



BULLFIGHT

India is for me the land of peace, Gandhi, and non-violence. Hindus do not step on grass, out of reverence for life, and animals are treated with respect; it could be your grandmother who has taken up residence in one of them. Cows and bulls roam freely in the streets and do mostly as they please. Cows represent mother, milk, and life-giving power and oxen are related to gods. All in peace and reconciliation. Mostly.

One day a street in Mandawa in India was filled with people. All of a sudden I heard screaming and shouting behind me; abruptly the street was deserted. Two of the sacred oxen had clashed, fighting for life and death. Blood flowed. A girl on the bike was caught between them; she had to be hospitalised, her bike was ruined.

The bulls were brothers, but still fighting for life. Why, I never discovered.

We humans are no better than animals. When sacred bulls can enter into fights for life in peaceful India it is no wonder that there is war and strife among people in the world. But as human beings we should

actively try to be better!
Let us try!

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THE GIFT



India is a land of contrasts, for better or worse. I met this beggar (above) in Mandawa a few months ago. He invited me to sit on the stone steps beside him. In a plastic bag he had three oranges; one he gave to me as a sign of friendship. Side by side, we sat there in the crowded street sharing the oranges. He did not want any money: this was a gift from him and India.

Thanks!

Perhaps one of the most symbolic gifts I've ever received; from one who has little, very little, to someone who has much and much to be happy about.

Per Hjortdahl,

Professor, Department of General Practice,
University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway.

E-mail: per.hjortdahl@medisin.uio.no

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SONNET ON PAIN

*Pain: the complaint I hear time and again.
I know what you'll say when reaching your door;
Aching all over, still ten out of ten,
Increase the dose and provide me with more.
What proof do you have of this pain you feel?
My wish is to spend less time in your room.
In truth, I know what you claim is not real;
I care for much sicker patients than you.*

*The sickling might stop but the pain goes on;
Worse than the feeling is knowing for sure,
The pain will return as if never gone.
Your drugs can relieve but provide no cure.
But go, you are like the others I see;
You care for much sicker patients than me.*

Clark DuMontier,

Resident physician, Internal Medicine Residency
Program, Boston University Medical Center,
Boston, MA, US.

E-mail: clark.dumontier@bmc.org
@cdumonti

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