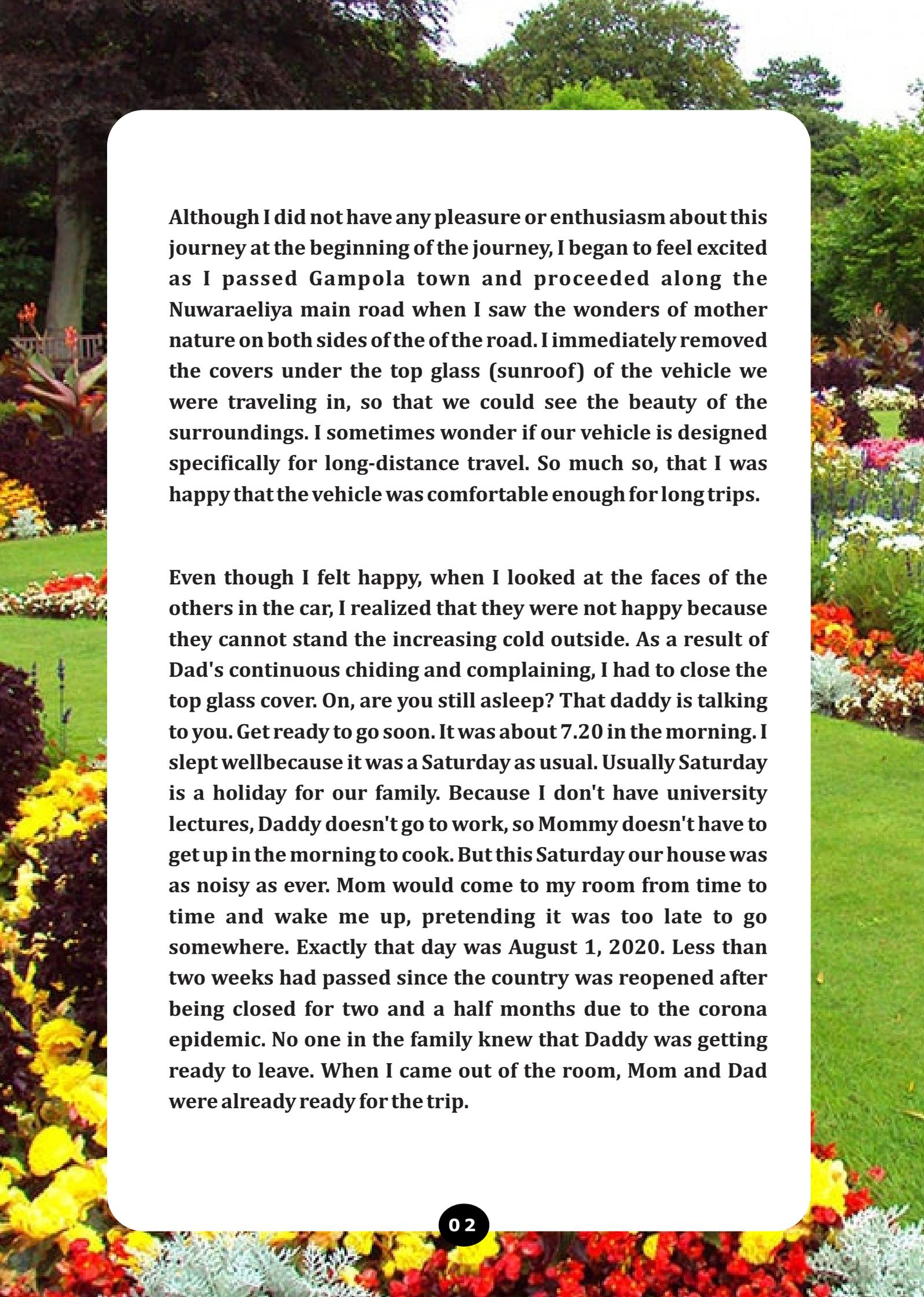


## Unplanned Family Trip

***Chuti putha, are you still asleep? Appachchi is calling you. Get ready to go soon....."***

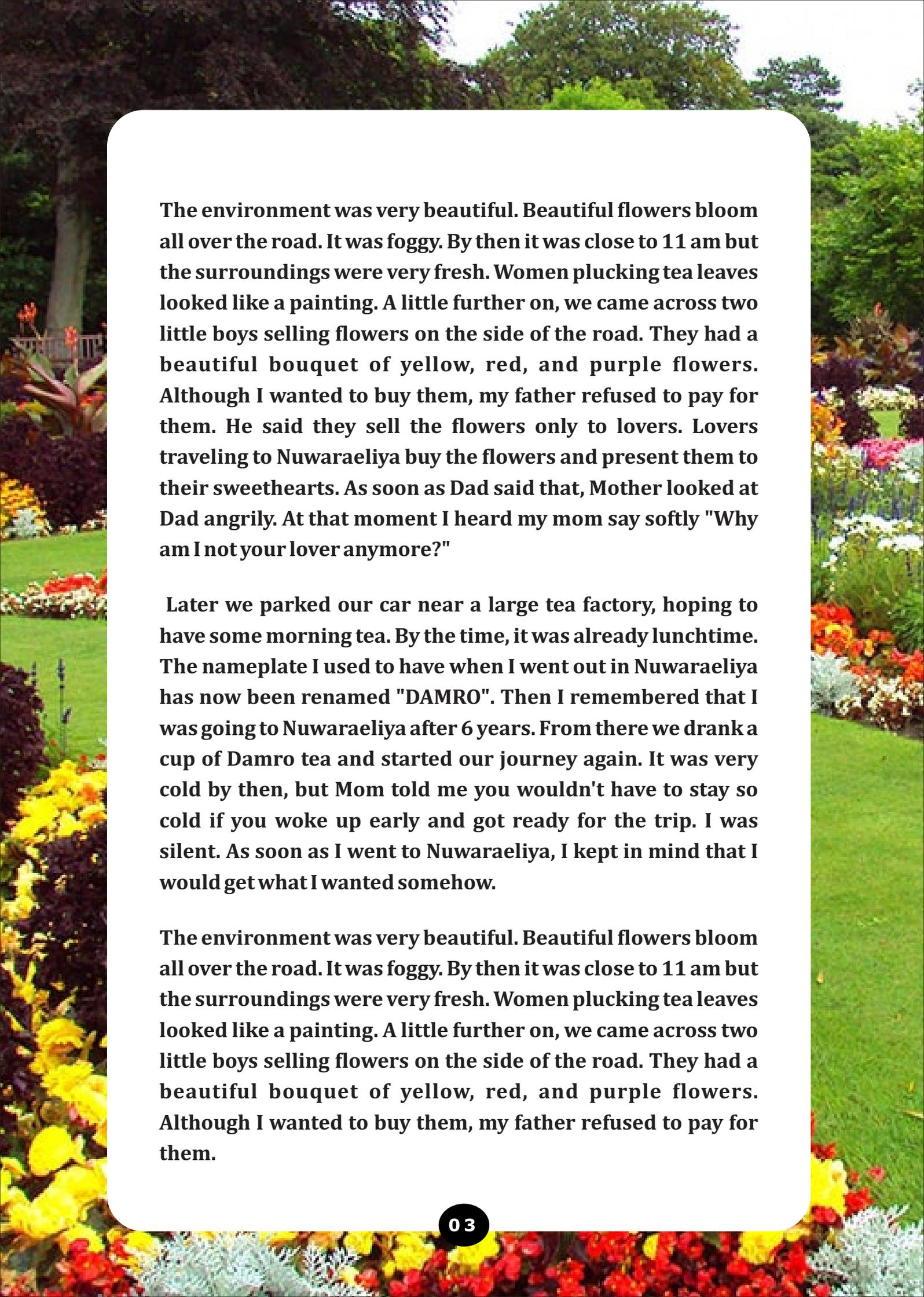
***It was about 7.20 in the morning. As usual I slept well because it was a Saturday. Saturday is a holiday for our family. I don't have university lectures and Daddy doesn't go to work, so Mommy doesn't have to get up in the morning to cook. But this Saturday our house was as noisy as ever. Mom would come to my room from time to time and wake me up, pretending it was too late to go somewhere. Exactly that day was August 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Less than two weeks had passed since the country was reopened after being closed for two and a half months due to the corona epidemic.***

No one in the family knew that Appachchi was getting ready to leave for Nuwaraeliya. When I came out of the room, Ammi and Appachchi were already ready for the trip. "Look, the driver is here too. Aren't you ready yet?" Dad scolds me as if he had informed me about this journey before. I washed my face as soon as I could and got ready for the trip. I had no interest in this trip because I did not have time to choose a suitable outfit for this trip. However, we left home at 9.15 in the morning. The journey from Peradeniya to Nuwaraeliya usually takes less than three hours.



Although I did not have any pleasure or enthusiasm about this journey at the beginning of the journey, I began to feel excited as I passed Gampola town and proceeded along the Nuwaraeliya main road when I saw the wonders of mother nature on both sides of the of the road. I immediately removed the covers under the top glass (sunroof) of the vehicle we were traveling in, so that we could see the beauty of the surroundings. I sometimes wonder if our vehicle is designed specifically for long-distance travel. So much so, that I was happy that the vehicle was comfortable enough for long trips.

Even though I felt happy, when I looked at the faces of the others in the car, I realized that they were not happy because they cannot stand the increasing cold outside. As a result of Dad's continuous chiding and complaining, I had to close the top glass cover. On, are you still asleep? That daddy is talking to you. Get ready to go soon. It was about 7.20 in the morning. I slept well because it was a Saturday as usual. Usually Saturday is a holiday for our family. Because I don't have university lectures, Daddy doesn't go to work, so Mommy doesn't have to get up in the morning to cook. But this Saturday our house was as noisy as ever. Mom would come to my room from time to time and wake me up, pretending it was too late to go somewhere. Exactly that day was August 1, 2020. Less than two weeks had passed since the country was reopened after being closed for two and a half months due to the corona epidemic. No one in the family knew that Daddy was getting ready to leave. When I came out of the room, Mom and Dad were already ready for the trip.



The environment was very beautiful. Beautiful flowers bloom all over the road. It was foggy. By then it was close to 11 am but the surroundings were very fresh. Women plucking tea leaves looked like a painting. A little further on, we came across two little boys selling flowers on the side of the road. They had a beautiful bouquet of yellow, red, and purple flowers. Although I wanted to buy them, my father refused to pay for them. He said they sell the flowers only to lovers. Lovers traveling to Nuwaraeliya buy the flowers and present them to their sweethearts. As soon as Dad said that, Mother looked at Dad angrily. At that moment I heard my mom say softly "Why am I not your lover anymore?"

Later we parked our car near a large tea factory, hoping to have some morning tea. By the time, it was already lunchtime. The nameplate I used to have when I went out in Nuwaraeliya has now been renamed "DAMRO". Then I remembered that I was going to Nuwaraeliya after 6 years. From there we drank a cup of Damro tea and started our journey again. It was very cold by then, but Mom told me you wouldn't have to stay so cold if you woke up early and got ready for the trip. I was silent. As soon as I went to Nuwaraeliya, I kept in mind that I would get what I wanted somehow.

The environment was very beautiful. Beautiful flowers bloom all over the road. It was foggy. By then it was close to 11 am but the surroundings were very fresh. Women plucking tea leaves looked like a painting. A little further on, we came across two little boys selling flowers on the side of the road. They had a beautiful bouquet of yellow, red, and purple flowers. Although I wanted to buy them, my father refused to pay for them.



**He said they sell the flowers only to lovers. Lovers traveling to Nuwaraeliya buy the flowers and present them to their sweethearts. As soon as Dad said that, Mother looked at Dad angrily. At that moment I heard my mom say softly "Why am I not your lover anymore?"**

**Later we parked our car near a large tea factory, hoping to have some morning tea. By the time, it was already lunchtime. The nameplate I used to have when I went out in Nuwaraeliya has now been renamed "DAMRO". Then I remembered that I was going to Nuwaraeliya after 6 years. From there we drank a cup of Damro tea and started our journey again. It was very cold by then, but Mom told me you wouldn't have to stay so cold if you woke up early and got ready for the trip. I was silent. As soon as I went to Nuwaraeliya, I kept in mind that I would get what I wanted somehow.**

**King Ravana abducted Princess Sita and returned to Sri Lanka. We did not forget to visit the temple built in memory of Hanuma who came to Sri Lanka in search of them. We were able to stay near that temple for a very short time. It was very rainy in that area that day. We arrived in Nuwaraeliya after a four-hour journey. I felt very hungry at that time of arriving in Nuwaraeliya. I bothered my dad and decided to go to a hotel near the city post office. I was hungry at the time so I ate four parathas and five rolls. Mom, Dadi, and the driver ate string hoppers and rice. After we ate, we went straight to Haputale, because Appachchi was very much looking forward to seeing the Adisham Bungalow in Haputale. We went to the Adisham Bungalow in Haputale and spent about an hour there.**

It was situated in a serene and mystic atmosphere. When I saw that bungalow, I remembered that the movie "Sarigama" was shot there. Although the exterior was beautiful, the view of the building was limited to a small area. Later we came back to the Haggala flower garden because of my interest in taking photos. We walked in the flower garden for about an hour and a half. As we walked through the flower garden, it was raining slightly.



When Mom told me to go buy some roses, Daddy didn't seem to mind. But Mom and I bought ten roses. Daddy bought the fruit. When we returned to Nuwaraeliya from *Haggala Malwatta*, it was almost 4 pm. We had lunch at a small restaurant nearby. Then we walked around Gregory Lake. I bought all the food I needed. Although I wanted to ride the pony near the lake, I was frightened by the way the pony looked at me. I immediately put that idea out of my mind.

**We spent a lot of time having fun near the lake. In the evening we were able to see an opportunity to shoot a movie. Although I did not get a chance to go near it, I took the**

**opportunity to watch it from a distance. At around 7 pm we left Nuwaraeliya to return home. Since it was dark on both sides of the road and I could not see the beauty of the surroundings as in the morning, I took the opportunity to post the photos on my phone on my Facebook. I'm sure I enjoyed this trip. At 10 pm we returned home very happy. As I got out of the car and headed home, I looked at how many likes and comments I had for the photos I had posted on my Facebook.**

