

Passing Through Sonamarg (rev)

Leaving Srinagar at the dead of the night was eerie,
But the lonely layers of the night unfolded their baroque beauty,
As we drove through several towns on our way to Baltal,
First step in reaching the mysterious Amarnath.
While the townsfolk were asleep the towns were wide-awake.
(If you want to see places see them when they are bereft of people)

Gandarbal is a long bacon-strip town, congested and abuzz during daytime,
During night its street-dogs sleep fearlessly in the middle of the roads,
Lone morning-walkers strip its silence momentarily in pre-dawn.

Kangan greeted with pastoral abandon
From its sequestered mountainous perch,
Studded with fine water and trees.

As our journey progressed the continuous company of River Sind
Became our joie de vivre and intoxicated us
With its scintillating and spirited flow.

Entering Sonamarg the scene changed dramatically.
Horizon turned into a lacework of high mountains,
Serenity enveloped the time-frozen landscape.
Our life in the cities seemed to be a wasted opportunity.

I meditated on the mystic beauty of Sonamarg
And the expansion of human mind,
But I couldn't dwell too long on them,
As I had a commitment to reach Amarnath in the afternoon.

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Note: Sonamarg and Kangan are in Kashmir, India. The former is among the most revered religious places in India.