

# AJAY MK

## POEMS

### IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS

(written at the One World Foundation, Ahungalla, Sri Lanka)

From the top of these palm trees  
I look below, searching for what went wrong.  
In the ocean's waves that crash  
and crash again  
I find your voice  
from the day you quit.  
Mongrels owned by fishermen bark at me,  
sure as the waves,  
guarding their masters' nets.  
I pass those nets on tip-toe  
and that reminds me of us  
splayed on a low wooden cot.  
There are huts made of palm leaves  
and beach shacks made of tin sheets  
and beach boys who heckle me for sales.  
I find an abandoned driftwood  
sitting upright under a shade  
of Pandanus plants, sitting  
like a recluse in hiding.  
Desperate to reflect my own voice  
I make it my friend  
utter stories of winds and waves  
and dogs barking -  
the entire archipelago of laments.  
The *araliya* flowers around me bleed.  
I feel naked beside the ocean,  
a creature without its shell.  
Sometimes I am the smell of salt  
sometimes I am the kingfisher watching  
sometimes I am the *araliya* flowers  
sometimes I am the mangrove  
sometimes the salty land itself  
sometimes I am the dogs  
and the silence between their barks.

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### GREEN MOSS BUDDHA

Inside this cave you will find happiness,  
he said, his head bowed, his left arm  
tucking his ochre robe of infinite cotton,  
swirls and Pali chants.

His outstretched palm pointed to a cave  
a cool hollow within a tent of three rocks,  
each rock perched atop the other.  
There was a cloudy rainwater cistern  
and pigeons scattered among rice.

Inside the cave was the promised happiness,  
a granite Buddha, still as a lotus.

The Buddha showed no pleasure  
not even a hint of smile.  
He sat in his middle path  
of no joy, no sorrow.

Happiness fell into the cave in small parcels  
dappled sunlight  
sway of a Bodhi tree  
memories of everyone's Buddhahood.

My attention grew as wide as the sky  
all blue  
no pleasure  
no smile  
no sorrow, no pain  
each sensation perched atop the other  
on a tent made of breath.  
Just me and my breath  
chirp of sparrows  
water dropping into the cistern

no shadow

no sunlight

no self, no mind

no Buddha.

Happiness  
is just a cave  
without my shadow.