

## Tha Blue Herb

### "S.S.B"

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Accordin to karma, I will die by mistaken identity.  
It's not funny, that fate is itself a mistake.

This is what I heard when I was just a kid, that my  
great-grand father died while he was walking  
on a street on which he never walked before.  
He was killed by a surprise landslide, old men in the  
neighbourhood said it was a case of mistaken  
identify.

My uncle was mistaken as a Maoist activist who had the  
same name save letter spelled differently,  
nobody's heard from him since he got arrested 8 years  
ago.

Recently I don't hear it, but everytime I was about to  
leave the house, my father used to tell me;

'Don't stand out, make sure you don't get found by the  
karma, don't get mistaken for another.  
Alright? Don't stand out, grandpa and your uncle were  
also the eldest brother.'

So I walked out to the street, bending forward as I  
stepped on my shoelace.

Miserably and heartlessly, today's sun also sets, and  
the west wind brings a coldness.  
The darkness slowly shaves the sunset in the east that  
transforms the curtain, and the day goes to  
sleep.

Indistinct contours and complexions, this is the  
beginning of a morning where pleasure amd money  
sing loudest.

The dead black birds start to caw, this is the world  
where secret businesses have the advantage.  
I saw my father, exhausted by asking round money  
lenders, dragging an undetachable shadow from the  
roof.

A loser down on his luck, I'm tried of hearing 'AT least  
you are alive.'

The tears I had to shed for injustice have long dried up,  
I seeked desperately for a way to escape.

I could no longer stand living on a doormat, that's when I joined the family of my partners Ram and Ski. Ski worked the street since he was 18 years old, the same age as I did. He tricked the most wary girls, and now he surveys the deals of his own crossroads. A sly and clever fox, a pretence of loyalty to his manager but never gives a damn. Accompanied by bodyguards, his motto is 'Never miss the chance of your life.' I take Thai powder and brown sugar, Kathmandu full of chronics this time of the year. Guests with plenty of dollars and yen, 'You are special, don't buy from anybody else.'

My partner Ram is a good man who I can trust, I met him the night I moved to this town. His shirt a birthday present from me, my knife is what I got from him. In the apartment where poverty is squeezed between thin walls, we grew up together. There was a ray of light entering the room through a crack in the glass, Ram used to say 'We're gonna beat the karma.' as he watched it. The street is a spinning theatre, just like looped images of the same person playing. A man running frantically, looking for good deals, tourists milling round faces stuck in the same expression. Amongst the noise of car horns, smog, dropouts and sellers' monologues, the sound of daily footsteps escape without notice. At a similar time of day, with a similar speed to a ball and chain, with an unquenchable thirst. It passes on, in the towering brick-walled prison, I look into the narrow sky from this cursed land. Take it back to reality, what has been delivered here is a stray dog's howl, 'Has something made you wanna escape by any chance?' The Japanese who came yesterday was an easy mark, he happily took the sugar for 2000 per gram. 5g will make 10000, out of which, 1000\*5g, 5000 goes to Ski, that leaves 5000. The money I borrowed from Ski was 1000, I would need 500\*4, 2000 for the next consignment. The remaining 2000 rupees is my profit, which certainly doesn't pay for the last 5 years. How many times do you think I have passed this spot? How much polluted air do you think I have inhaled? The rats think I'm a member of their family, I even think that this is the only place left for

me on death.

'There is only one other way for us.', Ram kept telling me about his plans, his nervous disposition unchanging.

The wind sweeping over the street just as cold today, 'To steal Ski's money from his safe.'

The street is still full of fellow traders, touters, dealers, homeless, and weighing scales.

Musical instrument vendors, kids, rich foreigners, swindlers, and pirated products, one after another. The asphalt layered with spit, dust and trash look like they've been patiently waiting for the rain.

I've seen a man about wash his hands of the business, arrested on his last job.

'Ski leaves for a trip to Pokhara tomorrow, with his bodyguards too, his woman is the caretaker.

We go straight to the border once it's done, by this time tomorrow, we'll be India, OK? It's tomorrow.'

Ram mimicked Ski's way of speaking and giggled, 'Never miss the chance of your life.'

A huge wheel began to turn with my hesitation on its top, I felt uneasy.

But there was actually a chance awaiting us, I sold all the powder I had cut price.

I went back to my room still owned by the cold, this is where an 8 year old smokes ganjah.

Where my abused mother sleeps with a blanket, it's the bottom of the world.

'God has given me a life like everyone else, but has never helped me out since.

I've found the ultimate truth.' My father yelled out as he smashed his fists against the wall.

The world is a ghetto, abed of despair, a maze with its exit connected to its entrance.

This is the battle field where you get killed by karma, like a stray cat it never appears on maps or in history books.

On the street, the sound of a shutter being closed, a prostitute peeps into a restaurant window.

Choking with coughs passed on from her last guest, retching heavily, on the street.

Boarded the Royal Nepal with Ski and flew out to the west, drove his woman home from the airport.

In the rear-view mirror, a fake smile on my face, my eyes fell on her necklace and rings.

The three-story mansionette built on street money, was lit by rose-coloured warmth.

I was already making myself comfortable in the room

like I always do, nobody doubts this dog's obedience.  
Money in the bedroom safe, dollars in cash, some  
Crystal for Ski's personal use  
The password is the birthday of his woman, sitting in  
front of me content on smoking Charas, dialled  
back to front.

I took the keys as I walked out the door, 'I'll see you  
soon.' I whispered softly.

Dusk was beginning to sit on the city, but my path was  
left not narrow nor darkened.

I converted all the mushrooms I had into cash, met up  
with Ram at the usual corner.

Our last night in Nepal. the cold winter rain was pushing  
all life from the street.

We both went back home to eat, my emaciated mother  
was waiting for me with a cold Daal Bhat.

The pain we bare now is because of what we did in our  
previous lives, take it for the sake of the  
next world, her eyes were telling me.

On the street, the looking of discontentment, a little  
sister who never smiles, the mud that never  
washes off.

A leaking boat that's full of the weak, a symbol of  
hunger, on the street.

Ram opened the door of hope, Ski's woman was  
sleeping in the lounge on the first floor.

We went upstairs, straight to the safe in the bedroom  
holding our breath.

While Ram dialled the number four times, I could feel  
that god was on our side.

After the last silence, as the safe opened, we suddenly  
saw a light 'Where is it coming from?'

We turned and saw Ski's woman, she said something,  
and I took out my knife.

The woman screamed 3 seconds, I covered her face  
with my left hand and stabbed her throat.

It took 5 minutes to bring myself back to me, there  
were only two of us, Ram and I, alive in the room.

It took off the blood-soaked shirt and borrowed Ski's  
jacket, we escaped from uptown in Ski's Jaguar.

We drove toward the town of Birugunji on the Indian  
border, a straight road to the south, our glorious  
goal is in sight.

Ram suggested 'Can we take one last look at our  
street?', I told him that I had had the same thought  
as I turned the steering wheel to the left.

On the street, where fog is inhaled and the sorrow  
exhaled, lifelong captives on both sides.

I clearly heard somebody talking in their sleep, saying  
'Please, take me with you.'

Ram turned around and kept watching the street from  
the passenger seat, I told him 'Hey Ram, the  
future starts here.'  
Before we knew it, Kathmandu was already far behind,  
it seemed like we had evaded karma.

Finally, I felt like I was free from karma, but the karma,  
but the karma special committee will  
never let you go.  
Don't even try to escape or hide from it, even the sun  
and moon are members.

At particularly siringent inspection in Bim Phedi, one of  
the policemen stard at the Jaguar  
and my jacket.  
And said suddenly;

'You are Ski aren't you? I know who you are, hey, this is  
Ski from Tamel, you know that heroin....  
this jaguar... I'm sure.'  
'I'm gonna show you jusitce.'

I heard that I will die by mistaken identity...

'Hey! Don't move!'  
'Wait! Get out of the car!', ' Don't you dare think you  
can get away.'  
'Don't move!'

'Stop, stop shooting now.'

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