

MY OWN BEACH AT SEMMALAI IN SRI LANKA

Generally, everybody loves their own homeland. Me too. My childhood passed beside the seaside. Each day was enjoyed with my friends on the beach, collecting seashells, flying kites, running, falling, counting waves.

How many houses did we build with the sand?

Sometimes we made a delicious curry from the shellfish we caught.

I can describe a very natural beach. There was no noise from people, no hotdogs, no popcorn. No sounds or smells from artificial things.

My house was situated by the sea. If we stood on the front yard of my house, we could see the sea waves. I have many sweet memories of my teenage years. I wrote many poems about my future life. How many dreams were grown there? How many love stories were written? All of this framed by the beautiful and peaceful sea view.

During my school days, I made a tree house on the top of a mango tree which was in the backyard of my house. I always felt very happy and relaxed there, dreaming of what I could achieve.

One of my dreams was to go to university. I lived in the northern part of Sri Lanka which was in the war zone. From there it was a very difficult task to enter a university but I was accepted and went away to study.

Then a very sad thing happened. On the 26th December 2004 a tsunami hit my beach. I returned to find only my mango tree there. My home had gone. The strong waves were still there, never resting, crashing on to the beach.

Gradually things returned to normal. The sea calmed and snow white waves kissed the edge of the sand. Baby crabs began appearing, coming out of one hole and running with speed and disappearing into another. The smell of fish, the songs of the fishermen heading out on to the Indian Ocean. My home by the sea.

I now live in Gravesend but I will never forget my beach at Semmalai. I truly loved that beach, it was part of my family and one day I will put my feet on that beach again.

Raji