

## **Letter to Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy:**

It comes from a place of deep sadness, of remorse and pain. A pain and grief that has not relented for more than 28 (now, almost 29) years. A lifetime.

The object of the pieces is a woman that I deeply loved, and cared for, and to this day still do. Though it sounds trivial and even trite to say so, it was as if she was a soul-mate. I could always sense when something was wrong with her, or whenever she was in need. She even commented often that it was if I could read her thoughts. She was from New Zealand (Auckland), and when this happened to me, returned back to New Zealand with her family—brokenhearted, and feeling betrayed. Except for the occasional visit by an attorney or a private investigator (and even these stopped years ago), I have had no visitors for the entire time I've been in jail, and prison (28-29 years). She lives half a world away. Thus, when my sun sets on the western sky, hers rises. I have struggled to always find a cell facing the west horizon so that just as it dips below the horizon I think of her, and pray her life is good, and that she is safe.

All those years I have strove to establish my innocence, and for her to know that I never lied to her, or betrayed her trust. I struggle every day to remain positive, and to do good for others, to help heal their lives—to honor the memories of the times we were together.

I am working on another appeal, but even so I worry about what she may think when the day comes that after 28 to 29 years, she finds shwas wrong about me. I have sent her letters, birthday and Christmas cards that remain unanswered. I have heard she was married twice, but I don't know. While I always hope and pray she is happy, and safe—there is still the fact that I was not there for her whenever she was trouble, and that even though I am truly innocent, I am guilty of not being there when I was needed most, as I always promised her (and her silly folks) that I would be.

Nothing, Professor Roy—not even freedom, will ever change that guilt or the fact that I failed her.

This has, and continues to haunt me every minute, of every hour, of every day, for 28 years.

I hope this might explain things better to all involved.

Again, Thank You

Thomas Michael Simmons

### **Almost...**

by Thomas Michael Simmons

Ten thousand, one hundred forty-five. How many Suns have set over my world, to rise upon yours.

Light wanes, spectres return as I float aimless—lost amidst the cold eddies of memory. Each, precious and dear, balanced precariously upon another, never fading.

It was, almost...

It seems a lifetime ago when a life so graced held a certainty in ability that bore the audacities of possibilities; now, crushed by the overwhelming weight of profound, relentless grief wrought by loss—the loss of you. Always I am reminded—some sight, a sound; thoughts yield to the soft shuffle of distant feet to the smell of fresh-brewed coffee that you'd place into the microwave a few seconds more to greet another day. I'd close in to steal a frothy kiss as you'd brush your teeth, only to be sprayed as you'd open your mouth and drag the bristles across them. You'd giggle though, knowing the inevitable was to come.

Whether heartache or heartsong, there was ever that gentle smile, and caring eyes that bore witness to the wonder you found in everything—and a laugh so clear and pure no shadow of the heart could withstand.

It was, I was, almost...

A sojourn—ten thousands of miles of living, along hundreds of paths—then the warm embrace of your arms, where at last I found solace, and home. We'd part, and moments later nothing seemed aright. You were missed.

Now the moments have passed into hours, hours to days, days to years, years to... memory. A memory of that which was...

almost.

But memory claims a price - the cold reality that you aren't here. No words, religious or philosophic; no chaste attempt at

explanation could ever help cope with the utter and complete absence of you from my life—an unending ache that ages with the  
· scars gazing back from the mirror of a concrete tomb.

But the ache, the memory, makes you more present now, rather than thoughts destined for an unknown oblivion.

You dwell in my heart, my mind, always—a pole star in this endless night that guides me—yet ever beyond reach.

It was, almost.

Ten thousand, one hundred forty-six. How many Suns have set over my world, to rise upon yours.