

The Existence

- A short story by Biplab Pal 10/31/06

(1)

Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom
-The Hollow Men, T S Elliot

From spring to chillier spring. Winter in orange county is at best a sweater or light jacket in the night and if nothing else, a late sunrise.

I left flurries and snows of New Jersey just before it skins and opted for California traffic. In the very first day of new job, snooty looks of my colleagues made me at ease. That's how it should be in the first day for an alien like me. Those pairs of inquisitive eyes were no ominous sign but plowing of ever lasting friendship. Experience taught me, indifferent gestures are the worst!

It's too late for seven thirty's appointment-so I gave her a call. I was nearly done in the office. Theresa picked up on the other end. In roommate.com, I was looking for a paying guest arrangement. Her notice seemed to me the most optimized one. A balancing beam between marital fidelity and econometrical consideration of decent rent with a shorter commute. After all, gas and house price only grow faster than light in California .

Her was a sweet voice of late thirties. I am big beautiful divorcee woman of thirty eight who is looking for a roommate-that was all she emailed me. Neither had I known any more. But cautious fancies filled me up with a vision of a caring hardworking matured American who keeps her apartment clean. We agreed to meet in her Wilken Way two bed room apartment at nine.

And we did. It was not too lousy, not too tidy but a small room. 12 foot by 16 foot. Furnished only with a deflated air bed. I glanced at the stoic floor and handed out the advance. Five hundred dollar. Stunned, she wanted to put more furniture with a benign apology. Yesterday, her last roommate left without a notice! And that she had no time to clean up or put up any furniture! Either way.

I said -it's ok. Don't worry. I lived in the dorms for twelve good years. From my high school to doctoral days. You can survive in those messy Indian dorms if and only if you would master the art of living without any luxury. A steel cot, a small chair and a tarnished steel table are all that I had for my living nearly for a decade.

-Interesting! Surely I would not have thought that for an American of your age!

-Welcome to the world of cultural diversity. Besides, looks to me, your neighbors are more humane than I can find them in Southern California . I need more human than luxury. That's how we grow up in India !

- They are indeed. How do you know about my neighbors? You are here for barely a few minutes!

-Oh, I forgot your exact apartment number. So I asked outside. They showed your room as if they are your best buddies. I felt the warmth. Being humane is always about the feeling.

-Hmm, smart dude-- looks like we will make interesting room mate. How long would you stay?

-Two months and then my wife would join. We will move to an apartment by then.

She was going through divorce. Her half Hispanic military husband was not contesting. There was nothing left to contest. No children, no car, no house from marriage of seven years. In America , we contest over material, she later told me.

I left to rush in for dinner.

- How does she look? My wife called me from New Jersey .

-She has to turn around to get her out of the door-guess the rest. A three hundred pound, five feet nine inch American lady of half Irish, half Italian origin. Good sense of humor. Looks compassionate. Seems popular among her neighbors.

(2)

Nothing defines humans better than their willingness to do irrational things in the pursuit of phenomenally unlikely payoffs. This is the principle behind lotteries, dating, and religion. –Scott Adams

Next evening, I knocked the door at seven-standing with a suitcase, a Chinese dinner bowl and a wine. I relocated only with a suitcase, leaving behind the most in Jersey . Theresa opened the door with rhapsodic but warm welcome. As if East met the West. A five dollar Gallow Zinfandel was all that I could offer in return. She was excited.

-Your courtesy is a pleasing experience. Would you mind if I call Dina and Tina? Or you are too tired after a day's work?

-I told you, I am here for more humane connection if nothing else!

Dina and Tina were our neighbors. Cronies of Theresa. Two sisters living with their divorcee mom Rita, Tina's husband Rick and their newly born baby Jeff. All in two

bed rooms. That's how common people live in Orange County . Highest occupancy rate per room in the whole country, she later groused to me.

- I told them about you. They want to know whether you cook Chicken tikka masala!

Yes, in America , Indian identity is inseparable from Indian spices. Of course it should be that way-an immigrant race must be identified with the best gift they bring in from their homeland.

- Well, I do cook but fairly simple stuff. You want it, I will bring it.

Tina was a bony mom of nineteen. Motherhood brought her an early maturity in the facial geometry. Dina looked more of a bimbo of sweet sixteen in her revealing dress for which she always quarreled with her mom. To me, both the sisters were lost soul in ups and downs of daily soap.

For them or any girl of their age, reality shows are the real world. Realism is far above what they see in and around. Their naked eyes are Oprah and Dr Phil. You are either in or out of that media magic.

So I found conversation going difficult as I shared nothing common with them-food, soap, car, education and politics if any. Kudos to existentialists-I spoke to myself. Human beings are truly singular point and the world is created around them. It does not revolve round the sun of science and sanity.

Kitchen was as dirty as hell. Uncooked shrimps from last year's thanksgiving perished in the freezer. There were food every where. So much so that, I started looking for the creatures on the floor. Clearly she was not used to clean the kitchen -forget about cooking.

-Where do you eat?

-As and when I am hungry. Anything at anywhere goes by! You see I need to loose weight. But don't you think I am big and beautiful? Isn't it true men like more flesh than skin in the bed?

-True.

I nodded. Indeed men like more flesh than bones in the bed. But most of the men can also whip out fat from the flesh. But I kept quite-bigger truths are always unspoken for its vulnerable skin.

I had nothing better to do in the night. Concerts, night clubs, and gentleman's club-I like it all. Living close to Disney area, everything was within a throw. But I thought of saving some money hoping to buy one of those unaffordable houses in Orange

County . No friend yet to go out for dinner. Internet surfing might be a better option. So, I was returning early every evening.

And there she was! Glued to the web, she was looking for boyfriends or next prospect to move in to marriage.

-I am a bit old style-wan to get back to same man every day. I found that more comforting than looking for new date every night.

-Dating can be fun too!

-Did you date? I heard Indians do only arranged marriage.

- India does not exist in one shell. There is nothing that can be precisely called Indian except its rich diversity! Yes I am married to sister of my friend after a lovely arranged affair. It was too short and sweet for me. My wife still bitches for its short length. I blame its sweetness. But for the same reason.

-It's tough for the girls in South California . Five girls for every boy. And if he is good, God knows the ratio. I would better go girls someday.

Her face rained the eternal discrimination against women by God and the God of Southern California. I thought of consoling her. Patiently listening to a frustrated woman was perhaps the best I could do.

-Your prospect looks good?

-I have been looking since last week. My Inbox is full of replies. Kind of.

-That's good then. Right?

-Should be. Look what this boy wrote to me "Your cherubic face, with almond eyes....."

Later I learned 'this boy' was a twenty two year kid from Shrilanka. English major. In the Internet, everybody is a celestial prospect if true identity is not sought for. And that dating is hundred percent real yet virtual. She put up a pretty face in Yahoo personal. Theresa revealed her identity with a four year younger facial portrait. No information on weight. No full-sized photo. Her mailbox flooded since then.

All sorts of Americans and non Americans. Age, race, ethnicity, country no bar. That's how she profiled her in the true spirit of America . And like on American soil, her mail box deluged with every prospective non-American groom aspiring a bride called America or American lifestyle.

She sighed.

-There are not many from South California though. Not that I don't like them! Do you think I am more attractive to non-Americans? How do I appear to be in the eyes of the Indians?

Looks like reality spanked her. But escaping realism always catapults a phantasmagorical charlatan on the soil of the moon.

I could not tell her the truth. If statistics are to be trusted, probably one will not find even a handful of Indians heavier than her. So I smiled,

-You are too tall for the Indians.

-Yaw....But I don't want my hubby to be taller than me..Yaww that sucks. I will suffer from inferiority complex.

Was she real? I contemplated for a minute.

Darwin can't be that wrong-isn't it true that all women like tall hubbies because they want taller kids? And here stands a woman who is seeking a dwarf? Is it believable? Or escapism from the fact that market economy of dating in America is so inclined towards the tall and handsome, a thirty eight year old obese woman bereft of any wealth, hardly had a chance in the market place-the Bride Bazaar?

She looked pretty elated. Cajoled. No sign of remorse.

Is it so pleasurable to live inside the cocoon of self deception? How does that matter actually? We are the singular point-the world, the real world, the visible world, the cruel world, the blissful world all collapse into self. The eternal 'I'-Hindus call it Atman, existentialists the singular 'I'.

So I grinned. Just didn't forget to add a doubt!

-Are you sure, having sex with some one shorter than you too comforting?

-What do you mean? My second hubby was five feet five, three inch shorter than me. He was a little monster-a sex maniac. Wanted sex in breakfast, lunch and dinner. Initially I liked it. Later, I turned casual.

Enough for the day. May be I was stupid and struggling in my conservative Indian mindset. After all who needs taller hubbies for sex-isn't that all for women jealousy? Fad to fit out the high-heels?

(3)

Happiness is just an illusion caused by the temporary absence of reality.---Chinese Proverb

Before hitting the platitude of emails, Theresa found her first date.

I waved good luck to her day before. She was supposed to meet after the work.

The guy was an Armenian realtor. His profile shimmered with his iron body and million dollar home in Anaheim Hills. Too crush and raw for my test but may be that's how women predestine for men in America . Reverting back in evolutionary clock when a bird, a beautiful male bird waits in his nicely weaved nest for a perfect mate. Honestly, it is same everywhere but with a veil. Americans do not need a skin. It's all bare bone here.

She returned at eleven. I was surfing in Internet. I thought she would go out to sleep with him or bring him home.

-He was busy. Just rushed in for ten minutes. Had a drink. And then left. Looks pretty rich. He rides a Benz, owns his home in Anaheim hills. He paid his mortgage. And guess, he is not thirty five yet.

-Great. Consider a first date as a bottle opener. You open it and compressed gas foams out-you get real soda free from the bursting bubbles.

-Yaw, Gevic looks well built. Well established. But he has accent. Like first generation immigrants. Sucks..Yaw...

-I have accent too. Is diversity of accent that bad compared to a monolithic accent-a synchronous world view? Isn't it true burgeoning TV media orchestrated diverse American accents in the seventies and eighties?

- I don't know—you PhDs theorize everything. I was just speaking my mind. He left because he had to pick up his niece. He apologized that his sister dumped him with the responsibility in the eleventh hour.

Yes of course. I realized her dilemma. How come a man in date could leave his girl friend, a magnificent prospect of night, just for giving a ride to his niece! I thought of comforting her explaining the family pressure of the eastern culture. Where family values are supreme. Individual foray is criticized-East does not believe in the sequestered existence of human being without a society. I decoded for her.

-He belongs to Armenian Church. I know nothing more-I will find out.

Few days passed by. I was out in a business trip in Bay area. I returned and found her dancing around the whole apartment. She just could not hold her secret.

-Hei you are right. You are so right. I am in heaven.

I felt happy for her. She deserved it.

Much before I settled down with my lemon rice from Panda Express, she streamed in like a flooding river.

-Oh! I have such wonderful sex with him. You are right-men who exercise a lot make better bed partner. It was so good for last two nights.

-Great. You two are settling in then!

She paled. As if a fresh eye-stinging onion dried up in a minute. As if I had shuttered her fancies with a question that she would have looked for in last few days. But she gave in to indulgence of pleasure and pleasure alone. Didn't have time to think what's up next. And now there she started excogitating.

-He is a nice family man. He told me Armenian Church is very conservative. Her mom lives here with five children. I will soon be introduced to his large family. I am excited. Do you know anything about Armenians?

-Not exactly. Except the Armenian genocide I have seen in the Hollywood classic Ararat by Atom Egoyan. I guess any battered race is more resolute for success. Well knitted in the families. Can't you see, he millions his wealth even with his poor immigrant accent where as your ex is still a destitute despite a perfect American up-bringing?

-Don't talk about my ex. He is a scamp. A real one. I took care of his two children for seven years. Like my own son. You know I have none. I agreed to have none for them. Their bio-mom is a whore. I mean it. Yet, they went back to their mom. I feel being wasted. A complete waste. Better or worst than rotten tomatoes may be.

I sensed the excruciating pain. Pain of being left out as a mom, as a wife. She felt more bamboozled by Ricci and Gorgi when they left her for their biological mom-who left them in their childhood for her fiancé.

I apologized for being such a spoilsport. Like any other divorcee, memoir of ex is anything but collection of dreadful reminiscence. All ex-spouses exist like a shattered glass window- never to be amalgamated again.

-It's alright. Actually I didn't ask much about him yet. Maybe I was asking for more

sex. I was lost in sex. But you are right. I gotta ask his plan.

After few days, I found she was losing momentum. Her pale face was unmistakable. Geric was missing. Dropping out dates. Then he stopped taking her calls. In a matter of week.

She was broken-I consoled as if clock was ticking for her best interest.

-You brought some fine wines from Napa Valley

-Yes, we can open. I want to hear the whole episode.

That night, she gushed in like a first monsoon rain with the finest '91 collection of Merlot from Foster estate. Incessantly like the thundering shower of monsoon, she was blaming men and only men for all of her pain and miseries. Then, she fell asleep from excessive doses of wine. I discovered a perfect, a fine feminist in her. She could recollect it all. The dreadful injustice against her four decade of existence as woman. When I first met her, she bitched about American feminists. That they are all jerks!

(4)

Almost everything in life is easier to get into than out of.-Iranian Proverb

It all started with her Irish father. Like any other Irish immigrant of 60's in New York he made his fortune in old ways. Siphoning in as a bar-tender and then investing in lucrative real estate market controlled by the Italian mafias. That's how he met Theresa's mother Sonia, daughter of an Italian realtor. The marriage was a happy and typical one of '70's that lasted for quite sometimes till her father drowned himself in a bad investment. Might be a cliché and entwined parcel of American dream but marital discord in her family exploded ever since. The thin borderline between marital and material discord does not exist in America . I could not understand this part of American culture. Wives divorce their husbands when they get drooped in economic hardship! Beyond doubt financial security is a big concern in marriage. But the very concept of marriage, the union of two be decided and guided solely by material and material alone? Is marriage just a union of dotting bodies? And not of beseeching minds?

Soul exists only in religious text and mind has a controversial non-materialist existence at per a new research in Princeton University . So marital and material are scientifically interwoven-I consoled myself.

After their parent broke up, they counseled to her. They were taking the step, the very indomitable pain, in the best interest of their beloved kid! She was too young to comprehend then. Grown up, she blamed the both. Her dad started sleeping with a stripper and mom escaped herself into the chest of a wealthy dentist. And neither kept their promise. She was not left on her own. But unavoidable and uncomfortable

circumstance of being tossed between two warring divorcee parents forced her to leave both of them before she touched cord on her sweet sixteen.

She came to Arizona and started her first job in a grocery. An average American teen without any objective to chase. But full of vivacity and gaiety exploring the life as it bosomed through teensy sex and unwanted pregnancies. She learned to sacrifice the pleasure of unprotected sex in hard way.

- I still hate condoms, she told me. But physical pain of abortion is unbearable!

Before she turned eighteen, a raving romantic affair with a thirty five year old Mechanic from Phoenix shoved her into fire-woven reality of otherwise heavenly marriage.

I was really into heaven for first few weeks, she reminisced. But aura of first marriage was shorter lived than camphor. And within a year they broke up when she discovered her hubby still could not get over from her ex with whom he had three children.

-I didn't feel cheated. Just realized I had to share and fight for only a tiny space left inside John. Dad of three can marry but can offer only so much! I was teen and demanding his every second including the quality time he was spending with the kids in the weekend. So it didn't work.

She came out of marriage. Frustration and despair for a more romantic life drove her to Las Vegas. Her obesity posed problem to find a romantic job in Vegas. Intimacy between romanticism and slim figure is such a reality, unless demystified, we would see only perfect figures in the sin city! But in the end, she managed a job as waitress in Tropicana. May be canny wits and frivolities outweighed her two hundred pounds.

-I loved those skimpy dress of mine –revealing cleavage of my boobs and back. Any dirty look made me so wanted. After all, that's why everybody goes to sin city. Isn't it?

-I know womanhood can be elated at those dirty look. Or else fashion designers would go berserk. But then peccadillo of living is not the objective in itself! Are they?

-Yaa. You are right. I moved in with a juggler. He was short, five feet three inch. I started living in. He was incredibly horny but a complete beast. Hundred percent flesh and no mind. I could hardly discuss anything with him except we were getting laid multiple times a day. If sex become just a breakfast or dinner, after sometimes, one can not feel anything. There was only communication of bodies and no mind. So I broke up-I was not heading anywhere. I left Vegas.

After five years, she called her mom. After all, a mom is always a mom. That's how

nature defined a mom.

She was advised to get back to school.

Theresa was striving for a change. One of her friend used to live in Disneyland area. His tourist company was looking for escort guides in Southern California . She decided to go for it. Besides, adult schooling is much more of a prevailing concept in this part of the country. Initially she was afraid to resume school. But slowly she started finishing her high school certificate while working in the day. Influenced by her friend, she started attending Lutheran Church for the first time in her life.

-I was christened into the world of sin, you can say. There is sin every where in Christianity. I stopped sleeping with the boys to purge myself off the sin of fornication. It worked well for me. You have to resist pleasure to know what it is. I resisted temptation. Not that I was afraid of sin, but I wanted to change my self. In and out. Every renovation needs effort and human renovation needs it more. I was trying to do everything differently. At the end, I wanted to be reborn.

-Were you?

-Yes, I did. I completed my associate degree in college. Moved into a decent corporate job in customer service. They were paying me fifteen dollars per hour. If dollar is a yard stick , I have doubled my self in that four year.

-Yap, of course. But can 'self' be numbered in dollar?

-I was looking for better job and so it worked for me. But I committed third blunder of my life. I fell in for a military man. Richard. Who looked very religious and loyal to me. And some way he is. Even now.

-How did you meet him?

-I put up an ad in Orange country register. Old way. Internet dating was not fad then.

-Well, you took the decision. Why blame now?

-How could I? He was a lost soul. He was out in the Navy most of the times. His wife Laura, that Bitch, was sleeping with anybody with an erect dick. She prinks like a whore. A real hooker I mean.

- I don't understand. He was out. So she had a need. Sex is like a food. So what's wrong if she was sleeping safely? As per you, she didn't fall in for anybody as there were so many of them. Was it that wrong if a wife cloyed her need when her husband was out for so long?

- You must be kidding. She is supposed to be a wife, not a whore for Christ's

sake. She vowed.

- But that's man-made cannons called religion. Belief system. I am sure your ex was having fun with the hookers in other countries. Fornication with prostitutes does not break a vow? Sanitized by the fact that they were hookers and not women?

When belief appears as a wall, it does so by closing all the roads to humanity. And we always hit dead end in every direction. So I brought her back into focus.

-But you were married with Richard for seven good years. And decided not to have kids with him?

- I wanted. But he didn't. Because he already had four. Two from his marriage. And another two from his first girlfriend. Most of his meager earning goes for child support. My earning fed the family. Including schooling for his legal kids.

- Interesting! Do you find an objective of life without children? You are at thirty eight now. Sooner it will be too late unless you decide now.

- What can I do! So many of my friends do not like to have kids. They think giving birth is painful! Unbearable!

- Are you sure that is more unbearable than not having kids?

- May be I will adopt one from Africa . Pam did.

- But will that serve the purpose? The very purpose of your existence?

- What do you mean?

- Look, I am an atheist. According our guru, Richard Dawkins, father of selfish gene conjecture, we are all survival machine for our genetic code. Meaning, we are being into the world so that our genetic code can survive through reproduction. Our body changes. Mind evolves. Genetic code is the only invariant part of our existence-the self. Hinduism, the religion I am born into, calls that invariant part of existence as Atman. Christianity calls it a soul. Neither knew about the fact that they are referring to DNA codes that prevails from generation to generation and as the scripture said, does not get destroyed when you are dead. Because your soul is then alive in your kids. So primary objective of our existence, the very reason why I am onto the earth, is reproduction. Procreation of that invariant existence of me-my twisted pairs of nucleotide codes.

- You are too high on Merlot. But I agree, sometimes I think of future. Even strongly feel for having kids. But I got to find the right man.

- Well you had him.
- No matter how it appears to be, even in America , there are not many things that a woman can decide by herself. You will never know it from India .

She screamed at loudest. Her rage continued.

- You don't know that. I hate to be single mom. May be that is my destiny now. who knows!
- I think you must look for the right man. Diligence will pay off.
- Easier than said! At best, I will be getting men of fifties who have grown up kids. They will not like to have kids with me. I am positive.
- It is all for sex then!
- I guess! After all, are women more than that to men?

I nodded. Whether in teens, or in youths or as a loyal father, men do not change. Neither their single focused perspective about women.

She was yelling at Richard and failed marriage. Apparently catalyst for break up happened to be Monica, wife of Terry- a longtime military buddy of Richard. They were so close, in heart and mind, they decided to go for a swing. An au fait urban fad for au courant couples. Yes, Richard loved sleeping with Monica, but so was Theresa with Terry. Swapping was such a pleasing experience for Theresa! But as she recalled later, Monica always bitched about her to Richard and drove him away. In mind, heart and body. You must be able to separate fantasy from reality-her marriage counselor told her.

That night she poured down it all against men-eternal injustice of men against women starting with Adam. Then she snoozed into slumber.

(5)

“Desperation is a necessary ingredient to learning anything, or creating anything. Period. If you ain't desperate at some point, you ain't interesting.-Jim Carrey

The very next day, she was back to herself.

A student studying in UCI showed interest. She was bitching about his impecunious wallet and a sixteen year old Mazda capable of moving barely few miles only inside

the campus. She had no concern that the guy was young, too young for her. Eighteen year younger. I kept quiet. What a squandering-I talked to myself. To me clearly the boy had a fantasy to sleep with a mature woman. Once gratified, he would desiccate into thin air.

She brought him home. I saw him in her lap. For a stranger, it would look as if a mom was consoling her kid. Next day, she regretted her thirty dollar she had to spend on this boy. Two gallons of gas to pick up, three square meals, and a train ticket to send him back. All counted to thirty dollar. He was such a bum-she told me.

Next day, she was out for another date. I could clearly see her enthusiasm ebbed significantly struck by the reality of last few days. Instead of looking for a prince , she matured to look for any Tom, Dick and Harry who would agree to sleep with her. And sometimes, even that was becoming a gargantuan.

Like this boy. After Theresa paid the bill for the sumptuous dinner, she invited him for the night. The guy agreed. He started shadowing her car. However after second crossing between State College and Chapman, she lost the sight. Worried she called his cell phone. Five times. No response. Clearly the boy dumped her cleverly. Returned, she shared her sore.

You need to look more seriously- I consoled.

Yes. She learned to be matured hard way. For next one week, she joined many other dating sites. This time, instead of hastily getting out for a date, she was learning how to apprehend from initial conversations.

I started spending more time in Bay area returning only in the weekend. Still I would be asking whether she made any progress.

-I found another divorcee from military. I am skeptical. Not again!
-I know you have burned your hand. Even then, give it a skeptic's try.
-I will.

Next week, I could not find her when I returned on Friday night. She showed up Saturday morning.

- I think I found the man.
- Great. Moving on well then.
- Sort off. But I don't like his daughters.
- You are not marrying to his daughters.
- Yap , I guess. But his younger daughter is a stripper in a local club. I yakked. But her dad frowned. Is it an honest living? You tell me. I know you have been to many Gentlemen's clubs and you may even recognize her.
- You mean dad approved her daughter to be a stripper?

I stumbled. Yes, I do know a lot of strippers in this area. But almost all of them broke away from parents to raffle a career in Hollywood .

- Hahah..What am I saying! Not only he approved, he escorted her in the interview too! Can you believe? Daughter stripping to pussy before her dad in the interview? Yew..
- He might be too liberal.
- But tell me. Is it good, moral to be a stripper?
- Only thing I know- sexual morality can not be assessed by science or logic. Such issues don't belong to Popperian world-beyond philosophical domain of science. Because you can argue both in favor and against.
- You always theorize for no reason. Don't you think, I would be showing off my body if I had one? Why work for twenty fifteen dollar an hour when I would have earned hundreds of dollars a night just by being naked? And so many males would have jumped on me! Craved for me.

I paused. Was she jealous because his daughter had become such a sexually desired among the locals? And her desire for male was struggling worst than a destitute? I switched over to a healthy topic.

-So when do you plan to get engaged?

-Mike has an assignment in Iraq . For three months. We would decide then.

My workload in Bay area was increasingly off the hook. I decided to move into the north California for a couple of months till my assignment were over. When ever I would be back to orange country, I never missed to drop by her apartment. She was getting solid with Mike. They were planning to have vacation in Europe -she showed me her first passport.

-Only five percent of Americans have passport, do you know that? She was proud.

(6)

The mystical trend of our time, which shows itself particularly in the rampant growth of the so-called Theosophy and Spiritualism, is for me no more than a symptom of weakness and confusion. Since our inner experiences consist of reproductions and c---Einstein

I returned back to Orange County permanently in the fall. After a wheezing settling down, I thought of stopping by my old friend Theresa. I didn't talk to her for quite a long. She must have returned very experienced from her European trip.

I knocked on a Saturday afternoon thinking of giving her a surprise with a vintage

Cabernet from Napa .

Tara opened the door. I knew Tara . He was gay friend of Theresa who was also going through separation from a seven year old relation. His boyfriend, whom he always referred as ex-hubby dumped him for a young cute boy. And he could not file for compensation as gay marriage is not recognized by the state. He once told me –“ Mr learned, tell me, how come a state be so callous, so indifferent to the feeling of its citizens? I am broke. I am dumped and slumped. Yet, I can't move to the court. Gays have no right in America ”. In those days, I kept quite. Gay right issues were not something I was very aware of except what vociferous American media trained me with.

Theresa greeted me.

-Welcome back to Orange County . You are not going back, right?

I nodded with assertion. I was curious. No sign of Mike. So I asked straight,

-What's up lady? The BBW queen of Orange County ?

She giggled into a big laugh.

-You know Tara ?

-Yes, we met.

-We decided to go for a kid. Tara proposed whether I would bear his kid. I thought that would be great. After all I am at the fag end of menopause.

I was electrocuted. Heavy rain of her loud cackle made me normal. Both are in exigency for a kid. Genetic replication. The basic instinct, the very basic of existence. Tara would still be a gay. He would find his husband someday. But he also yearned for his nucleotide procreation. For Theresa there was not much of a choice. Straight males didn't want to father her kid.

She required a Y gene and not a straight male.

Straight males are only for bed-She moaned.

That was the last time, I heard from her.

California , 10/18/06

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