

Jungle walk

We woke up the next morning to a symphony of the senses — the sight of a tangled green forest and the mist-mudged Nilgiris beyond the picture window of our cottage and the perky call of the whistling thrush. (At first, we imagined it was a man whistling, but then the sweet trilling came from outside our window and there was no one in sight!)

Even as the morning mist danced like a flimsy veil in the wind across the forested mountain slopes, we set off on a jungle trek. Tiger, the resort's guard dog, led the way as we stomped through the forest. The dog bounded ahead self-importantly with a proud sagging of his tail; the canine was obviously aware that he had an important job to do. Woodpeckers rapping on trunks of towering trees, the creaking of bamboo groves

rustling in the breeze, the chirruping of birds, the gurgling of Kistna waterfalls, the gurgle of streams... the forest resided us with its morning rage as our feet crunched on the dry amber leaves. Delicate flowers blushed under the jealous gaze of thorny leaves. The rays of the morning sun streaked through the branches and glimmered off the strands of spiders' webs.

Our forest guide cautioned us to move slowly as we

approached a meadow that was a popular hangout for herds of wild elephant and giant sloth known as the Indian bison. Thankfully, the open space was empty, and we crossed over to a rocky outcrop where we rested our weary urban legs and admired nature's canvas painted in every imaginable shade of green — deep, dark and luminescent. The only relief from the colour was the vast blue sky above.

