

## Plan C

Plan A, not so exotic but apparently foreign to me, was to find true, deep, passionate love and share it in a home full of color and light in a natural place where the sound of wind, water and animals would lull us into bed, into each other, into old age, and into Heaven. I don't mention Plan A much anymore, except that it was apparently even more unattainable than Plan B, and the failure of it is a supposed result of unfortunate karma, I am told by smug, compassionless practitioners of questionable arts.

Plan B was to go visit friends I have in Bali, partly on a recon mission to possibly move there, find a hut on stilts outside of Ubud to fix up and live in, sell paintings to drunken tourists, write, maybe do a little subsistence farming and find some generous Balinese family who might consider taking care of an old and very white woman when she becomes infirm at some point in the future. What I would do for the rest of my life: sit in a rattan room with no walls and sip rich, exotic teas with all my stateside friends who come to visit and marvel at yet another crazy thing I have done. Learn the language and help the community in some small or large way. Marvel at the insane colors of the fruits and birds, and the intense green of the giant leaves I would use to wrap my small paintings in when they sold. Giddy tourists would squeal at the tropical ingenuity of it all. Look deep into the pudding-brown eyes of an ancient Hindu guru, and instead of seeing any knowledge beyond my own that he may be believed to possess, see the ordinary frailty that we all share, and make a friend who feels just the way I do about most things.

It still sounds pretty nice, until scenes of cock fighting, of terrified, suffering live chickens hanging upside down by their feet in the market, of starving street dogs with mange so bad they are too weak to walk, and of women who work from dawn until dusk while their husbands gamble and drink come into view. All of a sudden, Hollywood has departed. A close friend that I share with the friends in Bali and who travelled there gave me the unvarnished reality of the modern Balinese culture, and without so much as giving the fantasy a chance, I jettisoned Plan B.

So now I am working on Plan C, and it has made me see what an impossible misfit I truly am, in a world that eludes my locational requirements at every corner of the map. The things I need: warm, green, beautiful, affordable, friendly to Bohemian leanings, loving to animals, enlightened population, a place where an old woman might find solace and a hospice bed in the home of a surrogate family, and a place of peace and quiet where she might paint and write and feel a breeze of perfect temperature against untanned skin until this long absence from true home is finally over. Even the best travel agents are completely stumped.