



VOLUME ONE

CHIT CHAT

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SMALL TALK

I have regularly been attending events with Prem Rawat for decades, although, within the last decade less frequently so, and up until January 2020 it had been a year or two since my last event with Prem Rawat. I've been listening to his words of wisdom my whole life. Prem Rawat has been going around the world talking to people about Peace for over fifty years, I have only been alive for forty one.

Through going to his events and on occasion being involved in his work, as a volunteer, I have come to know a group of people who do the same. When I first started going to his events I didn't know many people who also attended, and in some ways this was a golden era of events for me. After the events I would walk through the crowds, remembering and absorbing what I had heard in Prem Rawat's talk, feeling quiet, still, without being distracted by anything or anyone.

The more events I attended the more people I got to know. As I became more friendly, more known, I started to meet different groups of people who hung out after the events, eating dinner together, with a joyous feeling from the event. Some times meeting up was fun and interesting, but as time went by, I found that it took away from the experience of the event, the experience of being with the self after hearing about the well of knowledge within.

Although I wanted to share this feeling of contentment with others, sometimes it just wasn't possible. Often the act of a group deciding where to eat became a chore, a logistical time wasting experience, everyone chiming in, spending time figuring out what restaurant to eat at, and then trying to find a place big enough to seat a large gathering of people, after which we would have to wait for the food to come and then of course participate in the decidedly time-consuming feat of splitting the bill between twenty people or more. I started to distance myself from the people who went to these events, while also going to fewer events myself.

In January 2020, as another event came around, I considered whether I should go, weighing up the pros and cons. I delayed to decide to attend until the morning of the event, I took the train from Ventura to Downtown Los Angeles, had my parents pick me up from Union Station, and then we made our way to The Orpheum Theatre on Broadway - a beautiful Charlie Chaplin era theatre.

"Where are you living now?"



While I made my way south on the train, I thought about seeing some of the people I always seemed to bump into at the events in Los Angeles. I wondered how many people would come and ask me questions. Most of the people I would see at these events, would always ask me the same question. Despite not seeing them outside the events, sometimes for years, they would always ask the same burning question. "Where are you living now?"

I travel a lot. It's true. In comparison to others, it's maybe not that much, or maybe its a lot, it's relative. I can understand how it could be hard to relate to a person like me. I travel nearly every year, often for months at a time, have held many different types of jobs, and have had long periods where I haven't had a job.

I often find that I tend to want be nice to people, and since I don't want to be rude or offensive I answer their burning question truthfully. Yet, in my mind, I don't want to answer the question at all. I don't care to answer. I am not interested, especially since I am going to an event to hear someone speak about peace, a feeling that resides within a person, a home every person carries with them wherever they may be, their true home. There have been times in my life where I have been homeless, sleeping in my car, out of my car, at hotels or in temporary accommodation. In those instances how should I answer this question of where I live "I live nowhere!"

As I pondered these thoughts, I felt the need to make this event different. Something had changed within me, I needed to be more playful, rather than be annoyed or stumped by other people's curiosity, I needed to come up with a better way to answer. How should I answer this question, "Where are you living now?"

Aren't we all tourists in this life? Here today, gone tomorrow. Leaving the physical behind. Life is temporary. We exist for a short time in a temporary realm but yet a very real one, looking for markers to place ourselves in. I am from this land, you are from over there.

The reality is that every human being is constantly moving. No one ever stands still, even when they stay or live in the same place for years on end, even if someone never leaves their house. We all move, because we exist on a planet that is in constant motion, spinning in space. Where are you living now? In space! On a spinning planet! What a crazy existence, that here we all are spinning in space on a planet, the same planet. We have that in common. This is my home just as much as it's yours. Does it really matter where I'm living? How about my vibe, my feeling towards life? Do you care about my experience of life, how I'm feeling? Are you experiencing? Are you alive? Maybe we could relate to each other on the experience of life.

Each human being lives in their mind and heart. We create our own sto-

ry in our own mind, yet we are physically attached, grounded, in gravity, to planet earth. We live on planet earth. We all live here. This is our home. We have this in common. This is our base, home base. We have the same home. Planet earth. We share the same home.

Most people asking me the question, although nice unthreatening people, they aren't actually interested in me, or where I live. They are only asking, in order to find a way to place me in relation to their own existence. Some are curious, most I would guess want to put me in a box, or a place that makes sense to them. I know this is going to sound cynical, but my view is that most people are only interested in me if there is something they can use me for or get something from. Do you find this to be true about a lot of your human interactions? How many people are genuinely interested in you as a person?

The art of Networking for example, is about meeting people in the hope of furthering your own business, profession or lifestyle. Dating, for a lot of men, is more about getting laid than anything else, not necessarily to pleasure the women but more to pleasure themselves. Relationships can become contracts, agreements, you bring what you bring, we share, but when it ends, I take what I brought into the relationship.

Humans are constantly navigating the world of relationships. Some build relationships through say social media, growing a following, with the hope of selling a product. Time and time again, people build a large following on Instagram, and down the line, sell them their lifestyle, their affiliations, their products. Such is the modern western life. We are all in this game, this capitalist regime, trying to find a way to live, mixing relationships and business. Rare do I find an occasion where I meet a person who can exist with me in that specific moment, unencumbered by any outside forces, purely right there with me in the moment, not needing anything from me, not trying to sell me anything, not asking me to follow them on Instagram.

For the most part nearly all the people I have met over the years at these events, turned out to be people that weren't really interested in getting to know me. A few have been amazing people in my life, people that actually do exist with me in the moment, accepting of wherever I have come from and wherever I may be going. The people that know me, they know where I am living, they don't need to ask, because they already know, and even if they don't, it doesn't matter.

It took me a long time to learn that the term 'friends' is something that I attach to others. It's not actually real. My concept of a friend has changed over the course of my life. When you are young, you think you have friends, but for me, most have come and gone. As you get older friends become peo-

ple you feel you can trust, that get you. Then in your darkest hour, you realise a true friend, is the one you can count on even in your darkest hour. Those type of friends are rare. Everyone else, I would say is an acquaintance.

I may have a lot of acquaintances but I only have a few friends. I used to misplace friends for acquaintances. This hasn't stopped me from being friendly with people, but it has changed the way I interact with people from my past and present. I don't make as much effort to stay in touch with people whom I used to be 'friendly' with, because I've seen over time that many of those people aren't that interested. Anyway, that's a lot to ask of them, I should have been clearer about what kind of friendships I wanted from the start, then I wouldn't have been so confused by people, and I would have developed more sincere relationships or at the least acknowledged when they were or weren't sincere interactions.

In reality, who really cares where I am living now. I can answer any which way, I could lie and it would make no difference. Whatever perception, whatever reason, whatever reaction is irrelevant, since most people live in their own mind, they are mostly trying to place me, to make sense of the world. Once they have their answer that will be it, they will move on. My attachment to their question, to their interest, should be minimal. Shared interest is a rare experience. Even in sex, you may share each other's body but you might be having completely separated personalised experiences.

As I arrived downtown where my parents picked me up from Union Station, we drove the half mile to The Orpheum Theatre. On the way I told them what I had been thinking "I bet you that I'll bump into a few people at the event and they will ask me the same question. Where are you living now? This time, I have the answer. Right here in the moment!" My parents laughed.

Together we tried to figure out if there were any better answers. Maybe I could answer. In your mind! No, that's a bit creepy. Maybe. Does it really matter? Slightly aggressive. Maybe. In my mind. A little Cryptic. How about. I'm living in Peace, brother. A bit too hippy dippy? Or, I 'm living at your mother's! Old school, but might get a laugh? Or, Right here in the moment, man! Still might be the best answer.

I'm reminded of a summer job I once had, on a mountain top in Colorado, as a nineteen year old, serving customers donuts and coffee. Americans would hear my english accent, while I served them food at fourteen thousand feet, and then ask where I was from. I used to ask them to guess. Most of the time they had no idea where I was from, thinking I was Irish, Australian or even French. I used to joke with people a lot more when I was younger, telling the customers I was from Jamaica, Paris, whichever country came into

my mind, and they used to believe me, I was always amazed.

When we arrived at the Orpheum Theatre, we parked in the adjacent lot, and I took a power nap for a half hour in the car. After, I went to a coffee shop next to where we had parked, initially in the hope of filling my water bottle and visiting the bathroom. It was a modern coffee shop with lots of people on computers, with sleek lines, high ceilings and good looking people looking incredibly productive on their devices. As I walked in, I semi-consciously surveyed the customers. One person caught my eye. A woman sitting on a high stool by the window typing away on her computer. I don't know why she stuck out to me, but she did, she seemed to have an aura about her.

I decided to put an order in for a tea, I figured it would be easier to use the bathroom, being in Downtown LA, bathrooms are often reserved for customers only. After ordering I made my way to the one unisex bathroom, the entry right off the main sitting area. As I waited in line I turned away from the toilet door to people watch. I waited, surveying the scene, and as I did the woman I had noticed came and stood in the line next to me. As she approached the line she gave me a big smile, and we made eye contact. She was wearing blue jeans with Native American sandals, a blue cashmere type sweater and Native American Jewellery. She had a small frizzy Afro and a slender physique, she was very beautiful. I commented on how I liked her shoes and jewellery, at which point she proceeded to tell me she had just purchased them from a Native American artist. We chatted a little further but then my turn came for the bathroom "Gotta go, it's my turn" I said, as I pointed mid sentence to the bathroom from which the previous customer was leaving.

While I went to the bathroom I wondered how cool it was that the one person I had noticed on walking into the cafe was the one person I was talking too. I made sure to leave the bathroom as best as I could, although considering this was downtown LA it wasn't in the best shape when I went in.

On exiting the bathroom we smiled at each other and I went and waited for my tea to arrive. When the tea came I stood by the counter near to where the lady had been sitting. I waited a little longer, hoping I would get to see her again. It felt strange, I didn't know how much longer I should wait, but I thought if you want to meet someone you often have to place yourself in the right place. Soon enough she was walking past me, we looked at each other and started talking.

She worked for a quite large museum in downtown Los Angeles, as a science curator. We chatted pleasantly, still standing near the pick up section, while people started lining up around us to collect their order. I suggest-

ed we move so people might not be able to listen in on our conversation. She agreed and we moved to a small table in the outside patio, free of onlookers, while she left her computer and purse at her station by the window. For the next twenty minutes, we sat around a small circular table, facing each other, talking vibrantly about her work, the event I was going to, the moon, photographing the moon, traveling abroad, Europe, and life in general. I remember noticing her facial features, the colour of her skin, her earrings, all while we engaged attentively with each other, looking into each others eyes.

I felt lucky, I was talking with a very intelligent, beautiful and possibly single lady. With five minutes before the start of the event, I unfortunately had to interrupt what she was saying and make my exit. We exchanged email addresses.

Feeling pretty positive and full of life, I headed around to the entry of the theatre. I made my way to the metal detector check, zig zagging through barriers, like you see in airport check points. There was no one else in line and as I was about to turn to meet a security guard, I heard a voice yell my name. I turned around, and there was a person I knew from many years ago. He was a twin, and back in the day both twins used to play tricks on people, pretending to be whichever twin the person thought they were.

“Hey” he said.

“Hey, which one are you? John or Tom?” (I felt the urge to play right away) He answered truthfully, or at least I think so.

“Ha Ha. I’m Tom!” (He said with a smile) He continued immediately.

“Hey. Where are you living now?”

Ah ha. I hadn’t even made it into the theatre and the question had been asked, but I was prepared.

“Right here, in the moment!” I answered with glee.

“No. No. Really. Where are you living? Ohio?”

I paused. Turned my head to the side, wondering what to do. He had no reaction. Nothing. He had immediately persisted, not even contemplating my answer. What should I do? I hadn’t prepared for the persistence of his mind, I had assumed the answer would stop people in their tracks, I was wrong.

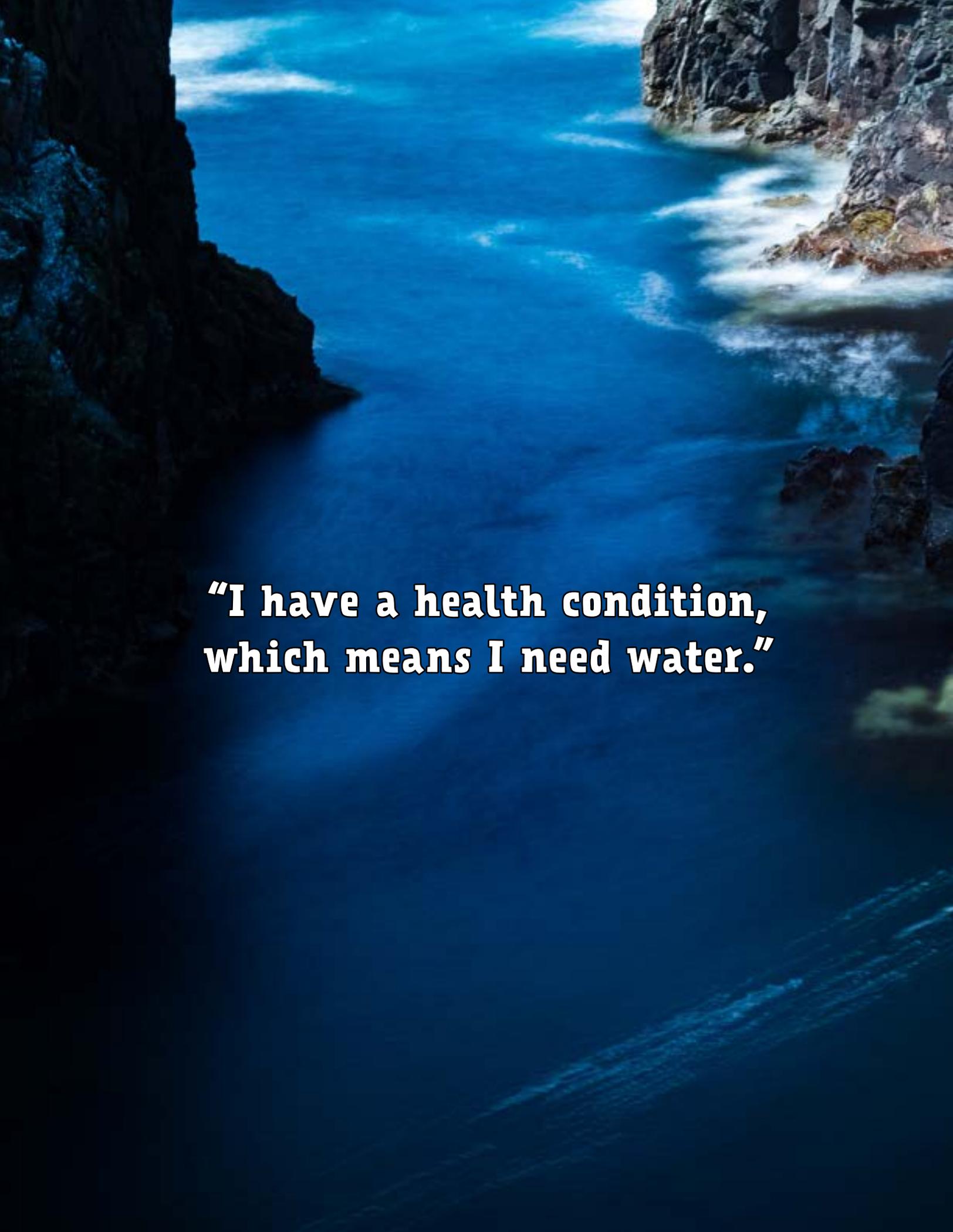
“Yeah, Yeah” I felt disappointed.

“I used to live there”. Tom continued.

“Uh huh” I answered. He continued. “I just saw Tyrone”.

“Uh huh” I answered.

Tyrone was someone I used to hang out with many years ago but over time I realised he wasn’t someone I really had anything in common with anymore, and in fact he wasn’t someone I trusted or wanted to be around. For



**“I have a health condition,
which means I need water.”**

Tom he equated seeing me with seeing Tyrone, since we all hung out together many years ago, and we shared going to these events. How was Tom supposed to know that I didn't have any attraction to being around Tyrone? Tom was trying to link us through old ties. So much had changed for me since I last met Tom, there was no way or reason to explain my life to him.

"Let's chat soon, we can find each other after the event" Tom said.

"Ok. Gotta go. See you later". I said.

As I unloaded my belongings from my pockets to head through the metal detector the security guard told me that I couldn't take the water bottle I was carrying into the event. I looked at him and responded, off the cuff

"I have a health condition, which means I need water."

"Well" he looked at his boss.

"You can smell it, it's not alcohol, it's water" I said.

The security guard took the lid off my bottle and sniffed the contents.

"Ok, smells like water" He pointed for me to enter the metal detector.

Quickly I found my seat, on the Mezzanine level, with a whole row to myself, as the theatre was only half full. I sat in silence, focusing on my breath, waiting to hear what Prem Rawat had to say.

Prem Rawat's talk was great. Reminding me of the present moment, the obsession with our problems and the gift of breath. Later I went to TimelessToday.com to re-listen to what he said on that day. Here are a few very brief quotes from that talk.

"In the midst of the world's chaos, it may feel like you have no control. But in your existence, you have control over every moment and can exercise it by what you choose.

The value of this moment is not the moment itself, but the fact that I can do anything in that moment, including being miserable or being elated.

The power of now, that's your Aladdin's lamp. Your wish is my command, says the lamp of now. Whatever you want. You want to be miserable, you can be so miserable you won't believe it, which 99.9% is what you choose. Since now doesn't dictate how you should be, you dictate how you want to be. So how do you want to be?

Your life. Your existence. Your now. Your now, and what did you ask your now to bring you? What did you choose in that now when your now said, your wish is my command. What did you choose? Did you choose clarity, did you choose joy, did you choose understanding in your life. Because if you did, you understand what I am talking about. You will be, I get it. I get it. I got it. You're right on. If you didn't. I don't know what he's talking about. I haven't got a clue. Clueless on

planet earth, not in Seattle, on planet earth. Clueless.”

On exiting the talk, I bumped into another familiar human, a family man I used to sometimes house sit for. We talked pleasantly enough, gave each other a hug and I made a conscious effort to be more silent, to listen, rather than respond to some innate desire to make small talk, ask and answer the usual questions we do. How are you? Where are you living? Still working the same job? Or respond to whatever energy the other person was putting out into the world.

As we exited the theatre onto the street with the hundreds of other people in attendance. We continued chatting on the street outside the theatre. Some friends came and said hello to us, a few looking to make dinner plans. Then two women, both of whom I knew, stopped to chat, not to me, but since I was there I felt like I had to say hello, even though I didn't want to. One of the women, I used to try and help with housing problems. She seemed to have a habit of picking mouldy homes to rent, and the last time I interacted with her many years ago, I went to her new rental, where she had asked me “Do you think this house might have mold?”

On walking through her new property I discovered there was a creek running through the middle of her house, a small one, but a creek nonetheless. I was astounded. Had she not listened to anything I had told her when I visited her previous rentals? Water breeds mould. Needless to say this was the last time I really took her seriously. Outside the theatre, she looked at me with her big eyes, almost as if she was trying to draw me into her gaze, her world, and then she said, “You're back!”

I wanted to come up with some funny remark but I couldn't think of anything. In her mind I was back, and yet after everything that had just been said inside the theatre, who really gives a fuck, whether I was back or forward, here or there. I was in the moment! I was right here in the now.

I had gone traveling for eight months, and so yes, in a way, I was back, this was true. Would I be back if I had not left the country but had not seen her for eight months? Would I still be back then. Admittedly, at the precise moment of seeing her again, I was back in her life. Maybe that was her point? In reality though, we all live on the same planet, we all live in this time and space, there is no back, there is no forward. I find the whole, you're back thing, strange. I get it, this person is a sweet, kind person, there is nothing wrong with her, but in a flash all of these thoughts went through my head, but instead of saying something, I said nothing, and nodded. She kept speaking, “It's so nice to come and listen. I've been so distracted, so out of it. Things haven't been easy.” I nodded some more. I decided silence would be my friend. I furthered my practice of not engaging, letting others lead the

**“Your father has
the sperm, but your
mother, oh your
mother, she has
everything else, the
looks and the brains!”**



conversation, seeing where that would take me rather than trying to take the conversation where I thought it should go. Eventually the conversation petered out and the two ladies said their goodbyes.

I moved off towards the car to meet up with my parents. As I walked towards the car I heard my name yelled out in the dark night. The voice came from a car half sticking out of a parking space, reversing to leave, the driver stopping to yell my name, oblivious to the possible problems she was causing to cars trying to leave behind her.

I walked towards her car trying to make out her face as the bright lights of the cars leaving the lot blurred my vision. As I neared her car I realised it was Bethany, a wild German lady, with a good heart. She had driven all the way south from the Canadian border to come to the event, and of course, you guessed, the first question she asked me. Where are you living now?

By this point I don't even remember how the conversation went but I do know she enjoyed my answer. "Right her in the moment, Bethany!" She laughed. I deflected any further questions and put the attention back on her as much as possible. She spoke of the struggles of selling her art, turning her photography into a career, all while finding an affordable decent place to live. The conversation moved towards my parents, whom she knew before she met me.

"You have a good family. Yes you do. You are all so beautiful. You are a handsome intelligent man, yes you are. You got that from your parents. Your father has the sperm, but your mother, oh your mother, she has everything else, the looks and the brains!"

Ha Ha Ha. I laughed. I knew she would say something brilliant if I waited long enough. She always had crazy things to say. I noticed my parents walking behind the car and beckoned them over. Passing the Bethany conversation baton over to them, I moved off and headed towards the coffee shop I had visited prior.

As I waited outside the coffee shop for my parents to arrive, I observed the street life. A fellow event goer, a fashion dresser to the stars, wearing a nice three piece suit, came up to me while he smoked a cigarette. I asked him how he was doing.

"Not so good. I came back from Europe this morning. I had taken a sleeping pill on the flight, I was a little groggy after I got off the plane, I hadn't actually had much sleep. I was still zonked and on the way here I got into a car accident. It's been kind of crazy".

"Sorry to hear that man. I hope you get some rest soon."

Then I contradicted myself, almost like a reflex action, slipping up with all my previous intentions.

“Are you still living in the Hollywood Hills?”

“No. I lost my house” as he took another drag of his cigarette.

I remembered many years ago when I first moved to the Los Angeles, smoking Marlboro Reds, alongside joints, in his backyard. Back then it was all so fresh, so exciting, so Hollywood, so different from anywhere I had ever lived. He used to hunt me down at parties, at first I was kind of put off by him, I thought he was gay, maybe he was, he used to boast that he'd been on the front of a Playgirl magazine in his youth. I was young, had a full head of hair, a simple innocent demeanour and also knew people he wanted to know. Without knowing it, I was part of a particular 'it' crowd. But that was over ten years ago and since then I have had nothing to do with him, nor has he had any real interest in knowing me. As I pondered the past, he turned his attention towards me.

“So. What about you? Married? kids?” As he took a drag on his cigarette.

“Ha ha” I laughed and answered

“It's hard enough looking after myself let alone anyone else.”

“Tell me about it” as he threw his cigarette to the floor, crushing it with his foot and making his way inside to get a coffee.

MADE INTO AN ISLAND

Were you different in school? Constantly picked on or bullied? Did you have some kind of disability that other kids made fun of you for? Was your skin colour skin different to most of the people around you, and were made aware of this fact, every single day? If so, you will surely know about the feeling of isolation.

Are you an activist fighting what seems like a never ending battle against a stronger more powerful opponent? Are you or have you ever been sick, alone, fighting for your life? Have you ever been addicted to a substance or a person or a mental state, and then isolated yourself from it or them in order to free yourself of that addiction? Then you will know what it feels like to be isolated.

Have you been in an academic environment, toiling to compete, to fulfil the schools desires to fit in to pass the tests, with a group of anxiety driven students pressuring you the whole time, to fit in, to socialise, to be like everyone else around you? Have you ever been singled out by the government? Sent to jail? Been Homeless? Has your mind told you that you are no good, not successful enough, that everyone else is better than you, you're a loser, you don't fit in? You will then know the feeling of isolation.

As the Coronavirus sweeps its way across the world, causing lockdowns everywhere. Forced social distancing and social isolation is being practiced by billions of people. Social distancing will probably be very difficult for large sections of society, no more distractions, no more adventures, isolated from the world, not to mention the financial repercussions.

This article, explores aspects regarding the feeling of isolation. I am not addressing what needs to be done to survive a pandemic, or any such extremely dangerous virus such as the Coronavirus. If you are living in a city, surrounded by millions of people, it requires a certain level of effort to keep everyone isolated, and not spread the virus. How to deal with the ins and outs of surviving a pandemic is not something I will be addressing here, however, understanding the feeling of isolation or being isolated is important to our survival. Taking action based on the feeling of isolation and taking ac-

tion based on what is needed, are two different issues. Regardless of who you are or where you live, nearly every human being has experienced the feeling of being isolated.

The word 'isolated' has a few meanings 1) far away from other places, buildings, or people; 2) having minimal contact or little in common with others, and; 3) single and exceptional. When we isolate we 1) remain alone or apart from others or 2) identify (something) and deal with it separately.

The word, isolated stems from the Latin word 'insula' which means, island. Later 'insula' would change into the word 'insulatus' meaning 'made into an island.' Isolated then became what we know today: to be far away from anyone, to be apart, alone. We can infer from these definitions that to be isolated is to be or made into an island, separated, singular but also special, single, exceptional, and a human being is just that, exceptional.

A human being comes into the world, alone, almost self contained. The mother feeds and nurtures a child until the child may support itself. Each human being experiences life through their own eyes, ears, and whatever senses are available to them. Humans build connections with the people around, whether we want to or not. We naturally form bonds with the people around us, out of curiosity and necessity. We view the world through our own eyes, looking outward, yet experiencing inwardly. Each person is an island to themselves. Besides food, air and water, for which the Planet Earth provides most of, a human being, self heals, self generates, breaths, and functions as a fully formed individual. We come into the world alone, even if you have a twin born at the same time, you will essentially be alone within yourself, and when you leave you will die alone, no one goes with you for the journey of death, just to make sure you are ok, to then turn around and go home. A human being is gifted, an island of breath, an island of beauty, a self contained unit, working, living, breathing.

Even though a human being is born as a self contained unit, with everything needed to live, most likely, all human beings at some point in their lives will feel a sense of isolation, some more so than others. Even today with the interconnectedness of our current lives, cell phones and social media accounts, where we can share our every move, humans still feel lonely and isolated. Social media accounts do not fully reflect the true image or the feelings of a person. Sure, some accounts are laden with picture perfect images, showing a life lived to the full. Maybe those people are having the time of their lives, or could be a projection, a facade, the truth much more varied, images don't necessarily convey the true feelings of the human experience.

How are we supposed to know what's really going on with the world, when we as a society create images, create lies, and live those lies. In today's

world, thanks mainly in part to journalism, we have no idea what the truth or facts are, as there is so much misinformation. People openly lie.

Every person reading this has probably known somebody who took their own life, suddenly, leaving those behind in shock, wondering where the suicide came from or why the person killed themselves, because they showed no signs of being suicidal. Maybe we were too engaged in our own lives to notice, or the person hid their real feelings well. Loneliness and isolation are very real, and can affect anybody at any time of their life.

In a sense, being human, involves the feeling of loneliness, its part of our experience, why, because we all know at some point we will die. Death is lonely. We all experience death alone. We don't want to acknowledge it until we have to, and that's the best way to be, what's the point of focusing on something that is a certainty. There is nothing nice about death, you cannot sugar coat death, it sucks. When we think about how life involves death, it brings up feelings of isolation and loneliness. Letting go to the fact that one day we will die, may be the hardest thing we ever have to face.

Yet, we can survive, even with the feeling of isolation and loneliness. The necessities of life, in terms of logistics, in terms of food, water, air, shelter, cleanliness - this is a different matter. We need outside inputs to survive but the essential ingredient, life itself, is all ours, that was given to us at our birth. We have to nourish and take care of our vessel but as long as we have breath, we have life. In life there is one true friend that will always be there, the breath. The breath comes in and out of a human, bringing life. Once the breath leaves, so does life, the last thing a human being experiences, will be the breath leaving them. Understanding this fact can help with the feeling of loneliness and isolation, we are truly each an island of breath.

When the idea of social isolation or social distancing, surfaced as a way to combat the Coronavirus, I did not hesitate to distance myself. I had no doubts or fears about being isolated, it made complete sense to me as a way to limit the effects of the virus. Being isolated was an experience I have felt many times before, it was nothing new. Of course, forced isolation is a different animal. Before, if I wanted to interact with someone I could, with forced isolation, this is not an option. Yet for the greater good of society, myself and the world, spending more time isolated is a process I am willing to undertake.

A few weeks prior to the emergence of the Coronavirus, I noticed while out riding my bike how I was one of a handful of human beings out on the bike path and the streets of the town. Here, most people drive everywhere, often, one person per car. As I cycle around town on my bike, everyone else is hidden behind a chunk of metal. I don't see people on the streets or pavements. I see people going in and out of buildings, and unless I need to go in

those buildings I am mostly alone on my bike. I do see a few local homeless people I have gotten to know over time, because they are the only ones on the streets, and I have one friend who doesn't own a car, sometimes we go on bike rides together, or meet up at the coffee shop. Even in the coffee shops most people are on their phones or computers, it's like being on your own there. It's strange to live in a place where you rarely see other people, even though there are thousand of houses and many people driving around in cars. If I want to see human beings, I have to consume, buy stuff. Of course if you have kids, a job, hobbies, you see people when participating in those activities.

The way I describe the feeling of not owning a car in a place where probably 99% of people own and drive cars every single day of the week is, being surrounded by moving and stationary objects that have people in them but never actually seeing or meeting the people in those boxes. In a way it's actually quite a peaceful experience riding my bike, not in terms of the noise created by automobiles (which becomes apparent to a person who is using pedal power versus those who are in their cars - people driving cars don't notice the noise they create with their machines). When you use pedal power to get around in a car centric universe, there is a quiet isolated feeling to your movement, you are mostly alone on the roads, moving from one place to another, never really seeing anyone.

A few months ago I purchased my first electric bike, in the hope that it would allow me to live a more cultural active and engaged lifestyle. I live on a hill one thousand feet above sea level. It is seven miles, from my house, to the nearest food store. Unless my family do food shopping for me, it takes forty minutes to get to the shops, and a lot longer to get home because I have to climb up the thousand feet elevation, carrying whatever produce I might have bought. I can't ride up the hill, it's too steep, hence the reason behind



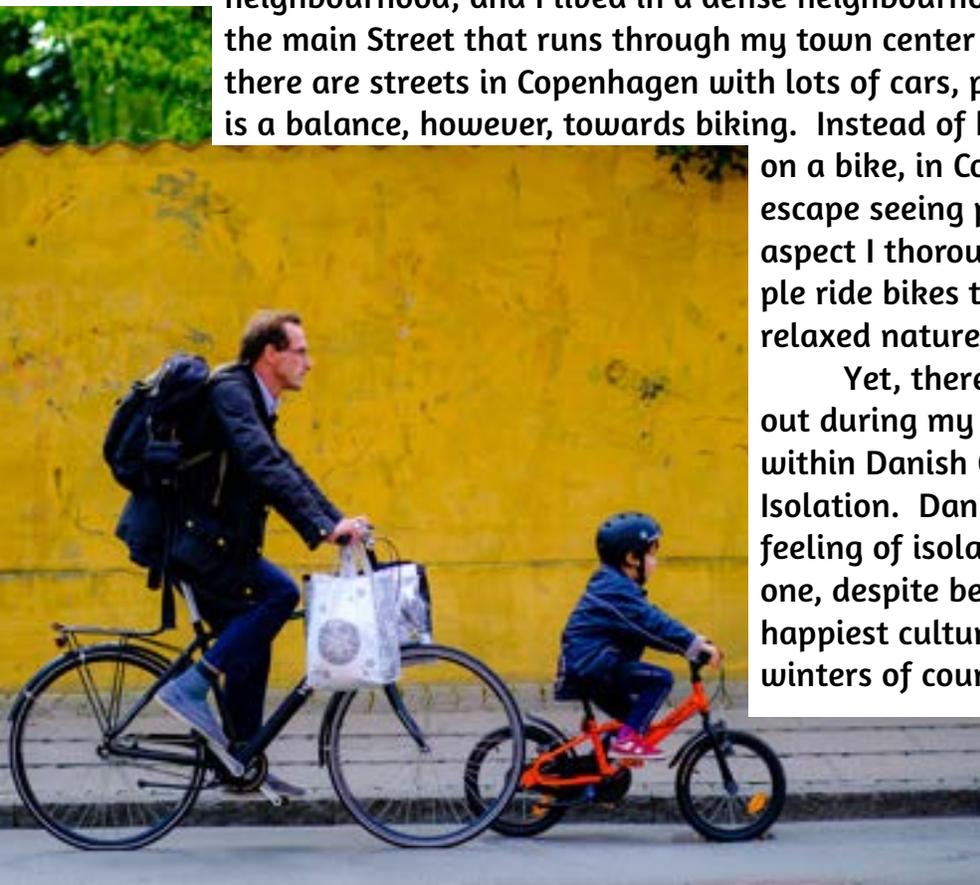
getting an electric bike, in order to use less energy, so that I will be able to do more. If I had to survive on doing everything by bicycle it would take most of my energy to do the basics, let alone have any kind of social life. Consequently, I find my lifestyle to be insulated, the only people I hang out with are my family, the people I live with, and I tend to go out very little because it requires a lot of energy. Over time I felt more and more isolated living here. Of course with a dangerous virus circulating, there has been no pull to socialize, the less people I interact with, the better.

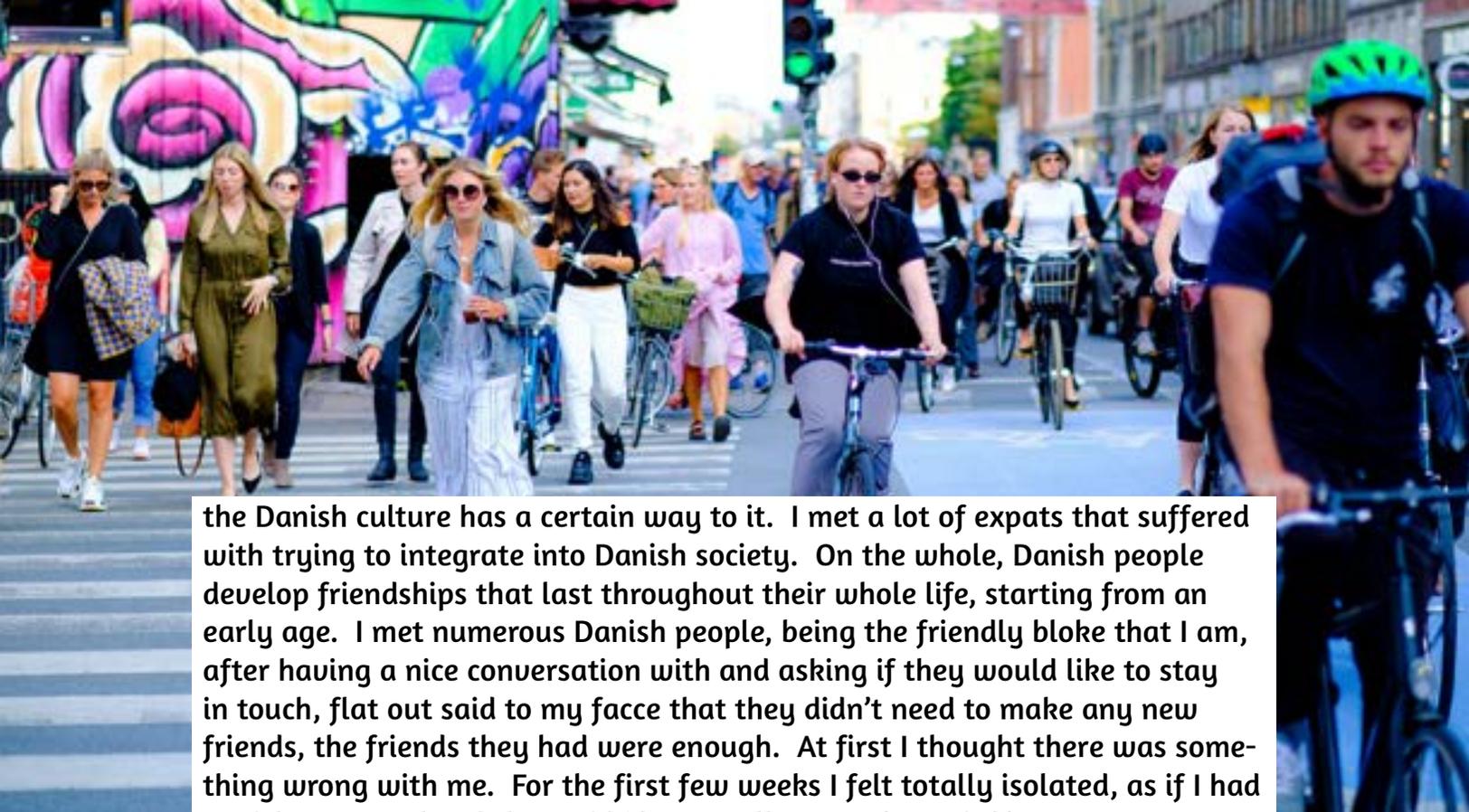
Oh, woe is me, I hear you cry, your life is so tough! Yes, compared to some people, those who hike for days to collect water, my life is considerably easy, but this article is not about comparing one life against another, it's about the feeling of isolation, which can be felt by anyone from any background with any amount of money. It's almost universal to all human beings, whatever your culture, the country you live, whether you live in the middle of nowhere or around millions of people, a person can feel isolated.

For example, when I lived in Copenhagen last summer for two months, I biked everywhere. Compared to where I live now it's a completely different experience. In the small California town, where I live now, there are about 10,000 people, most have a car. In Copenhagen, roughly 55% of people ride bikes to their work, school, hobbies, etc. With roughly 650,000 bicycles on the streets and dedicated cycle lanes, you see more people on bikes than you do in cars. I lived on the 6th floor of an apartment block, and during the two months I stayed there, I hardly noticed or heard any cars on the streets in my neighbourhood, and I lived in a dense neighbourhood. It was quieter than the main Street that runs through my town center here in the USA. Of course there are streets in Copenhagen with lots of cars, people still drive cars, there is a balance, however, towards biking.

Instead of hardly ever seeing anyone on a bike, in Copenhagen you couldn't escape seeing people riding their bikes, an aspect I thoroughly enjoyed. When people ride bikes they seem to have a certain relaxed nature to the way they move.

Yet, there was one thing that stuck out during my stay in Denmark, living within Danish Culture, the feeling of Isolation. Danish people suffer from a feeling of isolation just as much as anyone, despite being described as one of the happiest cultures on earth. The long dark winters of course don't help, but more so





the Danish culture has a certain way to it. I met a lot of expats that suffered with trying to integrate into Danish society. On the whole, Danish people develop friendships that last throughout their whole life, starting from an early age. I met numerous Danish people, being the friendly bloke that I am, after having a nice conversation with and asking if they would like to stay in touch, flat out said to my face that they didn't need to make any new friends, the friends they had were enough. At first I thought there was something wrong with me. For the first few weeks I felt totally isolated, as if I had a sticker on my head that said 'do not talk to me I'm weird.'

For this reason Expats in Copenhagen tend to hang out with other expats. That's why it's a great city, as an expat you meet loads of people from all over the world. The expat community is vibrant and large. The difficulties of integrating, pushes people to make more effort to socialise and do things together. I made more acquaintances in two months in Copenhagen than I have made in years of living in California. The biking culture and the ease of moving around made socialising a breeze. In California, people are nice, almost in a airy fairy kind of way, but actually getting to know people can take years and sometimes in my experience, never.

Of course, because I didn't speak Danish, this excluded me from being able to integrate, just like any culture you may live in where you can't speak the language. Danish people may all speak English, but it doesn't mean you are included. Once I started to understand the undercurrents of Danish culture which precludes people from being overt or too friendly, I realized I wasn't the reason people weren't as friendly to me as I was to them. I decided I had to be myself. If people wanted to know me, they would.

While I was there I heard stories of elderly people who suffer from living alone and never being touched, to the point where their skin starts to deteriorate from the isolation, lack of care, and sunlight. Danes have latched on to Hygge, for this reason, something I don't fully understand, but basically Hygge centres around getting together with people you feel most comfortable with, sharing your difficulties with people who won't challenge your opinions. In a way, Hygge, developed out of the struggle with being formal,

polite and professional all day long. The necessities of living in a socialistic culture require a certain conformity, the alternative to which is to be comfortable at home with people you care about, having Hygge. In a sense there is a loneliness to the professional life, the work, the upkeep. I would see teenagers singing in the street as a kind of anti establishment action, being loud in public is frowned upon. To Hygge, is to relax and be yourself around others who care about you.

You can live in the city surrounded by thousands of people and still feel lonely, and you can live on a remote island and feel the complete opposite. Last summer I lived on Fair Isle for one month, an island in Shetland, Scotland, inhabited by fifty or so people and the occasional bird watcher. I looked after a family's home while they went away. I arrived thanks to a family connection from my childhood, the lighthouse keeper, who invited me to come visit. While there I did experience the feeling of being isolated both externally and internally. As the fog surrounded the island, I was left to my own devices. The sheep dog I was looking after was my companion, feeding him and walking him while making sure he didn't chase sheep off the steep cliffs kept me somewhat occupied, and less prone to thinking how all alone I was on an island in the middle of nowhere. I mostly cooked my own meals, shopped at the only store on the island (once a week), when the fresh produce came in - if I was lucky to get there in time before all the produce was bought by the islanders. Living off eggs from the chickens, frozen croissants and potato dishes with the occasional carrot, onion and zucchini. The internet was slow, so I read books, went for walks and slept a lot. The house did have a small separate business running, so a couple of people came to do their [Fair Isle Knitwear](#) - so I wasn't completely alone. In the end I really appreciated looking after a dog, some chickens and a few cats. None of the people I met



were my family, the dog wasn't mine, everything was temporarily mine.

When you live on an island that you can walk in a day, if you are fit, you see a different side to isolation. The islanders had the same drama as anyone else living in any other place inhabited by people. Human congregations seem to do the same things. There was a church, museum, community hall, tourists, etc. The islanders had to figure out how to live together, some neighbours didn't talk to each other, some married couples divorced but stayed on the island, people had affairs. I enjoyed not being part of the drama, but appreciated the effort it took for people to live there. People had to get along, they worked together, held numerous jobs, things had to get worked out despite the differences. Social structures can become a trap, constantly spending time talking about each other, gossiping, just as much as any other place on earth. Soap operas are built on such places. The classic English ones such as *EastEnders*, *Emmerdale*, the Australian *Home and Away* and the American show *Dallas* - all center around human relationships.

Despite my forays into socialising on the island, I left as I arrived, alone. There I realized, there is a way of working together but also being distant from it. Do I really need to be involved in everyone's business, no, but some co-operation and sharing, needs to take place in order for me to exist, especially a remote island in the middle of the ocean. I was in the end impressed by how despite their differences people worked things out as a community.

From Fair Isle I made my way to a tall ship, setting sail from Aarhus, Denmark, to the southern tip of Norway. For two weeks I crewed on a 150ft sailboat with sixteen people, all of whom I had never met before. From the first day until our final departure we were ship mates, working, eating and sleeping in close proximity to one another. I made the best of it, laughing and joking as much as possible, trying to keep my energy up. Everyone was amenable, and yet each day I went to my bunk to sleep alone. There wasn't someone who I could really speak too, really connect with. Mostly I kept it light, keeping working relationships, occasionally becoming more expressive as the time went on. Despite thinking I would get on with everyone and we would become close, I felt a distance to the crew and passengers. Much like going on a cruise ship, where you are surrounded by thousands of people yet most people never say a word to you, they are more interested in eating at the buffet than meeting you. Besides the food, it was a life changing trip and one I will not forget.

At the end of the boat trip, a few days after coming ashore in Stranvanger, I became sick with the flu. At first I felt weak, had a migraine and could feel my body fighting something. I started to sweat even though it was the end of summer and it was cold. Despite feeling a little blue I made my way

to Bergen, Norway, as I previously had intended to do a mini tour of northern Norway. Knowing nobody in Bergen, I found a small apartment to rent for a few days. Totally fed up with the British food of white bread and pasta, that had been served on the boat, I longed to cook my own meals. I dropped my bags off and dragged myself to the local food store to buy some supplies. When I got back to the apartment, I tried to sleep off the massive migraine that was now afflicting me, but it didn't improve.

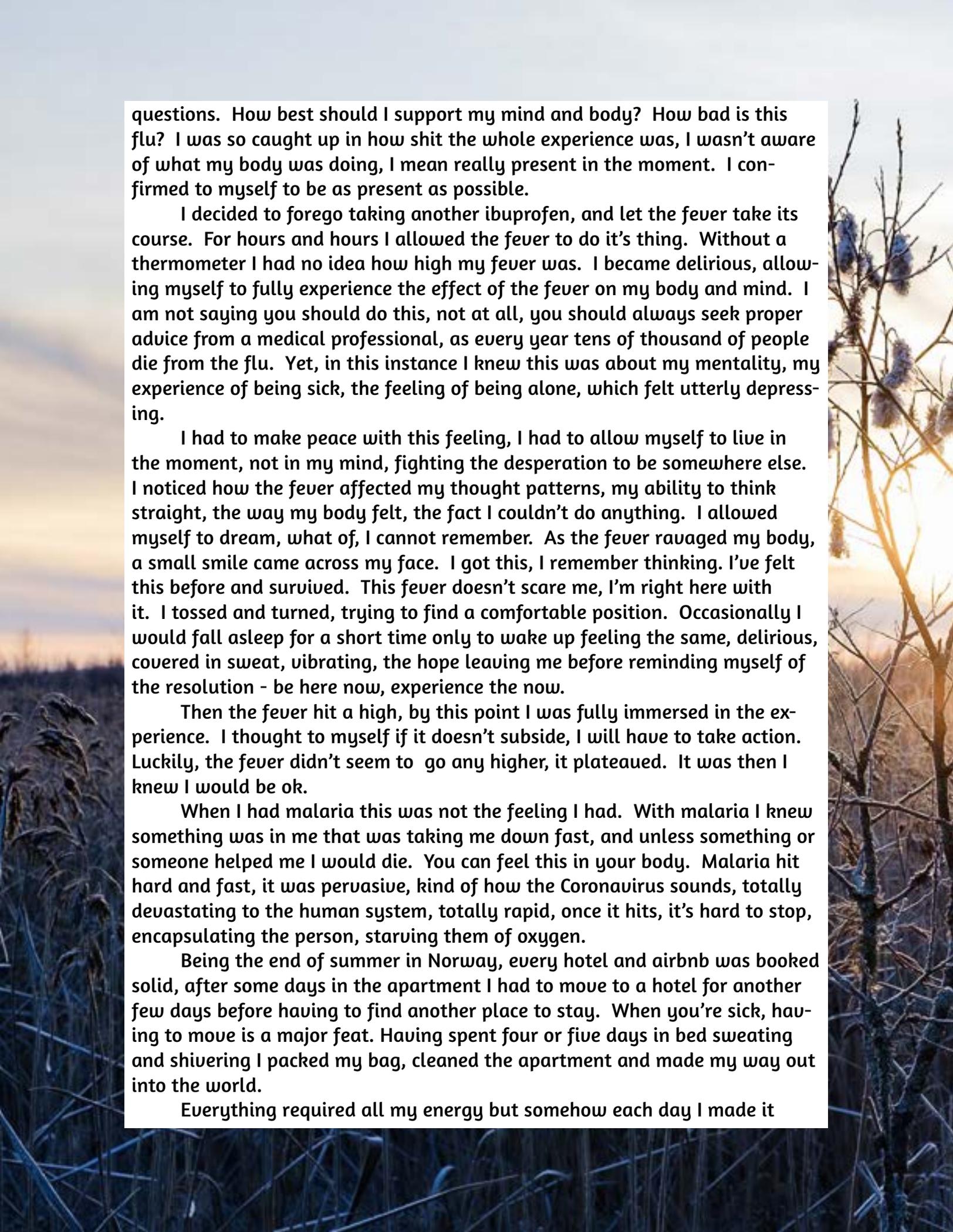
The next day in broken english I bought some ibuprofen. Unwittingly I purchased an extra large dosage. I took one pill. At first I felt better, and managed to sleep a little, thinking the bad feeling would pass, but then a few hours later, I had a fever, the ibuprofen had it on. I started sweating profusely and for three days I vacillated between extreme sweating and heavy chills. I was alone and without help. For those first few days somehow I managed to make a small amount of food, forcing myself to eat and drinking lots of water. I switched sides of the bed every few hours, so that I wasn't lying in the cold sheets covered by my own sweat. I would open and close the window for fresh air, wash the sheets occasionally, or not depending on how bad I felt. I lived off the produce I purchased on the first day, isolating myself for days and days.

I have experienced chills and sweats of the worst kind, the kind you get when you have cerebral malaria. As the malaria ravages your body you can feel it killing you. I survived malaria but whenever I get the chills and sweats my mind goes back to that time, to that experience, the experience of your body losing the battle with the disease, fighting but losing. With no one nearby to comfort me, and with little energy to call anyone, I decided I had to adapt.

At the height of the fever, while shaking violently during a particular bad chill, I started to believe my body would not stop shivering. Like an animal that crawls to the side of the road after being hit by a car to find a hole to curl up in and go into shock, my mind went dark. I thought, this is how I was going to die, alone, in a strange apartment, in a foreign country, with no friends or family, isolated, shivering to my death. The cold took hold, I turned up the heat and put more clothes on to try and warm my body. Thankfully I moved from violently shivering to sweating. As I shifted out of fear of dying I made a resolution to change, to break my mental pathways, - because for my mind, all the signs were leading to another experience like malaria, to near death. In the past I used to mentally fight the sickness, to mentally say to myself, how awful, how unlucky, how unfortunate I was. I knew I couldn't change the fact I had this flu, that my body was going through what it was going through. I could keep fighting myself, as my body in a way was fighting something within itself. Or I could ask myself some

"...slightly delirious, covered in sweat, vibrating, the hope leaving me before reminding myself of the resolution - be here now, experience the now."





questions. How best should I support my mind and body? How bad is this flu? I was so caught up in how shit the whole experience was, I wasn't aware of what my body was doing, I mean really present in the moment. I confirmed to myself to be as present as possible.

I decided to forego taking another ibuprofen, and let the fever take its course. For hours and hours I allowed the fever to do its thing. Without a thermometer I had no idea how high my fever was. I became delirious, allowing myself to fully experience the effect of the fever on my body and mind. I am not saying you should do this, not at all, you should always seek proper advice from a medical professional, as every year tens of thousand of people die from the flu. Yet, in this instance I knew this was about my mentality, my experience of being sick, the feeling of being alone, which felt utterly depressing.

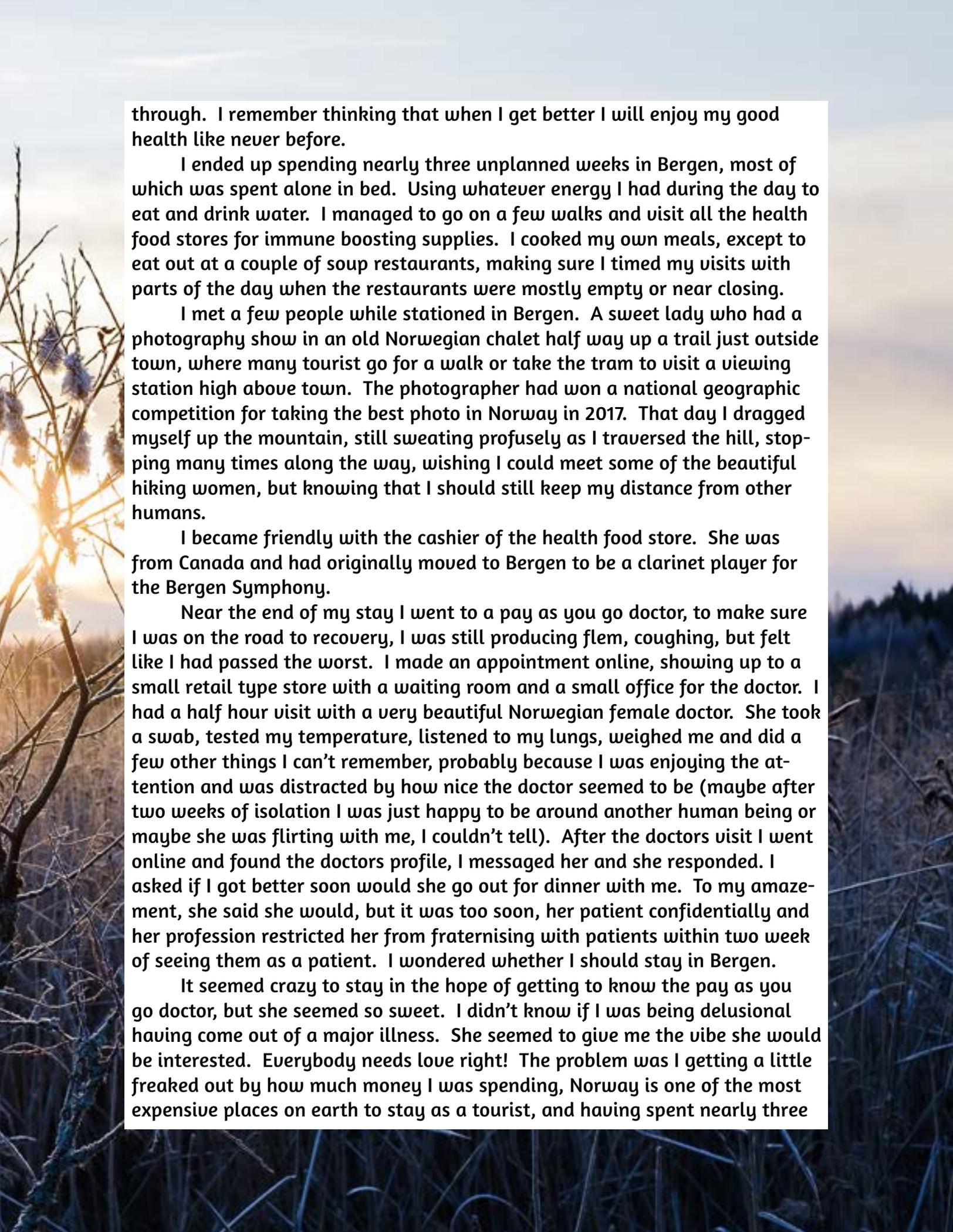
I had to make peace with this feeling, I had to allow myself to live in the moment, not in my mind, fighting the desperation to be somewhere else. I noticed how the fever affected my thought patterns, my ability to think straight, the way my body felt, the fact I couldn't do anything. I allowed myself to dream, what of, I cannot remember. As the fever ravaged my body, a small smile came across my face. I got this, I remember thinking. I've felt this before and survived. This fever doesn't scare me, I'm right here with it. I tossed and turned, trying to find a comfortable position. Occasionally I would fall asleep for a short time only to wake up feeling the same, delirious, covered in sweat, vibrating, the hope leaving me before reminding myself of the resolution - be here now, experience the now.

Then the fever hit a high, by this point I was fully immersed in the experience. I thought to myself if it doesn't subside, I will have to take action. Luckily, the fever didn't seem to go any higher, it plateaued. It was then I knew I would be ok.

When I had malaria this was not the feeling I had. With malaria I knew something was in me that was taking me down fast, and unless something or someone helped me I would die. You can feel this in your body. Malaria hit hard and fast, it was pervasive, kind of how the Coronavirus sounds, totally devastating to the human system, totally rapid, once it hits, it's hard to stop, encapsulating the person, starving them of oxygen.

Being the end of summer in Norway, every hotel and airbnb was booked solid, after some days in the apartment I had to move to a hotel for another few days before having to find another place to stay. When you're sick, having to move is a major feat. Having spent four or five days in bed sweating and shivering I packed my bag, cleaned the apartment and made my way out into the world.

Everything required all my energy but somehow each day I made it



through. I remember thinking that when I get better I will enjoy my good health like never before.

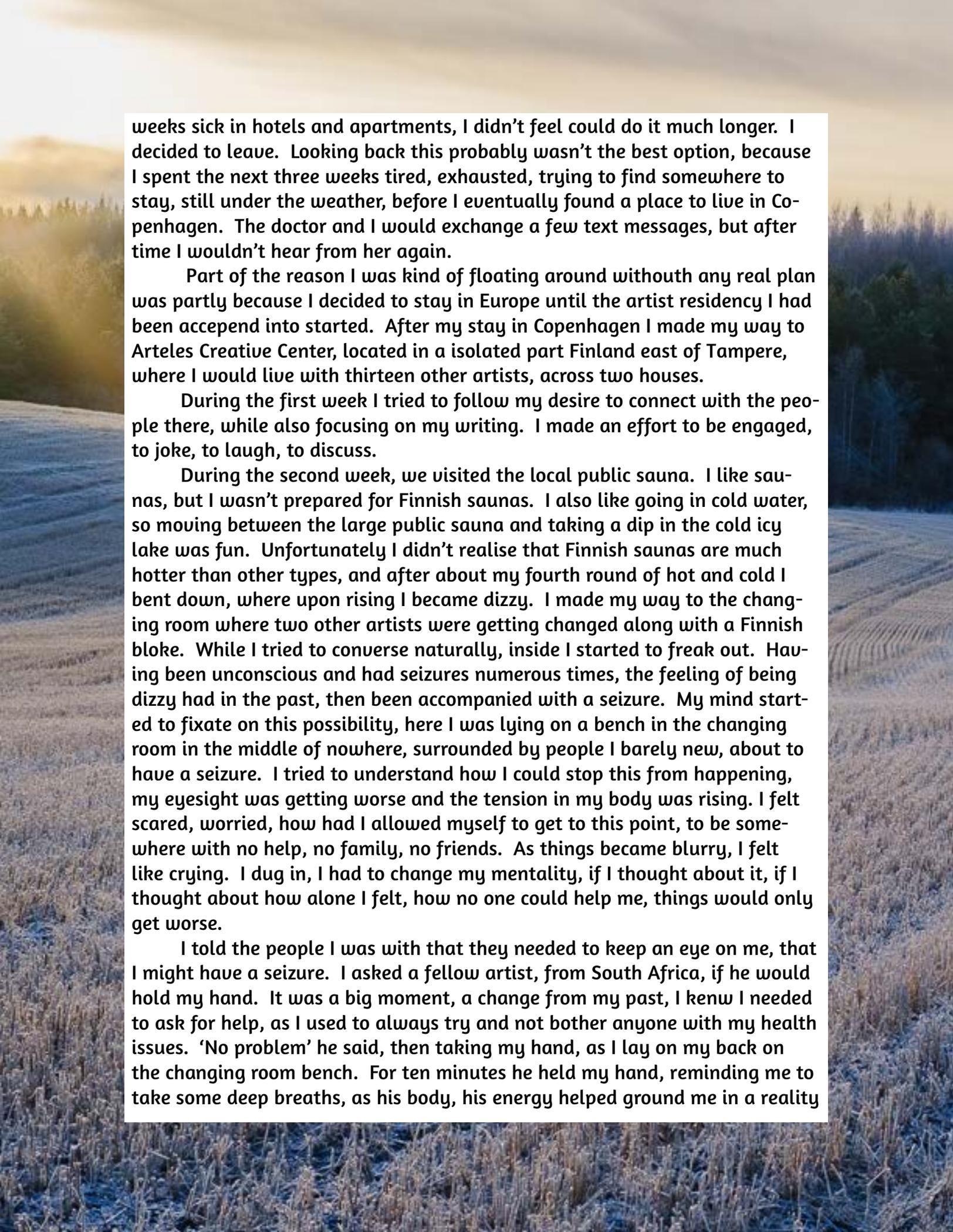
I ended up spending nearly three unplanned weeks in Bergen, most of which was spent alone in bed. Using whatever energy I had during the day to eat and drink water. I managed to go on a few walks and visit all the health food stores for immune boosting supplies. I cooked my own meals, except to eat out at a couple of soup restaurants, making sure I timed my visits with parts of the day when the restaurants were mostly empty or near closing.

I met a few people while stationed in Bergen. A sweet lady who had a photography show in an old Norwegian chalet half way up a trail just outside town, where many tourist go for a walk or take the tram to visit a viewing station high above town. The photographer had won a national geographic competition for taking the best photo in Norway in 2017. That day I dragged myself up the mountain, still sweating profusely as I traversed the hill, stopping many times along the way, wishing I could meet some of the beautiful hiking women, but knowing that I should still keep my distance from other humans.

I became friendly with the cashier of the health food store. She was from Canada and had originally moved to Bergen to be a clarinet player for the Bergen Symphony.

Near the end of my stay I went to a pay as you go doctor, to make sure I was on the road to recovery, I was still producing flem, coughing, but felt like I had passed the worst. I made an appointment online, showing up to a small retail type store with a waiting room and a small office for the doctor. I had a half hour visit with a very beautiful Norwegian female doctor. She took a swab, tested my temperature, listened to my lungs, weighed me and did a few other things I can't remember, probably because I was enjoying the attention and was distracted by how nice the doctor seemed to be (maybe after two weeks of isolation I was just happy to be around another human being or maybe she was flirting with me, I couldn't tell). After the doctors visit I went online and found the doctors profile, I messaged her and she responded. I asked if I got better soon would she go out for dinner with me. To my amazement, she said she would, but it was too soon, her patient confidentiality and her profession restricted her from fraternising with patients within two week of seeing them as a patient. I wondered whether I should stay in Bergen.

It seemed crazy to stay in the hope of getting to know the pay as you go doctor, but she seemed so sweet. I didn't know if I was being delusional having come out of a major illness. She seemed to give me the vibe she would be interested. Everybody needs love right! The problem was I getting a little freaked out by how much money I was spending, Norway is one of the most expensive places on earth to stay as a tourist, and having spent nearly three



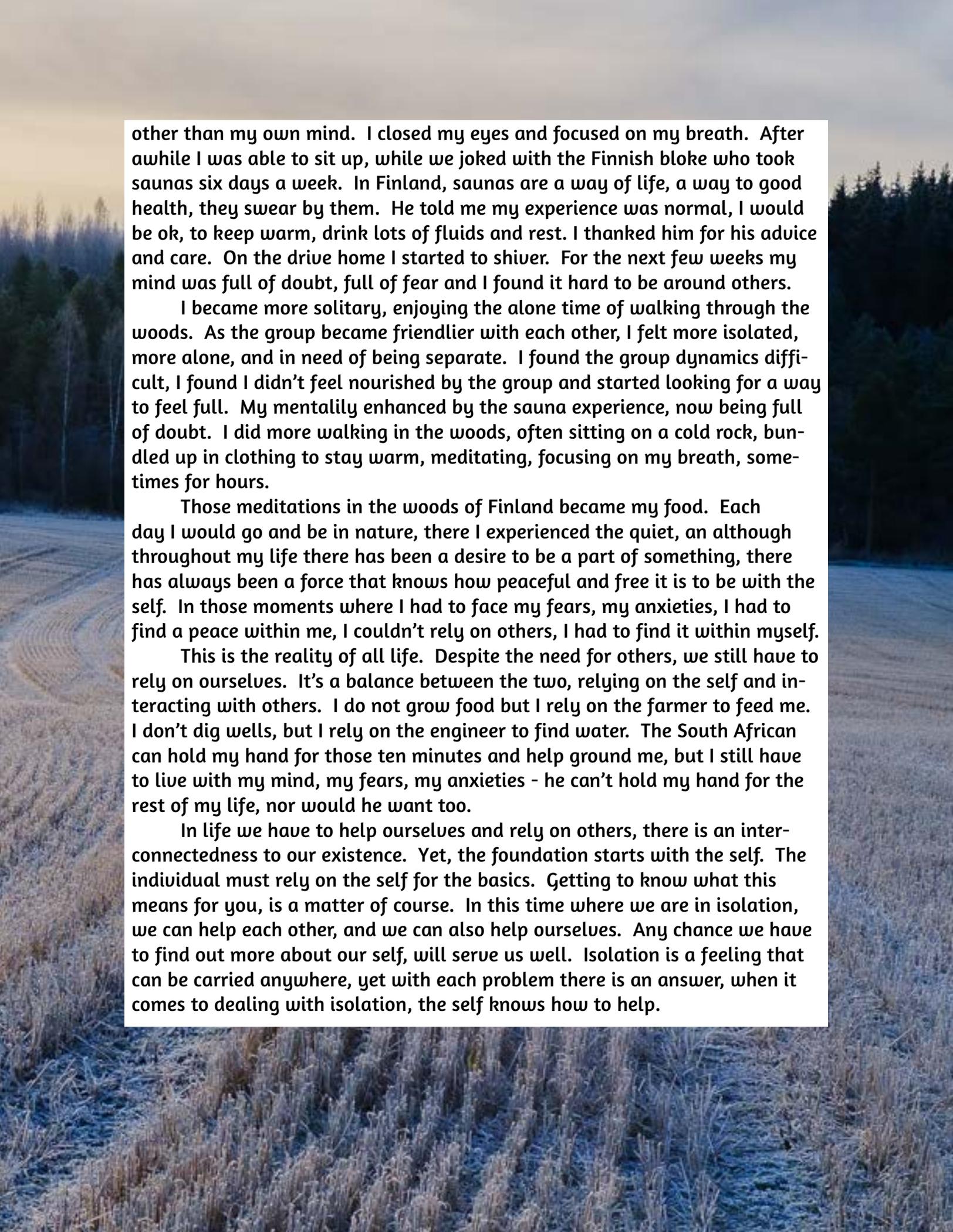
weeks sick in hotels and apartments, I didn't feel could do it much longer. I decided to leave. Looking back this probably wasn't the best option, because I spent the next three weeks tired, exhausted, trying to find somewhere to stay, still under the weather, before I eventually found a place to live in Copenhagen. The doctor and I would exchange a few text messages, but after time I wouldn't hear from her again.

Part of the reason I was kind of floating around without any real plan was partly because I decided to stay in Europe until the artist residency I had been accepted into started. After my stay in Copenhagen I made my way to Arteles Creative Center, located in a isolated part Finland east of Tampere, where I would live with thirteen other artists, across two houses.

During the first week I tried to follow my desire to connect with the people there, while also focusing on my writing. I made an effort to be engaged, to joke, to laugh, to discuss.

During the second week, we visited the local public sauna. I like saunas, but I wasn't prepared for Finnish saunas. I also like going in cold water, so moving between the large public sauna and taking a dip in the cold icy lake was fun. Unfortunately I didn't realise that Finnish saunas are much hotter than other types, and after about my fourth round of hot and cold I bent down, where upon rising I became dizzy. I made my way to the changing room where two other artists were getting changed along with a Finnish bloke. While I tried to converse naturally, inside I started to freak out. Having been unconscious and had seizures numerous times, the feeling of being dizzy had in the past, then been accompanied with a seizure. My mind started to fixate on this possibility, here I was lying on a bench in the changing room in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by people I barely new, about to have a seizure. I tried to understand how I could stop this from happening, my eyesight was getting worse and the tension in my body was rising. I felt scared, worried, how had I allowed myself to get to this point, to be somewhere with no help, no family, no friends. As things became blurry, I felt like crying. I dug in, I had to change my mentality, if I thought about it, if I thought about how alone I felt, how no one could help me, things would only get worse.

I told the people I was with that they needed to keep an eye on me, that I might have a seizure. I asked a fellow artist, from South Africa, if he would hold my hand. It was a big moment, a change from my past, I knew I needed to ask for help, as I used to always try and not bother anyone with my health issues. 'No problem' he said, then taking my hand, as I lay on my back on the changing room bench. For ten minutes he held my hand, reminding me to take some deep breaths, as his body, his energy helped ground me in a reality



other than my own mind. I closed my eyes and focused on my breath. After awhile I was able to sit up, while we joked with the Finnish bloke who took saunas six days a week. In Finland, saunas are a way of life, a way to good health, they swear by them. He told me my experience was normal, I would be ok, to keep warm, drink lots of fluids and rest. I thanked him for his advice and care. On the drive home I started to shiver. For the next few weeks my mind was full of doubt, full of fear and I found it hard to be around others.

I became more solitary, enjoying the alone time of walking through the woods. As the group became friendlier with each other, I felt more isolated, more alone, and in need of being separate. I found the group dynamics difficult, I found I didn't feel nourished by the group and started looking for a way to feel full. My mentality enhanced by the sauna experience, now being full of doubt. I did more walking in the woods, often sitting on a cold rock, bundled up in clothing to stay warm, meditating, focusing on my breath, sometimes for hours.

Those meditations in the woods of Finland became my food. Each day I would go and be in nature, there I experienced the quiet, an although throughout my life there has been a desire to be a part of something, there has always been a force that knows how peaceful and free it is to be with the self. In those moments where I had to face my fears, my anxieties, I had to find a peace within me, I couldn't rely on others, I had to find it within myself.

This is the reality of all life. Despite the need for others, we still have to rely on ourselves. It's a balance between the two, relying on the self and interacting with others. I do not grow food but I rely on the farmer to feed me. I don't dig wells, but I rely on the engineer to find water. The South African can hold my hand for those ten minutes and help ground me, but I still have to live with my mind, my fears, my anxieties - he can't hold my hand for the rest of my life, nor would he want too.

In life we have to help ourselves and rely on others, there is an interconnectedness to our existence. Yet, the foundation starts with the self. The individual must rely on the self for the basics. Getting to know what this means for you, is a matter of course. In this time where we are in isolation, we can help each other, and we can also help ourselves. Any chance we have to find out more about our self, will serve us well. Isolation is a feeling that can be carried anywhere, yet with each problem there is an answer, when it comes to dealing with isolation, the self knows how to help.

Womb Like

Up, down, left, right, back, forth. The motion of the ocean, for some, rocks them to sleep. For others, it churns the stomach, tightening, then unclenching, only to tighten again. The body tires, hoping to find a way to remove the feeling, the mind asks, when will this end?

Maybe your parents used to make you laugh and scream as they drove their car extra fast over hills on the road, giving you a brief but thoroughly enjoyable weightless feeling, as if you were but for a moment floating in space. That weightless feeling used to excite me, but the continual movement of the boat going up a wave and then pausing slightly at the crest before running down the other side, is now a feeling that causes nausea.

The body wears, as the hours of sailing roll by, finding it difficult to grasp a reference point, a reality to focus on, akin to being put in a blender and slowly but continually whisked. Soon my focal points become blurry and the only thing I think will quash the feeling, is to lie down. I try to survive on the deck, in the sun, the wind, the water, the horizon, making some sense, but with each rise and fall of a wave, it becomes harder to focus, the body questioning reality, land is familiar, the ocean, unknown. I decide to go below deck, maybe the bunk will act as a barrier, a cocoon from the reality of my nausea.

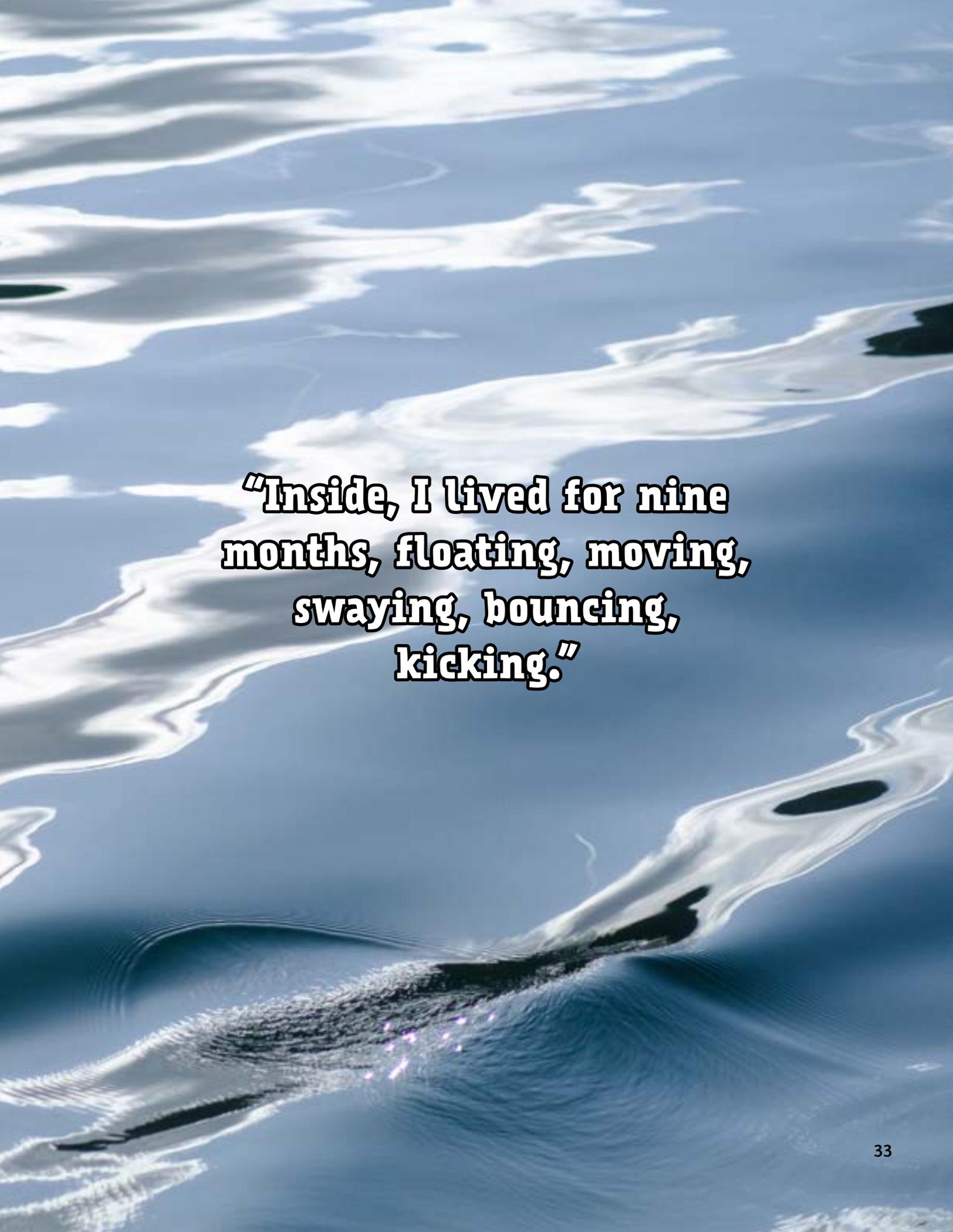
Below deck, the cabin closes in on me, all I experience is the rolling motion of the waves rocking the boat. I can feel the nausea brewing, churning my stomach. The four floating walls that surround me, start to close in, nearer and nearer, bringing a trapped sense of confinement with no escape, nowhere to go, above or below, no sanctuary. The inevitable conclusion of all this, a purge.

What the heck am I going to do? I ask myself. Positivity, must be my friend in this situation. I must keep the mind positive, keep the thoughts positive, tell myself I will survive, just hang on a little longer. I dream of a place with calmer water, an anchorage or harbour. A sanctuary, a place which will bring a sigh of relief and a still sleep. This is just a dream though, as I roll from one side of the bunk to another, slamming into the side of the boat.

The longer I feel queasy, the more tense my body becomes, until I am hanging on by a thread, barely able to focus, screaming inside 'fuck, fuck, fuck, I'm trapped.'

I force my mind to wander, to ponder on a decision which needs to be made. Do I allow the mind to run me or do I run the mind - is that even possible?

The mind, already sending a steady stream of negative thoughts my way,

An aerial photograph of a large body of water, likely a lake or a wide river. The water is a deep blue color, and there are several white, wavy patterns scattered across the surface, which appear to be reflections or ripples. In the lower portion of the image, a dark, narrow strip of land or a boat's wake is visible, with a trail of white water behind it. The overall scene is serene and expansive.

"Inside, I lived for nine months, floating, moving, swaying, bouncing, kicking."

reminding me of the poor decision to go sailing, knowing how I suffer from sea sickness 'told you so' the mind reminds, while also reminding me of all the better options I could have chosen, an ocean liner, cruise ship or tanker, all of which would have been less rocky with their stabilization technology. I remind the mind, this is what I wanted, to really sail, not power, to experience the sea.

Constantly fighting my own mind, I try to fixate, to focus on something other than the fact of my nausea. I nudge my mind in a direction of positivity, otherwise I will plunge deeper into despair, spewing my guts all over my cabin.

I try to get the mind to think about someone I love. Is there someone I love, that I can think about as I lie in my bunk suspended in water, being rocked up and down, spatially rejected by my surroundings? Is there someone I can focus on that will distract me from the reality of my current moment?

With the duvet pulled over my head, my eyes closed, I try to focus on a woman that I love, a woman I feel passionately about. No one comes to mind. Where then, can I send the mind? Is there an idea, place or dream I can focus on which will take my attention away from the fact that I am in a boat floating in the middle of the ocean with nowhere to go, nowhere to escape. Still no ideas come, I keep drawing blanks.

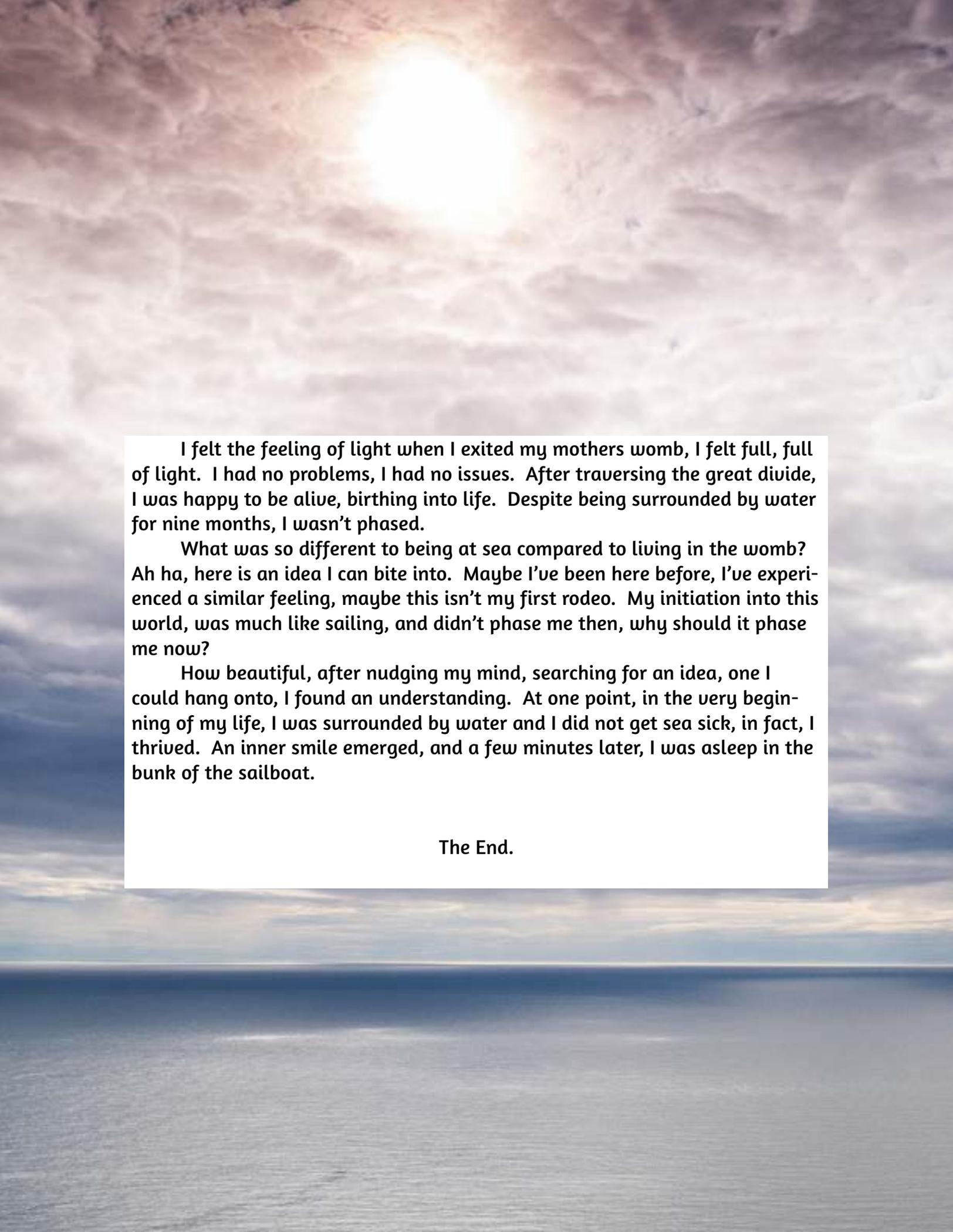
Do I have a dream perhaps, a dream I can picture, a bright place? Is there a job I really want to do? Is there anything, a thought, an image, a food, a structure, anything I can hold onto for a few minutes? No. Like the eye of Mordor, in the JR Tolkien Lord of Rings novels, scouring the land in search of Frodo and the ring, I search the surroundings of my mind for something to fixate on, to latch onto, something that will ground me.

I force my mind to search the crevices of my brain, looking in the corners, the far away places never normally visited. I can't seem to fixate on anything, not one person, not one idea, not one place. I'm left to myself, alone, in the dark, surrounded by water, with nowhere to go.

I start to imagine myself lying in a bathtub, totally alone, floating on the surface of the deep deep ocean, with a piece of sailing rope attached to the bathtub leading off far into the distance, with no land in sight, I'm attached to something I cannot see.

When I was a child, before I was born, I was a foetus in my mother's womb, surrounded by fluid. Inside, I lived for nine months, floating, moving, swaying, bouncing, kicking.

I don't remember anything from being in the womb, but I can imagine what it was like to live there. I can imagine being immersed in fluid, moving, growing, in a space with no light, yet feeling filled with light.



I felt the feeling of light when I exited my mothers womb, I felt full, full of light. I had no problems, I had no issues. After traversing the great divide, I was happy to be alive, birthing into life. Despite being surrounded by water for nine months, I wasn't phased.

What was so different to being at sea compared to living in the womb? Ah ha, here is an idea I can bite into. Maybe I've been here before, I've experienced a similar feeling, maybe this isn't my first rodeo. My initiation into this world, was much like sailing, and didn't phase me then, why should it phase me now?

How beautiful, after nudging my mind, searching for an idea, one I could hang onto, I found an understanding. At one point, in the very beginning of my life, I was surrounded by water and I did not get sea sick, in fact, I thrived. An inner smile emerged, and a few minutes later, I was asleep in the bunk of the sailboat.

The End.



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