

I found work in a hotel. I worked 6AM to 9PM, earning 40 rupees each month.



I lived on the spot. At the end of each days I would put up the chairs to sweep, then sleep on the floor

Kumar worked in an aluminium shop nearby but we both worked such long hours that we immediately lost touch.

Other workers came and left. I kept my belongings in a case, locked against sneak-thieves.

In my little free time I would walk the streets but coming from the hills I found Colombo too hot



YAWN



Following the JVP\* insurrection emergency rule was imposed. Ethnic tensions rose and curfew were enforced.

\*Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna / People's Liberation Front



I stopped leaving the hotel at all.

In 1972 I gave up on Colombo and returned to the plantation

Hello Stranger



Nothing had changed there. Old friends were still workless and aimless. Jackfruit was still the best meal available. I missed the good food in the city!

Colombo was a hard place but I realised the estate was no longer right for me either

MUM!  
DAD!  
I'M LEAVING AGAIN!



With seven rupees in my pocket I returned to the Capital. I started selling grain from a cart for a small commission. It was heavy work but I was stubborn...

Don't lift with your back  
I know



In time I saved enough to buy my own cart. And then enough to buy a second, so I could employ my brother!



Then in 1975 I met Letchumi. We fell in love. My parents wanted to arrange a match for me, so we eloped together!