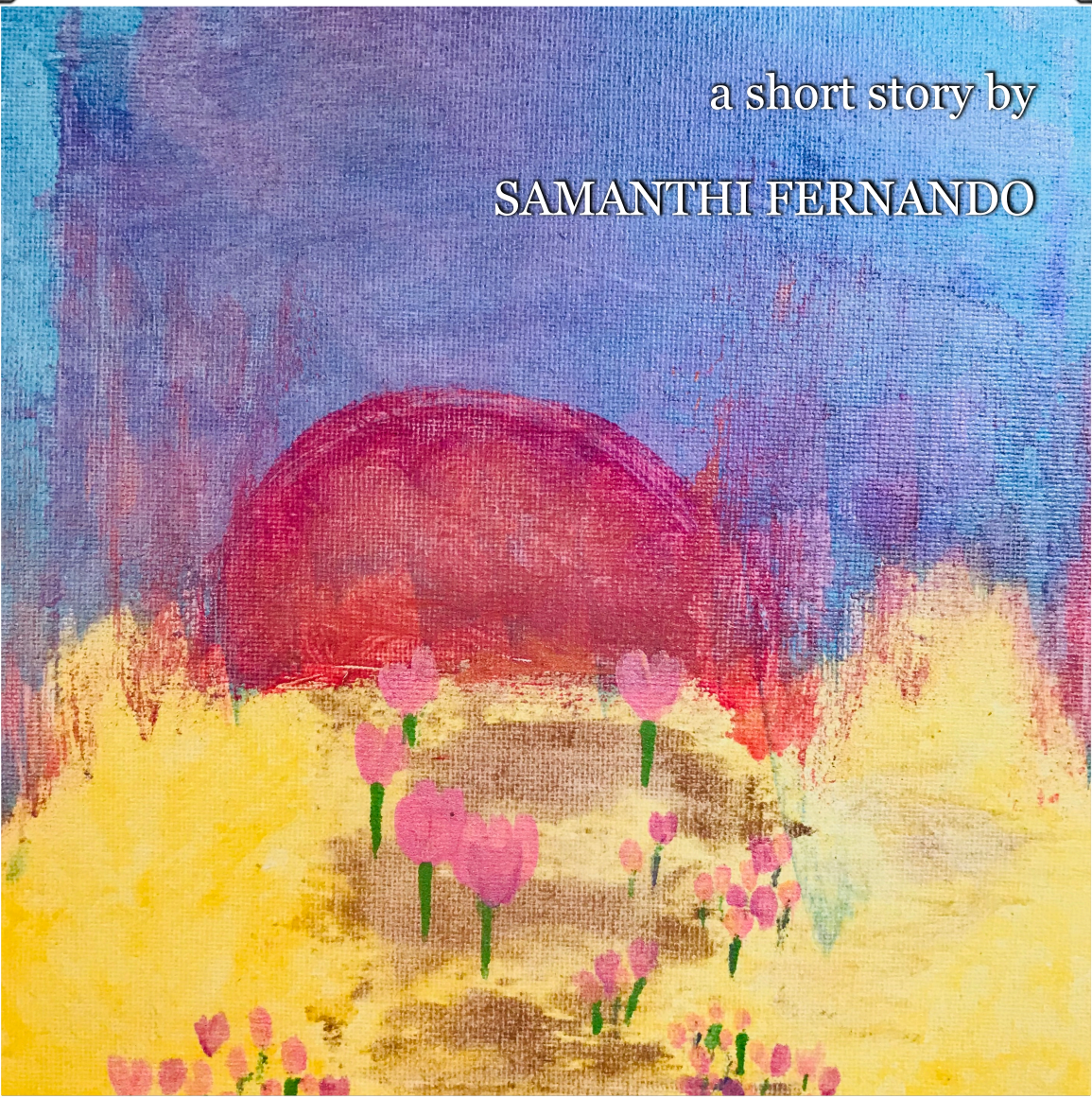


Quaint in the Sunset

a short story by

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How their story began was anybody's story. The trials and joys they had experienced through the years was everybody's story. What they truly meant to each other nobody knew. But the universe had been kind to them, and through all their journeys the channel between their hearts had stayed open. Today marks the beginning of a new page in their story. A page created from dreams nurtured through time.

He took the train from the town center heading west. Another joy of traveling the world - time was on his side. She had written to say that she was visiting a quaint seaside village. Was it another coincidence that he was traveling through these parts at the same time? He smiled to himself, the randomness and unexplained connections all merging together in his subconscious. The hot sun had spurred him to wear a turban on this trip. Now everyone in the train stared at him curiously, the tourist in a turban.

It was quite rare for him to take the train as he did prefer flying, but this was no ordinary day. There was a sense of anticipation, which reminded him of previous encounters with her. But today, somehow was different. He felt different. Wiser from his travels and reflections, the meaning of life seemed clearer today than ever before.

His thoughts flitted in and out of places he had been, as he watched the scenery pass by swiftly. A blur of green, blue, black and brown bringing him closer and closer to his destination.

She met him at the station. Through some mystical coincidence she had decided to wear a sari that day. A refreshing change from the cotton sundresses she had been wearing the last several days. Seeing him in the distance, she smiled and thought he looked quite regal in his purple turban. And he in turn, was mesmerized by the peach and gold silk draped so perfectly around her body. It seemed like they were two crazy tourists trying to look like locals. She leaned into his open arms and they stood there embracing for a quiet moment before they started talking.

He noticed a glow about her. She was happy and that made him happy. She led him up a hill into the midst of a bazaar. They found a table and ordered a local blend of iced coffee. He noticed how the sunlight drifting in and out of the awning dazzled on the gold motifs of her sari. She did look good in peach, he told her. But then she looked good in every color. They talked of many things, their travels and adventures, their meetings in far off

cities. The afternoon passed. They had something to eat, more to drink and continued talking. The day became cooler and she realized it was evening.

Would you like to see the view? she asked. He was perfectly happy with the view of her smile, but agreed to take a walk. They went up the roughly hewn stone steps. The walkway was steep, and he didn't know what was at the summit. The colorful flowers on either side heralding an enchanting entry into the unknown. The beginning of a poem sprang into his mind. Something he would write, later.

They reached the edge of the hill overlooking the Indian ocean. The view was breathtaking. The brilliant sunset painted across the western skyline, an affirmation of all that is bright and beautiful in their hearts. He realized this place held something magical, unlike any other place they had experienced. In a natural spontaneous move, he took her hand in his. Is this our first sunset? she asked. Smiling, he replied - since we first met, you have been in my every sunset, and I in all of yours. So this my friend, is not our first sunset, but the first we boldly declare to the universe, as ours!