The paper describes and explores a journey I made to Shimla in October 1994 to attend an international conference on "Interrogating Postcolonialism: Theory, Text and Context". The rumour of a plague in Gujarat state was in the air and several scholars cancelled their trip or refused to travel by train. I travelled by a car from Delhi to Shimla and persuaded two scholars to join me.

The journey to Shimla, the summer capital of the Raj, took us about ten hours. On the way we passed through Kuruchetra, the battlefield of the Indian epic the Mahabharata. My paper is a meditation on the civil war so vividly, and powerfully enacted and embodied in the longest poem of the world, within which is embedded the celestial song, the Gita. The journey for the writer becomes a quest into the self with echoes of conflict in Fiji and the scars and shadows of partition in Punjab through which the winding road leads to Shimla. At the end, a poem is born titled: Shooting the Deer.

The journey significantly begins in Canberra.