

Aug 12 2002

My dear Raza

The painting you gave Dileep and me when Dileep visited Paris in June has been framed and put up. It looks absolutely stunning, brings a great élan to the room. Nikhil is absolutely in love with it. And my heart goes out to it too, no words can do justice to your gesture.

You are constantly in my thoughts, thanks to the painting. In time, this work too, like all the others of Raza that stand on our wall will become part of our blood, and there will hardly be a Dileep - Latika home which can hold without Raza. Just the way our sideboard - a lovely piece from Paris - is one with Jeanine's big collage. And is always a centerpiece in the house.

I have not written to you after Jeanine's death, although we speak on

the phone. I, too, lost my father in June. He passed away quickly without any suffering. People call him गुस्ताख. He was 86, and was suffering from cancer and a weak heart. The heart took him away. It's tough on my mother who is unable to live alone. She is at present with my sister.

Have you begun painting again? What does it mean, I keep asking myself, to embark on a creative act after feeling drained out? Does the inspiration flow once more? Does the hand tremble and the mind go blank? How does one re-start work, when the work is the fruit of inspiration. With artists, nothing, I suppose, is routine. It's fresh thinking every day.

India is in the grip of a drought. Today it has rained in Delhi, the first monsoon shower - 6 weeks too late. When rains are bad, all life is affected.

Dileep is a member of the newly Constituted Committee for Kashmir - a private initiative launched by Ram

Jethmalani. The Huniyat appears ready to talk to it. Wonder what all this will give. The new President went to Gujarat to meet his victims - many thought it was a sanitised visit - roads swept, garbage removed, walls white-washed, water available - all overnight - plus carefully chosen people to meet him.

Anna Vasudev, a friend Rashmi Doraiswamy & I edited a 600-page book called "Being and Becoming: The Cinemas of Asia." It brings together for the first time under one cover the history & aesthetics of the cinemas of nearly 30 Asian countries. It was launched in the same place in Mumbai where you were felicitated, and I thought of you on the podium as we, too, sat on the podium as speeches were made.

Dear Raza, please accept some

of these thoughts as the true feelings of
an old time friend who loves you so
much.

affectionately

Latika.

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