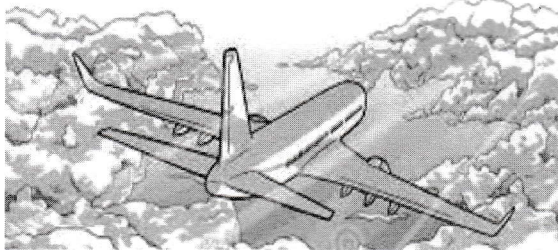


## Fortuitous Fusion

Leaving the Toronto General Hospital that late evening after a chaotic day and feeling exhausted, I was rushing to the airport to be in time for my airlift to Sri Lanka, to be present for my father's surprise birthday party. My brother Kusal had called me thrice from New Zealand and had dropped a text message saying that he was on board.

At last, I too was on my way. I was suddenly overwhelmed with a sense of nostalgia and



desire to mingle with the familiar surroundings and the people. I felt like a bird which suddenly gained freedom from captivity and flying homeward. I tried to close my eyes and visualize the simple delights we enjoyed as kids back in the motherland. For a moment, I was in the green fields playing with my friends, shouting at the top of our voices. The momentary deviation from the usual busy schedule suddenly summoned back the pleasures of delving deep into the memories of those bygone days- Saman, Devendra, Kamal and of course my furry little Tibet Terrier, Shaggy yapping at the slightest disturbance- they all started popping up. Then flashed in that face making me fondly recall that voice and the small brown spot on her oval face, just under the nose. Why did I want to miss what that smile and the pleasures associated with it could have

added to my life? She was my first love - Samanali. Where could she be now?

Well, I had to weigh my love on one side and on the other side stood my education, my parents and siblings. I wanted to be rational and chose the heavier side of the scale. I hoped she understood. I wanted to be rational and grateful to my parents for all they did for me. Making the decision, though, was not easy. I always had to suffer the pain of the conflict between rationality and sentimentality. I think I wanted to be hardened enough to be a real man, in my father's words. My father, I have realized is becoming old. He turns 65 this year.

The planning for my father's surprise birthday party started two months earlier. My brother, sister and I together with our beloved mother had hours of conversation planning this. Oh! It was such a bore to communicate with those two females of ours.

“Sir, May I unload your luggage?” asked my driver Jacob.

Hearing his words, I came out of my thoughts.

I checked in, passed the checkpoint and as I was early for my flight I paused at the gates scrolling through the possible happenings back at home.

Unquestionably, my mom would have invited all her exclusive friends. I am happy that I could realize my parents' wishes by being their “Specialist Doctor Son.” But I found it hard to put up with the latest bore. I could almost hear the plaintive remarks of