

# The Unreasonable Solution

My life after coming into the orbit of Sabyasachi Guha

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## Kidnapped

G arrived after midnight on the 6th of October in Mumbai and came to Kiran, Sanjiv's mother-in-law's apartment which was lying vacant. He barely rested. He freshened up, had coffee and started talking to us. I was surprised that he showed no signs of jet lag. I stayed at Sanjiv's house and came everyday at the crack of dawn to meet him. He would be all ready and dressed, glowing softly like the early morning sun. The very first glimpse of him would suck the air out my lungs and make me tremble with excitement.

Since G wanted to visit Pune this time, I had booked a nice hotel for him in the posh Koregaon Park neighbourhood. Koregaon Park is famous for the Osho Ashram. We arrived on October 11th in Pune. G asked me how much I had paid for his room and wanted to pay me back. When I said I would have done the same if my parents were visiting, he replied with a grin, "We are not that close yet!" I shared a room with Golda at the hotel during daytime. I didn't want to stay at my place, which was at the other end of the city and travel everyday to meet him. I did my office work and meetings from the hotel itself. Sanjiv and Kishor had rented an apartment owned by a Rajneeshi lady close to the hotel. I slept the nights there. We named it "the armpit lodge" after a picture of Osho which hung from the bedroom wall with his hairy armpits in brazen display! Venky and Twarit stayed in another hotel nearby. Every morning we would go for walks in the lush green lanes of Koregaon Park. A couple of lanes were so full of banyan trees that the area looked like a banyan forest. For breakfast and evening coffee we would go to the famous German Bakery right next door. G liked their hash potatoes and veggie burger. Even though this was one of the nicest neighbourhoods in Pune, G felt something was odd about it. He said, "This place has something which is creating a discomfort in me." We assumed it could be because of the Osho Ashram.

He spoke for hours with us. The atmosphere was electric! His carefree laughter charged every particle in the room. His magnetic presence arrested every distraction of mine. I felt completely bewitched by him! Every minute seemed precious and rare, to say the least. All this while I had no questions to ask him, nothing ever came to my head. I believe whatever he talked about was somehow automatically addressing my deep-seated issues. I was simply and utterly mesmerised by what he was and forgot all about my conflicts and problems in his presence. In fact, from the day I met him until now, I have never asked him any questions, unless it is for the purpose of an interview or for documenting his talks. A day before leaving for Mumbai, he along with all the friends came to see my apartment. He met my brother there. We stayed for a couple of hours and I made coffee. On our way back he told me he didn't quite like my apartment. "You need a different place", he said. Then he started talking to the others in the car. Moments later I heard him say softly, "A free man is one who cannot use others for anything". I thought if this is the definition of a free man then G is the only free man I know of. A gush of tears flooded my vision and turned the image of G sitting in the front seat into jelly. We returned to Mumbai on the 14th.

Our tickets to Cochin (or Kochi) were booked for the 17th of October. This was to be my first ever flight with G. There were about 7 of us, I think, all high and pumped up in G's presence. I had never been to the state of Kerala before. We landed there around noon and drove to Maradu where G had rented an apartment next to Manoj's in the same building. Two tall buildings of 14 storeys each stood next to each other in a lush green surrounding right next to a river. G's apartment number was 13 G. It had two bedrooms, one tiny study and a huge living cum dining room and a kitchen. The view from the balcony was breathtaking. G settled into his room, Sanjiv and Kishor took the other bedroom and G asked me to take the study. The rest of the folks moved to another apartment in the adjoining building. Manoj's wife Vidya was very welcoming. She ran around the house, cooking and trying to make us all comfortable. Their little son, Vaibhav adores G.

The first night I felt suffocated in the study because it didn't have good ventilation. So, I decided to sleep in the living room from then on. I used to be up before 3 am feeling an uneasy pressure inside my chest and my throat parched dry, waiting to see a sliver of white light appear at the bottom of G's bedroom door. As soon as the light emerged, I would freshen up and get ready. The vision of him coming out of his room gave me goosebumps. "Did you rest well?", he would ask often. Around him I got little sleep, and the energy levels were always high. I felt like a wired monster with a jammed head. My body was just beginning to give me a hang of the power of its functionality, which my ideas and self-image can never touch. Sanjeev would make coffee for everyone and we would sit cozily around G. The mornings were explosive. It didn't matter if G spoke or kept quiet. Watching him was like watching an epic on a giant screen. His magnetic disposition, his deep voice, his effervescent laughter and graceful body language - it was simply too much to take in! I used to pass out often. "How can someone have such an impact on another person? This is stranger than fiction" I used to think. He would allow us to be around him all day starting from 5 in the morning to around 9 or 9:30 at night. There were no distractions whatsoever. On some days he would say, "What do we do with ourselves? How long can you guys eyeball me?!" Then he would take us all out for a walk or go shopping at the gigantic Lulu Mall. One day we rented a mini bus and went for a boat ride on the giant Vembanad Lake. During the ride somebody asked him playfully, "Guha, where are you?" He pointed to the endless blue waters of the lake and said, "Guha is there". His eyes were distant and pristinely empty. Another day, we enjoyed the views from Fort Kochi by the sea. Every day we would pass by the Maradu vegetable market during our morning walks. The intoxicating smell of fresh vegetables, herbs and fruits made my head go into a tizzy. G used to buy his favourite vegetables and red bananas from there.

When G first saw me, I had just turned 36. A few days later he asked me about my life. After hearing my story in brief, he started muttering softly, as if calculating something in his head. "The seed of radical change started to germinate in you from your 35th year. It was a year of great upheaval," he said with an uncanny authority. That reminded me of an incident years ago. After my marriage broke down my mom was worried sick for me. She used to visit

astrologers to get some semblance of hope and succour. After one such trip to an astrologer, she came back looking happy and said to me, “This guy said your daughter’s life will change completely after her 35th year but he wasn’t able to say what will happen or how”. All my adult life I had a vague awareness that I was tortured by thought and the highs and lows it creates in its image-filled universe; that I was a slave and thought was the rogue king slapping and tossing me around. As a result, a gnawing sorrow used to drill a million holes in my waking consciousness draining all my energy. My only escape was when a highly unusual “euphoric state or condition” started kicking in 3, 4 or maybe 5 times a year starting September 2011. I didn't have the slightest clue what triggered it. I was completely in the dark about its origin and operation. It would manifest on its own, generating a joy, sensitivity and alertness that seemed almost magical. Thoughts would slow down and my dull existence would suddenly acquire a raw, animal-like rhythm, making me ecstatic, fearless and super charged for no tangible reason. I didn’t know the term “acausal” back then, which G uses so often to describe such things. I wanted it to stay forever, but it would vanish suddenly like a heartless lover, throwing me into the pit of sorrow. It was most intimately mine, yet it was unknown to me. And I couldn’t possess it. Questions ravaged my mind. How can this thing vanish if it is inside me? And if it is not inside me, where is it coming from? Why doesn’t it stay? How can I get it back? Overcome with tortured emotions, I would tell myself, “I don’t want it if it can’t stay. I was better off before this happened to me”. I searched the internet night and day for answers. I had to find out or else I would die, I thought. I read about countless people and their spiritual experiences hoping someone would know. Most connected their experiences to the grace of some higher Being or God or a universal super consciousness or kundalini or their own guru and sadhana. But I had no guru and I had never done any sadhana. So, I was left with no causal connections to play with. I kept reading and was thoroughly confused. It drove me crazy. I would cry uncontrollably in my room. I lost sleep as well as my appetite. I stopped entering the kitchen as my whole body would tremble at the very sight and smell of food. It was just me and my brother in the house, so my younger one took over the cooking duties. Luckily, I didn’t have much to do at work those days. I would sit at my desk and ponder and come back home in the evening. My colleagues were surprised how much weight I had shed in just a couple of weeks. One of them, a Gujarati girl, asked one day if I was going to become a sadhu or something. During the weekends my brother and I had to go grocery shopping. As soon as I would enter the supermarket, the sight of mountains of food and other stuff would create a feeling of somebody actually choking my throat with both hands. Terrified I would run towards the exit asking my brother to excuse me. I couldn’t read newspapers. I would get a jolt in my hand whenever I picked up one. I never felt like seeking advice from anyone and had dropped out of the social scene completely. I didn’t think anyone could help me because my pain was uniquely personal. It was an excruciatingly lonely struggle that crushed me from within. The “state” kept visiting me according to its own random rhythm. I was so tired of trying to grab it, that I surrendered to its whim. All I could do was desperately long for it to show up and release me temporarily from my mental prison.

Back in Cochin, I felt G is a live volcano spewing energy and fire and nectar all day. Heat waves were ravaging my body in his presence. They were radiating directly from him and drowning me. Even breathing was difficult. This was the first time I got to stay with him under the same roof. He was very gentle and sweet to me. He gave me a hand-made soap in a coconut leaf box. The word Yogi was printed on the label. He liked it so much that he bought at least a dozen and gave to everybody. I had no questions to ask of him yet I would be glued to him all day. We would chit chat when he was not discussing serious matters. Soon, I found my interest naturally gravitating towards taking care of him in whatever way I could, and attending to his simple daily needs. He didn't need me for anything. It was my need. He asked me often, "Did you ever imagine you would be attracted to somebody so madly?" It never took me more than a second to answer — "Not in my wildest dreams. I was miserable until you came".

I had to return to Pune on the 24th of October to get back to work for a week. And boy, was I miserable! The first two days at work, nothing entered my head, it felt completely jammed. I wanted to go back to G by hook or by crook. G said he felt strange that he was in India yet I was not with him! Then he added, "One should make the best use of an opportunity when it presents itself." I instantly knew the opportunity he was hinting at was the opportunity to be in his presence. This added fuel to fire and I hatched a story about a relative's illness and took leave from office to join G in Kolkata and stay with him till the end of his trip. G arrived in Kolkata on October 31st from Cochin. Before I started from Pune, he told me that he wanted to come to my parents' house on the 4th of November for lunch. I had previously boasted about my mom's culinary skills to him, so he had to try it out, he said. Basically, he invited himself. He wanted me to reach a day earlier and help my parents with the preparations. So, I arrived on the evening of 3rd in Kolkata. He didn't tell me how many people he would bring with him and I never asked. On the D-day, he called in the morning to inform that he was inviting all his friends for lunch! Then he kept calling every hour and the guest count jumped from 10 or 12 to about 30! My parents panicked and blamed my callousness for this situation. They couldn't believe for the life of them, that I did not know how many guests I had invited! My mom said she had cooked for 10-12 people and could stretch her resources to feed three or four more, that's all! She was sure half the crowd would go hungry! Amidst this chaos at home, my mind was peacefully floating in G's thoughts. The very event of him stepping into to our house was so significant and joyous that nothing bothered me. I didn't feel any anxiety. I was confident nothing could go wrong because *He* was coming. To me it was no ordinary happening. I had spent countless days and nights shedding tears within the walls of this house for some miracle to happen, for someone to appear who would show me a way out of my miserable existence, and finally *that someone* has come! I waited with bated breath for him to arrive. A white car zipped past our house around 11:30 am. I came out to see if it was him. The car had stopped in front of a couple of houses after ours, and I saw G's slender figure glide out of it. I dashed towards him and he also almost ran towards me. I held his hand and said, "This thing (pointing at him) finally came to my house! I can't believe it!" (For the first couple of years I couldn't think of G as a person and couldn't address him by any name.) G had the warmest smile on him. He handed over a big box of exquisite Bengali sweets to my father as he

entered the house. We took him to a room on the first floor. More cars stuffed with people started arriving one after another and the upstairs room ran out of space in ten minutes. Then the gang was moved to the living room on the ground floor. Although they were apparently my guests, many of whom I was seeing for the first time! Some of them were G's childhood friends. We didn't have enough chairs and couches for everyone, so some had to sit on the floor. My parents were flabbergasted, they had no clue what all this was about. They hardly knew anything about G or the events that had taken place after I met him. I had kept the entire thing to myself because I knew they wouldn't believe any of it nor approve of my running after an unknown old man. After everybody had settled down, G asked my parents if there was ever any sadhu or renunciate on either side of the family. They both thought about it, then my mom said her great grandfather in Bangladesh had left home, his wife and children to become an ascetic at a young age.

My mom had made quite a few traditional Bengali dishes and G loved them all, especially the "payesh" or rice pudding. After tasting it he said, "Only people from Bangladesh can make such good rice pudding. It is unique to them!" My trust in G stood vindicated when everybody ate well and we didn't run out of anything! Then began the cultural programs. Poetry recitation and songs galore! Partha, Ila and Bubu sang. Partha and Bubu are trained musicians. They live in Hindmotor and have known G since 2008 or so. Bubu is a professional singer and a music teacher. Partha is a PhD in Physics. When my term came, my father suggested I should sing the Kali song *Shyama naame laaglo aagun amar deho dhupkathite* (*My body is like an incense stick that caught the fire of the name of Shyama*. Shyama is another name for goddess Kali). I didn't want to sing that song and blurted out that it had weird lyrics. G caught me instantly and said, "Sing it, what do you care about the lyrics? You did not write it," I sang this song after a very long time. Everybody listened silently. When I was done, everybody said it was too good. G was ecstatic and kept saying, "Isn't she fabulous? She's something! Lady, you don't know what is hidden inside you!" He said much later to me, "This was when I really got to know how good a singer you were. It was a revelation." Little did I know then, that this song would become G's most favourite and he would ask me to sing it a million times over the years! Golda taped the entire event on her video cam. Then the kids, little Rohini and Pupul, took over the stage and enthralled us with their recitation and songs. In between, I found a few moments to sneak into my room to pack a small bag of clothes and a few essentials. I didn't want to stay back home after G's departure, but didn't know how to break it to my parents as I was home after a very long time. I felt uneasy. When it was time for G to leave, he got up and thanked my parents for hosting him and his friends. Then he looked at me with a glint in his eyes and said, "Are you going to come with us?!" My guts twisted with excitement as I babbled, "Of course, I am coming. See, I am packed!" G laughed heartily when he saw the little bag on my shoulder. My parents weren't pleased though; a dark shadow fell on their face. My father asked when I would return and I replied I didn't know. Then I left home with the crowd, unafraid and happily basking in the benevolent presence of my beloved friend!

A year later around July of 2018, G and I were fondly remembering his first visit to my house and we had the following text exchange:

*G: You got everything without asking! I arrived even before you could invite me, right?!*

*Me: Right, you invited yourself! I remember how you came to my parent's house and kidnapped me!*

*G: I thought, how can I leave the little one behind? Hahaha!*

Something totally unexpected happened that afternoon after I left my parents' house. G asked me if I would like to stay with him in his apartment, Urvashi, near the Rabindra Sarovar Lake. He said there were two extra bedrooms apart from his, and there was nobody staying there right now other than him. I could stay there till 9th after which he would make some other arrangement for me. I couldn't believe my ears! I said I will be the luckiest person on this planet if I get to stay with him! He laughed and said so be it. I entered Urvashi with G in the evening. After dinner everybody else left. Then it was just the two of us! He asked me, "Are you not scared to stay alone with a strange old man? You are a young girl!" I said, "You know something, after Cochin I had a strong feeling that I must stay alone with you and see you from close quarters. I wanted to see how this phenomenon "Guha" operates in the field of daily living when he is by himself and what it would be like to actually live with him. You granted me this boon and fulfilled my desire without my having to ask you!" G was mighty pleased. To experiment with myself, I left my bedroom door unlocked the first night. I wanted to see if I had any shred of fear or insecurity about staying alone with him. I had to be 100% certain. As soon as I hit the bed, all my thoughts got drenched in the sweetness of G's image in my head, leaving no room for doubts. I was relieved. The following 5 days were to be my best so far with him. G used to be always up before dawn. I would come out of my room upon hearing the sound of his bedroom door open. The morning of 5th November was my first morning with him in Urvashi. As he stepped out of his room and walked into the living room where I was waiting, shivering with excitement, I felt a highly luminous object was standing in front of me. I sensed a kind of power emanating from his body and enveloping me in its field. He wished me the warmest good morning, then said, "Would you like to learn how to make coffee? I will show you. Come with me". I followed him like a puppy inside the kitchen. Then he demonstrated to me the fine art of coffee making. He first showed me the coffee pot and explained its features. He filled the base/pot filled with water. Then he spooned heaps of richly aromatic coffee powder into the sieve or funnel which sits on top of the base. Finally, he covered the sieve with the top part which is also like a pot with a snout inside, a lid and a handle. This is where the rich chocolatey decoction collects. Then he turned on the gas stove and put the coffee pot on the burner and reduced the flame to the minimum. He said, "The best coffee is made when it is cooked slowly" His movements in the kitchen were startlingly fluid, relaxed and beautiful. It was as if he was gliding through air without any resistance like an eagle. He attended to every task one at a time with total attention as if nothing else existed in the universe for him in that time

frame. As I watched him, I felt he was a ball of energy. In the field of this pure energy I froze and became still. My eyes got fixed on him, almost ready to pop out of their sockets, and unable to look anywhere else. My limbs and neck were paralyzed. And thoughts slowed down to a halt. I didn't know what was going on! He asked affectionately, "What are you looking at little girl?" All I could say was "You!" He made coffee every morning for the next four days and poured a little for me in a small cup! I was soaked in his electrifying presence every moment. When alone with him, we spoke little and almost never about spiritual matters. I was mostly dumbfounded in his presence and couldn't speak. He would sometimes ask me about my life before I met him, what books I had read, etc. One morning he asked me with deep affection, "Where were you hiding all these years?" He said after the information center fell into its natural rhythm in him, he used to pine for people who would resonate with him. Then he said, "Should I tell you something? It was almost like the way Shri Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar used cry from his rooftop for the right people to come to him. There was a strange restlessness in me, but I was not depressed or anything. It was as if Nature was trying to enact something through me and it was looking for the right resonance to take place. I used to think, isn't there anybody who would resonate with what's in here? But in my heart I knew the right person will come one day!" I wasn't expecting to hear anything like this from him and felt shy. What was he hinting at? I am that right person? I hushed my unruly thoughts and kept staring at him. A most magical smile was sweeping his gorgeous face.

I could barely sleep. The first two nights at Urvashi were torturous. A peculiar pressure in my chest and abdomen made me breathless and thirsty. To add to that, the moment I lied down, my body and the bed both started shaking. I got up with a jolt thinking an earthquake had hit our neighbourhood. But strangely, there was no sound of furniture or other stuff rattling in my room. When I looked around everything was in order. I was bewildered. When I tried to sleep, the shaking started again. It continued for some more time and then I don't know what happened. I couldn't figure if the movement was originating inside me or happening outside. Next morning, I told G about the pressure inside my chest and then asked him, "Was there any earthquake yesterday night? Did you feel anything?" He said he didn't. When I told him about the tremors he said, "These things happen. Don't worry about it. It's ok" I didn't ask him anything further. On the third night before I went to bed, he held my hand and said most tenderly, "Sleep well tonight". That night the pressure inside my chest eased a bit and I could sleep for some time.

Back home, my parents were mad at me. One day when I was in a car driving to some place my mom called. She said in a threatening tone that if I didn't come back home within an hour, their doors would be closed forever for me. I was taken aback by her unusual harshness. My jaws hardened and I shot back, "So be it. I am not coming back!" This incident strengthened my resolve that nothing could prevent me from being with G.

Radhika arrived from New Jersey on the 7th and took the other room in the apartment. This was the first time I met her. The next day about twenty of us went to Ila's house for lunch. Her family owns a renowned sweet shop in the



heart of the city, not far from where we stay. It was set up by her father who was very fond of G. He died some years back. Ila calls G *dada*, which means elder brother in Bengali. On the 10th we went to the iconic Victoria Memorial for morning walk. Julie came later that day and G arranged for my stay at Ila's house on Fern Road for the 10th & 11th of November. Every morning I would wait for the people of the house to wake up so somebody could open the gates for me and I could run to meet G. Every minute away from him seemed unbearable. Around 5:30 am I would run through the Southern Avenue and meet him at the Lake where he usually went for his morning walks. I would literally jump with joy at the very sight of him and he would reciprocate in a similar manner. I told him he was like a giant magnet pulling me with inhuman force! He said he was doing nothing and had no hand in all this, and that it was beyond both of us. My amazement and wonder about this man was growing by leaps and bounds.

Manoj and Sanjay left Kolkata on the 12th morning and G asked me to move their room in Sailabas (meaning abode in the mountains) which is a 7 minutes walk from Urvashi, and closer to G's than Ila's house. I think Sanjiv, Kishor, Twarit and Venky were sharing the other two rooms and the living room between them. I stayed there for two nights. Every morning I would get ready and rush to G's place running all the way. I couldn't wait for the others although we were supposed to leave together. I was like a dog looking for its master. My guts throbbed with a peculiar urgency. I was never like this. Upon reaching his doorstep, I used to find him sitting on his chair perfectly dressed and fresh as a daisy, electrifying his surroundings! A great gush of energy would sweep through every pore of my body. Sometimes, the very sight of him was enough to make me tear up.

G sent me home on the 14th after breakfast. He asked me to pacify my parents and also take care of a personal work that I had to finish. He flew the same day to Jalpaiguri, a small town in North Bengal, where he had some old friends. His return ticket to Kolkata was for 16th November. The atmosphere at my home was terrible, to put it mildly. My parents rained anger and rage on me the moment I stepped inside. It was as if I had done something unspeakably evil. They thought I had abandoned them for some random old guy. Both of them looked miserable because they knew they were no more the center of my life. The ground beneath their feet had shifted. How could I blame them? I used to be the most devoted daughter any parent could ask for. I took care of all their needs and was ready to do anything to make them happy. They were proud of me. But it all changed after G came to me. Their love for me turned into disgust before I could blink. How true are G's words, I used to think. What we call "Love" is only the power play of possessiveness, jealousy and control. I made many futile attempts to make them understand, lost my temper a few times, then gave up. My father refused to talk to me and my mom had her worst meltdowns. I told them, nobody and no power on this planet could convince me that I was doing something wrong. They could call me selfish, cold-hearted or whatever, it didn't matter to me. The next day I persuaded my mom to take a train journey with me to Berhampore, a town about 200 kilometers north of Kolkata, where I spent the first 16 years of my life, thinking the distraction would bring her some relief. I had to collect my school-leaving certificate from my high school located there. I

enjoyed the train ride thoroughly. Thoughts about G gave me a huge kick of energy and lightness. I kept singing the entire time, as my mom sat next to me highly disturbed and jittery. After collecting the document from my school we hopped around the town in a rickshaw. I was surprised I felt no sense of nostalgia in visiting the place where I had spent the formative years of my life. I zipped past familiar neighbourhoods, markets, playgrounds and my music teacher's house, yet no memories good or bad came back to bother me. I felt free. We came back home before it was night. Next day, I went back to G. Neither my mom's tears nor my father's rage could hold me back. I didn't plan for any of this. I didn't want to hurt them or cause them distress, but I couldn't help being with G. I had no power to resist his tremendous pull. He would ask me everyday if wanted to see my parents again. Claspng his hands I would plead, "Please don't send me away from you ever again." He asked me to focus on my job and earn loads of money but I was losing interest in everything.

The morning of 17th, we flew to Mumbai and stayed at The Mirage hotel near airport. He gave me some dollars and his red Indian phone. He asked me to keep them safely. He flew out on the 18th around 1 pm to go to London. I couldn't hold back my tears and cried openly when he said goodbye at the airport. Just before he turned away from us, I saw a tear trickle down his left eye which he wiped off swiftly. Then he vanished where I couldn't follow him. He called many times while I was on my way back to Pune crying uncontrollably in the car. He kept in touch everyday when he was in London. Even when he was on his flight back to New York on 25th November, he kept calling and texting me. I still don't know how he managed to call from mid-air. He was very concerned about me. He said he was constantly thinking about me. So was I. After he left, I began to feel that I didn't need to stay in a big house with so much stuff to take care of. This feeling grew and I started looking for a small place to stay by myself close to my workplace. When G heard about my plans he asked me to go for it and encouraged me greatly. It would also drastically cut my daily commute time to office. He was anxious and got up very early (2:30 am in US) to see over video call the apartment I had shortlisted. He made me show him the entire place and asked me its full postal address. After a minute's silence he said, "Just take it." I wanted to rent a furnished apartment because I didn't want to own appliances and furnitures anymore. G specifically instructed me to leave everything behind and take only clothes and some basic utensils with me. He said, "For the new to begin the old has to go. Give up all of it". I didn't tell my brother, who is 3.5 years younger to me, anything beforehand. I broke the news to him a week before my move. I loved him dearly and we had lived together for the past 10 years, yet I felt nothing when I moved out on 2nd December. My brother was gracious enough to help me set up my new place.

The following passage is my diary entry from the new apartment:

The last 6 months have been a roller coaster ride. Now I am all by myself in my tiny apartment. My stomach feels locked up from the inside. I can't eat anything beyond two spoonfuls. And my old food habits have changed drastically. The very sight of food makes me feel full. I have developed a great repulsion for garlic, onion, fish and meat. Their very smell makes me sick. (I grew up eating fish everyday in a Bengali household and meat was my favourite) Food is a big

part of our conditioning. When I try to eat anything out of old habit, my body gives me a jolt and creates a bad taste in the mouth. Delicacies taste like mud. The body is the real master. What am I to do? I don't feel hunger throughout the day. Even if I do, I cannot eat more than a couple of bites. I have lost around 12-15 kgs of weight, if not more. Strangely though there is no dearth of energy and I feel more vital than I ever did before! G knows about this and says as long as I don't feel weak it is all good. We never discuss anything more about this. And I don't try to understand or interpret it either. My father thinks I am suffering from depression and I need to see a doctor immediately. He warned me that I should not experiment with my diet without consulting a physician. G and I had a good laugh about it! I have developed back pain and feel tingling sensations in several patches on either side of my spine, as if loops of electricity are swirling all around. I also feel something quivering under the skin between my eyebrows all the time. I reported everything to G. He said tenderly, "You are so close to me, many things will happen!" Another time he said, "You are closer to me than you know!" He asks me frequently, "Do you feel any pressure inside your chest, is there any redness there?" He is so concerned he calls me countless times asking how I am doing and if I am able to eat. He says he is forced to think of me all the time and has no choice in the matter.

When G was in India last time, we travelled to Shantiniketan from Kolkata. A big gang of at least 25 of us made a delightful train journey to the town where Tagore had built a University and a community of scholars, musicians and artists had grown up around it over time. G showed us around as he was quite familiar with the place. Then we went to a local fair. There were local artisans and craftsmen selling their stuff. Bauls, the itinerant singing fakirs of rural Bengal, were a special feature of this fair. Each Baul fakir sat with his or her own group of musicians, chit chatting and smoking ganja. There were many such groups dotting the fair ground far apart from each other. Some were busy tuning their instruments. Then one of the groups starting singing the song *Milan habe kato dine amar moner manusheri shane* (*When will I be united with the friend for whom my mind pines*). G smiled at me and said, "Do you hear what they are saying?" I was so overcome with emotions, I barely nodded my head to convey I had heard. What happened next was just bizarre. Every time we passed a Baul group, they started singing the same song. The next one, then the next and the one after that. It went on and on. Their silken, high-pitched voices soared into the sky ... *When will I be united with the friend for whom my mind pines, when will my luck shine?*

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*"End of the search is the beginning of love" - Guha*

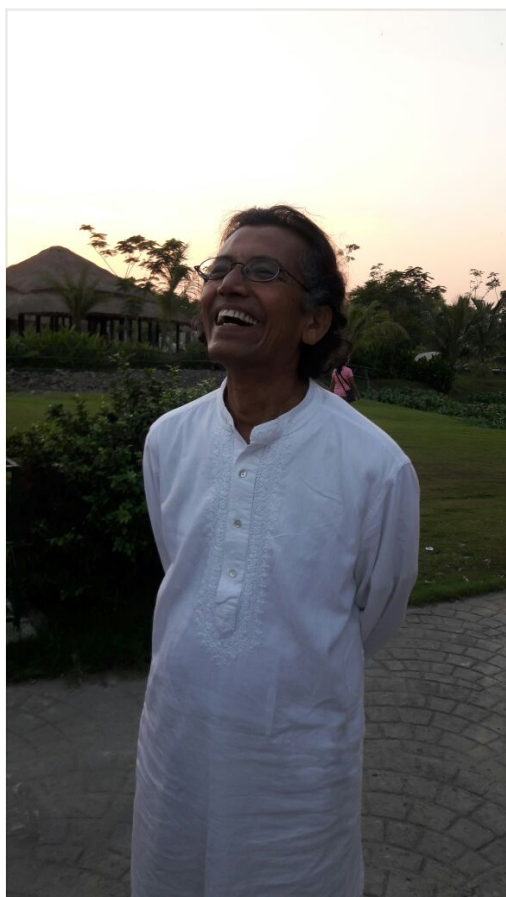


Cochin, October 2017



Pune, October 2017





Eco Park, Kolkata, November '17  
Photo by Kishor Chopda



Returning after morning walk at the Lake,  
Kolkata, November '17  
Photo by Julie Thayer



At a fair in Shantiniketan,  
November 2017

