



Dream

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Last year I went to India. A land that I came to know as Bharat. This is not a great revelation in itself. However, the journey I wish to share with you is one that seldom has a voice and I am still in the process of finding my own way of speaking it.

Time is a great factor in this journey. In reality it began about 100-150 years ago. Precision is not the essence of this experience. I was born in Triumph Village, Guyana. My ancestors had made the great journey from 'Mother India' to

the Caribbean as Indentured Labourers of the British and that is another story. Generations later I am living in London, England. The story I am about to tell is one about 'going home'.

It seems to me now that I have always known that I would complete this circle of time and space by 'going back to India'. I was in search of my roots. I feel this is a story of ideas, phrases and forms of expression that have almost become clichés in my time. So many of us have been searching. The search for the land

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of ancient and hidden mothers and fathers seemed 'natural'.

I had come to a time in my life when I felt I could no longer move forward without making peace with the past. In my case this meant making the journey to 'India'. When this journey began I thought that my heart was going to burst with excitement. My head was full of dreams magnificent and splendid. This was my bid for freedom. Freedom from always being a foreigner, stranger, homeless, encapsulated by that question, the one that always comes up when I think I'm safe. The dialogue goes something like this: 'Where do you come from?' 'London.' 'No, I mean really, originally?' Sometimes I answer: 'My mother's womb, or the same place as you, or Africa, or . . .'

In Bharat my experience was how I imagine a marathon runner's experience to be. The description of running until that wall of pain is broken through and the energy that takes over is no longer purely physical, seems to best describe how I felt. I began slowly to realise that my journey was not physical. I began to live in a world of extremes, internally and externally, made up of fragments that seemed familiar, heightened awareness — my perceptions were continually challenged and a dream-like quality tinged my every day. My sense of reality altered. My sense of self began to dissolve and something new began to grow.

Sometimes I received the warm, loving embrace that I was in search of. I was

welcomed home by some, by others I was not. I realised that as a child of the diaspora I have the comfort of many homes, cultures and disguises. I also have the freedom of nothing. I have chosen to share this with you because I feel some experiences of diaspora are made invisible. Movements of human beings due to politics, war, displacement, holocaust present their own challenges when searching for identity, belonging and wholeness — for those who experience this and those who do not. I feel that being grounded and rooted holds a special magic.

The strength of a story such as mine lies in the power of survival and transformation. As a result I am clear — I dream a new dream and I am sure I am not alone.

