walter Bagehot.

The time has come. All courses were over, the car was sold. I doubt there was anyone happier than me. Happiness is contagious. The happier you are, the happier all around you are. And although fairytales don’t exist, I attempted to live a not boring life full of adventures.

“Have you ever felt that you were missing someone who you’ve never met?”

Richard Bach.

Yes, I felt his absence during forty years. “There’re no perfect people, but there’s always someone perfect for you.” I believed to Bob Marley. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited, meanwhile, for the imagination even the world is not enough. And Abu had already settled in my imagination.

Clearly connected by something bigger than just an incident, our friendly group has arrived at the airport as a whole by the agreed time. The date of the flight matched one girl from our group’s birthday. And we were celebrating on the run, at the airport. We all were like a family, all so different we’ve become very close to each other after this one-month training. Our company indeed were quite motley, but very tight-knit. Everyone has noted that fact.

On arrival in India, we were going to have a guided tour- going all the way to all the tourist destinations which our tourist company provided. And it was much more interesting when we’ve been already prepared theoretically. By some joke at the baggage claim exactly our birthday girl’s baggage had been lost. But it didn’t discourage us and I shared my clothes with her. The organizers attempted to plan everything in the best possible way. And if our training in Moscow has been paid by us, then all expenses on the guided tour were covered by the company. The flight tickets, the accommodation, the food and the visas all was paid by the company. We’ve landed in Delhi. The only difference between a good and a bad day- is how you take it! It was just a perfect day! And one more time

“Namaste” India! Things moved so fast that we just didn’t pay attention to some minor irritants: trash, dust, dirty streets, slum, deadly odour from the Yamuna river.

The amount of information, the rate we moved and the constant talks with each other have turned into a carousel from which I wasn’t allowed to fall out in spite of my age. My head was spinning around, but I’ve kept on making notes and my big note-book was going to an end. Sometimes I sketched the routes, wrote down English words and Indian names by Russian letters. But I really had lack of time for the English grammar. Nothing could stop me, everything brought some joy. I was always uplifted and in a very good mood, which was helping me to keep on my toes. All that was happening could be compared with a non-stop rotating kaleidoscope. Everything was spinning before my eyes and inside my head, carrying me away into the depth of the Samsara wheel. Everything was rushing with the speed of sound but left to me the impressions and the gratitude for I’ve had a chance to see all that, to hear, to visit the places, to value, to remember and to make my collection of the exciting stories for my public. My audience was waiting for me, my new spectators the tourists.

Three days later our group of twenty people have been going already for a week tour to see tourist sites of Karnataka. The wasn’t even a sign of tiredness on our faces. Waking up the early morning we packed our stuff and took our places in the car. Among already familiar faces I’ve noticed a fresh one.

I’ve turned around at the sounds of the voice which seemed to me rich and credible. Such voice certainly used to be heard, a very good speaking voice with strong vocal cords and articulate speech; it was deep, loud and graceful at the same time. He was talking with an intonation of the BBC newscaster. The voice belonged to not tall, dark-skinned, sporty type man with sparkling eyes, who was rubbing his earlobe with the big and the index fingers. ABU.

He stood out among all others not only by his bright red t-shirt, the cap with a long brim and the natural tan skin, but he had a discerning eye with the light resembling the first rays of the rising sun. And only the small Mephistopheles beard was sticking up on his clean-shaven skull. It seemed to me that he was gazing through all the dimensions at the same time. With a springy walk, he has come to the crowd of the tour participants taking seats in the cars. Who was he? The guy has joined our big group so naturally, that not all at once spotted him. He was talking with the organizers, shaking the hands and was quite active in general. ABU.

I couldn’t catch the meaning of his words as he spoke English. But I could hear how clear and beautiful was his voice, I stood and stared at his sincere, open, wide smile with which he used to charm the people around him so easily. He carried himself so naturally without a shadow of being phoney or any attempts to show off that he has immediately taken over you. ABU.

Abu and me were sitting in different cars, that was decided by the organizers. But at every stop, for breakfast, lunch or sightseeing, Abu filled out the entire space and seized the attention of the people around him. And I still couldn’t get a single word. Although I’ve right away noted his talent and the acting ability for he was grabbing attention like a magnet. There have been quite a few Indians with us, but Abu was everyone’s favourite. He was charismatic, one of a kind, a man with the spirit capable to engage you, arouse your interest and hold your attention, he could easily make you laugh or to make you think without any attempts to preach. Even without understanding the meaning of the words, I could see how he controlled the audience and it has helped me to realize the way of the right interaction with tourists like an actress in front of theatre spectators.

My thoughts flow was interrupted by the laughter around me not just once, everyone was laughing at Abu jokes. I was the only one who was giving a poor reaction. He had an incredible ability to lead people by his own example and to infect them with his own interest. His approach was so energetically powerful, that even me with no getting a meaning, caught myself smiling. I just nodded my head from time to time like a china doll. His leadership was beyond any descriptions, you could only experience it. My feminine has been charmed by his magnetism, but as I couldn't understand his words, I just savoured his image and the sound of his voice. Although the failure to get the point of his speech hurt me with some jealousy.

The day full of events has begun with the first stop for breakfast near a roadside inn. They have shown us a washroom and I went there to check the place to have an idea where to send my future tourists to. Under the washbasin, there were small puddles left after cleaning the floor in Indian style, such as pouring water on the sides in the expectation that when the sun rises it would get dry up naturally. Indians never overdo, as well as all Asian though. They are in the hands of never-ending "susigada" or siesta. There're two fundamental rules they follow: 1) Never do today what you can do tomorrow or not to do at all; 2) Who knew life, that is no longer hurries.

But to any Russian woman of my age, those rules seemed absolutely absurd as we've been taught the opposite. "Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today" – they said attributing this expression to the uncle Lenin. And if they said so, then it's not just a rule to follow, but you might be blamed in neglecting with all its consequences as soon as the Party only get a chance.

I washed my hands and was going back already but suddenly I've noticed a huge monkey sitting lazily on a tall tree with the crooked branches. Later turned out that it was langur monkey. A black shrivelled muzzle with attentive eyes, a very long black tail, black leather paws with long fingers color red like a Siamese cat. This Hanuman pensively was holding a nut near his teeth until he has suddenly swung his arm back and threw the nut exactly in my forehead. I didn't have a chance to get out of the way and I slipped on the wet floor, in reaction. There came the sounds of something heavy hitting the floor, and from outside you could note only two legs sticking out from the restroom and raising up like above water in synchronized swimming.

Surely those who have seen that became laughing. I myself felt no pain but the attack of uncontrollable laughter. With whom else that could have happened? But in my head, I thought that it anyway was much better than that story happened to my theatre friend who was sailing on the tour in Kamchatka and the whole way she had spent in the stateroom having terrible attacks of the seasickness. And when she was invited to see the northern lights, she was simply blown away from the deck into the freezing waters of the sea. I was wet, but at least felt warm.

The guys who have come to help me lifted me up carefully and said that the langur had blessed me as a monkey was a holy animal for Indians. They also added that it was a very good sign and I've been a chosen one. To my surprise, even the grinning monkey was pointing at me with her long black finger and making some weird sounds either hiccup or laughter. Like in a movie. Well, I've been blessed, that's nice. The clothes dried up as well as the floor, we had breakfast and moved further. And this cartoon episode has drawn Abu and public attention to me, though I felt more like a carnival joker.

All our group except me loved Abu. Because of him the only thing I used to do- was running from one to another with the requests to translate for me one thing after another. But the colleagues simply couldn't keep up with Abu as an interpreter also needs time, and we didn't have it enough.

I realized that a lot of good and interesting information has been missed. By my colleagues' reaction, I could understand that he was telling something very important and fascinating and in a very thrilling manner too. All I could do was to admire his artistry, the athletic body and professional skills inherent to a genius.

Sometimes our eyes met and I couldn't help but have taken my eyes off him. But later I've again heard his voice and it has been absorbing all my attention and my thoughts. I looked at his eagle's profile, the energetic chin, full lips, sparkling almond-shaped eyes full of expression. I couldn't take my eyes off the grace and confidence he demonstrated every time appearing in public, his accurate gestures, the clear speech and obviously an exceptional sense of humour when even me was laughing together with all the group without understanding what it was about. His laughter was so contagious that it was almost impossible to resist. At some moment it seemed to me that he was the man of my dreams, whom I visualized so many times before but only fair-skinned. At the same time, I felt some pressure because of lacking a common language. I spoke Russian, but Abu didn't know it. later revealed that he knew eight languages! I felt flawed and hated him with jealousy. Abu was giving a dizzying tour on the aboveground catacombs of the intricate Hampi routes, he spoke out loudly and clearly, looking directly
into the spectators' eyes.

For a night the organizers got us rooms in a real fancy five-star hotel in a Hospet town from where we were to heading back to Hampi early morning. The organizers made a deal to not close a swimming-pool with fountains and a jacuzzi for us and even to switch on all the illumination as an exception. And we got a chance to swim in the pool, refreshing our tired, dusty sweaty bodies in cool waters under multi coloured rays of light. Here someone got an idea to celebrate this unforgettable day and to have some whiskey before going to sleep, just to chill out a bit at the back of the hotel with a pool view. We all quickly backed this idea up. And that was indeed such a loving evening! We felt so relaxed, had much fun and laughed all the time.

Finally, I've had an opportunity to have a good conversation in my mother tongue, to share my stories and to tell about my impressions. I really enjoyed my auditory, they were responsive and getting my sense of humour, we were on the same page. When I was going pretty big, Abu has joined us. And my evening has been finished on that. As soon as he has appeared all focus shifted at him in a flash. And again I was sitting like a doll blinking the eyelashes and couldn't catch a word. I've poured some whiskey, it didn't make me feel better. Has drunk some more, didn't help.

Losing all the interest for the party I felt how some kind of self-pity has attacked me and I felt a lump in my throat. And the questions began to arise: "what am I doing here?", "how will I work in the country without knowing its language?", "maybe it's a professional unsuitability?", "why did I come here?", "why nobody has listened to me?" I wasn't used to be on the sidelines. A leader, an actress, an anchor was crying inside me. Wiping my tears with a sleeve, I've run away to my room and kept on crying alone. Abu has instantly stolen all attention, and I was just a puppet theatre actress from Russia, with no knowledge of the language, not capable even to get a small talk flowing or to argue.

My roommate Arina has come for me, she tried to pacify me and to bring back. But I really needed to stay alone.

"If you have a bad day, just remember that you can cry. If you need to have a good cry in bed just do it. But don't forget after that to stand up, pull yourself together and keep on moving forward." Louise Hay

Someone came in and went out. I didn't care, I had a good cry and fell in asleep. We all have our own inner battles with the demons and we struggle them with courage. Daily and in our own way. All our efforts big and small deserve praise and applause.

Has it ever happened to you to wake up one morning with a thought that you've lost a control over your life and can't even say what is right and what is wrong? Each one of us has got such days and, believe me, it's absolutely normal. I've discovered, that if to make the decision to change the situation then it's already a halfway to success. The only thing left is to understand how to do it.

The next morning my eyes have been slits, and I was terrified to meet this new creature in the mirror. It was like an ordinary morning of a Chinese beekeeper. Washing and eyes drops didn't work out and I was to wear the sunglasses before daybreak. And here went out the ballerina. I've left my room like Maya Plisetskaya deceased in Germany in her ninety, and with her words on my lips which has become my morning credo: "All my life I love the new, all my life I look into the future, I always wonder!... Not resign ourselves to the edge is not tolerant. Even then – Fight, fire back in the tube pipes, drums beat... Up to the last moment... My fight win only on that andkeep it up. Character – this is destiny."

I convinced myself not to give up and not to allow any difficulties to break me down. By that, I learned to accept with equanimity the things which I was not able to change for now. I did my best to put behind my yesterday weakness, my tears and self-sabotage, left the room and followed Arina to the lobby downstairs, where our group was supposed to meet. Sudden of all I noted Abu was coming to me! AAAA!

Where would I get away now? Where to hide? Maybe he was just passing by? But he was not. It was too late for me to back down and nowhere too. If only, to jump into the swimming pool which I tried to avoid. He approached me quickly, gave me his look, that lighted the space in the crack of dawn, and what was the most terrifying, he began to talk to me! Here I had a thought that he was doing that with the purpose to tease me. Yesterday he had already found out that I couldn't understand him because I didn't speak English. And now he attempted talking to me again the same language I didn't know. But he was smiling so sincerely that I couldn't help but stopped, and that scene crashed into my memory for the rest of my life! I missed the meaning of his words. Nevertheless, I could feel something very warm, kind and full of light in his voice and gestures. And he had been talking now to me personally!

"A heart beats, beats, beats and will find a way to beat everything!" Renata Litvinova. At that time I decided not to react to his words, although I really wanted it. With a silly smile, I didn't say anything but began to walk faster. Filled with anticipation, I had blown right past him to catch Arina and to ask her about the meaning of Abu words.

"And what did he tell you?" Arina asked.

"Don't cry, you try. If you want I will help you." I repeated impatiently trying not to miss a word. Arina translated me his words with a smile.

"So what does that mean? He offers me help? Him?!" I exclaimed while blushing.

"Yes, he wants to help you."

"And how does he know that I need help? How did he understand that?" I still couldn't make out what kind of miracles took place now.

"When you left yesterday he asked right away what happened to you and why you ran away so unexpectedly. I came up for you, figured out, went back and told him everything." Arina explained.

"Don't cry..." I repeated pensively and... began crying. The salt of gratitude was rolling down from under my sunglasses. But this time that was the expression of my joy through the tears.

I pulled myself together and tried to concentrate; whatever happened, I had to walk with a smile on my face. Life is wonderful; this shouldn't be forgotten. A beginning is always the hardest part.

The crying morning at the sunrise from the Hemakuta mountain in Hampi turned out into a sensual rise of my soul. My awoken heart was beating some rhythmical melodies echoing Krishnas' tambourines under the hill. Abu could see me with my own eyes, his sensitivity to another's pain made him helping me. Before, I used to seek the strength and confidence from outside; I forgot to check within me, while they always were there.

From that day on I noted that my life became exactly the kind that I have always imagined. The world around has become a fairytale, and I am its heroine. The mystical coincidences revealed too many miracles to not to believe in magic. I began to create my new reality. The life transformed. I stepped to the path that led to the return of my integrity, the authentic real me. I awakened after the centuries-long sleep.

At the Hemakuta hilltop at the sunrise in Hampi, I was beginning to meditate, that helped to look deeper within me.

Life was beautiful, and I was open to its novelty. I began to observe my mind and to keep the focus on each given thought, replacing negative thoughts with positive when it's only possible. I felt much more love and compassion than before. Hampi was now my symbolic place of strength.

“Even a tiny seed of hope is sufficient to sow the field of happiness” Mark Levi. And one more time together with the first rays of the rising sun Osho phrases became dancing in front of me in Shiva Nataraj dance bringing with them the sacred destruction of the past.

Recently, while viewing our photos, one thought struck me: it was always like that with us, and probably our story still lasts somewhere. Someone was taking my picture. And Abu in the background had just walked into my frame accidentally. By accident?

It's significant to learn not only to give but also to accept gifts, I mean not to refuse help. When we let accept help or some gifts, our heart opens and radiates the energy of gratitude. And the miracles will inevitably happen. And I became to attract new opportunities and a happy destiny like a magnet. All that matters to keep thank God for having this precious privilege to feel, to give and to accept.

And so I got accepted Abu's offer as a gift. Your teacher is not that one who teaches you, but that one from whom you learn. I've found my teacher, my master- Abu. I took his gift so deeply, as deep as I myself was. This sacred miracle of each breath, each heartbeat. This every luminous, vibrant sensation and the tingles in the body. This joy, sadness, an explosion of creativity. This sudden merge and a chance to find yourself in another.

How to recognize your man? Oh, it's very simple. You will go forward and bump into him in your halfway. He didn't know. You didn't call. You were found. And whatever direction you were taking before, now your diverse paths got converged, and you keep on going the one way. There's nothing neither good nor bad in this world. There's only our attitude towards things.

You can fall in love with beauty. But love is only the soul. William Shakespeare.

5 – THE NEW LIFE TOGETHER

THERE ARE PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE LOSE TIME. AND THERE ARE THOSE WITH WHOM WE LOSE THE SENSE OF TIME.

“We don’t meet people by accident, they are meant to cross our paths for a reason.” Osho.

I’m absolutely certain, a hundred per cent, that no man appear in woman’s life by chance. Only that man comes to a woman’s life, who matches her internally and externally.

My working tourist season in Goa started as soon as the order from the management came. They said I was to go for my first excursion with tourists the next day, despite the fact that our own tour hadn’t finished yet. The workload was to the eyeballs, we had tours non-stop, everyday, sometimes nine days in a row without rest. I was working at my full capacity. Nevertheless, we used to find time for each other. Because, whoever they called the god of love, – Eros, Eroses, Amor or Cupid, had provided the winged boy with a bow and arrows to shoot them when I and Abu first met.

On the other hand, the time spent waiting turned out for us into the catalyst for stimulating our lives for the next meeting. The super intensive work season didn’t let us meet sometimes more often than a couple times a month. We were like two actors from different theatres, who loved each other but were always on tour. But we always comforted ourselves with the thought that any period would come to an end and we both knew when our time would come. We had the rare opportunity to meet on tours in those days when we arrived somewhere together each with his group, let’s say in a restaurant where we brought our tourists for breakfast. Almost all tour routes were drawn up by Abu. Or we met in the tiger reserve where we used to bring our tourists to after elephant rides. After each that very short encounter, we both remembered those moments again and again and took them as the most precious in our lives. Oh, days of innocence, when the world was full of eternal youth, you had already become the mythology of that old time! Sometimes it seems to us, we miss some far away places while in reality, we miss the time we spent there. That’s how time cheats us taking cover behind the mask of space...

Initially, we both were sure that we wouldn’t be able to spend more time together than those rare moments of our tea ceremonies on my balcony between the early pickups for excursions. That time we communicated via our symbolic language of gesture or the “paper with a pencil” language invented by us. In this manner, in addition to all languages of the subcontinent diluted with numerous dialects of other countries, had appeared a new “Abu-Alena language”. With his knowledge of eight languages, Abu was a well-educated Goan and he could afford to speak with me using the ninth one without agonizing about the colonial inferiority complex. India always was affected by influences from abroad. And Nehru, the first prime minister of India, rightly identified that India’s true genius lied within its ability for fusion. Try, however, explaining to a non-Russian, who Snow Maiden is. Or try to understand without knowing English that Jesus Christ’s remains are buried in India, in Kashmir. Our language was a crazy fusion with pantomime, a puppet theatre with ballet and graphics with painting. Such evenings together were well worth living for.

We finally got lucky with a coinciding weekend on St.Valentine’s day. In the evening of 13th Abu invited me to take a ride, to hang out around and to have dinner together. No doubt I agreed. My hands got shaking with excitement, but suddenly I noticed a metallic wardrobe with my clothes which was at that moment half empty inside and half filled with my uniform. Almost all my clothes

had been given for laundry. The coming date excited me so greatly that, with the best speed I could, I rushed downstairs to pick up my clean things. And that even helped me to get gained an hour extra for a traditional woman's dance with changing clothes near the mirror. No, the reflection didn't bully me with the age; like a little girl I was singing a hymn to the passage of time: "A man of my dream is just like you."

When I saw his bike's headlights in a dark alley and heard so familiar "Yamaha" engine sounds closing to me rapidly, my heart was already jumping towards him faster than its master. Like a grasshopper I jumped onto the back seat, the first time in my life holding onto the man I loved. And we rushed through the Goa narrow alleys with the strange sensation of flying, blown with the warm breeze and the tactile closeness. The Goan night accepted our union. Among the hectic movement around we plunged into the flaming sensations stopping the loud roar of the engine, which actually only completed the noise in our heads and filled with excitement each bump in the road.

Together on a bike... It's the most expanding feelings vehicle. The new story fell into the new path, and we were carried away with the flavours of old plots. One day absolutely accidentally you find yourself in the right place at the right time, and a million paths will cross. Initially, you see your wishes clearly and realize them, and the daily observation of them in this material world will settle you for their fulfilment. Have you ever noticed that coincidences in your life are not random at all?

Abu fasted and I was sipping cocktails losing any sense of time and without being afraid of losing myself forever in the abyss of my love story as if I saw the light of a day without bonds and chains for the first time in my life. We both seemed opened books to each other. When we were reaching the next 24- hour cafe to get a water for Abu and a cocktail for me it was the middle of the night already. When we were turning around the front three young inadequate Indians on one scooter crashed into us and were scattered out on the road right away. But Abu not only could hold the bike with one hand but also caught me in the middle of falling down with another one. Making sure that the incident closed and no one got hurt, I decided that it's a perfect time for a celebration of my second birthday, though with Abu most probably it was the twenty-second already.

The night was almost over when I got the idea to see the sunrise as we were not sleeping anyway. Taking a deep breath I took Abu to my magic place at the Black Rocks with stunning sea view from where you could not only see the sunrise but also if you're lucky to watch dolphins and to gaze shooting stars of diamond crumbles falling straight into the ocean. I revealed this place to him as my most sacred viewpoint which I'd never told about any living being. But with Abu, I felt like sharing. The Universe is a field of miracles and only our resistance to see can dull our eyesight. He believed me, smiled and allowed me to bring him there. Sitting at the crack of dawn on the cold Black Rocks and not breathing we sensually explored our body contours experiencing the sweetness of the first shy kisses in the dense milky fog.

The dawn broke extremely fast that morning, not only rocks but also people silhouettes were becoming visible. St Valentine's morning began. And in spite of I was extremely exhausted and sleepy when Abu dropped me home that morning whispering "See you soon", I couldn't help but stay awake, smiling inside and dreaming about my superhero. My mood was lifted up with each second, with each heartbeat until the sun appeared in the sky. I was crazy with joy and fell asleep smiling, seeing dreams where the Caucasus mountains, the Goa beaches rocks and the granite lumps of Hampi were moving, dancing and spinning around together with me.

"Faith can move mountains. But not everyone has faith." Blake.

I always looked for a man – a teacher who would help me exploring myself. My endless Universe needed a man who wouldn't walk past the various phenomena of my soul and was able to turn on all my unrealized female modes: a girl, a mistress, a hostess, a queen. But only a king could do that, that's why I needed a strong man overgrown his childish fears, a mature man who had come to peace with his ancestors' spirit. A man who would like to be a creator of his woman and ready to create himself a queen out of me. Abu was that man and that's why he listened so attentively about all my wishes. Abu was the best man I have ever known.

From that day on Abu became the King of my dreams. And I used to show him the royal respect and importance. Abu gave everything that made me happy. Our relation took the form of the decision to live together and we began our common life sharing one apartment and one space. I finally realized that I felt so wonderful and free close to my chosen man. It turned, that Abu was exactly that powerful image from my dreams who could understand woman feelings. Feelings, not words. He gifted me with his warmth. He was the Sun Man, and I was like a flower basking in the sun, in his tenderness, light and care. What an inexhaustibly rich and intricate pattern of a human life!

The most powerful word in the world is “WE”. It inspires, supports, pacifies... It teaches to live not only for yourself. “WE” are better than “me”, than “you”. This feeling gives us the strength to live, to have faith and dreams and what is the most important to love! At one of my exams on scenic design in the theatre institute, I had read a passage from “Exit the King” by Eugene Ionesco. Twenty years ago subconsciously I threw the boomerang with my wishes seeing the meaning of life only in great bright mutual love. In India my wishes became true, all my intentions were fulfilled precisely, in the real material life. I accepted back my almost twenty years old boomerang.

Here this extract is: “My sweet king, there is no past and there is no future. There's only a present and it goes right up to the end. Everything is in the present. Be present. Pause. Stop torturing yourself. “Existence,” that's just a word. “Death,” just a word. These are just formulas and ideas that we create for ourselves. Once you understand that, nothing can hurt you. Life is only an unanswered question: what is it... what is? That you can't answer the question is the answer – let yourself drop into the infinite wonder and chaos and then you too will be infinite. Be amazed! Be dazzled! Everything is strange! Don't let words define you, break through the prison bars and escape! Breathe! Pause. Let yourself be inundated by joy, be amazed and dazzled by the energy. Its glare penetrates your flesh and bones and flows through you like a river of bright light. If you want to.

Remember, please, that morning in June by the sea, the two of us... you looked out and you were filled up with an indescribable joy, something you couldn't describe, you felt it, you said it was unchangeable and inexhaustible. If you felt it then, you can feel it now because the light comes from inside you. Look for it inside yourself.

Love insane. If you're in love perfectly and madly the death is moving away. If you do love me, if you do love everything, the fear let you go. Love takes you, you forget yourself, and the fear goes away. The Universe fills. All rises from the dead. The hole gets vanish.

Hold me tight, don't let me go. You're alive because of me. I give life to you, and you give life to me. Do you understand? If you forget me, if you leave me, I won't be able to exist any longer, I will turn into nothingness.”

After the exam, I felt delighted, felt triumph, and now I feel rather confused and all my thoughts messed up. Now is the real life. Everything I needed, what I really longed for and worked on, buries

deeper and deeper under the avalanche of injustice. Breaks apart between two realities – this world and another one which is also visible here but imperceptible. The split happened not with me but in the Universe. And I just felt the fork in the Universe, going into nothingness.

But till that time we had been living incredibly beautiful and happy story of our love. I constantly thanked my God – the Universe without separating it into borders, states or religions. Since early childhood, it seemed to me that that one is more happy who sing, dance, smiles and laughs more. Without sideshow and cheating, without hierarchies and money-driven lifestyle, without certificates of birth, marriage, divorce or death.

Borges wrote: “I thought that a man can be an enemy of other men, of the moments of other men, but not of a country: not of fireflies, words, gardens, streams of water, sunsets.”

Each day spent with Abu I perceived as the entire life. When he used to forget to shave for a few days I called him my hedgehog from “Hedgehog in the Fog”, and he corrected me laughing: “I’m a porcupine.” And we remembered a story when in some Goan cafe after lunch Abu asked me: “How did you like the porcupine? Was it tasty?” Now I can’t say even what I ate then. I always loved to bite my Abu a bit like a dark chocolate. He liked my wild caress and I worshipped not only his soul and mind, but also his body. Feeling exhausted after our amatory exertions we continued our conversation:

– So was the porcupine tasty? You have tried his meat.

– I like everything with you, absolutely everything without exception.

– Do you know why Abu Sufiyan had converted to Islam? He just didn’t like pork. He was a Muslim ksatriy. And in Russia, you like lard as well as bear meat, moose and horse meat.” Abu teased me. And what will be next, Abusha? Cannibalism? Maybe you’re hungry?

– I’m hungry only about you. Do you know another Abu? Abu Bakar, Mohammed’s disciple and companion. He said, that- God is a woman.

– No, you’re the first Abu I know. Even not the first but the only one. And, you know, sometimes I really feel like a cannibal, like those aborigenes from the Hawaiian islands who ate the Captain Cook, by the way exactly on 14th February 1779, St. Valentine’s day. You’re my alive feast.

And we were laughing and biting each other like puppies.

– Thanks, Alona, you’re my most mysterious manuscript. It’s a challenge for me myself to decipher you. I’m grateful to you for that gift. “Kuskus” in Russian means “kusat” (to bite)?

– “Kuskus” is not a Russian word, it’s a name of the dish made of semolina and wheat cereals. I tried kuskus in Morocco, Tunis and Italy. And “kusat” (to bite) is a Russian verb.

And we went to a restaurant for dinner, both really feeling hungry after all that conversation.

Abu was really easy to connect and talk to. He treated any meeting like a friends gathering. It was only because of his own positive attitude and the goodwill toward humans. He had a high degree of confidence in people. Abu was trusting, accommodating, comforting and the easiest man to deal with. And he always left only positive impression. He made others happy, and that made himself even happier. Emotions are contagious. He never was worried about anything, he knew that any anxiety is just wasting of energy and time, and the same was true for taking life with all its problems too seriously. “Alona, why you have to worry about that? Most of your today problems you will hardly remember in a couple of years. And even if you do, you can unintentionally hurt yourself.” He made it easier for me, and I felt good getting another grade of joy from my man’s wisdom.

I was glad for my previous experience and thankful that many lessons we had already digested in our past and separately from each other. Our family was that perfect example where a couple prepared for a relationship before the relationship. Surely all of us have different fates. Someone is able to acquire all necessary knowledge before the fateful meeting, and others have to obtain it together through thick and thin. Sometimes you have to win your happiness back from the fate. We all need time to become mature. Mature for each other. Many are afraid of a breakup, but the level of fear to bring closer is even greater. But we always have to choose the lesser of two evils. Each step towards each other pushes the limits, dissolves your ego, arouses your fear. The weak ones are tended to pull back, stepping backwards or hiding in safety they were used to. But we were already mature, experienced and were not afraid of our love. We had already learned through the self-discovery, how to allow another come closer.

“Love is not passion, love is not emotions. Love is a very profound understanding of the fact that another completes you. The presence of another expands your own presence. Love gives you the freedom to be yourself, it has nothing to do with possessiveness.” Osho.

Sometimes it happened that someone called Abu and he passed the phone to me as if something important had happened. I took it naively, and after had to listen to Hindi music on the voicemail. He always liked to play jokes on me. Like a little girl, I would run after him to catch, punched his chest and arms with my small fists. and our bodies merged. The question of irritation or complaints on Vodafone obtrusive customer service was left back. Abu made a game of everything, was tolerant of any invasion into our private life. We didn't want children, it was too late already, but Abu made jokes even about that: “If we had kids, they would be zebras.” And before I asked “why?” he already gave an answer: “Because you're fair, and I'm dark-skinned.” And we laughed again and played horsey, riding each other.

At some point I was beginning to think that I became to understand the way the world works, people and, in particular, men's emotions, what principles communication rests on, how people interact with the cosmos and it with them, in return, and many other things. It was as if existence itself through India, through Abu revealed to me the new immense knowledge, the new layer of reality. It was like a new birth for me, and I started from scratch. Enlightenment came. Many issues were resolved themselves and others just ceased to arise as if it would be a normal thing. This steady powerful current, the flow of life and incidents. The new age of awareness came to me. Finally, I was there where I wished to be. The chronic anxiety of Russian went away. My confidence in the future in all its brightness and cloudlessness replaced all past worries. It was a golden age of my life. The positive thinking worked as if I was a little kid who is not afraid of anything, but only knows how to be amazed and charmed by this incredible world around.

Clive Lewis wrote: “Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again.”

And I read fairy tales aloud, for Abu. It turned out, that exactly stories creating for children are much more meaningful than meets the eye. In each of them, I used to discover something new, unknown, filled with different even more profound meaning. I kept on learning English buying children's books already of a new level, not “Beginner” but “Elementary”. That was a progress! I was reading them aloud for Abu, and he fixed me and laughed from the heart at my German accent. Especially the word “fact” once made him so much laugh that he fell down on the bed with laughter. But it was a wonderful time for both of us, we learned together, Abu – through teaching and me – through learning. This pure magic unwittingly reflected on our ordinary life too, as together with the language learning we learned to live together going through the adjustment period. All in all, it was a fantastic time of fairy tales.

Abu could and was fond of cooking, and in this subject, he also became my master. Our lessons always were full of fun and joy. One day standing with a hot pot in the hands with steam pouring out of it Abu asked me to pass him “fry pan”. I was in total information vacuum regarding this

unknown word. Trying desperately to please him I began opening the doors of the kitchen cabinets realizing that I had to give him something but WHAT exactly I couldn't imagine. Every time I turned back to him frightened and offered either a ladle or a strainer. Finally, the luck was smiling on me and I took out the frying pan. Abu sighed solemnly: “Yesss, my darling!” After that, we had some kind of a fun- filled extravaganza. You must admit, that not so often you can find a word “fry pan” in fairy tales, but I worked on my vocabulary through play and learning.

With the end of the season approaching, the workload got down and we had more free time now. A happy home life of the new family got started. We even established our daily routine. We liked to wake up early morning and go to the beach for playing tennis until the sand was not too hot. After half an hour of such intensive fitness, I turned red like a crab, and Abu then announced a small smoke break to get rest and drink some water: “Alona, you again became like a lobster! So, now I declare a break.” Sometimes our friends joined us and then we played Frisbee together. Later we swam in the sea and went back home for taking shower and having breakfast. For both of us, it was a gorgeous time, happy and unforgettable.

The earth rotated in no time, with days and nights full of events which ceased to be divided on dream and reality. They simply came together in a harmonious and diverse happy life full of wonders and unpredictable revelations. I got back to the reality of a child's perception when each new day brings only fresh emotions.

“The Jungle Book” was opened and we lived our story. However, life in a Moscow flat and in a Goan one is not the same. We both were in the kitchen when we heard some cooing just over our heads and suddenly we lifted our eyes and saw the source of the sound. Our kitchen windows were constantly open, it was a kind of our natural ventilation, and a couple of pigeons had made a nest just in the corner, on the hanging shelf! Now we understood why from time to time bird droppings appeared in our house. Abu quickly dealt with our guests. “Pigeons are number one infection carriers all over India,” he explained. “We let only geckos live with us, although they don't pay a rental charge.” The nest was expelled.

Goan world of sounds never lets you forget that you live in the jungle, in everlasting summer filled with life and motion. The tropics of Goa are bustling with life round the clock; they smell, quack, coucou, yell, halloo, hoot and even meow. Unidentified loud sounds always seem more high-pitched to us, it's just how our brain works. When we can't recognize the source of the sound it either makes us worry or we try to imagine the object which could possibly produce those sounds and to find the reason why it does so. Seeing my interest, Abu told me about birds and even showed me some of them and their natural habitats like images in an encyclopedia with pictures or a full article. Those are meowing birds. Koels are the birds of the cuckoo family and they scream like real March jungle cats. But even their sounds, in the beginning, can be easily confused with peacocks, whose meowing is even more plaintive and shrill. Goa is a region rich for unique creatures of all kinds. The bald eagles which were so stunning to me turned out into the Brahmin vultures which have several species and vary in colour. You can find brown-beige fishers mostly in Calangut, and white-black snake catchers fly in Palolem over the river. An amazing life hack: if snake catchers circle above you that means that there're snakes nearby.

Even if your apartment is situated in the Goan jungle it's impossible to not keep your home clean and tidy. The tropical environment of Asia requires to maintain cleanliness at home. You share your space with "two of each species" like in Noah's ark. The land of my dreams which I was so eager to inhabit brought me more and more wonders and discoveries, and my wise teacher Abu compensated all life turmoil by constant fun and the unceasing sense of humour. Things gave us a thrill by the natural joy.

Instead of being irritated I took my energy even from not very pleasant things. Mosquitoes always started their dinner with me, even if there was a company of eight people on the balcony. Abu hunted them and beat the walls barehanded leaving blood-red spots on the walls. Later together we used to take wet sponges and washed away those cartoon traces of the murder. And Abu with his constant smile along with seriousness noted proudly: "It's not my blood. Because mine is blue, and that one is red."

Giant bees made a hive just straight above our window, it looked like a carving clay pot. With a fishing rod, Abu torn apart the beehive and took away a big wax piece the size of a pottery wheel. Taking precautions he got wearing glasses for building and a raincoat and looked like a one-eyed Minion. Filling up with repellent all the house we ran off to the beach. When we back in the evening we had to sweep the half-dead tiger-striped cover away from the white tile floor. Abu had stepped on one bee but tolerated the pain heroically without a sound. He just in his style commented that he's not Winnie the Pooh. One bee we still hadn't noticed and our friend Keith got stung by it. We barely saved him from the allergies.

By the way, the tile floor is one more interesting feature of such areas. Wood, metal and other corrosive materials are deteriorating rapidly during monsoon season. That's why it's more practical to use stone or ceramics. Tile floor is done almost in all Goa apartments. Many appreciate a pleasant coolness on hot days it gives. But there's a danger too, which Abu as always had demonstrated by his own example. Taking a shower with his feet in soap, once he couldn't keep balance on a wet slippery tile floor and fell down. While falling down he bumped his jaw on a washbasin and knocked out a tooth. Stood up, did spit, finished his shower with no screaming and panic.

He left the bathroom gloomy, wet, feeling sick from his recent fall. He went to bed without any complaining, just showed me a fresh hole inside his mouth. Bent over him I gasped in shock, and he with a smile started singing "My way" of Armstrong. And then he announced: "All is well, my darling. The great falls change people. I can speak and even sing, the diction hadn't been affected." I was looking at the changes in his teeth quantity in a state of tension and astonishment by the fact that it didn't touch Abu at all. I sighed and told him: « I wish your chewing abilities wouldn't disappoint you too. But you're a guide, and anyway, you need nice teeth. You're not an elephant whose teeth changes up to six times a life, but a 21st-century human who has an opportunity to place implants. And Abu sang again with his hearty laughter: "Life is plastic, this is fantastic." I never felt bored with him.

People meet not by accident. Every meeting carries some meaning, but what exactly it does mean we often can't guess. We already knew that we bear some significant information for each other, the revelation.

Pyotr Mamonov said: "Every human being you meet in life is an angel. He's your helper and you've met him not by chance. He tests or loves you. There can't be another." We did love and were each other's angels.

At times Abu was galloping from one room to another with a slipper in his hand trying to get a cockroach. Besides, that Indian cockroaches are huge, they also can fly. Abu knew that they multiply uncontrollably and he didn't let them in our house. But ants caused me most troubles. Just a drop

of something sweet and ten minutes were enough to get invaded. Usually, they intensify before monsoon starts. Intuiting the coming of hungry and difficult times, the running crowds of these insects store all around, what their hardworking feet can only get. I had an allergy for them, almost same as Keith with bees.

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