APPENDIX
One afternoon when I woke up from my siesta, I found Clayton seated at the foot of my bed.

There was utter silence in the verandah. Then a sparrow chirped. And some crows caw cawed at the end of the verandah.

'Ma?' I cried.

'Ma has gone on a visit', Clayton said.

Babuji asked me to take you to Mescot where Khansamah Fakhru has made a cake for you, on Babuji's order.

'Will Baji be there?'

'Let us go there and see. I will give you a ride on the cycle... And tomorrow is our Eessai Bura Din. My mother asked me to bring you home.

'I want my mother,' I insisted and shouted: 'Ma'.

As there was no answer, I began to cry.

'Come! Come! That cake is waiting for you. And Longdon Sahab's Mem Sahab told Babuji to send you to play with her Baba...'
I was tempted.

A description of going to the Khansamah Fakhru, meeting the Karnal Longdon Sahab, receiving a gift bag, and returning home follows....

On reaching home, I found mother and her sister, my aunt Aqqi weeping, with their heads joined together, as they sat opposite each other.

I sat down and opened the cardboard box and shouted to Clayton: 'Look, toys! Also big cake.'

Clayton said:

'Your brother Pritivi has gone'.

'Where has he gone? I asked.

He did not answer.

Father emerged from the big room.

'Look Baji - toys: Elephant: Camel: Train: - Kernel Sahab's baba gave me'.

'And Fakhru Khansamah has sent a cake Babuji',

Clayton added.

'No - look, toys: Sahab gave me ... And cake ...

'Son take the toys with you', said my mother. 'Go and play with Clayton'. Her face was twisted. Her eyes were dripping with tears.
I began to sob.
Clayton bore me away even though I wriggled.
'Where has Prithvi gone?' I asked him again.
'Gone to god. Become a Jinn - a little bhoot! Don't cry. Or he will come and catch you by the throat.'
I did not understand where Prithvi has gone. Where was God?
And how my little brother could become a jinn, of whom I should be afraid. And, inspite of mother's and aunt Aqqi's wails, I felt that as Prithvi has gone away, from now on I would be able to lie in mother's lap and suck her breasts all the time.
'We are going to my house,' Clayton said. My mother will give you cake.'
A description of going to Clayton's house where the children of the Regiment have Christmas lunch at his house, follows.
DEATH OF PRITHVI IN SEVEN SUMMERS

In the midst of this rich, happy life spent in the green solitude of hot mornings and breathless afternoons by the road on which caravans and men passed ceaselessly, there descended one day the shadow of an invisible, frightening thing called "Death". I did not know the name of this shadow. Nor could I see it. I only heard its name spoken in lowered tones and hisses by the people who thronged at the door outside our house as I came back after a whole morning during which my brother and I seemed to have slept on a charpai in the verandah of Babu Chatter Singh's house, fanned by "little mother" Gurudevi.

The afternoon sun was leaning across the walls of the mud house and all was still, and neither mother nor father to be within sight as we entered. Ganesh took me by my little finger and led me through the courtyard. As we found the little cot on which Prithvi slept in the verandah empty and the doors of both the residential rooms locked, I sensed some vague disaster and began to cry.

Ganesh had more courage and made me sit down on my mother's little stool by the spinning-wheel, and began to amuse me by revolving the handle.

"I want my mother", I said inconsolably.
Ganesh took some cotton wool and, making a moustache of it, tried to amuse me by pretending to be father.

This frightened me the more, until I howled.

Luckily, just at that moment father came, bearing a brass basin of milk.

I was glad to see him, though he wore a solemn expression on his face. I even felt a strange security sitting near Ganesh. Father went into the kitchen, fetched two cups of hot milk with dusters under them and gave them to us. Then he fetched himself a brass bati and began to drink the milk, the tips of his moustache immersed deep in the cup. And in between sips he encouraged us to sip the milk and not gulp it. I felt reassured now. "He is my father", I said to myself, "sitting near me". But as I became conscious of the lack of the droning song that the spinning-wheel sang, I asked him:

"Where is mother?"

"She will be coming back soon, son", he answered.

"After you have drunk your milk you go and play at 'little mother' Gurudevi's house, both of you. She will give you something to eat. Come, I will take you there.".

Then he got up, flung the brass bati aside, lifted me in his arms and called to Ganesh to come.
He had hardly taken a few steps when he saw mother, with her wet sari sticking to her body, and my aunt Aqqi in wet clothes, entering the house through the hallway. They seemed to be red-eyed and exhausted.

"Why did you bring them back from Garudevi's?" my mother remonstrated with my father.

"Never mind, never mind:" aunt Aqqi said to her, supporting her tottering body.

"Don't let them come near me", my mother wailed.

"For I still carry the taint of Prithvi's dead body about me".

"Come, come and sit down, Sundarai, and rest and think of the child in your tummy".

"What has happened to my mother?" I asked impetuously, while Ganesh went and caught hold of her legs.

"Your mother is not well", my father said.

"Let me go to her, let me go!" I said.

For I wanted to jump out of his arms and go and hug my mother.

She voluntarily walked up to the verandah and took me in her lap.

"Oh, what ruin in the death of Prithvi has prospered in our house;" she howled. And putting me flat on her lap, she began to beat her brow.
At this my aunt Aqqi bared her breasts and began to beat herself with the tips of her palms to the tune of the phrase, "Hai Hai Shera!"

"Dont do the siapa here," my father said. "This is not Amritsar, it is the cantonment. And the Sahibs are within earshot".

"Acha, brother", Aqqi said, wiping her eyes. "There is one consolation that though Prithvi is gone she will soon have another".

My father sat motionless in his armchair, twisting his moustache the while. And there seemed to be no connection between him and the wars flesh of my mother, whom I could feel next to me.

"Come, ohe Ganesh, I will take you to the Sadar Bazaar for a walk", father said.

Ganesh got up.

The sparows chirped and twittered noisily in the shaded part of the courtyard.

My mother's eyelid seemed to tremble as she restrained her tears.
"God rest his soul in peace", my father said as he walked away.

"The only consolation is the little one who is coming", sympathised my aunt. "Perhaps it will be a girl".

I felt the air spin about me. I could see Frithvi's body as different from my own, something other than me, with its sleeping form hovering over my mind's eye. For to me death meant sleep. And as I realized that he often used to be lying where I lay in my mother's lap, but was not there now, I felt my mother was not my own and I was terribly frightened. I close my eyes against Pritâvi's face that seemed to be coming towards me from a far land where he had gone, nearer and nearer, for I was sure that he would return. Darkness descended on me. Sleep. There was nothing more.