Temperatures of Pop

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Lukewarm

The temperature of the gaze is not always constant. Sometime it is searching and impatient. Sometimes it is calm and meandering.

When the temperature of pop is lukewarm, the gaze lingers but not for long. In its lingering, the gaze infects and often this is the gaze that sows seeds of new relationships. Cinema directs this kind of gaze. So do dreams. What happens when you run in a dream? Does your sleeping body sweat and pant? This is not so difficult a question. Dreams are like any other delusion. Delusion only confuses the body, it doesn't disconnect it. Sometimes you feel sick when you are sad. Sometimes you pant because you are running in your dream.

Lukewarm was born on a rainy day.

In the middle of all the rain, a fire was raging in a house. The fire killed everyone. One baby survived because she was on the porch.

The firefighter who came to the house to put the fire out took the baby home. Lukewarm grew up in Lensman's home.

If you hold a lens to a ray of sun, you can heat up the focal area of the sun light so much that it can cause a fire. This fire can grow. And grow. Engulf the whole frame. And then a firefighter will have to come and put the fire out.

If Lensman was too still, a fire erupted somewhere. So Lensman kept moving. Lukewarm grew up on the move. Growing up on the move meant that he did not have stable friendships. Early on he got into the habit of making up his own friends in his mind. These imaginary friends each had distinctive voices of their own. The material for the conversations that these voices had with him was unique. They would share news of things happening in corners of the world that he had not ever visited. These voices demanded things in exchange for all the information they fed him.

The demanded shelter, they demanded being taken seriously. But this was just a ruse. The voices who had squatted Lukewarm were viruses. They were only interested in infecting the world in an unkind fashion. The urge to infect came to them very naturally. They had grown in the periphery of the world, looking at the people inhabiting their lives with so much casual abandon. They said things and the words were actually heard aloud. Not as ambient noise in somebody's head. They wanted to go out into the world and become real people. Becoming a person for them involved finding a weak enough person to infect and then take over. Lukewarm had unknowingly become a conduit. And possessing this conduit made sense to the voices, because this conduit kept moving and they got newer and newer territory to inspect for weakness. Being possessed didn't mean anything to Lukewarm. Of what he

knew of life, he had always known a diffused face of life. He had always worn a spent energy. Being possessed didn't make the experience more faint for him.

He had always been so spent that people (including Lensman) actually feared that he was a zombie. But he showed subtle signs of life. For instance, if you looked at him in his eyes and asked him a question, he answered back. But if you asked him to tell you what all he enjoyed in the world. He kept mum.

Lukewarm only responded to conversation prompts that sought his opinion.

Lukewarm was called lukewarm because once Lensman focussed the brightest light on him. For a long time. Ordinary surfaces would have caught fire by then. But Lukewarm only became warm. So, with enough of a provocation also, Lukewarm did not get flared up. He was a chilled man. All he could offer were lukewarm reactions.

When identifiers gain semantic value, a short-circuiting happens. This short-circuiting attempts to analyse everything and find meaning in everything. On failing it comes to a halt.

Because of Lukewarm's naturally sedated state, he was not taken seriously by those around him. Lensman never expected him to go out of the way and do anything. He feared that he will just waste his life away talking to the voices in his head. But what no one was able to appreciate was the fact that due to his unexcitable disposition, Lukewarm was ideally suited for doing surgical procedures.

These surgical procedures were painless for the subject and dramatically changed their lives. Lukewarm performed these procedures on people's minds. If they were not able to do what they very much wanted to do, he was able to help them. He found that in the metaphorical ocean if there wasn't any flow, the fish couldn't swim. If he moderated the flow, the fish could swim again. Because Lukewarm couldn't bear the great passions in his bosom, he could become a healer of the maladies of flow.

With his touch the obstruction went out of the way. In the face of silent passion, a mind with equanimity was a good disrupting force. In the face of fever, a stony temperament is like medicine.

People came from far and wide to Lukewarm to get fixed. They said to him, "Deliver us to the passions."

At the altar of passion, there's no bliss. Still there is craving and mindless aspiration to feel the quivers of passion. This did not make sense at all to Lukewarm and he healed those who came to him much like a trickster who knows that he is only a trickster.

For joy, warmth and finding something to feel good about, Lukewarm went and stood in the crowded market and hummed a tune. Nobody heard his humming and he got locked into a self-reflective frame. The only reason he could like the melody that he hummed was that he liked it. He looked himself in the eyes and felt balanced again.

He went back to healing people. He went back to feeling like a trickster. He went back to humming in a crowded market every now and then. This circle of events was continuous.

Lukewarm the healer and Lukewarm the hummer never met each other.

Being devoid of passions, he had a difficult time performing courtship and politics. In courting a partner in love, he was expected to make a choice and then chase the choice through whichever means possible. A love not chased restlessly is seen to be casual. Casual loves are seen as signs of a weak heart. If the one freedom that humans have had for ages is also not enjoyed, then what is the point? In making a political choice again, Lukewarm had a tough time. Political choice even if it was not exercised, was a validator of perspective and will. Lukewarm was lost in the mundanity of his own life and he couldn't think of abstract notions of community and state and nation.

Lukewarm never went out to vote and he was seen as a disinterested member of society.

Lensman had lived his life very carefully. He had gradually honed his vision and by the time he was in his old age, he was almost as clear as a piece of glass. A piece of glass is also a lens. A lens with very little refraction.

Lensman understood why Lukewarm was so spent. He was born in the midst of a raging fire. So somewhere fire and the fiery nature of truth were blocked in his mind. What he did not understand is that a lack of passion is similar to blurring of a certain kind. And if he applied himself to Lukewarm's perspective, it would get clarified.

For Lensman and Lukewarm to come together was difficult. Not only were they differently charged as bodies, but also they were each holding the world in balance. This balance would definitely give away if they made any movement and change in the enactment of their perspective.

So, not only did both of them differ, holding each in their position was important for each of them. For, even if the other caused some imbalance, its repercussions would set off their own balance. They were on a see-saw.

Life is a see-saw in an inter-dependent way but it also operates on a one up-one-down principle. This one-up-one-down nature, unnecessarily sets forces in opposition to each other. Actually all the antagonism between Lensman and Lukewarm was fictional. None existed. They might even have been good friends actually.

But this did not happen. And they kept trying to prove themselves to the other. When they tried to prove to the other, their focus from the narrative - of trying to balance the world faded. This loss added fuel to the fire. Or rather fuel to the disarray. When Lensman tried to lend himself to Lukewarm to sharpen himself, Lukewarm took affront. Lukewarm did not appreciate Lensman's suggestion and thought of it as an insult. But Lensman was only offering a function and not a gesture, there was no sentiment attached to it.

As Lukewarm took offence, Lensman felt that he had been falsely accused of a crime he did not commit. So he set about defending himself. And this defence upset the balance on the see-saw.

If only Lensman and Lukewarm could live in harmony together.

But this was not possible because of the loop described above.

Through the thick of the antagonism flying through the air, Lukewarm reached out and tried to start cooperating with Lensman. With this sudden interest in collaboration, even-though he suspected a controversy, Lensman relented.

He changed his perspective that Lukewarm was out to harm him and was opposed to him and started seeing him as family. Family is naturally aligned to your interests because of all the contractual inter-dependencies. There are numerous restrictions on family-members because they can kill you very easily.

To prevent death at home, within the space supposed to nurture the family toward the performance of its functions, the familial system of control was created. One day after they had joined forces, there was an attack on their house. Lensman built a ring of fire around the house and Lukewarm stood outside the ring of fire to ward off and fight away any enemy agent.

Lukewarm was a very good fighter and he offered a very strong line of defence. Because he was devoid of passions, he did not unnecessarily waste his anger. His blows were precisely timed and of the precise amount of force needed. But in spite of the controlled rage, he exhausted himself in a little while. That day, a whole army had come!

When Lukewarm went on fighting the army singlehandedly, in spite of being tired and worn out, Lensman was filled with a sense of gratitude. His belief that his son was on his side became firm.

With this firm belief, the see-saw collapsed to a common platform. Lukewarm receded into his shell and Lensman no longer thought of him as insufficient. Lukewarm allowed Lensman to sharpen him. After becoming sharp, Lukewarm became cold. All the warmth exuded from his body got lost into the atmosphere.

Lukewarm's entire perspective was modelled on the understanding that he was not hot and not cold but something in the middle.

Now that he had become cold, he was lost. He faced an identity crisis.

He again got trapped in the arms of vagueness, because it is so comforting. He started thinking that because he did not have a temperature, he did have any role to play in the dynamics of the world. But although Lensman also did not have a temperature, he could amplify the temperature of any body that he focussed light on. So he just got a little bit of heat refilled from Lensman.

Lensman gladly refilled him.

Lukewarm was lukewarm again. There was no more anything to worry about.

Lensman and Lukewarm were on the same platform and Lukewarm was still lukewarm.

Everything was good in the world.

In this time of peace, a gentle breeze blew and kept everyone simmering with the fire that they had to offer to the world.

Glow

Glow, is an expression of intensity. When the sun shines brightly onto a white surface, the reflection is a kind of glare that is blinding to look at. This blinding glare is the glow.

Glow is produced because of the presence of a source of light and a reflective surface. Reflection is only a kind of refraction that the surface produces.

Gloss creates ambient illumination.

One evening, a monk was out walking. The landscape was beautiful. There was even a small waterfall that the

path crossed over. This was the path that he followed everyday and the monk felt safe and relaxed at the same time. He was not afraid of anything, he even knew the patterns of the wind. He knew when the breeze would blow and when it would take a pause.

A dog obstructed his path. It barked and whined, but the monk did not stray away. He kept walking straight. He passed the dog and still the dog kept barking. Then the dog started following him. The dog followed the monk close. Very close. The dog's nose touched the monk's legs. But the monk did not pay it any attention.

The monk was worried.

His monastery was on fire. He could see the smoke rise up into the sky.

And his legs were getting drawn towards the smoke automatically. In the heat of that moment, even if the earth had given away, it wouldn't have mattered.

But the earth did not give away and the dog kept following him and in a few hours, they reached his monastery. The monastery had caught fire because a random asteroid crashed into it from the sky. The crash could not have been predicted and the monastery could not have been saved. There was no loss of life. And there was nothing else.

The monastery had been established by the monk's teacher. His teacher had taught him everything that there was to learn and he felt incomplete without him. He had died a few years back but he had kept his room in the monastery intact. The room was still full of his old things, his notebooks, his toys. The toys could maybe be called his only possessions. He not only collected toys, he played with them everyday and his teachings were demonstrated through the toys.

These toys were objects of wonder to his students. Once upon a time, the monk and his teacher spent time in the mornings talking about the toys more than anything else. Because he helped his teacher make new toys. He had good wood-working and mechanical skills and he could craft anything out of wood. There were a whole series of failed experiments that he he helped his teacher perform. For some reason his teacher never threw those failed experiments away. In fact those are the only objects he kept around. His toys were in a box. But all his broken, would-be toys were hung on the walls all over his room.

In this fire, all those crude prototypes had gotten burnt. Now, standing there in front of the burnt monastery, he could not even form a mental image of those toys. His mind was empty. There was nothing in it. If he was not a monk who was well-progressed on his path, he would have experienced grief and shed tears. So instead, he just felt empty.

After feeling empty for some time, the monk had had enough and then he wanted to feel something else. He started thinking about the asteroid that had come crashing down and burnt the monastery. When he thought about the asteroid, he thought about what it looked like, whether it was sentient and if it was like a suicide attack. Thinking of the episode as a suicide attack made him sad as now somebody was now dead. Even the death in question was the death of an asteroid, that meant that meant that the asteroid was sentient. And this he could not accept easily. For he was raised to believe that humans worship God and only need to fear God. But if only God is to be feared, then how did the asteroid come out of nowhere and destroyed the monastery.

What did the asteroid crash mean?

Because the monk was after meaning he didn't get anywhere.

There was no meaning in the crashing of the asteroid. There was no meaning to be found. The monk was trained to find meaning in life and so he searched for meaning in the act of nature that destroyed all his links with the past.

But when he found none, he was dejected. He left the order of the monks. He resigned from the burnt monastery and went back to his village.

He asked his parents if he could stay with them. He explained that he was searching for meaning so he could not afford his own house. They let him stay there but for a few days only they asked them a lot of questions. "Didn't the monastery provide any meanings? Why did he come back if his search had not ended?"

He replied that the monastery was destroyed by an asteroid crash and if it had any meaning it couldn't have just gone. He said that he was starting his search all over again because he was shaken up, he couldn't believe in any order anymore and had to search for meaning on his own.

His aged parents did not ask him anymore questions and left him alone. His mother cooked three times a day and he gratefully ate whatever she gave him.

Everyday, the monk set out on foot and hoped to run into someone who would tell him something that helped him in his struggle. But he met no one and his quest remained unfulfilled.

One day, he was sitting in the muddy verandah of his house and looking out into the dry day. A dog came up to the house and started barking. The monk recognised the dog to be the same whom he had seen on the day the monastery caught fire. He went up to the dog. He thought that maybe the dog is trying to give him some message. He thought that maybe the dog was a messenger. He thought these things and he looked into the eyes of the dog trying to search for a clue, trying to search for an answer.

But the dog's eyes revealed nothing and the monk did not understand why it was barking. The monk also tried to read into the pattern of the barking, thinking that its barking might be a code of some kind. But nothing yielded an answer. The dog became an obsession for the monk. Like an unopened letter, the dog became a symbol for all possible messages.

What you don't know, can be anything. What you know is nothing.

The monk started feeding the dog and taking care of it. He even gave it a bath. He gave it a name: Chitti. Chitti means a letter in Hindi. And that is what the dog was for him. Else why would it have come back?

When it started raining, the monk allowed Chitti to come into the house. The monk's parents were not very happy with this but then they had given up on their son and they couldn't talk to him anymore.

Chitti slept under the monk's bed for the three days and three nights that it rained.

When they came back outside everything was devastated. Only the monk's parents' house stood upright in the landscape. Rest everything was gone.

Now, because the monk was into pattern analysis, he got thinking. He thought that if everything is gone, why is his parent's house still there? That could mean two things. One, that Chitti was a bad omen for the village. Two, that Chitti was a good omen for his parents' house. Both choices meant that Chitti was charmed. That it had something about it.

Realising this, made the monk fear Chitti. He was afraid. And knowing that, we can rationalise what he did next. He murdered Chitti. He stabbed the dog's heart many, many times.

Only after killing the dog, he remembered that the dog was also a messenger and now the message had disappeared forever.

After the dog had died, the monk didn't cremate him, instead he buried him. Now that he was thinking of the undelivered message that the dog was carrying, he went to its grave. The grave was not in a graveyard but in a farm. The untilled farm of the monk's parents. After he decided to become a monk, his parents stopped farming. They lived on fallen fruit and stolen vegetables from nearby fields.

At the grave, the monk chanted prayers that he had learned in the monastery. He also chanted spells that were supposed to invoke spirits and messiahs. But nothing happened.

His life was now torn between searching for a meaning that didn't exist and waiting for a message that was lost. These were both equally potent passions. And the monk was lost.

Being lost was traumatic for the monk. He had never been lost before. He had always had a guide and now there was none.

Being lost was like being three years old and being without parents. So, the monk could no longer live with his parents.

He wandered around, searching for a place to sleep and asking for alms. Strangers were unnecessarily kind to him and he survived these wandering days easily.

After a month of living like this, one day he decided to rest. He slept off under a tree. A herd of elephants was passing by the tree and one of the baby elephants knocked the tree down. The tree fell on the monk and he died immediately. The monk died with an open question in his mind. Open questions define entire lifetimes but on encountering death, these questions just fly out through the ears. On flying out these questions become birds that fly high in the sky and scoop down swiftly for a prey. On finding a prey, the birds do not kill them or eat them, they only seek answers which let them die again.

The monk died without knowing why the asteroid crashed onto the monastery that day. His question that became a bird, kept flying in circles in the sky. The question was never answered. There was no prey to be found. This bird was like a flying skeleton.

But the dying skeleton kept flying.

When it started raining, the bird had to take shelter. The bird took shelter on a tall tree. At that height it stops mattering what tree it is and it just matters if it offers space enough to hide. Looking at the whole world being submerged in rain from that height was a vision that offered freedom. And the bird took it.

It left the question, and the seeking slipped away. It floated away freely into the high skies. If at time the monk would have come alive and reminded the bird of its birthing ritual, the bird might have felt embarrassed. Much like a teenager, partly relieved and partly guilty for escaping, the bird wouldn't have soared anymore.

But the monk didn't come alive and the bird soared away. It started off on its journey, not knowing and not desiring to know any flight-path or destination.

It was thawing out of living the driven life. With drive comes guilt. With guilt comes weariness.

After flying many expanses, it came upon this valley of flowers. Each flower had an asteroid in its bosom. This valley was where the asteroids came from.

He found the origin of the asteroids. Asteroids were ejected from the valley when a bud blossomed into a flower. The number of flowers in the valley were constant. If one came, one went. That is how the monk's monastery burnt down. If an ejection happens, the velocity and the momentum of the ejected projectile decides its path and destination.

Because it stopped searching, it found the answer.

Afterglow

After the trauma passes, the moment of impact is the dull memory. This dull memory is the afterglow. In the afterglow there is no glitter or glare. There is a history and the history happens to be of luminescence. Memory of light is not very accurate. Light is rendered in memory only as a colour. This rendered colour does not have any of the properties of light. Light cannot be remembered.

The phantom body of the musician is always practising. Because of this, the musician will always be in mid practise. Any given time is a bad time. Even if a musician is chilling or tossing pebbles on pebbles, there is a measurement of rhythm going on. Rhythm is the pattern of gap between two sounds. And rhythms are of many many different types. They have to be measured and compared. If they are similar they are grouped. If dissimilar, they are acknowledged.

When the window broke, there was no sound. So initially no one was worried. When the children saw it, they started wondering about how the window broke. Later, when they went out, they found a dead bird under the window. Then they thought that the bird died by crashing into the window.

The bird had been flying at a high speed. In the middle of its flight, it went blind. This happened because water entered its eye. The bird had no way to wipe its eye dry.

When water enters the eye of a bird, all hell breaks loose. Initially only refraction happens. The drop of alien water is like a lens that the bird is wearing. So the bird just sees differently but vision is still present. But then when the second drop of water enters the bird's eye, the refraction over abounds and leads to blindness.

The bird went blind in mid-air. It did not get time to learn to perform way-finding without visual cues. It was in shock and it was going too fast to do anything. It descended in a downward slope. It hit the window and died.

The children found the dead bird under the window and they understood why the breakage had happened. They took the bird in their arms and buried it by the side of the road.

Once it was done, the bird's grave started emitting sounds. The children did not know what was happening. They were afraid of ghosts. They did not want to exhume the buried body of the bird.

The did not do anything. They just sat there and listened. The sounds had a pattern but they were not musical. At best, they constituted a beat. And they listened to the beat intently.

But how was the sound being produced? Where was it coming from?

When birds die, their song does not die with them. Bird song lives. It is not immortal. But it lives longer. Especially when the bird dies mid-flight, its song becomes out of sync with its body. The song continues for a long time.

The children did not know anything at all. They sat there and listened to the pattern of sounds as if the sounds held some secret.

But the sounds were just sounds. Sound holds just an immediate pleasure in its bosom and there is nothing beyond that. Patterns constructed out of sound may yield some meaning, but this meaning is not of the sound alone.

The children listened to the patterns of sound and understood something very bizarre from it. What they understood, suggested that the world was haunted by demons and their agents. These demonic forces were vying for absolute control of the world. They wanted to ensure that they could script everything. Scripting everything meant what the actors felt and when could be predicted.

Such control was of course good for the economy. Because the businessman always wants to know. Being able to know means being able to make bigger bets and recouping bigger investments.

After the children understood this, they felt a bout of fear. This bout of fear made them anxious. They wanted to run and tell everyone that they have to do something. They wanted to stand on the terrace of their house and shout into the air. They did not know how to pray. They went and asked their grandmother to pray that the demonic control would cede.

They did not know that they were already living in the world that they were afraid of.

They did no know that the clouds that were in the sky were also a symptom of the same malady.

At best, everything visible is a prop that is a part of the fiction.

Nature was not natural anymore. Because it needed a special word to describe it. Natural? What does nature mean? What else would it be if not natural.

Everything is natural all the time. There is no threshold.

And nature is a part of the control system. This control is not something synthetic. It is not something after the fact.

It is the only fact.

The forces which they looked as demonic in the beginning were not so demonic after all. And these forces were not seeing anything.

Like a cloud moves in the wind.

These clouds were covering the sun in a state of transition.

The forces were taking over. But not in a specifically demonic way. Control was just another way for order to exist.

Public life demands an order. A system that works.

The children saw a bird dying. And they heard some sounds and then they got trapped in fear. After the episode of paranoia had passed, they went on to do other things. In the morning, when they had left home, they had a clear plan. But seeing the bid die just set them off course.

After snapping out of the whole episode, they remembered their lives. And everything that they wanted to do.

They went to a circus and clapped hard for all the performances. The trapeze artists, the clown, the lion. Everything.

After the circus they went to an office and clapped. The people who were doing mundane tasks felt good. They thought. That their efforts were being appreciated. They stopped working because they no longer felt guilty. They no longer felt that they were fighting against time. They felt relaxed and they started singing.

But this time, the children did not not get trapped in the mood of the song. They left the office as soon as the officepeople started singing.

They stood outside the bread shop. They looked into the window and realised that they were hungry. They went in, bought what they wanted, ate it and started clapping. The baker went on doing whatever he was doing. He understood that the children liked the bread. But he already knew that he was a good baker. People came from very far away sometimes to eat his bread. But the children kept clapping and the baker had to stop and acknowledge. He went up to the children and asked them what they were doing.

The children said that when they clap, the staleness in the air gets exhausted. The afterglow of the sound of flesh colliding with flesh refreshed the environment. They did this act in different places across the city.

The baker invited them to clap in his kitchen. While they were clapping, he baked a batch of bread. The bread was more tasty than anything he had ever baked. He gifted a loaf to the children. The children then went to the garden.

They knew what they were doing. They knew the affect of their act. But what was the staleness in the air? The staleness is the ambience that refuses to move on.

Every locality, every actor has a field of ambience around them.

As time is a dynamic factor, the layers of ambience at any given locality keep piling up. Each subsequent layer displaces the previous layer.

But sometimes this movement gets held up. This movement freezes. And staleness sets in.

These children had found a fix for this by accident. They had started these clapping sessions all over the place to share their discovery.

The afterglow is the warmth that radiates after the oven is switched off. Not all ovens run on gas. Some ovens are inside the body and run on emotion.

So clapping offers sedation to people as well as things in the environment.

If anything they had to try and clap everywhere and all the time. The whole world needed sedation. But being everywhere was impossible. Time is a scarce resource. And location can only by defined by a unique attribute.

The children started thinking of other ways of refreshing the world. Without going and clapping everywhere. They sat and pondered on new ways of doing this. But no ideas were obvious and nothing occurred to them.

The children were getting ready to make peace with living in a stale world. A world with delay and lag and a low refresh rate.

Just then the wind started blowing like crazy. It started raining and soon there was thunder. The thunder was following the rhythmic pattern of their clapping and the was whole world was getting refreshed at the same time.

The cosmos was acting for them. Or so it seemed.

The atmosphere was clapping for many days and then it stopped. Again the children were afraid of the world wilting away. They stood staring at the sky for picking up any signs of the storm continuing.

But there were no more storms. The world withered away around them and everything became a desert.

They saw a fortress-like spacecraft descend from the sky. The storm was nothing but an announcement of its coming.

Thunder always preceded the lightning.

This descending fortress had flashes of lightning coming out of its windows. There were some people staring out of the windows were higher up in the fortress. These people had glaring eyes and they stared down at the children. They had thought that the whole planet would be cleansed of the fragile life forms that inhabited it. They thought that the planet would be ready for them. So, seeing the children confused them.

The children had grown up amongst wolves. They had a sharp instinct to survive. They also had a nurturing tendency. They wanted everything and everyone else to survive too. It is this desire that kept them alive.

The warriors and the fortress had come from the future. In the future emotion was already rendered useless. It did not serve a purpose. And so it was discarded.

These emotions were found to not serve a purpose only because they were not enacted passionately enough. But these children were sincere and they felt fully.

The warriors who descended from the sky did not know how to deal with raw emotion anymore. They succumbed to their wide-eyed stares. They became trees and mountains and blades of grass. They became what they were afraid of. Plants and trees are essentially naked strands of emotion. The warriors had forgotten how to deal with the sting of emotion. They succumbed easily.

The fortress became an ocean.

Both the children were tired now and wanted to rest. They had saved the world and now it was the turn of the world. To let them dream and sleep undisturbed and be well-rested again.

While they slept, the wind held itself back. There was no more whistling through hollow barks. There was no more swaying forests into sounds of motion.

The whole world kept a watch on the twitching of their eyes. There was nothing more to be done. The children could sleep for as long as they wanted.

The dreams which kept them engrossed in their sleep were long. They were epic stories, running without a pause. Not changing rhythm or track or the tone of voice. The kind of stories that only dreams can tell. Fluid like footage, edited to perfection.

Years and decades passed and the children slept there. Engrossed in their dreams. Their bodies did not age, their mouths did not dry, they slept like they were dead.

Temper

Temper is a liquid. When the situation is offensive enough, this liquid boils over. At any given time, there is no singular circumstance. There are always multiple actualities within each moment. Navigating these is not a choice but a matter of knowledge. And knowledge is an expression of the past narrative. Narratives are spun by complexity. There is never any simple story. Only true ones and false ones.

Temper is a frightening emotion. It offers you nothing back in return. And uses you for its own ends. Because it is liquid, the pursuance of its ends is being gaseous. In a gaseous form anger is not personal anymore. It floats away into the crevices of this world and resides there. With empty eyes, when you glance at the world, you see craftiness in the world. This craftiness is the anget. It is what the anger becomes. Anget is just impersonal anger.

Because of the anger in our hearts, the world is a bitter place.

The bitterness got to Ha in a critical way. He was sleeping. It entered him through his open mouth. Ha slept with his mouth open. His nose was no longer functional. He had evolved, moved away from his animal self. He could not smell anything anymore.

Ha's smell impairment prevented him from being sensitive. Sensitive to spaces, sensitive to people, sensitive to the nip in the air, to emotion. This insensitivity made him dull. He pretty much did anything that he thought could be done. His girlfriend, Sa, was aware of his compulsion to think. And she was aware of his drift away from his animal instincts. She was worried. But she hid her anxiety. She had seen many who had tendencies like Ha. Her own father and brother had been slaves to thought. They died thinking of life. And when they perished, the air remained overhung with desperation.

Sa did not want this to happen to Ha. Pining for life in the moment of death just ruins everything. The flavour of the last conscious moment is desperate. This flavour is not really significant in the sense that it determines anything. But it is significant in the sense that it is that the last memory that other people have of you before you die. And this memory makes them think of you as weak. As someone lacking courage. It takes courage to stare death in the face. Because all that you have been disappears in a moment.

They were both soldiers in the rebel army. They were practiced killers. They had each killed many with their own hands. In the act of killing they stared at the face of the dying opponent. They tried to catch a glimpse of death itself. But they never did. It came and snatched the last breath away. They did not notice its coming. They did not even notice its shadow. They did not even feel the temperature of air changing.

This had become the biggest problem of their lives. They killed. But they did not do anything. So, what happened? What was death?

"Maybe death does not exist," Ha said.

"So the people we kill are just lying in limbo?" Sa asked.

"Yes, life is a function. When we strike with our sword, we disrupt this functioning. Their bodies are not alive anymore. They are dysfunctional."

"So by using this word, we treat this word as if it was another state. As if it was another kind of life."

"Because, we cannot imagine a void."

Ha and Sa agreed on this. Ha and Sa were two people. But they were so connected that they thought as one. Their personalities were inter-twined. How they got to be so connected was another story in itself. Ha had gotten drafted in the army a few years before Sa did. There was a famine in the district where they lived and joining the army was the simplest way to survive. Either you survived or you didn't. But if you died, it was without awareness. It was bang in the middle of action. You popped like a bubble.

It was not the national army. It was a rebel army. The earlier ruler of the country decided to sulk and raised a army of his own. He had a lot of money that he had stolen from the state's treasury before leaving. The rebel army waged a few wars every now and then. But not to win control of the state. This ex-ruler, Ga, was a misfit. As a ruler, he could not get any work done. So, when he had to cede power and walk on the street like a commoner, he found that he was angry. Very angry.

He formed the army and waged small battles every now and then.

Ha and Sa were assigned kitchen duty at the same time. Ha had to peel potatoes and Sa had to make soup. They worked through their tasks through the evening. After serving dinner to the officers they were spent. They sat together in the darkness behind the tent that housed the kitchen. They got talking and their voices got mixed. The mixed voice had a character of its own. This mixed voice filled both their heads. Their conversations were like a soliloguy.

So, when Sa expressed worry about Ha's compulsion to think, it was time to introspect for Ha.

From this introspection emerged a realisation. That the narrative of life, the personal story that individuals anchor themselves so deeply in, is fiction.

When they talked about death being difficult because voids are difficult to think about, everything started making sense. If life is fiction, and death is a void, death is the void after the story is over. And nobody likes the end the story. Least of all the actors who are part of the story.

"If we want the story to go on for ever. We should all die in our dreams."

"That is asking for too much."

Ha and Sa constantly talked about death. They felt that if they can figure a way for their story to end smoothly, then they are done. But all the thoughts that they thought only entangled them further in the puzzle. They only got lost further. Their romance was morbid. The closeness they experienced with each other came to symbolise death itself. The death of the individual is to involuntarily participate in a conversation. And they had crossed that bridge long back.

All the moments they were together were silent and numb. Even if they talked, their minds were quiet. No thought ran in a recursive loop. When they were apart, again the carnival in their minds kicked in. Loop after restless loop. They decided to leave the army and live together. The oscillation between the time spent together

and apart exhausted them. In their exhaustion, they fell back on each other.

Life after the routine and regimentation of the army was empty. They had to pay all the money they had to be free of the bond that they signed when they joined. So even though they had a place to stay. It was literally empty. No bed to sleep on. No utensils, no food in the kitchen. Just plenty of sun in the balcony. Ha and Sa filled this emptiness by sitting together in the sun all day. They went for a short walk in the evening. But there was nothing else to do. They were sitting around waiting for death.

But death did not come. Years passed. The sun magically fed them and kept them alive. They became vegetative in their condition. They lost the ability of using their arms and legs. Nothing needed to be said, thought was already absent. Staring at the empty sky constantly had blinded their eyes. Their open eyes were as good as closed.

At this point, their bodies stopped functioning and they were technically dead.

Their dead bodies had no stench. Their dead bodies lay in the sun for a few days and then they just evaporated. Their house was locked from the inside. They had no friends. No one missed them. There were no remains to remember them by (if at all there was anyone to remember them). By evaporating, the personal became the impersonal. They merged into the air and air cannot be contained. It flows everywhere. People breathe naturally and Ha and Sa get rooted into everybody's psyche. Everyone starts speculating on death. The common experience of life changes.

With people at large contemplating on death, the life and death flux was not casual anymore. Death moved from the predestined indefinite to a necessary and definitive thing to understand. Life was not innocent and rosy up until the onset of old age, illness and death. The taste of death was never forgotten. The shadow always loomed large. In the shade, the schizoid was not an outcast but a deity. The schizoid taught people how to float away from superfluous emotion. The everyday took on a dry flavour. Feelings were understood to be a cognitive load. A waste. The shadow of death is not cool. It is fiery. It has a distilling effect on the entities that it is cast. It distills the truth from history. Historians in these times had a unique access to all of the past times and the stories that operated behind the scenes. For some time history became a narrative of things as they actually happened. In the shadow of death, history became a authoritative record of the past times. And this changed how people and societies looked at themselves. The idea of human culture changed. From an idea that represented grand gestures, ideologies and mythologies an understanding dawned that looked at human culture just as a sequence of mis-steps. Emotion disappeared like a vacuous entity. The shadow of death transformed ordinary fetish objects into objects of art. The philosophers into Gods. Transcendence was not seen anymore as a viable

option. Death was certain. Some went to far as to pine for death, as it was the only irrefutable event.

The world changed completely.

Very few things remained the same. But some that did are worth narrating. Earlier, death was considered inauspicious and was thought to be a disease. Even now death was thought to be an affliction. But now, this affliction was considered holy. A force that could be worshipped and tamed. The devotee could ask the force for protection. The devotee could ask the force for healing. Because darkness can only be offset by the dark, such a format of prayer was even effective.

In a quixotic way, the guardian angel of this time was death itself. And nobody could mess with death. So, before succumbing to death, all the living were healthy and fulfilled in every way. Emotion had already been discarded. Happiness was not even a familiar concept anymore.

When people slept, they had nightmares. In these nightmares they saw people who guarded malice with emotion. They woke up fearing that they had traveled back in time and people were employing emotion again as a device for encoded social communication. Still others had nightmares that showed them that instead of accepting death as a standard and regular event, people are using religion and intellect to deny it.

Nightmares reveal fears. Fears which are otherwise too potent to be acknowledged casually in waking life. The fear that the change which had come about was not permanent haunted the society for a generation or two. But then it disappeared.

When the nightmares stopped, there was no longer any link with the past. For people at large, the world had been the way it was forever. They did not feel the need to celebrate or keep alive the memory of any transition point. For them history was more or less just a story. Culture again passed into decay and slack. Symbols got lost again. Sharpness got blunted.

And then we will be back to where we are now. But that does not mean we will regress or that we will spring back. It just means that time moves forward in a spiral. In this movement, there are many points of similarity in at least one dimension. At these points, it feels (to an external observer) that there has been a regression. But, actually, there is none.

Fear

Fear is fire. It burns down all the other thoughts that are sharing the same time. It consumes the one who is experiencing the fear. It paralyses the ability of this fearful figure to defend itself. When no defence is possible, the only thing for the figure to do is wait. The waiting is for two things. One, the source of the fear (the object) is preprogrammed to offer a certain drama to the figure. The

figure remembers the object of fear clearly. This object, at first glance, seems to inspire fear in everyone who catches a glimpse of it. This is not because of its visual quality. Even if the object is not a monster and has a fairly pleasant visual experience, it is feared. The object inspires fear because it refuses to negotiate. The object refuses to recast the rules of the game. In this rigid position, it inspires fear. All questions, all suggestions are brushed aside. The object of fear offers its story cast in stone and refuses to take anything back in exchange. Fear knows no reason. Because the reasonable is not feared.

Being a monster, Gar knew that he inspired fear in every figure he encountered. Gar was a Gurk. Gurks were descendants of the dragon and the dolphin. A few hundred years back, a flying dragon was struck by the arrows of a viking warrior. The dragon fell from the sky. Its wings helped it only to break its fall by reducing the speed of its fall. It fell into an ocean. Because of the momentum of the fall, it went deep into the water, before it came back to the surface. When it went deep into the water, a dolphin saw it and fell in love with it. When it bounced back up to the surface of the water, the dolphin also swam up to meet it. When they first saw each other, they didn't even know what they were looking at. Of course the dolphin had never seen a dragon and the dragon had never seen a dolphin either. Inter-species communication is an unknown science. The dolphin and the dragon could not figure how to

communicate much to each other. The dragon was dying, this message got across easily because of blood in the water. The arrow had hit the dragon's foot. Blood was leaking into the water from the injured foot. The dolphin went and pulled out the arrow from the dragon's foot with its mouth and covered the foot with its saliva. Dolphin's saliva is magically healing. It fixed the dragon's foot instantly. The dragon was so relieved that it hugged the dolphin. The dolphin was already in awe of the fantastic out-of-the-world look of the dragon. After the dragon hugged it, it felt that the dragon was expressing love towards it. The dolphin responded back. The dragon was just expressing gratitude and it got confused with the signals from the dolphin. Amongst the dragons, when a female dragon liked the male dragon's responses, it blew fire into the air. Anyway, across the mixed signals, the dragon and the dolphin had sex. Gar was born out of that act of copulation. Gar was a Gurk which was the name of a category of freak animals and monsters born out of inter-special horseplay. Gurks did not fit any organisational taxonomy of species. Nobody knew what they were. Science was not interested in them. They were not even expected to survive.

But Gurks were scary. They inspired fear in everyone who encountered them. Some Gurks were themselves afraid of everyone (yes, even tiny insects and worms). But these were just ignored by the community of Gurks as freaks. To be a freak amongst freaks, was almost an honour. Some

humans kept the omniphobic monsters as pets. Otherwise most of these fearful Gurks just did not survive.

Gurks survived on fear. Much like a gang lord, their social prestige depended on the fear they inspired in the society around them. And mostly everyone was afraid of them. Why were they so successful in the business of fearmongering? Was it just the looks or did the Gurks have a scary growl or were they aggressive and sociopaths? Everyone was afraid of them because they were plain ugly. Not just in a anthesis-of-beauty kind of way but also they had no tenable qualities in their personality. Also their bodies exuded a very bad smell. They literally stank. The stink did not allow other animals to even wander close by in a casual way.

This territorialization of the world that ensued was a direct result of this. Gurks were a cross between a creature of the ocean and a creature of fantasy. For anyone to be able to accept them, they had to imagine a part of their body. So Gurks inspired fear because they were frightful looking and because people always imagine the worst possible. Imagining is not a voluntary act. People can be conditioned to think that what they see is not complete. People can be trained to augment what they see with what they imagine. Gurks had somehow trained people to do this. Every self-representation that they saw, they recognised as false. Reflection in mirror. Reflection in water. Reflection in

someone's eyes. They rejected the reflections and held on to their mental images.

This clinging on to a concept, when it was easier to believe the factual description of their physical being made Gurks monstrous. Gar used his monstrosity in ways that didn't require to be justified by logic of any kind. He scared the little ducklings away. They were so little that they could not even fly yet. When Gar frightened them, they had to run fast and attempt to fly. They couldn't fly, so all that they could do was walk very fast. Walk with forced and rushed movements. Sometimes this helped, sometimes this did not. And Gar ate the ducklings.

Eating the ducklings was not really an exotic affair. Because these ducks had a bad dream stuck in their heads. Everyday they woke up in the middle of their nightmare and then the nightmare got stuck in their heads. All their waking life was spent with the overhanging mood of the nightmare. The nightmare was broadcasting the repressed part of their life anyway. The repressed underbelly of their life was full of things that they could not accept easily. The lingering nightmare gave the ducklings a bitter taste. Gar actually had to go off food for a few days before he could eat anything again. The bitterness just wouldn't wash off from his mouth. Forgetting was the only way of getting rid of the bitter taste. And forgetting is possible only when you do not make any new memories in the mould of the memory of bitterness. A near-death state has to be reached and enacted

in a dramatised form. Else the reset does not happen. The taste does not wear off at all.

After resetting Gar was wary of being a monster. All the sentiment that had to be mustered to frighten the ducklings, run after them, didn't yield any good. Eventually he had to bear the brunt of his monstrosity.

For a half actual, half imagined being there aren't many options. For a dolphin-dragon hybrid, the mould is already made. The pose is already given a name. To effect a transition, a transition point has to be defined. So Gar did what was the easiest. Gar snapped back to his base state, he gave up on his imagined persona. He became a dolphin. He agreed that there were really no dragons in the world. This agreement led to the disappearance of the imagined appendages of his body. He became normal animal. No one was afraid of him anymore.

In the absence of the context of fear, Gar did not know how to conduct the business of survival. When he approached, ducklings did not run here and there. He was lost. When he jumped high above the water, to look at his own reflection, he saw that he was just a dolphin. He had no fangs, he could not blow fire. He had no wings and he did not have a mythology attached to him.

He was just a fish and he could live only in water and no one was afraid of him. Gar was troubled. Gar realised that he had to do something about his inability to inspire fear, else he would not be able to survive. So Gar went to a witch doctor. Witch doctors were still popular amongst dolphins. Dolphins do not have critical parts of their brain. One of these is the part that conducts a study of science. No scientific knowledge is archived in the minds of dolphins. For them the experience of everyday life is like a wild array of things that they cannot possibly understand. So they go to witch doctors and ask them what to do. The witch-doctor-dolphin asks Gar to go eat some small fish and that act of aggression will teach him how to inspire fear again.

So Gar went to eat small fish. Eating the small fish was very easy. There was no challenge. It was like biting berries in a field. Soon Gar got bored of eating the small fish, which did not put up any struggle and did not even try to escape. They did not exhibit signs of fear, they seemed resigned. They did not exhibit signs of hope anymore. Hope being a fraudulent emotion, only offers choices which are as fictional as the content of hope. Any projection into the future is a sign of a speculative malady. This cannot be dealt with in any other way than a dream, an attractive story. Hope being a trigger and an emotion for action is a pathogenic sentiment. How can one act on tendencies which are at best only symbols of a lost cause.

Reading before the word is written on the page is a lost cause and can never be performed.

The witch doctor's advice did not help. Eating the small fish did not help Gar to learn now to inspire fear again.

Without knowing how to inspire fear, Gar couldn't survive. He perished soon.

After he perished, the sea was calm. There was no one around to commit random acts of micro-terror. There was no one aspiring to be a monster anymore. Without this aspirational monstrosity, the world became too sweet a place. This sweetness became a culture for many small life forms to germinate and nurture. These cultured life-forms were salty. They began to counter the sweetness of the ocean. There began a struggle between the sweetness of the ocean and the saltiness of the life forms. The sweetness was produced as a result of homogeneity and an absence of a flux. The saltiness was produced by the sweat of the micro life-forms. The sweat glands of the organisms were massive. The pores that let the sweat leak out of the body were in fact bigger than the body-frame of the micro-organisms itself. So the micro-organisms looked like gaping voids. The voids were such that often they often fell into each other. When they fell, they thought they were falling into a portal. But these openings were only like windows. They did not affect their position in the narrative at all. Everything remained the way it was. This was a problem because the narrative was dependent on interventions that provided periodic shifts. So there was no dynamism to fuel the flux.

In this unstable world there was no clear movement. Things jiggled and juggled but there was no clear vectors emerging. Time might as well have stopped for things remained the way they were. The past, present and the future were all identical.

When this happened, the world found it very easy to end. In this ending, in this event of death, no one mourned and no one reminisced. It was a clean break. The world could end in this absolute absence of memory.

Sugar

Sweetness is alien to the world. The world originated in hostile circumstances. Sweetness was then cultivated to dull the memory of the moment of birth. Of course there was no one to remember and so no one also to cultivate this sweetness. These phenomenon can be related only in narrative. And not in motive.

But we will leave the technicalities aside.

Sweetness was cultivated as an antidote. Now, who did this cultivation is not relevant here. The fact is that the harshness of the world coming into being had to be dulled to be made tolerable. Tolerance is an emotion. And that's right - emotions have existed before humans came into being.

When the world was empty of bodies, emotions flew around and settled like dust on any surface that was available. This availability of surface was a matter of chance. Emotions few around because in those days a ferocious wind blew and this wind was blowing because there was nothing to contain it. There was no landscape, there were no structures, there was nothing to contain the wind.

The empty world was in fact a forest of ghosts. Ghosts do not have a tongue. Because they do not have a tongue, a mind or a body - now that the world is filled, we do not understand them anymore. For us God is the only boundless being. And there are no sub-sets. There is no idea that even approximates the idea of the holy ghost. Because of this singular idea of God, a lot of things which don't belong to this idea are projected on it anyway.

When Pinha and Kinha woke up, they knew that this was the day they had been waiting for. They were both identical twins. Their whole life, they had struggled with the idea of God. They wondered how the ghosts who spoke to them in the darkness could be their imagination. They knew the ghosts were real. But the whole domain of things which existed but could not be seen belonged to the idea of God. So if ghosts existed at all, they had to be a part of the idea of God. And ghosts definitely existed. Their conversations in the dark were not imagined. And they were not crazy. That much they knew.

On this day, a union of the church, the asylum and the school of black magic was destined to happen. This had been announced by the king of their time. This king was a compromise solution to the failure of democracy that stared the world in the face. The king was not very rich and did not live in unfettered opulence. From the days of the old monarchy, the people had learnt something. They designed a system in which the world was a giant machine. To make this machine run, actual physical effort was needed. The machine was mechanical and not digital. The king needed to sweat it out everyday. The king earned as much as he worked. This machine ran the world and its macro and micro systems as the people wanted them to run. The king was not exposed to the systems directly. There was no aura of wealth and power around him. He was a labourer hired to operate the machine that ran the world.

And in this labour was no glory.

What the world knew as the king's actions and decisions were just actions and decisions of the machine was fuelled by the labour of the king. The union of the church, asylum and the school of black magic was another such decision. The citizens of the world felt good that their king was so radical. But their king was just a labourer. The calendar didn't even get marked with the event of his passing away and the coming of a replacement. This was a comfortable political situation for most people concerned.

Those who probed deeper into who the king was, faced the machine.

The machine was said to be built by aliens so no one knew how it operated. It was a mystery. There was no

secret tribe of people who knew the intricacies of the machine and who could change the pattern of decisions that it threw up.

That was the story. And there all probing ended. The probing did not yield anything further and so probing remained an obscure task performed by obscure people. People on the large believed.

Actually there were people who knew how this machine worked. They had just not been transparent about the fact. These people did not want to come across as puppet-masters. They didn't want to be seen as people - mortal, fallible and fragile. They wanted the focus and the attention to remain only on the machine. The machine as this mysterious construct that ruled the world only inspired awe and fear and made it more powerful than it was. The more powerful the machine was thought to be the less resistance people offered.

Soon the world was bereft of individuality and bereft of dissent. The world was only a playground of rhythms - subtle and coarse. These rhythms could be easily tapped by the machine. Because rhythms are maths and machines are maths too.

The machine wanted a union of the church, the asylum and the school of black magic because it wanted the uncertainty to be manageable. All these people figured that the equation was open-ended and that it only got balanced by some flux which was not even physical. That which was not physical was not there for the machine. The machine could put all these people into one category. It could assign noise as the symbolical reference for this category.

Noise could be factored in and then ignored off as a rounding error.

Nobody cares for the pixel-level loss. If someone did, they could deal with the machine.

Pinha and Kinha were happy that this union was happening. They were happy because they knew that only when the machine found some way to bundle off psychosis as a rounding error would let it be. Once psychosis is let be, it creeps into the world and infects experience in a way that it cannot be sanitised anymore. Experience that cannot be sanitised becomes a protective veneer for psychosis.

Pinha and Kinha were identical twins. Kinha was psychotic. He lived in a different reality, which was sometimes dry and featureless and sometimes flowing with the passion of anger. His anger gushed like a water cannon. Soft and valuable but forceful. His anger was like water and like fire at the same time. It burned him and at the same time it burned the world.

Pinha was affected very intensely by this anger. He was in sync with Kinha's mind. He felt a shadow of what Kinha felt. So, in this case he was in the shadow of psychosis. So he felt relieved when the union freed it up and allowed boundless propagation.

He saw this decision of the machine as a sign of further ambition. Because in the unity, the psychosis was sorted and accounted for. Once the sorting was done, the machine felt that it could control all the sorted content.

After the unity was produced, Pinha and the machine came into conflict. Pinha wanted to infect the world. And the machine did not allow the infection to happen easily. It put up a strong resistance. In the conflict that ensued, the situation developed into a crises. Such that the motley crew of people who were behind the machine and who were behind the construction and the operation had to come into the foreground.

Once they came out into the open, everyone understood the deception. They understood that the machine was not divine and was just a product of ordinary mortals. More and more people gathered courage to fight the battle. Now it was human against human. People were also full of angst because they felt cheated. In fact they went back to holding cynicism as a main perspective because they felt jilted.

The conflict didn't become an all out war. There was no singular battlefield. There were many battlefields and many armies. Sometime the militias switched sides and started shooting everyone and everywhere in general. It was obvious that although they were fighting about it, one side has already won. Psychosis had already crossed the line. Because there is an aspect of experience that if genuinely outside the realm of sanity, then it cannot be controlled. The

machine and the crew behind it were wrong in thinking that they were in absolute control, in thinking that nothing was beyond them.

Pinha was calmer now. He could feel that Kinha was feeling more unencumbered now. He could feel that what was earlier the shadow of anger was now only only a shadow. Anger had disappeared. Because the attempt to keep culture sorted and clean had finally failed. Now there was nothing holding the potential of experience back. The potential was open. Prediction was not possible anymore.

In the middle of a battle that raged between the citizens and the machine - everyone lost interest in fighting. This happened spontaneously and after this moment everyone suddenly laid down their arms.

People were fighting with their hands and their minds. And now that they had stopped fighting - their hands were tired and their minds were exhausted. Their blood pressure was high when they were fighting and now it was normal again.

What happened? How did psychosis change the common experience?

A snake had crept into people's minds. Nobody could see this snake. But this snake crept from mind to mind twisting through matter if it was not present. And matter is never present. Matter is just a shadow of that which is present. And this shadow and the dream playing in our heads shows us a dream in which we imagine three dimensional forms. Dreams can be many.

One of them is of this snake crawling from mind to mind. This snake is harmless but when it crawls through a particular mind, it leaves the cerebrum in a condition that makes it feel like warm sludge. Imagine walking around with warm sludge in your head. This is what they felt like, when the snake passed through their head. The common belief has been that the mind lives in the brain. And the brain lives in the head. But actually the mind lives in the body. Our idea of ourself is modelled through the body we think we have. If this body gets hurt or damaged, it hurts the balance of the mind. It is difficult to get over hurt because it doesn't just involve physical experiences of pain. It also involves the memory, the imagination and the afterthought of pain.

And these linger on for as long as they lose their potency and fade away. The actual physical experience of pain is sometimes absent or at best very fleeting.

Although science has known this for a long time, they forgot to say it. Mind and body is one. There is no line of separation.

Once the shadow of psychosis became thinner and gradually disappeared, Pinha opened up in a new way. His life had been spent under the shadow of doubt. And then doubt vanished and he became whole.

After he became whole, he could see butterflies flying in the air. Butterflies are symbols of transition. After he saw a butterfly, he understood that his new life had begun. In his new life, he did not feel that he was in the shadow of anything. He did not feel any burden, any weight. He felt free. He could do anything.

And when faced with the freedom that he could do anything, what did he do? He did nothing. When you do nothing, no weakness, no vulnerability, no hesitation remains. Every loop get completed. You get enlightened.

An enlightened mind has an altered experience. In this altered experience, there are no threads binding you. Nothing is compulsory. We only do what we have to. If nothing is compulsory, we do nothing. And he felt that nothing is compulsory. So for him, doing nothing was natural.

Fever

Fear is a key as well as a lock. You succumb to fear and you get a unique experience. But also the dream that you have been dreaming snaps and breaks. Which dream were you watching so intently? Why was that dream so important. Merely because it took you away from the spot that you were in. Who are you? Why am I addressing you? Are you the reader? While reading also a fear grips you. This fear

threatens you that you will read something that will destroy everything. You fear that you will read something and you will never be able to read anything again. That something will be a pocket of puss. It will host in itself such a pungent smell that it will infect your senses in a permanent way. You, the reader, are sometimes my adversary. You read what I write but only if someone has pre-packaged for you the essence of what I mean. You ask me to force-fit my craft into the pattern of the format that you are familiar to and do not let me make my craft into my art.

The patterns of the formats of text that you are habituated to reading are not even punctuated with grief. You have never been broken. You have never waited breathlessly for someone or something to fix you. You will never know what lies beyond the crack.

Don't worry there is no trauma there, there is no hell with a burning fire, there is no unpleasantness. What lies beyond the crack is just a prolonged pause. Nothing happens, not even the tick of time. And in that bland featureless blankness everything loses meaning. The nice things, the syrupy emotions all become too much to deal with. There is no patience to let something take root. In the desert of your mind, before anything happens, it will dry away. That landscape will not let you dream and escape. You will be left with no choice but to be afraid. You will be afraid of being stuck in that frame of time forever - irrespective of the fact that you have never come across anything permanent, you

will be afraid of that. The fear will drive you to read whatever you read very carefully. Fearing land-mines, fearing traps, fearing the worst.

And that is where you are. I couldn't tell you that I am not describing a hypothetical situation but rather describing your current situation. If I had told you earlier, you would not have agreed to see the model I built for you. You would have also denied me the privilege of describing your situation. You would not have let me build up the story because this story reaches a conclusion that you cannot accept.

You fear that stories finish. You fear that stories change. You fear that stories let you down. And you are afraid that the author does not care for you. You are right but you are not right all the time. Sometime all these things flip and they turn around. But the thing with a flip is that there are equal chances either way and you cannot feel sure of anything. Being unsure, being unable to trust anything is a symptom of fear. It is an expressed symbol.

You are in this state.

And I can understand how you want to be free of this persistent fear. I can understand how fear is only an obstacle for you.

But it is not an obstacle.

It is you.

The fear is you. And it is not fear. It is a kind of emotion that you are not familiar to. You just call it fear.

There was a small squirrel which was nibbling on a nut in the shadow of a tree. The squirrel could fly but even then it found its food by running here and there on its tiny feet. It did not have any existential advantage over any other animal in the jungle. It could perish if it did not find food for a week at a stretch. But this was not a risk. Food was always available. Nuts were good at hiding. They even employed camouflage.

This squirrel was called Pintin. The name was a sound only and it did not have any meaning. Pintin was perfectly ordinary. She did not even daydream about anything. There was no going away. There was no escape. Even with the ability to fly, Pintin got to experience no break from the frame. But she started understanding the frame really well. She looked at everything from all the possible directions. She seemed to even have eyes inside her mouth. She could see the food as she chewed on it. Form became a paste and paste gets ingested and disappears. This skill of being able to look inside into the corridors of the pipes and channels of the body was unique.

Those who claim that looking inside is an abstract act forget that at the minutest level, the abstract is physical. How do you think of an abstract thought? After a point air becomes earth. Air comes into contact with the elements. On coming into contact with the earth, the flow of the air breaks. The earth responds to the air by allowing the air to shape it. On getting shaped, the earth has to give up on all

the possible shapes that it could have had and has to settlein with only one shape. This shape reflects the presence of the air. So air becomes earth.

Air, fire, water, earth are said to the elements from which the whole world is created.

These elements are all in a constant flux. One becomes the other and the other becomes one. There is a constant churning within the loop. States are not fixed, rounds of transition are fixed.

Behind the fever is the unnecessary excitement of the flesh. The clamour of wanting more. The hunger embedded in hunger, the vanity of hope that lives in the impossibility of time. How does fever stay alive? What keeps the temperature simmering? Why do fevers not fizzle out? Where does the stubbornness of the fever come from?

The fever is a sign of the pressure building up because of the stress. When the environment is acting on the pipeline, the pipeline gets squeezed and the flow gets compromised. When the pressure increases, the force and the velocity of the fluid gets multiplied. This multiplication cannot be contained, it is wild and dispersed. Its wild nature creates a network effect which breaks out the interface as an enhanced intensity and an a raised temperature. Fever breaks out.

After the fever breaks out, the immediate response is to suffer, collapse and let the fever reign. Once the surrender happens then the fever takes over. The fever consumes the whole body. On being consumed, the body moves from its hard state to its fluid state. When the body melts, the drama has begun. In this dramatic sequence, the body and its pores mix into one magma and the then all hell breaks loose.

In this hell, surface and medium cannot be distinguished. Solvent and plane cannot be told apart. Everything is level, all the privilege, all the karma is lost. History is rendered meaningless because it lacks any expression. Some call this chaos. Some call this hell. Nobody is happy with the state of affairs. Cluster formation became very difficult. No particle, no actor, no agent could bond with the other. There was no scope of any alliance.

In this world, everything remained in a collapsed condition. No layers formed. No complexity emerged. No secondary and tertiary states registered themselves. In this flat world, there was no way of navigation. No way of overcoming scale. Being lost was the only possibility. But getting lost was not easy. I was not as simple as just forgetting to seek a direction. There was more. In the guise of a common actor's mode of conduct on the field, was hidden a desperate hinder to know its own location. Locating their own bodies on the field forced the actors to look at themselves in a distant way. When you bring in distance in your own self-perception, the distortion and the noise breaks the mould. The shell cracks. All the reluctance and resistance that comes in the way of the actor's acceptance of its own role of a puppet disappears. There is

no semblance of a will left anymore. The actor's shell fully collapses and the actor happily gets lost in the environment.

After the actor gets lost, the game begins.

The game cannot deal with entities spreading their tentacles outside the game world. If the first rule if that no other rule must stand, then no other rule can stand.

The fever is only a death wish expressed as a melting of the flesh. Forms and volumes disappear and only the shadows and the traces remain. These shadows and traces intermingle and create planes of varying densities and opacities. These planes are the only evidence we have of the actor's existence. If only these planes were responsible for leading the onlooker astray, their purpose would have been served.

Who is the onlooker? The onlooker is only the inhibited actor who refuses to act. This refusal comes from an assumption that was made at birth. This assumption is that all invitations are entrapments. This assumptions works very well with the fever. The onlooker is only looking at a reflection of the inside in the glossy envelope. Because there is nowhere else available. There is nothing outside the envelope. The envelope is not kept anywhere, it is only floating in a void. There is no base surface. After a point the status quo cannot crash and cannot gal because there is no ledge, there is no boundary, no limit.

An actor whom refuses to act also ends up acting. This specific acting has an inhibited quality.

The shadows, traces and the lanes that they make up are like sounds of footsteps in a chase sequence unraveling in a dark forest. They are fleeting and indecipherable. Flashes of light shine and then they don't. "The cloths that you wear, rustle. When they rustle, they spark. The rustling happens when you move. When you will move next, nobody knows."

The actors are like vacuous forms generating these shadow and traces which they throw are like double encrypted signals.

This only goes to show how trying to make sense of the narrative is futile.

The narrative is not pointing to itself. It is pointing to nothing. It is hiding its tracks. The fever cannot be reverse engineered.

So this onslaught has to be suffered. There is no medicine. There is no escape. Lose hope or lose yourself.

The fever as a symptom is an empty symbol. It cannot be analysed. I does not mean anything. But as a condition it cannot be escaped from. It is a condition that needs preparation. For some it can feel like a fall. Running to stand still is not an acceptable flow in narrative. There needs to be an escalation, not a fall. But the fever is not a fall. It is a rise. It is not a frailty of the flesh, although it its moment of perishing. When water evaporates into steam, it does not recognise any cessation of being. Transformation is a moment of revelation. The potential becomes known. Even if there were no clues revealed earlier, the moment of

transformation does not become a upsetting moment. It remains a moment of celebration, an event that attracts a thunderous applause.

After the fever has passed, a kind of wipe is performed. The fever is not remembered. The moment of transformation is not remembered. In being lost, the only thing remembered is the previous instance of being lost. All the tension involved in the moment of transformation is in vain. The base state of being still falls way below what the buildup promises.