

The Annie Song still continued on his Bang and Olufsen on loop; a song that the American Troubadour had dedicated to his wife Annie, he felt a wave of nostalgia and emotion wash over him.

He always sang this as “Hrishita’s Song”, dedicated to his highschool sweetheart and first love.

Hrishita was one unscratched chapter of his life dwelling with him everyday like parallel lines never intersecting, sharing the same plane and space in some multiverse after all these years.

He remembered the first time he saw her at the school festival; how he fell in love with her hopelessly; how tongue-twisted he was to express his feelings for her. He remembered how happy they were together, the friendship blossoming into innocent and pure love, talking about their dreams and passions, how they enjoyed each other’s company, making each other laugh.

He recalled how they had overcome their differences and challenges, supporting each other through thick and thin only to drift apart in their own worlds as adults, going separate ways - treading on the paths they had chosen; a decision they took consciously; or maybe it was destined .

No matter how many years might have passed and in spite of having a loving wife and a doting son back home, Rishi couldn't resist an urge to see her someday.

He remembered exchanging occasional letters and phone calls with Hrishita, but never met again. He remembered how they had grown distant and estranged, until they had finally stopped communicating altogether.

He remembered how he had felt a pang of regret and sorrow. But he never ever felt a sense of acceptance and closure for the way he and Hrishita drifted apart; an unfinished chapter of his life, many questions remains unanswered.

Their paths diverged, both moving on with their lives, but the memories linger forever, etched in one safe corner of his heart. He took another drag of his cigarette looking at the stars in the clear night sky. He wondered what she was doing right now, if she was thinking of him too.