Palolem beach, Goa

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india is contradiction. a state, a place that assaults and caress's. it is not concerned with ease or distress. she is indifferent to her effects. we are left to our own reactions as we have only our selves to hold on to as she dances entranced with herself. and it is movement rich in beauty and brutal with its directness. it is this brutal assault that so quickly enraps so that the beauty is like a gift wrapped continually in layers of trash, scent, misery, and sound. we both struggle outward and inward to glimpse her glory. and this to is contradiction, this struggle to understand, to place upon her our conceptions and desires. these are both absorbed like tears to an ocean and flung off as sweat from the dancer. the intellect does not suit her. she touches us somewhere below the conscious even as our senses juggle wave after wave of grace and suffering. is it delusion to think we might touch her? or is the only knowing a surrender to, a falling into contradiction?

evening  nov.22

i sit here crosslegged drinking a beer at a bar on the beach. it is around midnight with the jazzy funk rythm of an american band in the air. earlier, as the sun neared setting and i drank a previous beer, a body was carried past in a small informal procession. out past the empty chaise lounges the tide goes out sounding as it did earlier when it reach its high point. at the table next to me three british women figure out their bill. the body was burnt upright, wood piled against it as if a net. it had been prepared with shrouds and ghee. later in the evening, between than and now, fireworks burst past both ends of this medium sized cove. first to the west spaced solitary explosions came randomly over a half hour span. an hour later in the east several multi-coloured bursts occurred within a very short time. and, as if a remembrance, a solitary flower of light happens near where the road ends at the beach. the fire was started with a bundle of herbs at the moment of sunset. now out past the chaises, indians wrap themselves in broad shawls for the night. the tide comes in twice over a full day. when next it is high they will be awake, preparing to
serve us who come here to relax.

mid-morning  nov 25

at night the dogs of Palolem sleep around and amongst the beach architecture and sleeping Indians. Only part of both populations sleep here, though the dogs are larger in numbers and the Indians a small percentage of theirs. Dogs in India can be thought of as the point where facet edges of an immense jewel meet. Here they are the still point within this KALIdescope of deep, expansive humanity. But for a very few I do not believe any of them have what might be considered an owner, let alone master. They exist in a federation of loose alliances whose affiliations, loyalties, and boundaries are as scented veils.

Before humanity, Indian and western, they act out their leela, karma, and dharma. It is the blending of these three, both sentient and conceptual, that is a spark within the jewel. Dogs birth, lay around, shit, chase a cow, mate, scratch, and die. Their invisible structures are constantly morphing and mutating. They sniff, growl at, strut by, cruise with, and nip at each other. On rare occasions brief focused assaults happen. All of their being is on this beach. It is here that they acquire food. This is the essential link between canine and human.

It is a complex of relationships ancient and evolving that dogs work with as fine gifted jewellers. Points connecting the lines they smell, hang-out, ignore, watch, move, wait around, calculate and adjust continually with us. This is not nearly as simple as it may sound. An expression, no matter how direct, is only a momentary point where two or more lines meet. As with all of India, Palolem’s layers and expressions are just points people grab a hold of as if the thing itself. While expressions of relationship adapt and alter the fundamental relationship itself is most often untouched. Awareness on this level happens so infrequently that when it does we like to call it a revolution. It is the willingness to go there with her, with India that allows her to open more fully to you. All the trash, scratching, shitting, laying around, sniffing, mating, and dieing is like the skin of a papaya. It is best to chew their seeds to acquire their beneficial health affects. Many travelers don’t realize this and miss something that could be very helpful.

Morning  nov 26

Sometimes I walk along the beach looking at shells with absentmindedness. Occasionally one catches the attention. I’ll pick it up and consider its beauty. And if it somehow meets some unconscious level of this I throw it far back into the ocean. The other lesser ones drop back to the wet sand.

Afternoon  nov 29

Another day is happening. So it seems. Little sleep last night. Party at the Laughing Buddha (with attached coco-huts). Opening night? So it seemed. Time is only a very small part of what happens here. So small amongst the immense fabric that is India that
it is arbitrary. This might give it a sound of some actualness it does not exhibit. It is a forgetting of time that is not like that of solitude. Even the ephemeralness of time is layered and distractive. Obvious and contradictive. Sitting under the Banyan tree waiting for the sweet lime juice to arrive, puppies dragging around a dead crow, Hari Baba serving the Austrians, and the cliché as big as itself, the ocean rolling in and out continuously. People move about more as the sun approaches the horizon. During this time games are played in front of the ocean. Sometimes clothes are changed. Sleep happens. Money passes hands. The time between ordering a beer and its first taste. Bodies burnt near where the river meets the beach. The assumption of time as a fabric we drape on experience. Here on Palolem beach the amount one wears is a tale of what they carry.