Fort Cochi, India

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FORT COCHI, INDIA

Vasco de Gama landed here during the spice trade and it feels European with its whitewashed buildings and exposed beams but a man is cooking nan bread in a roadside tandoori and Emily and I have traveled over the mountains in a bus with no doors or windows.

Two white owls watch us from the darkness as we walk past the tree-lined park and church into town for dinner. I snap a picture.

We eat outside and listen to German tourists bark orders to one another and I assume they are discussing their team’s chances in the World Cup though maybe they are talking about all-night parties in Goa.

I order fish curry and a beer and we talk about how much we don’t want to ride in the bus back over the mountains.

We can hear the ocean whining in the candlelight of certain inchoate things we’re only vaguely aware of.

We have only just been married.

The next morning we awake to shouting and open our window to children playing soccer in the park. We walk around the island and discover an old synagogue next to a junk shop with a decent collection of vintage door knobs. I buy a book about the Jews of Cochi and we keep walking, along the edge of town, and then through it, into a residential neighborhood where a cow is being butchered on the street.

I try to take a picture but I am waved off by a very unhappy looking man.
We stop to take a picture of a woman whose daughter had her face painted like a clown and then we stop for dinner at a yacht club full of westerners and we feel uncomfortable in our sandals because everyone else has on shoes. Much later, back in Boston, I scan our developed pictures for the owls but when I get to the one in Cochi with the trees at night there is only the night and the trees and that is all.