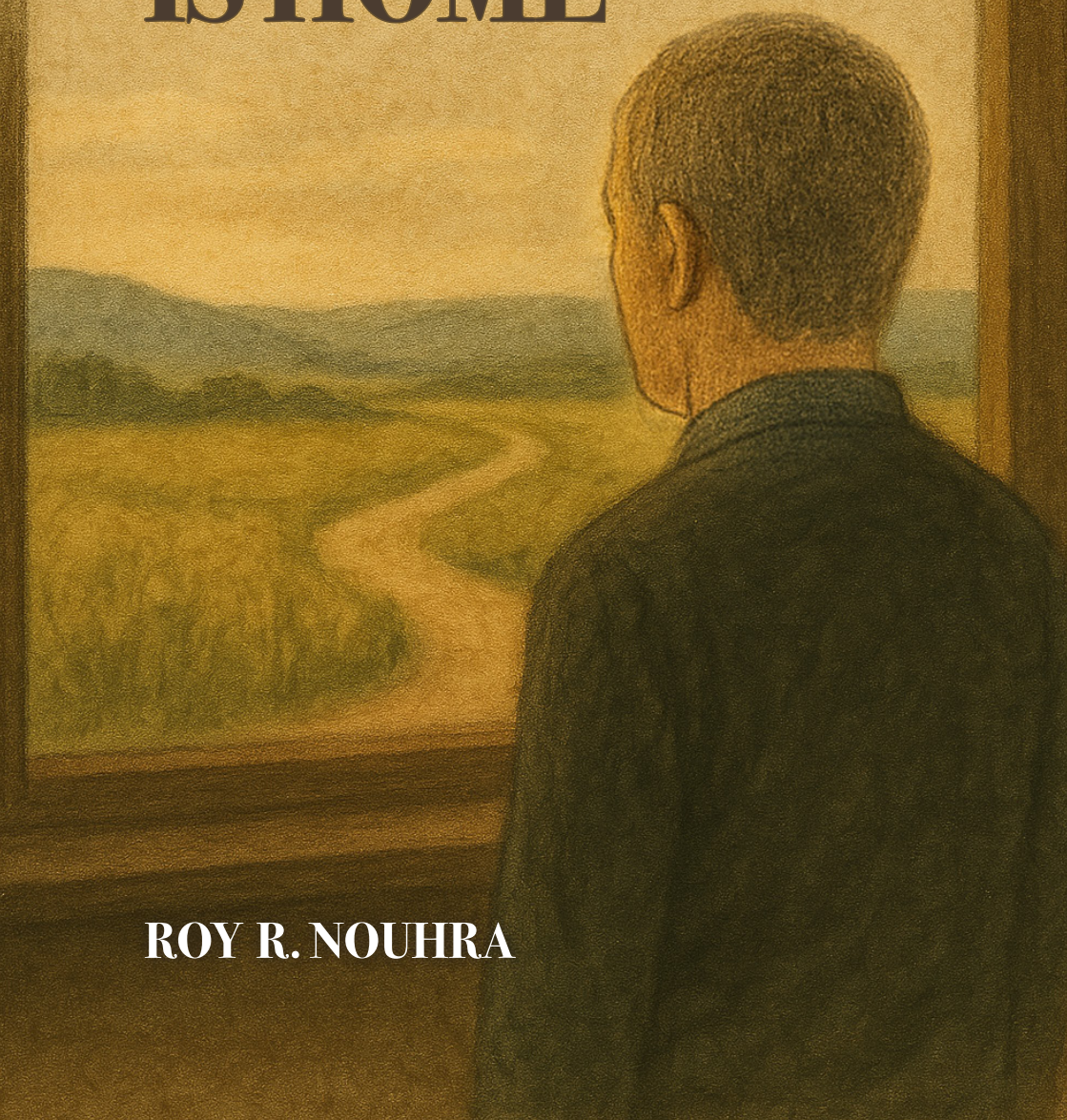


# WHERE IS HOME



ROY R. NOUHRA

# WHERE IS HOME

ROY R. NOUHRA

# Introduction

## The Question That Never Left Me

---

**I have lived in many places.**

Some were framed by the sea, others by desert silence or mountain air. I've woken to the sound of seagulls in one country, and fallen asleep to the echo of prayer in another. My closets are scattered across continents. My memories are tagged with time zones. My roots, if they exist, are woven into airports, visa stamps, the smell of cardamom, and the sound of children laughing in three languages.

And yet, I still wonder:

**Where is home?**

Not where I sleep or pay taxes or return to for the holidays.  
Not just where my loved ones live or my name is known.  
But that quiet place—the one that makes me feel whole. The  
one that asks nothing of me and gives everything.  
That place, within or without, where I am most me.

This question has followed me like a shadow.  
It whispered in the stillness of remote Himalayan caves.  
It stirred in me during sleepless nights in foreign cities.  
It lingered after every goodbye, every reunion, every return  
that didn't feel like one.

I am not alone in this search.  
Millions of us live suspended between geographies—expats,  
immigrants, seekers, nomads, runaways, builders of new  
lives. Some of us left home. Others were never given one.  
And some of us, like me, have had many—each incomplete  
in its own way.

What if home isn't a place at all?  
What if it's a feeling? A person? A memory? A breath?  
What if home is a question, not an answer?

This book is a map—drawn not on paper, but across  
moments.

Each chapter is a doorway into a different kind of home: the  
physical, the emotional, the spiritual, the fleeting, the  
eternal. Through stories, reflections, and truths both raw and  
soft, I invite you to walk with me—to lose your footing, and  
maybe, to find it again.

You may not find a fixed answer here.  
But you may find a new way of seeing—one that reveals that  
home was never lost, just unspoken, waiting patiently inside  
you.

So come with me.  
Let us ask, together:  
**Where is home?**



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**PART - 01**

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**THE  
PLACES I  
CALLED  
HOME**

# CHAPTER-1

## The House With No Walls

---

There is a house I retreat to, perched quietly above the sea.

It has no fences, no clear edges—just open space where walls might have been. The line between shelter and sky is blurred, and that is its gift. Nothing here feels final. Everything flows.

Most days, I am alone.

The mornings begin in stillness. I sit by the sea, just breathing. The waves crash with immense force—loud, wild, commanding. And yet, moments later, they retreat, dissolve into foam, and vanish. Again and again. Power rising, then surrendering. It is as if the sea is teaching me that even the fiercest things must eventually soften.

The wind, too, has its own rhythm.

It howls, it pushes, it shakes the trees. But if you sit long enough, if you don't resist, you'll notice something else—a pocket of still

air within the chaos. A moment where everything quiets, just for a breath. And in that breath, peace.

Sometimes the rain comes without warning. Not a drizzle, but a downpour—sharp, unrelenting, full-bodied. And yet it doesn't disturb me. On the contrary, it feels like a washing of the spirit. As if something old, something unspoken, is being rinsed away.

---

This house has no need for decoration. The beauty is in the air, the salt, the rawness of nature pressing itself against your skin. My bare feet know every tile. My silence echoes off the ceiling. Meals are simple. Days pass without the burden of plans. The wind writes its own calendar.

There are no clocks. Only light and shadow. No sounds, except for those that arise naturally—water, wind, and the occasional bird who lands without asking.

In this space, stripped of noise and expectation, something inside me begins to return.

Not the person I show the world.

Not the achiever, the father, the builder, the friend.

But the presence that simply is.

And still—this question arises:

**Is this home?**

Or is it just a place of pause, a sacred moment between chapters?

Because I've known many homes.  
But belonging... true belonging... that is something rarer.  
It asks not just for comfort, but for surrender.  
Not just for a roof, but for reflection.  
Not just for solitude, but for silence that holds you.

---

So I sit, barefoot, in this house with no walls.  
I sit in stillness as the waves rise and fall.  
I listen to the wind and wait for the quiet within it.  
I stand in the rain and let it cleanse what I cannot name.

And in that...  
In that undemanding, unguarded presence—  
I begin to wonder if this is it.  
Not a place I own, or a structure I built...  
But a moment.  
A truth.  
A feeling that I've come home, if only for now.

## CHAPTER-2

### Passport Pages and Empty Beds

---

There is a certain kind of restlessness that wears a suit and carries a passport.

It checks in and out of hotel rooms with ease, smiles at immigration officers without hesitation, and fills forms that ask for “country of residence” with a practiced shrug.

I've carried that restlessness. I speak its language now.

My passport is thick—not because I am a tourist, but because I've built a life that stretches across continents. Meetings in one country, children's birthdays in another. Retreats in the mountains, homecomings by the sea. Every page in that little



book tells a story—not of escape, but of expansion. Of trying to contain more than one life in a single body.

And yet, for all its stamps and signatures, my passport doesn't tell you where I belong.

It tells you where I've been.  
Not where my soul feels seen.

---

There's a strange paradox to being from "everywhere."  
People admire it. They call you worldly, cosmopolitan, free.  
But what they don't see is the quiet cost:  
The way you sometimes wake up in the night and forget what city you're in.

The way you keep a toothbrush in three different countries,  
and a suitcase half-packed even when you say you've "settled."

The way your heart becomes a nomad—always loving, never rooted.

There are beds I've slept in that were softer than clouds.  
Hotel rooms with perfect pillows and city views that stretched for miles.  
But they were empty.

Because a bed is not a home.  
Not if it holds only your body, and not your memory.  
Not if it hears your breath, but never your dreams.

---

And yet, there are moments—rare, fierce, unforgettable—when the world opens, and home finds you.

For me, it often happens in the mountains.  
At the top of a slope, board strapped to my feet, snow crunching beneath me, sky above me sharp and endless.

No passport matters here.  
No identity needs defending.  
There is only gravity, silence, motion.

I push off. The world drops away.

The cold bites my face.  
The wind howls past my ears.  
And for a few perfect minutes, I am not a man in transit, or a citizen of any nation.  
I am alive. Fluid. Anchored not by walls or addresses, but by sheer presence.

The mountain never asks me where I'm from.  
It doesn't care what language I speak.  
It just holds me, carries me, demands I surrender—and rewards me with freedom.

Sometimes I think: maybe I belong more to mountains than to countries.

More to wind than to roads.

More to the curve of a slope than to any fixed address.

Some truths only emerge when you're moving fast enough to outrun your stories.

When all that's left is sensation and soul.

And in that speed, that stillness, that surrender—I feel something like home.

---

So yes, I've known many beds, many cities, many flags.

But I've also known this:

That there are places where the earth opens itself to you.

And in that meeting,  
you remember—not who you are,  
but where you are most whole.

And maybe, just maybe,  
that is where home begins.

## CHAPTER-3

### When the View Was the Answer

---

Some questions don't need to be answered with words.

They just need a view wide enough to make them fall silent.

I've stood in places where the sky felt too vast to belong to this world.

On mountaintops where the clouds curled beneath my feet like rivers of light.

On cliff edges where the horizon pulled at something inside me I didn't know had a name.

And in those moments, I didn't need certainty.

I didn't need belonging.

I just needed to look.

For years, when I meditated, I would see the Himalayas in my mind.

Sharp peaks rising into endless sky. Snow like breath resting on their ridges. That silent presence—immovable, eternal—became the image I returned to whenever I sought stillness.

But one morning, in the remote heights of Nepal, I sat to meditate in real life—and when I opened my eyes, the mountains weren't in my mind anymore.

They were there.

Towering. Alive. Unflinching.

And I didn't just see them.

They saw me.

In that instant, something inside me dissolved.

There was no separation between the imagined and the real, between spirit and stone.

The view I had carried for years had stepped into form.

I wasn't dreaming anymore.

I was home—not in a place, but in the alignment between inner truth and outer beauty

---

I tend to go where others do not.

Not out of rebellion, but out of reverence.

I've taken trails with no markers, followed paths carved only by wind and instinct.

Because I long to see what hasn't been seen—to stand in front of a view that no one has photographed, no one has framed.

There's something sacred about being the first witness.

Not to claim it, but to honor it.

In those moments, it feels like the earth is showing me a secret  
And I become very still, as if I must earn the right to keep it.

---

There are other places that have spoken to me like this.

A stretch of desert in Wadi Rum, where silence pressed against my skin until it cracked me open.

A cedar grove in Lebanon, ancient and unmoved, where I sat for hours tracing the stories in the bark, feeling the weight of ancestors in the soil.

A crashing wave in Sri Lanka, arriving with such force and vanishing with such grace, I forgot for a moment where I was, or who I was supposed to be.

---

Sometimes, the view doesn't answer the question.

It replaces it.

With awe.

With stillness.

With truth too large to name.

In those moments, there is no need to define home.  
Because you feel it—not in the body, not in the mind, but in  
the space between the two.  
In the breath that forgets to be shallow.  
In the gaze that doesn't turn away.

---

I've chased views. I've sought them with longing, like someone  
looking for a sign.  
But the deepest ones always came when I stopped searching.  
When I was still enough to be seen by the land, not just to see  
it.

And that's the thing about beauty—it doesn't require  
understanding.  
It simply requires presence.  
And presence is the first language of home.

---

When I ask myself now, where is home?  
I often think of a single view—  
A ridge of snow.  
A line of trees.  
A wild ocean at dusk.

**And I remember:**  
**There are places that don't give you answers.**  
**They are the answer.**

## PART - 02

---

# PEOPLE AS SHELTER

## CHAPTER-4

### My First Shelter Was Love

---

Before I ever knew what country I was from,  
Before I ever signed a form or memorized an address,  
I knew the feeling of being held.

Not by walls. Not by geography.  
But by the quiet, steady presence of love.

I don't recall the first house I lived in.  
But I remember the feeling of warmth in the room where  
someone waited for me.  
I remember the echo of my name spoken with kindness.  
I remember the safety of arms that wrapped around me when I  
cried.

That was my first home.  
Not a place.  
A person.  
Or maybe, more truthfully—an emotion.

Of all the people in my life, my mother has been the truest  
form of home.

She gave to me unconditionally—without asking, without  
expecting, without limits.

She was the one who stayed beside me when I was sick, when I  
was weak, when the world felt too heavy to carry.

She was the quiet presence that never wavered, never judged,  
never pulled away.

She is still that presence.

Still by my side, still listening, still believing.

She has always believed in me—even when I didn't believe in  
myself.

She taught me not just how to love, but how to be loved.

And more than anything, she taught me the meaning of  
unconditional.

Because of her, I learned how to fly.

Because of her, I dared to walk paths that didn't yet exist.

Because of her, I've always had somewhere to return to—not a  
house, but a heartbeat.

She is my rock.

My root.

My reminder that real love doesn't ask for permission to  
give—it simply gives.

And that feeling—rare, unrepeatable—is something I’ve  
 carried ever since.  
 It’s how I measure home now.  
 Not by square meters or keys in my pocket,  
 But by the presence of love that doesn’t need to be earned.

---

Of course, like all homes, even that early shelter evolved.

Love grows.  
 People change.  
 Distance creeps in through the cracks of time.

We grow up.  
 We move out.  
 We build lives of our own.  
 And in that process, the homes we once lived in begin to live in  
 us instead.

They become echoes.  
 They become longing.  
 They become the invisible standard against which all future  
 homes are measured.

---

Later in life, I would come to understand love in many forms.  
 Romantic love that burned with promise and faded into  
 silence.  
 Friendships that held me through storms.  
 Children whose laughter carved new spaces in my heart I  
 didn’t know existed.

Each of them built rooms within me.  
 Each of them gave me new languages for belonging.  
 And each of them, in their own way, also left.

Some gently.  
 Some suddenly.  
 Some while still standing beside me.

---

And so I learned another truth:  
 Love, too, can be a transient home.  
 A tent pitched in the wild.

Sacred while it stands,  
 But never promised tomorrow.

And yet, would I trade those fleeting shelters for something more  
 solid, more permanent?  
 Never.

Because even temporary love can leave eternal imprints.  
 Because even a single season of feeling truly seen can be enough  
 to guide a lifetime.



When I ask myself now, where is home?  
Part of me still searches for that early shelter—  
That place where love wasn't conditional.  
Where I was safe just by being.

But another part of me knows:  
That shelter doesn't have to be recreated.  
It just has to be remembered.  
Revisited in silence.  
Rebuilt in how I choose to love others now.

---

My first shelter was love.  
And in her eyes—in the soft strength of my mother—it still is.  
And maybe, in the end, my last one will be too.

## CHAPTER-5

### Children Who Built Me a New Roof

---

There was a time when I believed that home was something I  
would build with my own hands.  
That it would rise out of discipline, design, and decisions.  
But then my children came—and they built something I never  
could have drawn in blueprints.

They didn't ask to be born.  
But from the moment they arrived, they began to shape me.  
Not with demands, but with presence.  
Not with words, but with wonder.

I became a father, and everything changed.  
Not just the rhythm of my days, but the architecture of my soul.

With each child, a new wing of my being was constructed.

There was a corner for Raymond's wisdom—quiet, thoughtful,  
always asking questions bigger than his age.

A sunlit room filled with Patrick's wonder—intense, brilliant,  
wild in the most beautiful way.

A staircase carved by Anthony's joy—his ability to laugh at life,  
even when I could not.

And a soft, open garden blooming with Alexandra's spirit—her  
light touch, her intuition, her grace.

They didn't just fill my life.

They made it deeper.

They made it real.

---

Home, I realized, was no longer a place I searched for.  
It was something I now had the responsibility to be.

To be the constant.

To be the arms that always opened.

To be the quiet at the center of their storms.

And in becoming that shelter for them,  
I found a kind of anchoring I had never known.

---

Of course, fatherhood is not always easy.

There are days filled with noise, with exhaustion, with doubt.

There are questions I cannot answer.

Mistakes I wish I hadn't made.

Moments where I fear I'm not enough.

But then—one of them laughs.

Or places a hand on mine.

Or simply looks at me, without expectation, without  
condition.

And I remember: this is what matters.

Not where we live.

Not what we own.

But that we have each other.

That in this bond, we are building something eternal.

---

Sometimes I walk quietly through our home,  
watching them move, grow, become.

And I am struck by the thought:

They are not mine.

They are only passing through,  
on their way to build lives of their own.

And yet, they have made something in me that will never be  
undone.

They have built a roof over my heart.

Not to protect me from the rain—

but to remind me that **even in the storm, I am not alone.**

So when I ask myself now, Where is home?  
Part of the answer is in their voices.  
In their footsteps running down the hallway.  
In the chaos, the calm, the thousand tiny moments that pass  
too fast to hold.

They are my home.  
And more than that—

**they've made me a home for love to return to.**

## CHAPTER-6

### The Taste of a Meal Shared

---

Some people speak through words.  
Others, through silence.

**My grandfather's language was presence.**

He didn't teach with words.  
He taught through presence.  
And in the warm, golden afternoons of Spain, his greatest  
teachings came not through conversation, but through the meals  
he prepared—slowly, quietly, always with love.

He would start early, barefoot and calm, preparing the space on  
the balcony that overlooked the sea. The old barbecue would be  
lit with care, and soon the scent of olive oil, salt, garlic, and fresh  
shrimp would drift into the air like a signal—*Come. Be fed. Be*  
held.

His specialty was **scampi and shrimp a la plancha**.  
 Nothing complicated. Nothing loud.  
 Just perfectly cooked seafood, kissed by fire, full of intention.

He moved through the preparation like a monk in ritual.  
 There were no rushed gestures. No wasted motion.  
 The sizzle of the grill, the breeze from the ocean, and his quiet  
 focus became a kind of meditation—one that we were all invited  
 into without needing to speak a word.

---

We would sit around the balcony, waiting—not impatiently,  
 but reverently.  
 Because we knew something sacred was happening.  
 Not just a meal, but a moment.  
 Not just food, but offering.

When he finally served the shrimp, it wasn't about the taste—  
 though the taste was unforgettable.  
 It was about the feeling.  
 Of being seen.  
 Of being loved without performance or condition.  
 Of belonging—not to a place, but to someone's full attention.

---

That was how he connected.  
 Not with lectures. Not with advice.  
 But with stillness. With care. With fire and salt and time.

He showed me that you don't need to speak to teach.  
 That presence can be more powerful than instruction.  
 That the most enduring homes are the ones built in hearts, not  
 houses.

---

In Tibetan Buddhism, they speak of the **root guru**—the one  
 whose presence awakens the path in you.  
 The one who shows you, through their being, what is possible.

### **My grandfather was my root guru.**

Not because he quoted scripture.  
 But because he embodied truth.  
 He was the teaching.  
 Grounded. Simple. Generous. Whole.

His meals were sermons in smoke and sunlight.  
 And his silence—his deep, anchored silence—was the most  
 eloquent thing I've ever heard.

---

Even now, when I cook for my family, I remember the way he  
 stood by the grill.  
 How he turned the shrimp with care.  
 How he smiled without speaking.  
 How he created a space where everyone felt safe, full, loved.

Sometimes I light the barbecue just to feel close to him.  
To call him back—not through memory, but through imitation.  
I try to prepare the food slowly.  
To be there fully.  
To pass on what he gave me, not in ingredients, but in presence.

---

When I ask myself now, Where is home?  
Part of the answer is on that balcony.  
With the sea just beyond the railing.  
The scent of lemon and smoke in the air.  
And a man standing silently over a grill,  
  
offering his love,  
not in words,  
but in warmth.  
  
That was home.  
A temple of silence.  
The beginning of everything.

## PART - 03

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# THE INNER GEOGRAPHY

# CHAPTER-7

## The Mountain That Spoke to Me

---

There are places you visit, and places that visit you.

I have always been drawn to mountains.  
Not the ones that offer comfort, but the ones that demand  
presence.  
The untamed ones. The forgotten ones.  
The ones that hide their wisdom in silence and stone.

---

High in the **Himalayas of Bhutan**, I once climbed to a cave  
where a hermit had spent his final years in retreat.

There was no marked trail.  
No map.  
Only the whisper of wind through pine and prayer flag.  
It took hours of steep ascent to reach it.  
And when I arrived, breathless and alone, I found nothing  
grand—just a hollow in the cliff, carved by time and solitude.

I stepped inside.  
Laid down my pack.  
Sat cross-legged in the dark.

And waited.

---

The cave smelled of age—stone, moss, ash, memory.  
There were remnants of incense burned long ago, traces of a  
human who had once disappeared into silence here.

I closed my eyes and began to breathe.  
Nothing forced. Nothing mystical.  
Just breath.  
Just stillness.

I didn't seek visions.  
I didn't ask for anything.  
I simply sat,  
and listened.

---

When I finally opened my eyes, the view from the cave took  
me.

The **Himalayas** stretched before me in their full, unfiltered  
truth—  
layer upon layer of ridges, clouds suspended like breath,  
snow peaks radiant in the light of a sun that had risen for  
centuries before me,  
and would continue long after I was gone.



And in that moment, something in me broke open.

**I began to cry.**

Not out of pain.

Not out of longing.

But from the rarest emotion I know—

**Tears of joy.**

The kind of joy that floods the soul when there is nothing left to chase.

When the inner world and the outer world suddenly match.

When everything you've searched for collapses into one sacred moment of being here.

The cave held me like a cradle.

The mountain said nothing, but everything was said.

There was no story left.

No role to perform.

No weight to carry.

Just breath.

Just light.

Just the silence of stone, and the infinite stillness behind it.

That mountain did not speak in words.

It spoke in presence.

It stripped away everything false,

and left only what was real.

I wasn't Roy.

I wasn't a father, or a builder, or a seeker.

I was simply a part of it all—

bare, empty, free.

Eventually, the sun shifted, and the world called me back down.

But I carried something with me.

Not a revelation.

Not a lesson.

But a knowing—

that I had once sat in a cave carved into a Himalayan cliff, and felt more at home than I ever had in any city, house, or country.

Now, when I sit in meditation anywhere in the world—

when I close my eyes and call in the stillness—

I return to that cave.

I feel the cool stone under me.

The silence around me.

The Himalayas holding me like a mother.

And sometimes, those same tears return—

gentle, wordless, whole.

When I ask myself now, Where is home?  
Part of the answer is in that cave.  
Not because I own it.  
But because, for a few sacred hours,  
**it owned me.**

That mountain did not give me anything.  
It simply took everything I didn't need.

And in what remained,  
I finally understood—

**That home is not where you go to find yourself.  
It's where you go to lose what you never were.**

## CHAPTER-8

### The Silence Between Breaths

---

There is a silence that lives beneath all sound.  
It does not begin when the world goes quiet—  
it begins when you do.

It's not the absence of noise.  
It's the presence of stillness.  
And once you touch it,  
nothing ever feels quite as real again.

I have touched that silence—not just once or twice,  
 but so often now that it has become **my natural zone**.  
 It is not foreign to me.  
 It is not a place I must chase.  
 It is where I return to when I drop beneath the surface of things.

And in that place—  
 even the breath dissolves.

Not consciously.  
 Not as an act of control.  
 But gently, like mist rising in the morning sun.  
 At first there is inhalation. Then exhalation.  
 And then... just being.

There is no effort to breathe.  
 No observer left to track it.  
 Only space.

---

In those moments, I am no longer someone meditating.  
 I am no longer a seeker.  
 I am simply awareness—spacious, grounded, still.

There is no time there.  
 No narrative.  
 No need.  
 Just silence—pure and alive.

You cannot force it.  
 You cannot hold it.  
 The moment you try, it vanishes.

But when you relax into it—when you surrender fully—  
 it opens like a door you forgot was yours.

And what lies beyond is not emptiness.  
 It's everything.

---

This silence, now, is more than a refuge.  
 It is home.

I dwell there more and more often.  
 In the middle of a meeting.  
 In the middle of a storm.  
 Even in the chaos of a crowd.

It rises like a tide inside me.  
 And I let it wash through—  
 not to escape,  
 but to *return*.

---

It offers no words of comfort,  
 no stories to soften the silence.

It simply is.  
 And in that, it teaches me what no teacher ever could:

That home is not where you go to find safety.  
 It is where nothing needs protecting.

When I ask myself now, *Where is home*  
The answer is clear.

**Home is the silence I carry.**

The one that deepens each time I dissolve.  
The one that remains after the breath has faded,  
and all that's left is being.

## CHAPTER-9

### The Map of My Soul

---

I have lived in many countries.  
Built homes in different climates.  
Sat in silence on snow-covered peaks, and laughed barefoot by the sea.

I have held hands beneath cedar trees, prayed in ancient caves,  
and wept in hotel rooms no one will remember.

Each of these places lives inside me now.  
Not as memories.  
But as coordinates.  
As markers on the map of my soul.

This map is not drawn in ink.  
 It is carved in feeling.  
 It does not hang on a wall.  
 It lives behind my ribs—folded, breathing, alive.

There is a ridge in Bhutan that opens whenever I exhale into silence.  
 A stone cave carved into a cliff, where I once became the sky.  
 There is a balcony in Spain that warms whenever I prepare food slowly, as my grandfather did—with presence and salt.  
 There is a trail in the Alps, etched with the sound of my board carving through snow, where I remembered how to trust gravity.

There is the rhythm of waves in Sri Lanka,  
 that matches the rhythm of my breath when I sit in stillness.  
 There is a heartbeat in Lebanon, my mother's embrace—always there, always open.

---

I carry them all.  
 Not as stories,  
 but as layers of who I have become.

They rise in me like seasons.  
 They speak in dreams.  
 They arrive in moments I least expect—  
 in scent, in silence, in sorrow, in joy.

They remind me:  
 I am not made of one place.  
 I am not just the product of blood or border.  
 I am a collection of *openings*—  
 each one shaped by love, stillness, and letting go.

---

And now, when I meet others, I don't just ask where they're from.  
 I listen for what lives inside them.  
 What landscapes their silence holds.  
 What winds shaped their soul.

Because I've learned something very simple, very quietly profound:

The truest home is the one you build in your heart  
 out of the places, people, and truths you refused to leave behind.

---

This map of my soul—it is not finished.  
 There are still blank spaces.  
 Unwalked valleys.  
 Undiscovered peaks.

But I no longer rush to fill them.  
 I no longer chase belonging as if it is something out there.

Because now,  
 Home lives quietly within me now.

## PART - 04

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# HOME, UNBOUND

## CHAPTER-10

### Exile Is Not the Opposite of Home

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There's a kind of exile that doesn't come from war or politics.  
It comes from living in too many places,  
and realizing that none of them can hold all of who you are.

I've lived in cities where I felt invisible.  
And I've lived in places where I was deeply loved,  
but never fully known.

Sometimes the exile is subtle—  
a quiet dissonance,  
a sense that you are always just passing through,  
even in the home you built with your own hands.



And yet—

**exile is not the opposite of home.**

It is not a curse.

It is not a punishment.

It is a space.

A threshold.

An invitation to find belonging somewhere deeper.

In exile, you learn how to carry your roots inside you.

You learn to grow sideways—toward light that others don't see.

You learn to belong not to a place,  
but to the **practice of presence itself.**

For a long time, I searched for the country that would feel like mine.

One that mirrored my values, my rhythm, my soul.

But each time I came close,  
the feeling slipped.

Not because the place changed,  
but because *I did*.

The more I grew,  
the more I realized I wasn't meant to fit into a single geography.

I wasn't built for singularity.

I was made of many lands, many silences, many contradictions.

And maybe, that too, is a kind of home.

I've come to see exile as a sacred teacher.

It strips you of identity,  
but in doing so, reveals your essence.

It removes certainty,  
and replaces it with clarity.

It removes walls,  
so that the horizon becomes your room.

Home is not always a place you arrive.

Sometimes it's a way you move.

A way you greet the world.

A way you sit with your own solitude and say,  
"I am enough. Even here."

Because if you can feel at home while in exile,  
then you have found something no one can take from you.

When I ask myself now, Where is home?

I sometimes smile and answer:

**Where I once felt lost.**

Because that is where I learned  
to stop looking outward  
and start listening inward.

That is where I discovered  
that exile is not the end of belonging—  
it's where true belonging begins.

# CHAPTER-11

## Stillness Travels Too

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There was a time when I believed stillness belonged to certain places.

Caves in Bhutan.

Mountain ridges touched by morning light.

Remote beaches, where the wind carried no memory.

In those places, silence felt easier.

Presence felt natural.

I would sit, breathe, dissolve.

And I believed the peace I felt there was a gift of the land itself.

But then life shifted.

The world pulled me back into movement—

airports, meetings, family, obligations.

The mountain became a photograph.

The cave, a memory.

And for a while, I grieved.

I thought I had lost something sacred.

Until one day, in the middle of noise and urgency,  
I closed my eyes—  
and there it was.

Stillness.

Unchanged.

Undiminished.

It hadn't stayed behind.

**It had come with me.**

---

That moment changed everything.

I realized the silence I once believed was bound to a place  
had actually taken root in me.

The mountain now lives in my spine.

The cave, in the space behind my eyes.

The sea, in the rhythm of my breath.

And no matter where I go,

I carry their quiet with me.

---

Stillness is not fragile.

It doesn't need incense or silence or ideal conditions.

It only needs awareness.

Willingness.

Space.

It has walked with me through grief.  
Through joy.  
Through airports and train stations, through crowded rooms and  
lonely nights.

And in every setting,  
it offers the same quiet invitation:

**Return.**  
**Not to a place.**  
**But to yourself.**

---

Sometimes, I'll be speaking to someone—my children, a  
colleague, a stranger—  
and I'll suddenly notice the stillness within me rise like a tide.  
Unannounced.  
Full.  
Gentle.

It holds me while I hold them.  
That, too, is home.

---

When I ask myself now, Where is home?  
Part of the answer is this:  
**In the stillness that walks beside me,**  
**no matter where I stand.**

Because while I've left many places behind,  
this one never leaves me.

**Stillness travels too.**

## CHAPTER-12

### Carrying Home Like a Flame

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There was a time when I searched for home as if it were a  
destination—  
a house, a country, a person,  
a feeling waiting just beyond the next turn.

But the more I walked, the more I left behind,  
and the more I found that what remained—  
what couldn't be left—  
was the only thing that truly mattered.

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What began as longing  
became a path.  
What began as a question  
became a silence.  
What began as a search  
transformed into a remembering.

That home was never out there.  
It was what I was becoming all along.

I used to think home was a place to rest.  
 Now I understand—  
**home is a flame you carry.**

Not a comfort.  
 But a light.  
 Not a shelter from the storm.  
 But a warmth you offer others as they pass through it.

---

This flame doesn't flicker in your hands.  
 It lives in your breath.  
 In how you walk into a room.  
 In how you listen.  
 In how you love without needing to hold.

I've sat in temples carved by wind,  
 and I've stood in kitchens filled with laughter and garlic.  
 I've slept in silence  
 and wept in airports.  
 I've felt home in the arms of my children,  
 and I've found it in the spaces between all expectations.

But now—  
 I don't wait for it.  
 I don't seek it.

**I carry it.**

There will still be days of forgetting.  
 Days of noise.  
 Of doubt.  
 Of dislocation.

But I no longer fear being lost.  
 Because I know the way back.  
 It is always the same:  
 A breath.  
 A pause.  
 A return to the quiet fire within.

---

When people ask me now, Where is home?  
 I place my hand on my chest and smile.

**Here.**

In this presence.  
 In this silence.  
 In this flame.

And as long as I can tend it—  
 with care, with love, with truth—  
 I will never be far from where I belong.

---

**Because home is not where I go.  
 Home is what I become.**

## EPILOGUE

### An Invitation, Not an Answer

If you've walked with me this far,  
thank you.

Not for reading—  
but for listening.  
Not to my story—  
but to the echo of your own,  
stirred somewhere quietly between these pages.

This book was never meant to give you the answer.  
Only to remind you that  
**you are not alone in the question.**

---

We live in a world that asks us to move fast.  
To arrive.  
To achieve.  
To define.

But home—the real kind—  
asks something else.  
It asks you to slow down.  
To soften.  
To remember.

Not where you live.  
But where you feel whole.

Not what you've built.  
But what has stayed with you  
when everything else fell away.

Maybe home is not a place or a person.  
Maybe it's the way the light falls on your face when no one is  
watching.  
Maybe it's the silence you carry after prayer.  
Maybe it's the moment you let go and are finally held.

Or maybe...  
it's not something you can define at all.

Only lived.  
Only returned to.  
Only recognized  
when your breath deepens,  
your eyes soften,  
and the ache of longing becomes  
a quiet peace.

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So I will leave you with this:  
**Don't rush to name it.**  
Let home reveal itself in its own time.  
In its own way.  
In your own body.

And when it does—  
wherever you are,  
whatever the world looks like—  
place your hand gently on your heart  
and whisper:

**"Here you are.  
Welcome back."**

# REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

- Where do you feel most at peace when you're alone?
- What does "shelter" mean to you beyond four walls?
- When was the last time stillness felt like home?
- What does your passport say about your identity? What does it leave out?
- Have you ever felt at home in a place you didn't expect?
- What memories make a bed feel like it belongs to you?
- What landscape has made you feel small in the best possible way?
- Is there a view in your life that silences your questions?
- When has beauty felt like truth?
- How have your children (or others you've cared for) changed your understanding of home?
- What kind of "shelter" do you offer to others?
- Who are you becoming because of the ones you love?
- What places have stripped you of your story and shown you who you really are?
- Have you ever cried tears of joy? What brought them on?
- What are you ready to let go of to find peace?
- When was the last time you experienced a silence that changed you?
- What happens when you stop trying to define yourself?
- Can you sit with yourself without needing to be "someone"?
- If your soul had a map, which places would be marked in gold?
- What inner landscapes are you still discovering?
- How have past experiences become part of your emotional geography?



# WHERE IS HOME

ROY R. NOUHRA