

THE BOOK OF ALEPH



THE BOOK OF

ALEPH

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NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER 6

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN 2015 7

WINTER 23 | SPRING 49

SUMMER 59 | MONSOON 69

AUTUMN/WINTER 91

PRIZE-WINNERS & FINALISTS 111

PAPERBACKS 133

SELECT BACKLIST 142

INDEX 156 | ABOUT US 167

Note from the publisher }

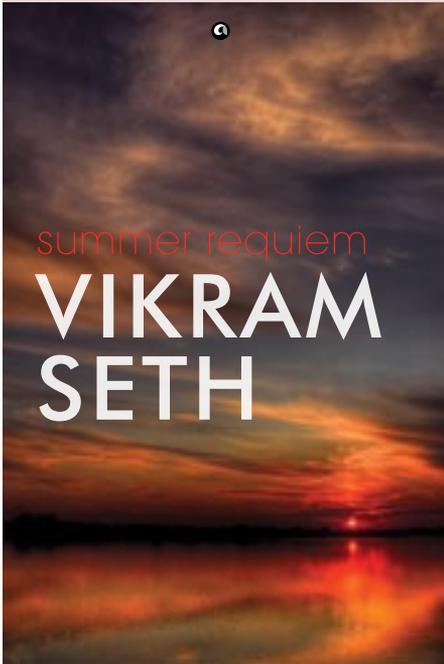
Once upon a time, when the world was a different place, catalogues such as this one were a staple of every publisher's sales and marketing armoury. They were put together with a lot of effort by harried editors and marketing people for they were often the single most important way to present a publishing list to all the intermediaries responsible for relaying a publisher's wares to the reading public. The highlights of the books on the list were framed as succinctly and imaginatively as possible. This was because the sales reps, distributors, retailers and book reviewers that the catalogues were aimed at had to plough through hundreds of them and had little time to process information about the tens of thousands of books being published in every season. Brevity was best. Today, in an age of online sales feeds, real time marketing on social networks, B to B and B to C sites, central buying, and a shrinking number of independents, it is hard to justify the time and effort that goes into the making of a seasonal publishing catalogue. This is why Aleph's catalogue, *The Book of Aleph*, tries to do two things at once—impart sales and marketing information to whoever needs it, as well as showcase the best writing from our forthcoming books for the reviewer and reader to sample.

Aleph is beginning to hit its stride. We think we have our best list yet in 2016. We hope you will agree when you leaf through *The Book of Aleph 5*. We are especially thrilled with the range, and reach of the books on the list—great poetry, narrative non-fiction, fiction, meditations on the most important issues of the day, and a lot else besides.

We turn five in May, and as we arrive at that important landmark we would like to express our gratitude for a few things—our brilliant authors, whom we cherish, our readers, who have embraced our books, and our promoters, who have stood solidly behind us. As the red ink begins to recede on our balance sheet, the future seems stable and filled with light.

New Delhi, January 2016

SUMMER REQUIEM VIKRAM SETH



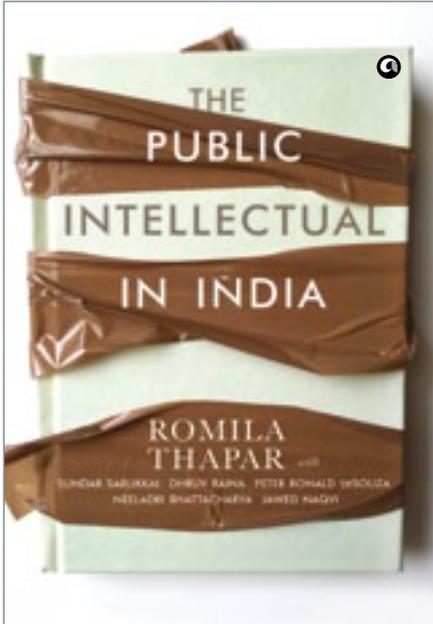
'I have so carefully mapped the
corners of my mind
That I am forever waking in a lost
country...'

Vikram Seth's first standalone book of poems in twenty-five years, *Summer Requiem* traces the immutable shifting of the seasons, the relentless rhythms of a great world that both 'gifts and harms'. Luminous, resonant and profound, these poems trace the dying days of summer, 'the hour of rust', when memory is haunted by loss and decay. But in the silence that follows, as the soul is cast adrift, there is also reconciliation with the transience of all things; the knowledge that there is a place, 'changeable, that will not betray'.

Vikram Seth has written five books of poetry, an opera libretto, and a book of other libretti. He is perhaps best known for his novel, *A Suitable Boy*, one of the most beloved and widely read books of recent times, as well as his novels *The Golden Gate* and *An Equal Music*. He is the author of two highly regarded works of non-fiction, *From Heaven Lake* and *Two Lives*, and is currently working on *A Suitable Girl*.

THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL IN INDIA

ROMILA THAPAR



The public intellectual in India is an endangered species. Should we care? In this well-argued book, Romila Thapar and others tell us why we should. Thapar begins by defining the critical role that such individuals play in our societies today. Collectively, they are the objective, fearless, constructive voice that asks the awkward questions when government, industry, religious leaders and other bulwarks of society stray from their roles of ensuring the proper functioning of a country whose hallmarks are (or should be) social and economic equality, justice for all, and the liberty to say, think and profess the fundamental requirements of good citizenship. Through the lens of history, philosophy, science, and politics, she shows us the key role enlightened thinkers and activists have played in India, Europe and elsewhere. Today, as the liberal space in India is threatened by religious fundamentalism, big business, and, worryingly, a government that appears to be tacitly (and sometimes overtly) encouraging the attack on freedom of expression, secular values and rational

readings of history, there is no book as timely as this one. With contributions from writers and scholars in the fields of philosophy, science, history, journalism and social activism, *The Public Intellectual in India* shows us why it is important to have independent voices to protect the underprivileged, ensure human rights and social justice, and watch over the smooth functioning of our liberal, secular democracy.

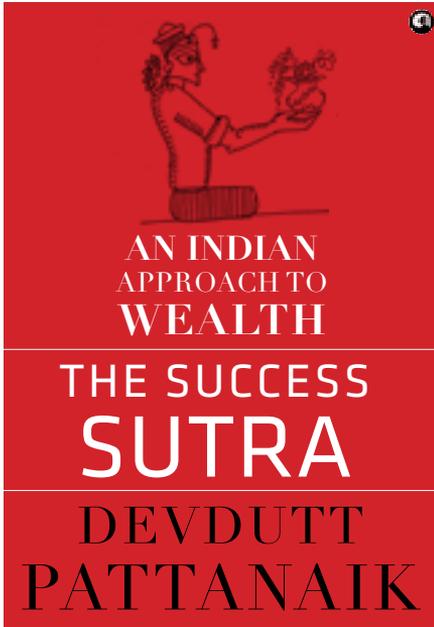


Romila Thapar is Emeritus Professor of History at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is a Fellow of the British Academy. In 2008, Professor Thapar was awarded the prestigious Kluge Prize of the US Library of Congress, which honours lifetime achievement in studies such as history that are not covered by the Nobel Prize.

THE SUCCESS SUTRA

AN INDIAN APPROACH TO WEALTH

DEVDUIT PATTANAİK



Most human beings hunger after riches and success. There are any number of management books which provide theories and techniques on how to become rich and successful. All of them advise us to chase Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, in order to make her our own. But the Indian approach to prosperity and fulfilment warns against the relentless pursuit of the goddess, writes noted thinker and mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik, as it will result in conflict. Rather, we have to give in order to get, we have to satisfy the hunger of others in order to satisfy our own. If we learn and practise this fundamental truth, Lakshmi will enter our homes and our lives.

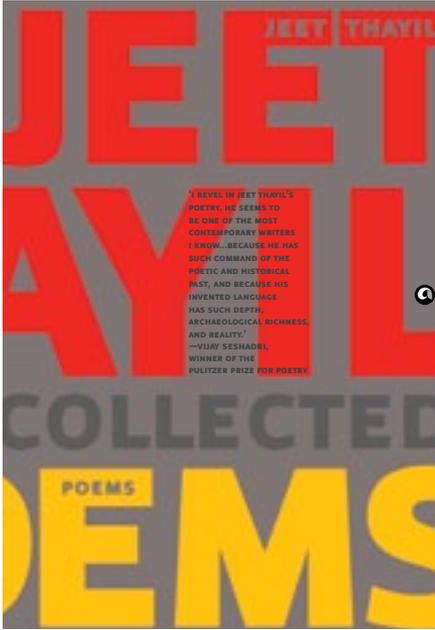
Derived from his acclaimed bestseller *Business Sutra*, this book is filled with lessons and insights into management, business and the creation of wealth and success.



Devdutt Pattanaik is a renowned author, mythologist and leadership consultant. He has written over thirty bestselling books, published several hundred articles and given numerous talks and presentations on Indian mythology, culture, business and management. He was formerly the Chief Belief Officer of the Future Group.

He is currently a much sought-after speaker, leadership coach, management adviser and consultant on Indian mythology and culture. To know more about him, please visit www.devdutt.com

COLLECTED POEMS JEET THAYIL



I revel in Jeet Thayil's poetry. He seems to be one of the most contemporary writers I know... because he has such command of the poetic and historical past, and because of his invented language has such depth, archaeological richness, and reality.'—Vijay Seshadri, Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry

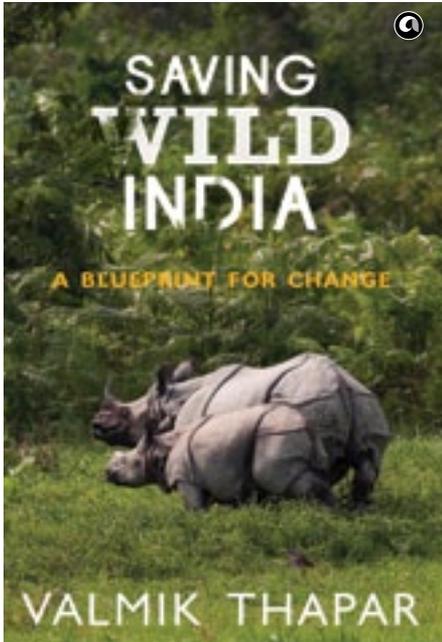
From his debut with *Gemini* in 1992 to his last volume *These Errors Are Correct* in 2008, Jeet Thayil has been a provocative and necessary presence in Indian poetry. *Collected Poems* represents more than three decades of work, starting with poems written in the early 1980s. It also brings together, for the first time, privately circulated, uncollected poems.

Jeet Thayil was born in Mamalasserie, Kerala, and educated in Bombay, Hong Kong and New York. His four poetry collections include *English* and *These Errors Are Correct*, which won the 2013 Sahitya Akademi Award for poetry in English. He is the editor of *60 Indian Poets* and *The Bloodaxe Book of Contemporary Indian Poets*, and is a visiting professor of poetry at the University of Goa. He wrote the libretto, *Babur in London*, which toured Switzerland and the United Kingdom in 2012.

SAVING WILD INDIA

A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

VALMIK THAPAR



In this book, naturalist and conservationist Valmik Thapar gives us a bold yet considered plan to preserve and protect our dwindling forests, wildlife and wilderness areas. Saving wild India (whether we realize it or not) is of critical importance to the quality of life we lead today. It should therefore be a priority, both at the level of the state and that of the individual, to sort out the myriad problems that are leading to the destruction of our forests and the extermination of our wildlife—poaching, timber smuggling, illegal mining, flawed administrative policy and much, much more.

Drawing upon more than forty years of experience in the field, the author gives us a detailed blueprint on how to effect change, and revitalize and expand our forest cover. He argues for the repeal of archaic and ineffectual laws, the framing and passing of enlightened legislation, the revamping of our training institutes, the eradication of corruption, putting an end to the meddling of

politicians and bureaucrats, the reorganization of the Indian Forest Service, enlightened wildlife tourism, an inclusive approach to conservation, public-private partnerships, as well as a variety of other measures that could check the ongoing damage to wild India.

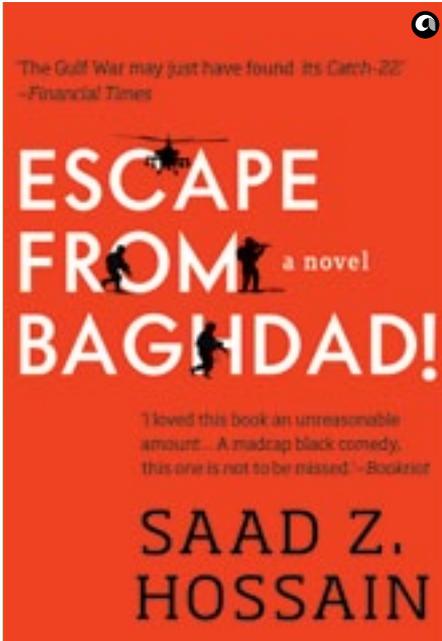


Valmik Thapar has spent four decades serving the cause of wild India. During this time, he has authored, co-authored and edited more than twenty-five books and made or presented nearly a dozen films for the BBC and several other television networks on the tiger and Indian flora and fauna. He is currently a member of the Rajasthan Board for Wildlife chaired by the chief minister and has helped the state government formulate a holistic forest conservation scheme—the Van Dhan Yojana.

ESCAPE FROM BAGHDAD!

A NOVEL

SAAD Z. HOSSAIN



‘The Gulf War may just have found its Catch-22.’—*Financial Times*

‘I loved this book an unreasonable amount... A madcap black comedy, this one is not to be missed.’
—*Book Riot*

Saad Z. Hossain’s debut novel is a wildly humorous take on the horror and absurdity of war.

Dagr, a former university professor, and Kinza, a small-time thug, are thrown together in the chaos of the Iraq war. As the US marines bumble around destroying their country, the two friends do everything in their power to stay alive, an increasingly impossible task as Baghdad collapses around them. And then their luck begins to turn. They capture Captain Hamid, the star torturer of the Saddam Hussein regime, who promises them a fortune in gold if they smuggle him out of Baghdad. Helped by a corrupt US marine, Private Hoffman, they begin their escape, when unexpectedly things get even more crazily complicated...

A unique blend of humour, satire, fantasy, mystery and mythology that rattles along at the pace of a belt-fed burst of machine-gun fire from an Apache gunship, *Escape from Baghdad* is an exhilarating debut.



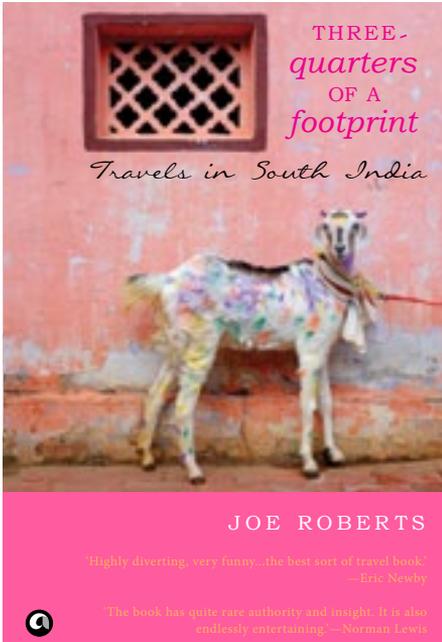
Saad Z. Hossain writes in a niche genre of fantasy, science fiction and black comedy which, on the balance of it, very few people actually want to read. Due to the stunning unpopularity of his writing he has been forced to work in various industries. This includes drilling holes, making rope, throwing parties, operating an illegal sports book and failing to run a restaurant. Needless to say, working for a living is highly overrated. He hopes to retire, as soon as he can convince his sons to start working. They are currently five and two and show no signs of earning their keep. He lives in Dhaka, the most ridiculously populous city in the world, teeming with humans, wildlife, and djinns.

His work has appeared in the Bangladeshi anthologies *What the Ink?* and *Six Seasons Review*. He has written articles and short stories for the *Daily Star*, *New Age*, and the *Dhaka Tribune*, the top English daily newspapers in Bangladesh, which has an enormous population of 160 million odd people. Yes, they're all odd, we've checked.

THREE-QUARTERS OF A FOOTPRINT

TRAVELS IN SOUTH INDIA

JOE ROBERTS



‘Highly diverting, very funny...the
best sort of travel book’
—Eric Newby

‘The book has quite rare authority
and insight. It is also endlessly
entertaining.’—Norman Lewis

Joe Roberts stayed five months with the Trivedis in Bangalore. Using their home as a base he travelled all over southern India. Wherever he went he met extraordinary people...Major Trivedi warned him that ‘nothing is as fixed as you think’. In Pondicherry he found Rita, a melancholy divorcee banished to an ashram. He encountered worshippers at the great temple at Madurai and on the holy island of Rameswaram. He mingled with the vociferous crowds at the snakeboat races at Arunmala and in Cochin he was offered heroin in the Jewish cemetery...

Funny, empathetic, and always entertaining, *Three-Quarters of a Footprint* has established itself as a travel classic about modern India.

Joe Roberts was born in Bath, England, where he still lives with his wife and three sons. Since the publication of his first book, *Three-*

Quarters of a Footprint, in 1994, he has visited India many times. His other books include *Abdul's Taxi to Kalighat* about Kolkata and a novel about Edward Lear's visit to India, *Bengal, The Cold Weather, 1873*. He has also written regularly for *The Times*, *Condé Nast Traveller*, *National Geographic Traveller* and many other magazines. He teaches in the School of Humanities and Cultural Industries at Bath Spa University and is working on a third Indian travel book about Lucknow. His interests are broad, ranging from gastronomy—he is a contributor to *The Oxford Companion to Food*—to art history, but his real passion is India.

BIRDS IN MY INDIAN GARDEN
MALCOLM MACDONALD
WITH A FOREWORD BY **BULBUL SHARMA**



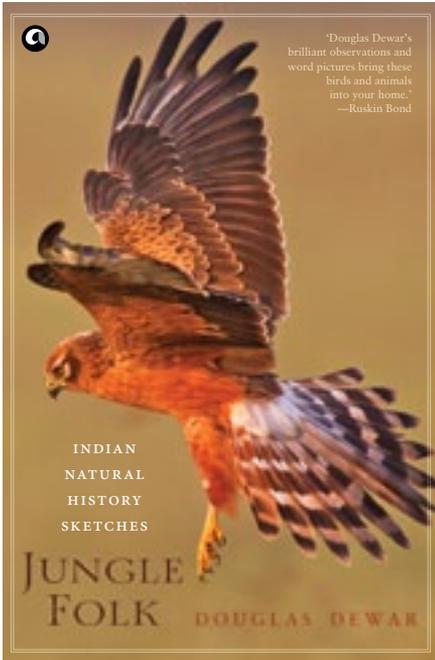
Birds in my Indian Garden is an acclaimed classic about Indian birds. Generations of bird-lovers have sought it out for its extraordinarily evocative and precise accounts about dozens of bird species. Malcolm MacDonald, who was High Commissioner to India in the 1950s, spent hours watching and recording the characteristics of 136 species of birds, thirty of which nested in his garden. Now brought back into print after decades, this edition features an introduction by writer and bird-watcher Bulbul Sharma. Along with beautifully written general observations on dozens of species, there are chapters devoted specifically to green parakeets, coppersmiths, mynas, white eyes, crows and koels, warblers and jungle babblers.

Malcolm MacDonald (1901-1981) was a British politician and diplomat.

JUNGLE FOLK

INDIAN NATURAL HISTORY SKETCHES

DOUGLAS DEWAR



‘Douglas Dewar’s brilliant observations and word pictures bring these birds and animals into your home.’
—Ruskin Bond

‘You will find no lack of superlatives among our Indian birds’ writes Douglas Dewar in this superb and idiosyncratic book about some of the most interesting birds to be found in the country. From the common crow, ‘splendid in sagacity, resource, adaptiveness, boldness, cunning and depravity, a Machiavelli, a Shakespeare among birds, a super-bird’ to the scavenger vulture, ‘the ugliest bird in the world’, wagtails ‘who dress most tastefully’, ‘mad babblers’, ‘upright cuckoos’, the night heron which ‘only sleeps when it has nothing better to do’, hawks ‘the bandits of the air’, the drongo, who ‘is the embodiment of pluck’, and several other species, well-known and rare, *Jungle Folk* will make you see our birds in new and arresting ways.

Douglas Dewar was a British civil servant and ornithologist who wrote more than twenty books on the birds of India, the Himalayas and Kashmir.

THIS UNQUIET LAND



STORIES
FROM
INDIA'S
FAULT
LINES

BARKHA DUTT

THIS UNQUIET LAND
STORIES FROM INDIA'S FAULT LINES
BARKHA DUTT



One of the most remarkable books ever published about contemporary India, arguably the most complex society on earth, *This Unquiet Land* tells the truth about the country's secrets and lies, its torments and triumphs, and its heroes and villains. This is the first book by Barkha Dutt.

The fault lines that run through India are wide and deep. Some of them go back centuries, others are of comparatively recent origin. The myriad villains these fault lines have spawned include rapists, murderers, terrorists, prophets of religious hatred, corrupt politicians, upholders of abhorrent caste traditions, opponents of free speech and dissent, apologists for regressive cultural practices, and external adversaries who try to destabilize our borders. All of them are responsible for impeding the country's progress, destroying the lives of numberless innocents, usually the poorest and most vulnerable of our people, and besmirching the democratic, plural, free and secular nature of our society.

Set against these enemies of our nation's promise are the heroic ones—the poor, illiterate woman who was gang-raped but helped change the nation's attitude towards women through her determined fight for justice; the young soldier whose courage and sacrifice in the high Himalayas was an inspiration to his comrades fighting the Kargil War; the wife whose husband was beheaded by Maoist terrorists, yet sought not revenge but succour for the poor and underprivileged; and the son of the village blacksmith (who was lynched by a mob of religious fundamentalists) appealing for an end to discord and sectarian violence.

These stories, and dozens of others like them, map our country's fault lines. In this book, Barkha Dutt recounts the ones that have left an indelible mark on her. Taken together, they provide a vivid, devastating and unforgettable portrait of our unquiet land.





Barkha Dutt, one of India's most prominent journalists and television anchors, became a household name with her reporting from the front lines during the Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan in 1999. In addition to her reporting on war and conflict (from countries as varied as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt and Libya), she has reported from the field in India on virtually every important national story—political crises, insurgencies, social upheavals, floods and famine. She has won more than forty national and international honours for her work.

'*Swimmer Among the Stars* announces the arrival of a writer who is gifted not just with extraordinary talent but also with a subtle, original and probing mind.' —AMITAV GHOSH



SWIMMER AMONG THE STARS

•• STORIES ••

KANISHK THAROOR

SWIMMER AMONG THE STARS

STORIES

KANISHK THAROOR



'*Swimmer Among the Stars* announces the arrival of a writer who is gifted not just with extraordinary talent but also with a subtle, original and probing mind.' —Amitav Ghosh

An interview with the last speaker of a language. A chronicle of the final seven days of a town that is about to be razed to the ground by an invading army. The lonely voyage of an elephant from Kerala to a princess's palace in Morocco. A fabled cook who flavours his food with precious stones. A coterie of international diplomats trapped in near-earth orbit. These, and the other stories in this collection, reveal an extraordinary storyteller, whose tales emerge from a tradition that includes the creators of the *Arabian Nights* and the *Kathasaritsagara*, Italo Calvino, Jorge Luis Borges, Angela Carter and other ancient and modern masters of fabulist, surrealist and magical short stories. Furiously inventive, beautifully crafted and remarkably assured, *Swimmer Among the Stars* announces the arrival of a blazing new talent.



Kanishk Tharoor is a writer based in New York City. His journalism, criticism, and short stories have appeared in international and Indian publications; his short fiction was nominated for a National Magazine Award. He studied at Yale, Columbia, and at New York University, where he had a fellowship in the creative writing programme.

1962:
THE WAR THAT WASN'T
SHIV KUNAL VERMA

The 1962 Indo-China conflict continues to be one of our least understood wars. Many of the books written about it, usually by those who were involved in some way, and were anxious to provide a justification for their actions, have only succeeded in muddying the picture further. What is clear is that 1962 was an unmitigated disaster. The terrain over which most of the battles of the war were fought (or not fought) was remote and inaccessible; and the men and officers who tried to make a stand were repeatedly let down by those who should have been supporting them. Time and again, in Nam Ka Chu, Bum-la, Tawang, Se-la, Thembang, Bomdila—all in the Kameng Frontier Division of NEFA—our forces on the frontier were mismanaged, misdirected or left to fend for themselves. If the Chinese Army hadn't unilaterally decided to stop its advance into the country, the damage would have been far worse. In this book, the definitive account of the war, based on scores of interviews with soldiers, generals, support staff, bureaucrats, and numerous others who had a first-hand view (and clear idea) of what actually happened in 1962, military historian Shiv Kunal Verma takes us on an uncomfortable journey through one of the most shameful episodes of independent India's history—in which hundreds of soldiers were sent to their deaths on the country's most inhospitable border, thanks to the incompetence of senior officers and their political masters.

Born into an army family (his father was a captain with 2 Rajput in 1962), **Shiv Kunal Verma** has produced several acclaimed films on the Indian Armed Forces. In 1992, he shot and produced *Salt of the Earth* for the IAF, followed by a series of films on the army and navy, culminating with a film on the Kargil War. He is the author of *Ocean to Sky: India from the Air*, *The Northeast Palette*, the highly praised *Northeast Trilogy* (that documented the entire region and its peoples) and *The Long Road to Siachen: The Question Why*. He co-authored General V.K. Singh's autobiography, *Courage & Conviction*.

THE BOSE BROTHERS

AN INTIMATE MEMOIR

SISIR KUMAR BOSE

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY SUMANTRA BOSE



A first-hand account of the private and public lives of the Bose family of Bengal—whose most famous son was Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose—and its role in India’s struggle for freedom. Sisir Kumar Bose, the son of Netaji’s older brother, Sarat, came of age during India’s freedom movement and this is his enthralling record of his father’s and uncle’s relentless struggles in the cause of independence for India.

The Bose Brothers is an intimate memoir of a family of dedicated patriots who never wavered in their battle for a free India.

~

What happened to me and my life in December 1940 was beyond my wildest imagination. I never imagined that I would get deeply involved in the inauguration of a new chapter in India’s history. History is sometimes said to take its destined course. Even insignificant beings like myself can be caught up in its cascading current and carried along as history is made.

A revolutionary leader does not always judge the world through an analytical lens. He or she often acts on intuition. Uncle Subhas once wrote an editorial in the *Forward Bloc* weekly on intuition and its role in history. He tried to prove that world leaders throughout history have often taken fateful decisions on intuition alone and not on the basis of analysis. And on many occasions, he argued, these decisions have turned out to be correct. I think Uncle Subhas arrived at many important decisions in his life by intuition and instinct rather than cold analysis.

Many people have asked me why he called me of all people to assist him in launching his daring undertaking in January 1941. By carefully assessing my

Am fully confident that you possess
the requisite strength of mind.
I am sure that if you are
convinced of the soundness of my
proposal you will not allow any
other consideration to withhold your
consent.

As regards there is to me
my spiritual father. To him and to
his mission I have dedicated my
life and soul. No decision is
final and ~~unchangeable~~ ^{unchangeable}, but
my destiny is at present in your
hands.

Can I not expect your
blessings in return and will you
not wish me footsteps in my new
and adventurous career?

Yours v. aff
Subhas

*The final page of a long
letter Subhas wrote to
Sarat from Cambridge,
before resigning from the
Indian Civil Service in 1921.*

suitability or by intuition? Or both? I don't know. It could be that he deliberated over this for quite some time. That I was able to respond to him positively and then help him with his plans was certainly due to his tactful approach to me and his wise guidance thereafter. Of course, I was just a cog in the wheel of a very ambitious operation.

It cannot be said that the children of the Bose family had a very normal kind of life—for obvious reasons. A great movement was in progress in the country and the storms it generated hit us often. The two outstanding sons of the family, Sarat and Subhas, were both major players in the struggle. We children were therefore all affected by what was going on, to a greater or lesser degree.

Before 1940, some of us were involved in student, youth or popular mass movements. We watched with admiration as millions of people threw themselves unreservedly into the national struggle. So many young people were ruthlessly persecuted by the police. So many went to jail. We saw with our own eyes young people sacrificing their lives with complete abandon for the cause. All this was bound to affect us, although young people reacted differently according to their character and temperament. I have also seen very many students and youth of my generation keeping themselves aloof from the national movement on one pretext or another.

Though I was deeply influenced by events around me and also had some extraordinary experiences as an observer of events and personalities while growing up, nothing that important had happened to me until December 1940. In and from December 1940, my life changed forever. Uncle Subhas, by assigning me a role in his escape from India, gave a revolutionary twist to my life.



Sisir Kumar Bose (1920-2000) was one of India's finest paediatricians, trained in Calcutta, London, Sheffield, Vienna and Boston. In 1957 he founded the Netaji Research Bureau at Calcutta's Netaji Bhawan—the historic house from where he assisted his Uncle Subhas's escape in 1941—and built it up over the next four decades into the leading centre of research and documentation of Netaji's life and work.

Sumantra Bose is the youngest of three children of Sisir and Krishna Bose. He is Professor of International and Comparative Politics at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and the author of six books.

{ ALEPH SPOTLIGHT }

**UNDERSTANDING
THE FOUNDING FATHERS**
AN ENQUIRY INTO OUR REPUBLIC'S BEGINNINGS
RAJMOHAN GANDHI

Aleph Spotlight is a new series of short books by our greatest writers and thinkers on issues that are the subject of great debate in the country today. The first Aleph Spotlight book will be Rajmohan Gandhi's Understanding the Founding Fathers: An Enquiry into our Republic's Beginnings (featured on this page) followed by Pratap Bhanu Mehta's The Burden of Tolerance (on page 60) and Shashi Tharoor's The Evils of Empire: The Truth About the British in India (which is featured on page 64).

Nearly seventy years ago, the founding fathers of the Indian republic—Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, B. R. Ambedkar, Subhas Chandra Bose and Vallabhbhai Patel—steered the new nation in a direction that ensured it wasn't destroyed by sectarianism, casteism and authoritarianism. Because their wisdom found widespread acceptance, every time it seemed that the country would succumb to religious hatred, fissiparous tendencies or caste violence, disaster was averted as its leaders and its people stayed more or less true to the values on which the republic was founded. In recent times, however, attempts have been made to discredit these great Indians and devalue their contribution to the modern Indian state. In this thought-provoking book, award-winning biographer and historian Rajmohan Gandhi sets the record straight on the founding fathers as well as their great opponent, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Along the way, he answers questions of perennial interest—who was really responsible for Partition? Were Gandhi and Ambedkar enemies? Did the Mahatma weaken the country's Hindus? Was he anti-Muslim? Should India have been a Hindu Rashtra? Could the Kashmir issue have been dealt with differently? Would Bose and Patel have led the independent nation better than Gandhi and Nehru? Erudite, forthright and brilliantly argued, *Understanding the Founding Fathers* will help us know ourselves and our nation, and how we came to be this way.

~

Why did Partition occur? That more Indians have not made a truthful, deep-enough and broad-enough analysis of the 1947 division and of the carnage that accompanied it (two separate if related questions) is certainly cause for disappointment and, in fact, concern. It may also partly explain why Indians are often at a loss when facing fresh polarization and violence.

To say that the Empire caused the twin failures of 1947 is both cheap and, to a large extent, false. Decades before Partition, Muhammad Ali Jauhar dismissed the ‘divide-and-rule’ explanation for India’s problems. ‘They don’t divide,’ Jauhar pointed out. ‘We divide and they rule.’

For what they are worth, I propose some thoughts for beginning to understand what led to the 1947 Partition:

From the start of known Indian history, high-caste Hindus flaunted the notion of their pure birth. From the start of Muslim entry into India, elite Muslims forced the notion of their pure belief. Resentment was inevitable in those despised for alleged impurity, whether of birth or belief.

However, in a triumph of common sense, non-elite Indians, both Hindu and Muslim, dependent on one another for life and livelihood and constituting the great majority of the population, put these exclusionary notions to one side and learnt to co-exist.

Whether ruling tiny bits or large spaces, chiefs and kings, whether Muslim or Hindu, always ruled over mixed Hindu-Muslim populations (the mixture varying from place to place) and mostly through officers who too were mixed. Over time, co-existence and cooperation seemed to overcome conflict.

After they came in the eighteenth century, the British adroitly played Indians against fellow-Indians. Obliging, Indians betrayed one another. Alien rule being humiliating and also, in periods, oppressive, there were revolts from time to time.

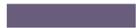
During some revolts, Hindus and Muslims joined hands. Each time this happened—in 1857, in 1919-22, in 1930-32, and in 1942—imperial officers at first panicked and freedom seemed near at hand, but, recovering its will, the Empire used overwhelming firepower to suppress the risings.

Imperial will was however exhausted by 1945, when World War II ended, and independence became inevitable.

What this brief timeline leaves out is an important fact: after *each* joint struggle, whether that of 1857, or 1919-22, or 1930-32, or 1942, Hindus and Muslims drifted apart once more, proving that a common enemy was no more than a temporary cement.

India's long story is neither one of ceaseless strife nor of unbroken harmony. In that story, a birth/belief clash between elites was joined to a common sense coexistence among ordinary people. And the story was punctuated by bitter clashes.

Unfortunately for Indian unity, the period when imperial will dissipated, 1945-47, was also one of Hindu-Muslim polarization.



Rajmohan Gandhi's last two books are *Prince of Gujarat: The Extraordinary Story of Prince Gopaldas Desai, 1887-1951* and *Punjab: A History from Aurangzeb to Mountbatten*. Until end-December 2012 he taught political science and history at the University of Illinois. Dividing his time between India and the United States, Rajmohan Gandhi has also made several visits to Pakistan.

India has more than 1,200 species of birds. The extraordinary richness and diversity of the country's birdlife has been chronicled by thousands of ornithologists, birders and amateur naturalists for over several hundred years.

Winged Fire brings together the best accounts, pictures and art on our birds. Contributors include luminaries like Babur, Akbar, F.W. Champion, R.G. Burton, George Schaller, Jim Corbett, M. Krishnan, Salim Ali, and Zafar Futehally. An essay by Ramki Sreenivasan provides a detailed account of the major species and their distribution, behaviour and habitats. *Winged Fire* is the last book in the trilogy—that also includes *Wild Fire* and *Tiger Fire*—put together by Valmik Thapar; taken together, these books give the reader an unprecedented view of the natural history of India.

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Ishqbazi, The Art of Pigeon Flying | Abu'l-Fazl

His Majesty calls pigeon-flying *ishqbazi* (love-play). This occupation affords the ordinary run of people a dull kind of amusement; but His Majesty, in his wisdom, makes it a study. He even uses the occupation as a way of reducing unsettled, worldly-minded men to obedience, and avails himself of it as a means productive of harmony and friendship. The amusement which His Majesty derives from the tumbling and flying of the pigeons reminds one of the ecstasy and transport of enthusiastic dervishes; he praises God for the wonders of creation. It is therefore from higher motives that he pays so much attention to this amusement.

The pigeons of the present age have reached a high state of perfection. Presents of pigeons are sent by the kings of Iran and Turan; but merchants also bring very excellent ones in large numbers.

A CELEBRATION OF INDIAN BIRDS



WINGED FIRE

VALMIK THAPAR

When His Majesty was very young, he was fond of this amusement; but afterwards, when he grew older and wiser, he discontinued pigeon-flying altogether. But since then, on mature consideration, he has again taken it up.

A well-trained pigeon of bluish colour, formerly belonging to the Khan-i A'zam Kokaltash (Aziz, Akbar's foster-brother), fell into His Majesty's hands. From the care which was bestowed upon it by His Majesty, it has since become the chief of the imperial pigeons, and is known under the name of *Mobana*. From it descended several excellent pigeons as *Ashki* (the weeper), *Parizad* (the fairy), *Almas* (the diamond), and *Shah 'udi* (Aloe Royal). Among their progeny again there are the choicest pigeons in the whole world, which have sent the trained pigeons of Umar Shaykh Mirza (Babur's father), and Sultan Husayn Mirza, into oblivion. Such improvement, in fact, has been made in the art of training, as to astonish the amateurs of Iran and Turan, who had to learn the art from the beginning.

In former times pigeons of all kinds were allowed to couple; but His Majesty thinks equality in gracefulness and performance a necessary condition in coupling, and has thus bred choice pigeons. The custom is to keep a male and a female pigeon, if not acquainted with each other, for five or six days together, when they become so familiar that, even after a long separation, they will again recognize each other. The hen generally lays her eggs from eight to twelve days after coupling, or more if she be small or sickly. Pigeons couple in *Mihrmah* (September-October), and separate in *Farwardin* (February-March). A hen lays two eggs, but sometimes only one. The cock will sit upon the eggs by daytime, and the hen during the night, and thus they keep them warm and soft. In winter they hatch in twenty-one days; but if the air be warm, they only take seventeen or eighteen. For about six days, the pigeons feed their young ones with *falab*, which means grain reduced to pap in the crops of the old ones. Afterwards, they feed them from the grain in their crops, which they bring up before it is fully digested. This they continue for about a month, and as soon as they see that the young ones can pick up their own grain, the old ones will go away.



THE
BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

Translated by

WINTHROP SARGEANT

ALEPH ॐ CLASSICS

'Sargeant's version is my favourite because along with a contemporary readable English translation it provides the Devanagari characters of the Sanskrit text and the transliteration. You get a brilliant sense of the original.'

—Garecharan Das, author of *The Difficulty of Being Good*

THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

ALEPH CLASSICS

TRANSLATED BY WINTHROP SARGEANT

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is one of the most studied and translated texts in the history of world literature. Referred to as the *Gītā*, this 700-verse Hindu scripture in Sanskrit is part of the epic *Mahabharata*. Emerging from post-Vedic India, it has made its mark as a standard, almost universal work of the Hindu tradition. This edition of the *Bhagavad Gītā* allows all those with a lively interest in this spiritual classic to come into direct contact with the richness and resonance of the original text. Winthrop Sargeant's interlinear edition provides an English translation along with the Devanagari characters and the transliterated Sanskrit. Discussions of the language and setting of the *Gītā* are provided. Long a favourite of spiritual seekers and scholars, teachers and students, and lovers of world literature, Sargeant's edition endures as a great resource for twenty-first-century readers.

Winthrop Sargeant (1903-1986) was an American music critic, violinist, and writer. He had a long-standing interest in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

EXILED AT HOME
BEING MUSLIM IN MODERN INDIA
SAEED NAQVI

India's Muslims have more than enough reason to feel aggrieved. They are routinely victimized by fundamentalist thugs (the majority of victims in all the major riots that have taken place in the country since Independence have been Muslim), the preponderance of the poor and disadvantaged are Muslim, they are constantly being asked to prove their loyalty to the country by sectarian politicians and others, and scarcely a day passes when the media does not report an incident that is a violation of the rights of the Muslim community.

In this important and finely observed book, distinguished journalist and commentator Saeed Naqvi takes us all the way back to the time that Islam first made its appearance in the subcontinent, and then brings the narrative forward (through each important phase and development in the history of the Muslim community) to the present to show how Muslims have been systematically betrayed at every turn by politicians, law-makers, bureaucrats and communally-minded goons. He analyses the impact that Partition, the ongoing situation in Kashmir, the demolition of the Babri Masjid, the riots in Gujarat, the increasing power of the RSS (and similar majoritarian organizations) and other such important historical developments have had on the fate of Muslims in our society. Woven into the narrative is the story of several generations of Naqvi's own family—staunchly nationalistic, secular Awadhi Muslims who epitomize India's syncretic culture that is being destroyed by overtly communal elements. Essential reading for anyone interested in contemporary Indian society, *Exiled at Home* is an extraordinary account of the world's third largest Muslim community.

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My mother, like her mother before her, always wore saris, of which a varied and steady supply was maintained by her daughters-in-law. Her sartorial preference for the sari would by itself not be a matter of interest. But because these

women were born and raised in Bara Banki and Mustafabad, both Qasbahs in the Awadh region of Uttar Pradesh, the cultural motifs they adopted in the course of growing up were indigenous. Their faith was Islam but the culture they exuded had strands in it which were Hindu, not in a religious sense but in its broader cultural connotations. These were the strands which made up the tapestry we call our composite culture—which was shaped by hundreds of years of cultural commerce.

Sohar is a song sung in the Awadh region when a woman is in confinement, particularly after she has been carrying for seven months. My mother's favourite Sohar was:

‘Allah mian hamaray bhaiyya ka diyo Nandlal.’

(Oh my Allah, give my brother a son like Lord Krishna.)

My early life was lived in the Qasbah of Mustafabad, in Rae Bareilly and Lucknow, which had not been convulsed by caste or communal politics. Neither in Mustafabad nor Lucknow, both in the heart of Awadh's composite culture, was one exposed to Hindu-Muslim antagonism. It was an article of faith with the people that life would be lacklustre without the enormous cultural enmeshing between the two communities which bound them together. Hindus and Muslims participated in each other's festivals. This generated a two-way traffic in the arts: from the highest to the popular level and the other way around. The pain of Partition was deep because very tightly held families had been divided. When my brother Shanney returned from Pakistan after visiting relatives, his friends at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University asked, ‘How did you like Pakistan?’ Shanney's spontaneous response was, ‘Nice place, but too full of Muslims.’

Saeed Naqvi has been a reporter and foreign correspondent for over four decades. He has travelled the length and breadth of India (except Odisha, he

insists) and visited over a hundred countries in pursuit of stories. He has covered many wars since the 1971 war with Pakistan, which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. Other wars covered include the civil war in Sri Lanka, 1971, the Sino-Vietnam war, 1979, the US bombing of Libya, 1986, the first coup in Fiji, 1987, the Nicaragua war, 1989, Operation Desert Storm, 1991, the US occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, 2003, and the Syrian civil war, 2011.

Besides virtually every Indian leader of any importance, Naqvi has interviewed world statesmen like Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Muammar Gaddafi, Henry Kissinger, Benazir Bhutto, Hamid Karzai, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, J.R. Jayewardene, Hashemi Rafsanjani and scores of others.

UPON AN OLD WALL DREAMING

MORE OF MY FAVOURITE STORIES AND SKETCHES

RUSKIN BOND

Upon An Old Wall Dreaming is the sequel to Ruskin Bond's bestselling collection of stories *A Gathering of Friends*, that sold out within a few weeks of being published. This new collection has more of the favourite short stories and essays of India's best-loved writer. In the fiction section of the book the reader will encounter classics of small-town and mountain life like 'My Father's Trees in Dehra', 'Bus Stop, Pipalnagar' and 'A Face in the Dark'. The non-fiction section includes flawless sketches like 'Life at My Own Pace', 'Birdsong in the Hills' and 'Once Upon a Mountain Time'. Rounding off the collection are a few stories and pieces that have never been published before—'And Suddenly it's Summer', 'Being a Writer', 'Mrs Roberts' and 'Stories to Tell'.

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I was barely ten when I received news of my father's death, and my life was turned upside down for some time. I had to adjust to my stepfather's Punjabi home in Dehra Dun, and this took a little doing, as his main interests were shikar and second-hand cars. But Dehra Dun, at that time, was a pretty little town of some 40,000 inhabitants; today, it is a state capital with a population exceeding 10 lakh. The litchi gardens have given way to blocks of flats. But the old Dehra, with its country lanes, little canals, and rolling hills, found its way into many of my stories.

When I was seventeen, I was shipped off to the UK to 'better my prospects', as my mother put it. Two years in the Channel Islands and three in London. Out of a longing for India and the friends I had made in Dehra came my first novel, *The Room on the Roof*, featuring the life and loves of 'Rusty', my alter ego. Two years and two drafts later it found a publisher, Andre Deutsch. In those days the standard advance was just £50—but it was enough to bring me back to India.

In the 1950s, everyone was travelling by sea, the air services were still in their



infancy. A passenger liner took about three weeks from Southampton to Bombay (now Mumbai), stopping for a day or two at Gibraltar, Port Said, Aden (now Yemen), and Karachi.

Arriving at Ballard Pier, Bombay, I still had £10 with me—my entire capital, my only asset being my portable typewriter—and a couple of days later I got off the train at Dehra's small railway station and embarked on the hazardous journey of a freelance writer. Railway stations! Trains! Platforms, with hundreds of people in transit! As long as there were trains I would never run out of stories.

In the 1950s, trains still used steam engines, and there was a certain romance attached to train journeys, a romance that was captured by Kipling in *Kim* and many of his short stories. Wheeler's had just opened their chain of railway bookstalls, and many of Kipling's early stories (written in the 1880s when he was a journalist with the *Civil and Military Gazette*) were published by Wheeler's Indian Railway Library—collectors' items today.

I did not have Wheeler's or the *Gazette*, but I had *Sainik Samachar*, *Sport and Pastime*, *Shankar's Weekly*, *The Leader* of Allahabad, *The Statesman*, the *Illustrated Weekly of India* and a host of other periodicals, all willing to pay a budding young writer anything from twenty-five to fifty rupees for a story. I wrote for anyone who would publish my stuff, and I had great fun eking out a living for a couple of years.

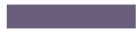
If I ran out of ideas, I had only to spend an evening at a railway station and I would come up with a story. Ambala junction gave me 'The Woman on Platform 8', the Kalka-Simla Railway gave me 'The Tunnel', a small, wayside halt, and the fringe of the Siwalik forests, gave me 'The Night Train at Deoli'.

Those small cheques enabled me to live off dhaba food, but what I needed was home cooking, so I ended up in Delhi where my mother was now living; and there I looked for inspiration in tombs and monuments and the ever-expanding city, but did not find it, and my productivity dropped. But there was that excursion to Shahjahanpur, my father's birthplace, where the old cantonment

hadn't changed since 1854—providing me with the background for 'A Flight of Pigeons', the story about the 1857 Revolt that was to be filmed later by Shyam Benegal, and called *Junoon*. It had been recommended to him by the legendary Urdu writer, Ismat Chughtai, who also took a small role in the film.

Escape from Delhi had become a priority for me. I felt drawn to the hills, the hills above Dehra. On the outskirts of Mussoorie I found a small cottage, tucked away in a hollow of the hills and surrounded by oak and maple trees. The rent was nominal. In 1960s Mussoorie you could get a house for practically nothing; today, rents and prices are phenomenal.

My forty-five years in Mussoorie are an epic in themselves, and have already filled several books. I do go away sometimes—to Delhi, Orissa, Rajasthan, here and there—but I always return in some haste to my small study with its window looking out upon the mountains and the valley. Every writer needs a window. Preferably two. Is the house, the room, the situation, important for a writer? A good wordsmith should be able to work anywhere—in a moving train, in a hotel room, on board a ship in a typhoon, or under an erupting volcano. But the room you live in, day after day and night unto night, is all important. And when I'm in my room, the stories and sketches and poems come floating in from the magic mountains that surround me, and appear on the page without much effort on my part.



One of India's finest and most popular storytellers, **Ruskin Bond** is the author of several best-selling novels and collections of short stories, essays and poems. These include *The Room on the Roof* (winner of the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize), *A Flight of Pigeons*, *Time Stops at Shamli*, *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award), *Rain in the Mountains*, *Roads to Mussoorie*, *A Little Night Music*, *Tigers for Dinner*, *Tales of Fosterganj* and *A Gathering of Friends*. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999. In 2012, the Delhi government gave him its Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2014, the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian honour, was bestowed on him.

THE LEADERSHIP SUTRA
AN INDIAN APPROACH TO POWER
DEVDU TT PATTANA I K



Durga is the goddess of power in Hinduism, as well as in Buddhism and Jainism. Her name is derived from the word ‘fortress’ (durg). She is the goddess of kings. She rides a lion, the king of the jungle and a symbol of royalty everywhere from China to England. We tend to tiptoe around the role of power in management, and fail to openly acknowledge how the animal desire to dominate often destroys the best of organizations. Critics tend to see power as a negative thing. But power is a critical tool that affects the implementation of any idea. Any attempt to restrain it with rules results in domestication and resentment, and fails to energize the organization. Leaders often equate themselves with lions, and indulge their desire to dominate when, in fact, the point of leadership is to be secure enough to outgrow the lion within us, and enable and empower those around us. But this is not easy, as anxiety overpowers the best of leaders.

Derived from Devdutt Pattanaik’s influential bestseller *Business Sutra*, this book offers startling and original insights into the exercise of power and leadership. It explores the human quest for significance, the power of rules to rob people of self-esteem, and the need for stability even at the cost of freedom.

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Paundraka, king of Karusha, wears a crown with a peacock feather. He holds a lotus flower in one hand and a conch-shell in the other. Around his neck he wears a garland of forest flowers, the Vanamali. From his ears hang earrings that are shaped like dolphins, the Makara-kundala. He is draped in a bright-yellow silk dhoti—the Pitambara. He even has hairdressers curl his hair. He insists on eating rich creamy butter with every meal. He plays the flute in flowery meadows on moonlit nights surrounded by his queens and concubines who dance around him. ‘I look like Krishna. I do everything Krishna does. I must be Krishna,’ he says to himself. His subjects, some gullible, some confused and others frightened,

worship him with flowers, incense, sweets and lamps. Everyone wonders who the true Krishna is since both look so similar?

Then a few courtiers point out that Krishna of Dwaraka has a wheel-shaped weapon that no other man has called the Sudarshan Chakra. ‘Oh that,’ Paundraka explains, ‘He borrowed it from me. I must get it back from the impostor.’ So a messenger is sent to inform Krishna to return the Sudarshan Chakra or face stern consequences. To this, Krishna replies, ‘Sure, let him come and get it.’

Irritated that Krishna does not come to return the Sudarshan Chakra, Paundraka sets out for Dwaraka on his chariot, decorated with a banner that has the image of Garuda on it, reinforcing his identity. When he reaches the gates of Dwaraka, he shouts, ‘False Krishna, return the Sudarshan Chakra to the true Krishna.’ Krishna says, ‘Here it is.’ The Sudarshan Chakra that whirrs around Krishna’s index finger flies towards Paundraka. Paundraka stretches out his hand to receive it. As the wheel alights on his finger, he realizes it is heavier than it looks. So heavy, in fact, that before he can call for help he is crushed to pulp under the great whirring wheel. That is the end of the man who pretended to be Krishna.

The corporate world is teeming with pretenders and mimics. They think they know how to walk the walk and talk the talk but they simply don’t know what the talk is all about. They know how to dress, how to carry their laptops and smartphones, what car to drive, where to be seen, with whom, how to use words like ‘value enhancement’ and ‘on the same page’ and ‘synergy’ and ‘win-win’. In other words, they know the behaviour that projects them as corporate leaders, but are nowhere close to knowing what true leadership actually means.

SUBCONTINENTAL DRIFT
FOUR DECADES ADRIFT IN INDIA AND BEYOND
MURRAY LAURENCE

Subcontinental Drift is an outrageously funny and deeply empathic collection of travel stories and essays set primarily in India. Murray Laurence, an Australian, first travelled through India in the 1970s. He kept returning to the country in the four decades since then, drawn back to India by forces he couldn't quite fathom. His early journeys resulted in bizarre encounters, absurd journeys, comic interludes and travel disasters. Laurence's more recent journeys reveal a more serious tone of exploration and observation, though the unexpected and colourful shine through. Stories from elsewhere in Asia are witty and penetrating; the one set in Nepal contains controversial and vivid observations on the country's post-civil war society, while one from China is a riotous cautionary tale.

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The Jodhpur Night Mail stopped at about nine o'clock. There was no station, and nothing could be seen through the open window of the great dark desert of Rajasthan which surrounded us. A few lights flickered feebly in the distance like candle flames. The only sound was the creaking of the train as it settled on to the rails. After about twenty minutes, I asked somebody, whose legs dangled from the luggage rack above me, about this unscheduled stop.

'Train is running late,' he explained. Nobody in the compartment moved.

'Then if we are running late, surely this stop will make us later still,' I reasoned. 'Not at all. We will surely arrive on time.'

As he spoke, far-off voices could be heard approaching, ghosts on a moonless night. Lanterns flashed and amidst the slowly rising hubbub a chaiwalla suddenly materialized from the darkness and began wailing at the window. I ordered a cup and, thrusting his skinny arms through the bars, one high and the other low, he poured his tea in a steaming and expert arc into a tiny clay mug. Such mugs are used only once; when you have finished you have the satisfaction of hurling them out of the window to smash.

Other tea sellers had boarded and stood at the compartment door, bashing their pots against the wall, even as we sat drinking. Their cry, 'chai, garam chai', was soon joined by other caterwauling vendors, of cigarettes, week-old newspapers, plastic jewellery, food, and toy animals.

A pen salesman had squeezed into the compartment. Decorated with Caravan and Parker style models pinned all over his clothing, he was, with great dash, demonstrating the effectiveness of each on the back of his hand and scraps of card. I tried to avoid his eyes by hiding behind a character selling enormous woollen undergarments. Beggars pawed at the window. The penwalla saw me and darted across, writing 'romantic style' on his hand. 'Twenty rupees,' he said. I shook my head and turned away, but everywhere I looked there was somebody with something to sell. From where in this infinite blackness had they all come?

'Okay, sahib. How much?' I showed him that I already had a pen, perhaps not a Caravan, but then how many pens did a man need?

'Okay, only fifteen rupees.' It was apparently a price nobody should refuse.

'I don't want a pen,' I said firmly.

Manically he scribbled ' $4 + 5 = 9$ ', in case I could be lured by mathematics, and said, 'last price, eight rupees.' He was already wrapping the pen in a page from a used school exercise book. Feeling feeble and defeated, I took out the money and gave it to him. 'Style and good price,' he declared, thrusting the pen into my shirt pocket.

Hoping to discover more about the progress of the train, I went in search of the conductor. I found him sitting silently in a corner beside the toilet, now occupied by a large and noisy family, smoking a bidi. I offered him a Scissors, a more desired brand, and we began talking.

'How long will we be stopped here?' I asked.

'Not long. About six hours.'

'Six hours! Why?'

'So that we can arrive on time.' He was trying to be helpful, sensing perhaps an anxiety that foreigners feel about being on time.

'So, if we are going to arrive in Jodhpur on time, why are we waiting here?'

'We are waiting until the midnight train will come. It will not come and we are waiting for its not coming,' he explained.

I felt that I was not catching on. A man whose legs appeared to stop at his

knees was struggling on to the train, his stumps blundering wildly in the air. The conductor growled and the beggar fell back into the dust.

‘The train has been running early, then,’ I proposed.

He looked at his pocket watch. ‘No, perhaps forty-five minutes late.’

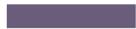
‘Ah.’ I stared through the doorway.

‘I am telling you, four or five more hours we are waiting here, for the train which does not come.’

I said that I didn’t understand. Something profound was eluding me.

‘When the train which is not coming, doesn’t come, all matters will be clear,’ he offered, holding his cigarette between his third and fourth fingers, and drawing gusts of smoke through his fist.

I smiled and gave him the remaining Scissors.



Murray Laurence is an Australian travel writer whose first overseas trip, to Indonesia, sparked a lifelong interest in Asia. His early journeys in India, and subsequent writing, reveal a traveller who is curious and open to any experience, a writer who is funny and sharp, and a country that is at once fascinating, baffling and unique. Laurence studied Asian politics and history at university; his further education was acquired on the road. He taught briefly in Australia, England and France before becoming involved in Australia’s international education sector in marketing, management and business development roles. He was one of the industry’s first marketers, taking Australian education throughout Asia and beyond, and travelled often to India in this capacity. More recently he has worked as a consultant and teacher in a management college in Kathmandu.

Murray Laurence’s articles have been published in newspapers and magazines, and in two collections, *High Times in the Middle of Nowhere* and *Accidentally in Transit*, where several of the stories in *Subcontinental Drift* previously appeared. He lives in Sydney with his wife Maureen, a willing participant in those early Indian journeys. They have two adult sons, Daniel and Andrei.

ASIA REBORN

A CONTINENT RISES FROM THE RAVAGES OF COLONIALISM
AND WAR TO A NEW DYNAMISM

PRASENJIT K. BASU



This book is an Asian telling of Asia's twentieth-century story. It weaves together the stirring tales of how Asia's nations overcame European domination—and its legacies of war and famine—and began the long climb to economic dynamism. Japan, having resisted colonial conquest through its conservative revolution in 1868, played a vital role as leader of Asia's rebirth. The tide turned when Japan triumphed in its decade-long tussle with Russia over Manchuria, the homeland of the non-Chinese dynasty that then ruled China. Britain's Curzon, seeking to nip nascent nationalism in the bud, quickly partitioned India's largest province—the first gambit in Britain's long game of divide et impera. The book examines why the most prosperous parts of Asia in the second half of the century were precisely those that had been ruled by Japan (even fleetingly), while those parts of Asia that were ruled longest by the British were its poorest.

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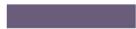
Japanese rule helped modernize East Asia, and crystallized nationalism across Asia. Sukarno and Hatta would incubate their Indonesian nationalist movement under Japanese rule, as indeed would Burma's Aung San and his thakin cohorts (whose Burma National Army would be created by the Japanese). While Taiwan's Lee Teng-hui and Korea's late Kim Dae-jung were both fluent in the Japanese language, their national institutions would also be profoundly influenced by Japan. Trained in the Japanese Imperial Army and heavily inspired by it, Park Chung-hee would remake Korea in Japan's image—from the chaebols that replicated Japan's zaibatsu, to the planning machinery in the trade ministry, to the labour-market mechanisms, Park's Korea would be a conscious imitator of its former imperial power, as would Mahathir's Malaysia with his 'Look East' policy...

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The historian Peter Fay wrote: ‘In the autumn of 1945 India was swept by a storm of excitement and indignation, a storm that Bose and his renegades ignited. It was a storm the Indian officer, and the jawan too, could not ignore. In 1942, at the time of Quit India, there had been no question of their reliability. Now their own commander doubted it. It was the Indian National Army that forced Britain’s hand.’ At the height of the Quit India agitation of 1942, one lakh new recruits were enrolling in the British Indian army every month. In the aftermath of the patriotic fervour induced by the INA trials, soldiers and officers had all become nationalistic for the first time—and could no longer be relied upon to fire on their compatriots. The basis of the British Empire—the unquestioning loyalty of the Indian armed forces—had been thoroughly undermined by those INA trials.

In January, there was a near-paralyzing strike among officers and pilots of the Royal Indian Air Force. Simultaneously trouble was brewing since 8 February on the HMIS *Talwar*, a signals training ship based in Bombay. On 18 February, this became a full-scale revolt, and soon seventy-eight of the eighty-eight ships of the Royal Indian Navy had joined the mutiny, which spread to all the key ports along the west and east coast of India.

On 19 February 1946, the day after the Royal Indian Navy mutiny began, Britain’s Prime Minister Attlee announced he would be sending the Cabinet Mission to India to begin negotiations for India’s independence. In the words of Nehru’s biographer M. J. Akbar: ‘It was the first time since 1857 that the military had revolted, and the British caved in. The Empire was over.’



Prasenjit K. Basu lives and works in East Asia (Singapore and Kuala Lumpur) with his wife Aarti and three children. He has spent the past quarter century analysing Asia’s economies for various clients of Wharton Econometrics, UBS, Credit Suisse First Boston, Khazanah Nasional, Daiwa Securities and Macquarie. Apart from copious reports for his employers, Prasenjit has been a regular

commentator for the BBC, CNBC-Asia, Channel News Asia, NDTV Profit and Zee Business, and has written op-eds for the *Financial Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Business Times* (Singapore), *The Statesman* (India), *India Today*, *The Edge*, *The Star* (Malaysia) and BBC Online, and co-authored a little book called *India as a New Global Leader* (published by London's Foreign Policy Centre in 2005).

S
ummer

This book is a rumination on challenges to the idea of tolerance in India at the present time. It will examine some of the conceptual confusions that are associated with the idea and the ways in which these distort its practice. It will reflect on the new political challenges to this idea, and the sources of social resistance to them. It will connect this churning to larger changes in our thinking about self, identity, representation and the distinction between public and private in modern India. It will argue that we need to not only fashion new concepts of freedom and pluralism but that we should reimagine the idea of India itself.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta is President, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. He has previously taught political theory at Harvard. One of India's foremost public intellectuals, he has widely published in political theory, law, Indian politics and intellectual history. His publications include the *Oxford Companion to India's Constitution* (co edited with Madhav Khosla and Sujit Choudhary, forthcoming) and *The Burden of Democracy*. He is the recipient of the prestigious Infosys Prize for Social Sciences, 2011. He is a prolific columnist and Editorial Consultant to the *Indian Express*.

INDELIBLE INDIA
A GOLDEN TREASURY OF JOURNALISM
EDITED BY M. J. AKBAR

Indelible India: A Golden Treasury of Journalism features some of the finest journalism produced in independent India by legendary editors and reporters who wrote powerful stories and influential opinion pieces on politics, war, diplomacy, economics, and that old staple, crime. This anthology will ensure that these exceptional pieces live beyond the time and space when they first appeared.

Selected from hundreds of pieces by M.J. Akbar, *Indelible India* features greats like Frank Moraes, N.J. Nanporia, S. Nihal Singh, Arun Shourie, Shekhar Gupta, Vinod Mehta, Romesh Thapar, Khushwant Singh, N. Ram, B. G. Verghese, Kuldip Nayar, Chitra Subramaniam, Surya Prakash, Tavleen Singh, T.J.S. George and many others, in a lasting tribute to the golden age of Indian journalism.

M. J. Akbar is one of India's most distinguished editors and writers. Starting as a reporter for the *Times of India*, he has written exclusively for the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, *Sunday*, *The Telegraph*, *India Today* and *Deccan Chronicle*. He is also the author of several internationally acclaimed books. During his long career in journalism he was editor of *Sunday*, a weekly newsmagazine, *The Telegraph*, *Asian Age* and *India Today*. He was also the editorial director of the *Sunday Guardian*, a weekly newspaper that he founded. He is a national spokesperson for the BJP and Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament from Jharkhand.

THESE CIRCUSES THAT SWEEP THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE

STORIES

TEJASWINI APTE-RAHM



A murderer stands behind his victim with a hammer, ready to strike—the culmination of a mind-game played out over decades. A woman is trapped in a mall for a year, unable to find the exit. A servant girl experiences a cruel loss of innocence when she eats something never meant for her. Two couples are about to play a candlelight game to find a missing silver bottle-opener, but what are they really after? A schoolgirl in Mumbai feels the ground slipping beneath her feet, except when she watches *Star Trek*. This remarkable collection of stories is about lives that are never ordinary because the people living them are never quite what they seem.

Funny, dark, richly layered and emotionally complex, Tejaswini Apte-Rahm's debut collection of fiction excavates human frailties with a selection of sharp and blunt instruments.

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The back of a person's head looks so vulnerable. Everyone looks like a buffoon from the back, slightly pathetic and clueless. The crown of the skull, the base of the cranium cradled on top of the spine, all exposed and witless. I am standing right behind him as he sits in his armchair. I raise my arms, hands clenched on my weapon. He does not move. He continues reading, head bent down, the tips of his grey spectacle arms jutting out behind the tops of his big old ears.

Suddenly, I am contemptuous of this non-man. The instinct for survival, where is it? This is the point at which the basic animal instinct ought to take over, his head ought to whip around as a reflex reaction, his arm rise to defend his face. Not that it would help him much. But it might make me respect him a little—not just him, but people in general. As it is, we are a soft mass of reptilian underbellies, forever exposed, lily-white and quivering with etiquette. Intellect

might have helped him at one point. Even now, it could tell him—if it took the trouble of clicking into action, that is—that since I have been sitting on that chair by the window for the past forty minutes, and have not yet left the room, I must, given the layout of the study, be directly behind him.

Nevertheless, here I am and I am about to strike. A house is full of possibilities of violence and murder. And I am not talking about the obvious potential of the kitchen. There are some pretty interesting things you could do with a screwdriver or a hot iron, say. A kitchen knife is convenient, no doubt, but maudlin. My choice of weapon is a hammer.



Tejaswini Apte-Rahm is a peripatetic writer who has lived in India, Myanmar, Israel, Serbia, the UK and Southeast Asia. She worked as an environmental researcher for ten years, including field work in India and Southeast Asia. She was a journalist in Mumbai and has written for *Screen*, the *Times of India*, *Hindustan Times* and *Asian Age*. She has published two non-fiction books. She currently lives in Dhaka and is a full-time writer.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, India's share of the world economy was 23 per cent, as large as all of Europe put together. By the time we won independence, it had dropped to less than 4 per cent. The reason was simple: for two centuries, India was governed for the benefit of Britain. In *The Evils of Empire: The Truth About the British in India*, his seminal new book, bestselling author and politician Shashi Tharoor tells us the real story of the British in India—of how, from the arrival of the East India Company in 1757 to the end of the Raj in the mid-twentieth century, Britain's rise was financed by its depredations in India.

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Britain's Industrial Revolution was built on the de-industrialization of India—the destruction of Indian textiles and their replacement by manufacturing in England, using Indian raw material and exporting the finished products back to India and the rest of the world. The handloom weavers of Bengal had produced and exported some of the world's most desirable fabrics, especially cheap but fine muslins, some light as 'woven air'. Britain's response was to cut off the thumbs of Bengali weavers, break their looms and impose duties and tariffs on Indian cloth, while flooding India and the world with cheaper fabric from the new satanic steam mills of Britain. Weavers became beggars, manufacturing collapsed; the population of Dhaka, which was once the great centre of muslin production, fell by 90 per cent. So instead of being a great exporter of finished products, India became an importer of British ones, while its share of world exports fell.

Colonialists like Robert Clive bought their 'rotten boroughs' in England with the proceeds of their loot in India (loot, by the way, was a word they took into their dictionaries as well as their habits), while publicly marvelling at their own self-restraint in not stealing even more than they did. And the British had the gall to

call him ‘Clive of India’, as if he belonged to the country, when all he really did was to ensure that much of the country belonged to him.

By the end of the nineteenth century, India was Britain’s biggest cash cow, the world’s biggest purchaser of British exports and the source of highly paid employment for British civil servants—all at India’s own expense. We literally paid for our own oppression.

As Britain ruthlessly exploited India, between fifteen and twenty-nine million Indians died tragically unnecessary deaths from starvation. The last large-scale famine to take place in India was under British rule; none has taken place since, since free democracies don’t let their people starve to death. Some four million Bengalis died in the Great Bengal Famine of 1943 after Winston Churchill deliberately ordered the diversion of food from starving Indian civilians to well-supplied British soldiers and European stockpiles. ‘The starvation of anyway underfed Bengalis is less serious’ than that of ‘sturdy Greeks’, he argued. In any case, the famine was their fault, for ‘breeding like rabbits’. When officers of conscience pointed out in a telegram to the prime minister the scale of the tragedy caused by his decisions, Churchill’s only response was to ask peevishly, ‘Why hasn’t Gandhi died yet?’

British imperialism had long justified itself with the pretence that it was enlightened despotism, conducted for the benefit of the governed. Churchill’s inhumane conduct in 1943 gave the lie to this myth. But it had been battered for two centuries already: British imperialism had triumphed not just by conquest and deception on a grand scale but by blowing rebels to bits from the mouths of cannons, massacring unarmed protestors at Jallianwallah Bagh and upholding iniquity through institutionalized racism. Whereas as late as the 1940s it was possible for a black African to say with pride, ‘moi, je suis Français’, no Indian in the colonial era was ever allowed to feel British; he was always a subject, never a citizen.

(No wonder the sun never set on the British Empire: even God couldn’t trust the Englishman in the dark.)



Shashi Tharoor is the bestselling author of fourteen previous books, both fiction and non-fiction, besides being a noted critic and columnist, a former Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and a former Minister of State for Human Resource Development and Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India. He served twenty-nine years at the United Nations, culminating as Under-Secretary under Secretary-General Kofi Annan's leadership. As India's official candidate to succeed Annan as UN Secretary-General, he emerged a strong second out of seven contenders. On returning to India he contested the 2009 elections on behalf of the Indian National Congress, and was elected to Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram. Re-elected in 2014, he chairs Parliament's External Affairs Committee.

Shashi Tharoor's books include the path-breaking satire *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), the classic *India: From Midnight to the Millennium* (1997) and, most recently, the bestselling *India Shastra* (2015), his account of twenty-first century India. He has won numerous literary awards, including a Commonwealth Writers' Prize, was honoured as New Age Politician of the Year (2010) by NDTV, and pioneered among Indian politicians the use of Twitter, where he has over two and a half million followers.

Dr Tharoor earned his Ph.D. at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at the age of twenty-two, and was named by the World Economic Forum in Davos in 1998 as a Global Leader of Tomorrow. He was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, India's highest honour for overseas Indians. For more on Shashi Tharoor, please see www.shashitharoor.in. Follow him on Twitter @ShashiTharoor and Facebook at www.facebook.com/ShashiTharoor.

FANGS AND FEATHERS

PRABHA MALLYA

Fangs and Feathers is an adult colouring book filled with creatures thriving in Indian jungles old and new, on mountains far away, around the bends of brown rivers and often on islands with no names. Sometimes, they're hidden in plain sight, but stop and look awhile—they're sure to find you.

Prabha Mallya is an illustrator, writer and comic-book maker. She is at her happiest when fussing around with inks and stubby pencils, and frequently has black fingernails. She has illustrated *Beastly Tales from Here and There*, *The Wildings* and *The Hundred Names of Darkness*, and several book covers. Her graphic short stories have appeared in *Mint*, the *Obliterary Journal Vol II*, *ForbesLife*, and *Brainwave* magazine. She art directs at Studio Kokaachi. Her first book, *The Alphabet of Animals and Birds*, is a collection of illustrated collective nouns for children.



MEDITATIONS OF THE PROPHET

SUJAYA BATRA

Thinking of non-thinking is in itself the essential art of meditation. —Dogen Zenji

Meditations of the Prophet is an adult colouring book that has illustrations based on verses from Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*—a book of philosophy that is beautiful, simple and encompasses every aspect of life. The drawings are filled with flowers, birds, animals and other images that have a zen-like quality. In this colouring book, readers will be able to connect the drawing and the verse and find their own personal meaning in the act of colouring.

Sujaya Batra is a textile designer and commercial artist. She qualified to teach T'ai Chi while living in London and that led to her interest in Taoist, Zen and Buddhist philosophies, which are the inspiration behind her drawings. Her art is predominantly black ink, pencil work and watercolours. She has worked on illustrations for four calendars commissioned by a private company. She has also designed motifs and designs for Nomada, an online accessories brand based in Dubai. She enjoys golf, playing the piano, writing and reading. She lives in Bombay.



Almost three millennia ago, a lotus-eyed dark-skinned woman, despairing of the resolve of the men in her life, bitterly rages:

I have no husband, no sons and no brother
Even you, Krishna, are not really mine at all

Three hundred years later, a courtesan steps out of the luxurious trappings of her city home in Vaishali to follow the Buddha and writes a single, haunting poem on the evanescence of beauty and youth.

Much closer to us, a hundred and fifty years ago, a Brahmin widow ties gold anklets on her feet, slips on a priceless necklace of pearls, unsheathes her sword and rides into legend and immortality on her silver horse to fight for her adopted son's birthright.

Yet in time, Draupadi's rage is ignored in favour of Krishna's miracle, Amrapali the monk is quite forgotten and Laxmibai is reborn as Bharat Mata through the narrative of the nationalist movement. This book comprises stories about eight extraordinary women from mythology and history, who have shaped the chimera that is the Indian woman's identity—Draupadi, Radha, Amrapali, Raziya Sultan, Meerabai, Jahanara, Laxmibai and Hazrat Mahal.

There is a need today to recover these women from the lacklustre places in our public and private memory they have been consigned to. To reclaim the daughters, wives and warriors they were. An urgency to remember their names and give them back their eloquence and their strength, as also their frailty, their despair, and their humanity.

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In the middle of the glittering Bay of Bengal there lies an archipelago of serene islands, somnolent in the hazy sun. All is not what it seems, however, for the Andaman Islands are home to man-eating saltwater crocodiles, a handful of aboriginal tribal hunter-gatherers and a pervasive and baffling nostalgia for the crumbling ruins of the Raj. In the late nineteenth century, the British built the infamous Cellular Jail on the Andamans, a penal settlement where the heroes of the Indian Uprising of 1857 were incarcerated in chain gangs and often tortured and worked to their death. Yet today, the names of these islands are still unchanged, and remain those of the British soldiers involved in the very same uprising. While Havelock was a Baptist evangelical soldier, Colonel James Neil called himself the instrument of divine wrath. Amongst other atrocities, in 1857 his infamous 'hanging parties' spread terror in Benares and Allahabad, when countless villagers were hanged from mango trees by teams of British volunteers.

If such is the disregard for the memory of the heroes of the Indian Uprising, and the cavalier insouciance in the naming of things, then how much more uncertain must be the memory of India's great women, how much more absolute the erasure of feminine history.

The history of India emerges out of the smokescreen of myth four thousand years ago but for many centuries, myth and history proceed in tandem, occasionally separate but often intersecting and overlapping. The representation of the female figure has intrigued the craftsmen of India from the dawn of time. There are female terracotta figurines from the Mohenjo-Daro excavations which have been described as mother-goddesses. According to historian John Keay they are pop-eyed, bat-eared, belted and sometimes mini-skirted, and of grotesque mien. The finest specimens discovered are tiny, only a few centimetres high, and very few in number. They include the precious 'Dancing Girl', perhaps the first real heroine of India, mute yet eloquent, enigmatic yet challenging.

This book deals with the lives of eight women, from myth and history, across three thousand years of India's stories. These women have shaped our identity

and our collective mythology. They are the scaffolding on which we lay our dreams. In turn their stories have been appropriated and their personality eroded, time after time, and age after age. Some of these women have been completely forgotten while others co-habit with us still, altered and appropriated, on our television screens and calendars.

The very first of these women is Draupadi, tentatively located in 950 BCE, most flawed and human of the mythological heroines. Passionate and angry, using her dark beauty and her scathing intelligence to shape her destiny, she claimed blood as her vengeance and death as retribution for her tainted honour. Yet, over time Draupadi is sanitized and disempowered and becomes the doe-eyed, weeping and fair damsel of Raja Ravi Varma's kitsch poster art.

The women in this book reflect the mutating, shifting identity of India through the centuries. There is a Mughal princess, a Turkish Mamluk warrior, and a Brahmin widow. There is a courtesan, a princess of Chittor and a begum who was of part African descent. Yet in time, all these differences are scuffed or overlooked and the women become representative of a universal, north-Indian ideal of beauty, fair skinned and buxom. The fire goes out of their eyes as does the strength in their limbs which once wielded talwars and scimitars. More corrupting still is the effacing of their personality, the sublimation of their faults and their unacceptable transgressions. Revered or admired in their own day, some are now altogether forgotten. Their lives have been re-ordered, and their glory dimmed.

Often, where men have taken over the narrative, they modify and obfuscate to such an extent that through the wreckage of their narrative, these women are sequestered once again. When the men are colonial masters, the distortion is immense; Laxmibai is a 'jezebel', an object of libidinous curiosity, whereas to her own armies she was that most holy of Indian women—a widow and a mother.



Ira Mukhoty was educated in Delhi and Cambridge, where she studied Natural Sciences. After a peripatetic youth, she returned to Delhi to raise her two daughters. Living in one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, she developed an interest in the evolution of mythology and history and its relevance to the status of women in India. She has had articles published in magazines on culture and travel. *Heroines* is her first book.

MAID IN INDIA

STORIES OF OPPORTUNITY AND INEQUALITY INSIDE OUR HOMES

TRIPTI LAHIRI

In many countries, the richest citizens and the poorest ones know little about each other. In India, we rub shoulders every day, under the same roof. There's sir, madam, and their children. Often, sir or madam's parents are around too. And then there's the help: the boon—or bane—of life for affluent Indians, depending on whom you talk to. In the not-so-distant past, everyone's place—whether maid, ayah or cook, sahib or memsahib—was well understood. There were clear rules for negotiating (and maintaining) the vast chasm between the two sides. Today, it's a little different. There are housekeepers who are part of the middle-class who ensure their children join white-collar India. There are teenage girls brought to the city by 'aunts' and 'uncles' to serve as '24-hour' help, who find themselves virtually caged. There are employers who wrestle with the guilt of spending more on an Italian meal in a fancy hotel than on those who clean their homes—and other employers who insist 'these people' are all thieves. With in-depth reporting in the villages from where women make their way to upper-class homes in Delhi and Gurgaon, in courtrooms where the worst allegations of abuse get an airing, and in homes up and down the class ladder, *Maid in India* is an intimate account of the complex and troubling relations between the help and those they serve.

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India has always had servants in some form or another—a casual glance at epics thousands of years old shows that—but once they swirled much more tightly around a particular point on the map, a solar system with a local zamindar or bureaucrat gleaming at its centre. Like called only to like: a family would have help from their district, if not their village. And so a relationship whose foundation was the strictest hierarchy was tempered ever so slightly by a shared history of being born and reared in the same soil. Now the landscape of help is unmoored from these limiting and yet protective networks by changes set in motion more than two decades ago.

The government's slightly looser hold on the economy after 1991, coupled with astonishing advances in communications—the 2G phone network that would one day lend its name to a corruption scandal that would cripple an Indian government was born that year—meant that there was suddenly an array of jobs and business opportunities that you didn't have to be a swot to get. One of them became shorthand for the best and worst aspects of the new economy: the call-centre worker.

Most of them were a little more humdrum: you could be a construction worker who lived, ate and shat in the rubble of the home you had just torn down until you finished redeveloping it; you could ferry little plastic bags of fast-food noodles and other snacks cooked in the searing heat of a street stall to a new type of office-goer, too young to come bearing a tiffin packed by a wife at home; you could drive a taxi-cab to ferry another new kind of worker—women—back-and-forth from work. But as taxing as these new jobs were, they beat the most common alternative, which was no job at all; all together, they drew many more people to cities than in the past.

In neighbourhoods churning with migrants, new alliances formed, and the universe expanded. A man from Uttar Pradesh married a woman from Jharkhand; two boys from Chhattisgarh and Bihar became the best of friends. And they would say to each other, why don't we go into business together? If you can get girls, I can find them places. Because suddenly, everybody who came into money was asking for girls—not red-light type girls, though there was that too—but someone to come to their home to cook and clean and fetch them glasses of water.

And so the district of Malda in West Bengal sent its emissaries to Gurgaon condos with names like Western Heights and Central Park, the Maoist areas of Gumla and Khunti dispatched ambassadors to the diplomatic and bureaucratic circles of the capital, and a woman running from Assam's many conflicts sometimes found, unexpectedly, safe harbour in a well-appointed bungalow in the heart of Delhi.

India's old rich always had help (but contrary to their reminiscences, noblesse did not always *oblige*). But now Indians entering, at long last, the upper echelons of the middle classes, are hiring domestic help too. Aside from its immediate benefits, having 'staff' is one more way to deliver this message to others: I am more important than you. And this message to themselves: I am even better off than my parents had hoped I would be. A memo seems to have gone out to India's new rich that being trailed by a maid or a nanny (or two) as they wander the mall of a Sunday evening is now mandatory.

Employers now have a lot of help, and just as many ways to refer to them: housekeeper, chef, child minder. It is a lot less common than it used to be to hear employers use the word 'servant'. Oddly, I couldn't help but notice it was the employers, much more than the people actually doing these jobs, who insisted on this new vocabulary of professionalism, casting an egalitarian veil over a relationship that is anything but.

The housekeepers, chefs and nannies themselves did not generally use these words. Once, in an interview about a girl who had migrated for domestic work, I asked a man from the same village how she got her job. But he corrected me. 'Not a job,' he said, 'she's a servant.' 'Naukri nahi, naukari.' More tellingly, domestic workers referred in interviews to their employers as *maliks*, which they translated into English not as 'boss', but 'owner'.

We have learned to be more politically correct with the names we use, but the relationship itself has remained so deeply, toxically hierarchical, that even if the word 'servant' is now verboten, it feels more truthful to the experiences many people spoke about—and to the words they used to describe their experiences and where they felt they stood in relation to the people they worked for.

It is a word that is certainly more truthful than any of the others to a tableau that is increasingly easy to observe across Delhi, little vignettes of the state of class relations in India, often set against the backdrop of an overpriced restaurant meant to simulate the experience of being in London or New York.

One evening, my friends and I went out to eat at a new French restaurant in south Delhi. At a table a few feet away, a woman crouched over a child in a carry-cot, fussing over him, and never once taking a seat as the rest of the table ordered appetizers and mains. When the food arrived, the nanny was quietly ejected from the air-conditioned restaurant as the rest of the table had a long, convivial and expensive French dinner. Through the restaurant's wall-to-ceiling glass windows, we could see out to where the woman sat on a plastic chair, alone, staring into the darkness of a hot summer night.



Delhi-based journalist **Tripti Lahiri** was the founding editor of the *Wall Street Journal's* India Real Time blog. In 2013, she was part of an award-winning *WSJ* team that reported in-depth on the law enforcement and judicial response to crimes against women in India. She is also a winner of the Ramnath Goenka award for civic journalism. *Maid in India* is her first book.

ME, THE JOKERMAN
ENTHUSIASMS, RANTS, OBSESSIONS
KHUSHWANT SINGH
EDITED BY MALA DAYAL

Khushwant Singh was wise, well-read, a writer of great gifts, a public intellectual with a conscience and a humorist who could often be very very funny. *Me, the Jokerman*, is a book of largely unpublished and uncollected work edited by his daughter Mala Dayal. It brings together a wide-ranging selection of essays on subjects that Khushwant Singh had strong and unmistakable opinions on—love, sex, marriage, death, religion, godmen, the Sikhs, humour, nature, birdwatching, Pakistan and living well. Irreverent, insightful and always entertaining, this is a book that will appeal to Khushwant Singh’s legions of fans.

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Good Life—The Only Religion

Among the many bad habits I have, I have one or two good ones. I can recommend one to my readers. I have my own book of quotations. No item is taken from quotation books, which are a dime a dozen. Mine are compiled from books I have read or from letters I receive. Most of the quotations are from Urdu poets. I also have some Sanskrit, Hindi, Punjabi and English ones—in that order. When I have nothing better to do, I go over them. I was doing that when I discovered that the largest number dealt with religion and hypocrisy, the two go very well together. Then came love, erotica and the pleasures of drinking. Why so much religion on the mind of an avowed agnostic? Because there is so much hypocrisy that lies under the surface of most religions and I love exploring the hypocritical nature of religion. As Thomas Fuller said: ‘A good life is the only religion.’ What is a good life? Ingersoll puts it in simple words: ‘Happiness is the only good life, the place to be happy is here, the time to be happy is now, the way to be happy is to help others.’ Notice that God, prayer, places of worship find no mention for the simple reason that instead of uniting people, they divide them. Hence, Ella Wheeler Wilcox’s summing up:

*So many gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind,
While just the art of being kind
Is all that the sad world needs.*

The latest discovery I made in my personal collections of quotations were a few lines from G. K. Chesterton which I had overlooked many times. They need to be read carefully and pondered over:

*To love means loving the unlovable,
To forgive means forgiving the unpardonable,
Faith means believing the unbelievable,
Hope means hoping when everything is hopeless*

Born in Punjab's Hadali village (now in Pakistan) in 1915, **Khushwant Singh** was among India's best known and most widely read authors and journalists. He was founder-editor of *Yojana*, and editor of the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, *National Herald* and *Hindustan Times*. He published six novels—*Train to Pakistan*, *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, *Delhi: A Novel*, *The Company of Women*, *Burial at Sea* and *The Sunset Club* as well as several books of short stories which were published together as *The Portrait of a Lady*. Among his other books are *The Freethinker's Prayerbook*, *A History of the Sikhs*; an autobiography, *Truth, Love & a Little Malice*; a biography, *Ranjit Singh: Maharaja of the Punjab*; and a book of non-fiction, *The Return of Indira Gandhi*. In addition, he published translations of Hindi and Urdu novels, short stories and poetry.

Khushwant Singh was a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1980 to 1986. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1974; he returned the award in 1984 to protest the siege of the Golden Temple by the Indian army. In 2007, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan.

Khushwant Singh died on 20 March 2014. He is survived by his son, Rahul Singh, daughter, Mala Dayal, and granddaughter, Naina Dayal.

PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

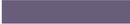
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF DR B. R. SHETTY

WITH PRANAY GUPTA



The story of Bavaguthu Raghuram Shetty, known as Dr B. R. Shetty—the man with a net worth of \$1.1 billion—is a classic rags-to-riches one. When Dr Shetty first landed on Arab soil, he was a young, aspiring entrepreneur with a degree in clinical pharmacy and a few dollars in his pocket. He saw tremendous potential for growth in the UAE and using his entrepreneurial spirit and skills built an empire in the healthcare sector; all of this in less than three decades.

Dr Shetty was born in Udupi, Karnataka, in 1942 and served in a number of leadership roles including being the vice chairman of the Udupi Municipal Council. He moved from India to the UAE in 1973 in search of greener pastures and went on to become the pioneer of the private healthcare sector with NMC, which was established in 1975. Under his leadership an array of service-oriented businesses have flourished in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, financial services, hospitality and education.



Besides his core business interests, **Dr B. R. Shetty** has an abiding interest in education. He is the honorary chairman of the Abu Dhabi Indian School. He runs a number of schools in Abu Dhabi and Dubai including Bright Riders School and Deira Private School respectively.

A humanitarian to the core, Dr Shetty has provided aid to countries ravaged by natural calamities or acts of violence including Bangladesh, Japan, Indonesia, India, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Palestine. He supports the Special Care Centre in Abu Dhabi.



He was awarded the Padma Shri (2009) and the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award (2007) by the Government of India. He has also been conferred the 'Order of Abu Dhabi' Award (2005) by the Government of Abu Dhabi.

**THE GREATEST MODERN BENGALI
STORIES EVER TOLD**
EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY **ARUNAVA SINHA**



Bengali writers introduced the short story to Indian literature, and have arguably been its finest exponents in the country ever since. Short fiction flows through the canon of Bangla writing spanning more than 150 years. It encompasses so many different ways of storytelling, divergent sensibilities, multitudinous concerns and contexts, and varieties of style and voice, that perhaps it is only the language and, usually, the geography of the fiction that is common to all the stories. And yet, the language has created its own aesthetic of expressive grace and powerful polemic, of complex thought and lyrical cadences, which provides a definitive identity to the Bangla short story. Add to this a strong narrative tradition, and you have an enormous body of compulsively readable and artistically elevated literary works.

Naturally, the greatest challenge for any reader is to select the finest of the finest among these. Inevitably, what is difficult is not the choice of what to include but of what to exclude. What criteria does one apply, in other words? There's the safe bet, of picking the canonical writers alone. There's the rebel play, which can seek—and find—stories just as good, but written by relatively unsung authors. There's the combination of both approaches. And then there's the unambiguous and defiantly subjective approach for an editor: pick the stories that he likes most of all, not in deference to literary merit or representation of different periods or democracy of genres, but simply as a matter of personal taste.

That is what readers can expect in this volume. Yes, you will find stalwarts like Rabindranath Tagore, Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, Mahasweta Devi and Ashapura Devi, represented by stories that you may not always associate with them. But you will also find modern and contemporary writers—many of them iconoclastic in their demolition of established norms of storytelling—such as Premendra Mitra, Udayan Ghosh and Nabarun Bhattacharya, as well as unexpected authors like film directors Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak. And,

through these and the others in this volume, you will accompany me on a deeply personal journey through the Bangla short story.

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‘Flapperos’ by Nabarun Bhattacharya

Whoever the black-market liquor dive belonged to, sometimes things did go out of control. Maybe a wasted plainclothes policeman would suddenly start hissing, lih, lih. At once the obscene cry would be taken up by all the drunkards present. The man who was asleep, leaning against a post, woke up abruptly and drilled the dude who was making chasers with chewing tobacco. That was it. Crapfest. That’s why the best policy was the one followed by DS or Director’s Special. His initials were resplendent on either side of his briefcase. DS. Black as sin. Looked like a bullfrog. Dressed in a terylene shirt. A locket with an image of Chaitanya peeping out between the buttons. Briefcase stuffed with share forms. A ballpoint pen with the name of a foreign brand of booze. A dirty comb whose teeth were fossilized with grit from the hair of hundreds of people. A photograph of an old woman. Sleeping pills. A metro rail ticket. A diary that he had actually bought. This year’s. It was a sweaty night. Crowded and noisy. DS’s policy was to charge himself at top speed with a pint and then leave. But that night he fell into the clutches of a man in a thin kurta, fair-skinned and lean, with shoulder-length hair dyed black, a hooked nose and not a single tooth.

His name was Madan. Madan gave him a gummy smile. Then, poking DS’s belly with an emaciated finger, he said, ‘See all these drunks? Dirty foxes, all. Ready to be kicked by their wives when they get home. You know what it’s called? The Bengal Bad Company. That’s why I hate Bengalis. Henpecked bastards. And the wives? First chance they get, they’ll run away.’

DS was flustered. Because his wife had run away. With a successful insurance agent. She was from the suburbs. DS told Madan, ‘Are you a detective?’

‘What do you think? The main thing is—don’t cross over, this bullshit is dangerous.’

But Bengalis paid no attention. They crossed over. And then came the tandoor and the crocodile... if not today, you'll definitely be involved in the case tomorrow, DS.'

Reaching into his pocket, Madan pulled out a set of dentures. Tilting the pint in his hand, he rinsed them in a little liquor and then fitted them into his mouth. Smiling, he said, 'Don't worry about it. We always get smarter when our wives run way. I did too. It was bullshit, all that I told you. Just giving you a sob story to make your heart bleed. All for a pint. I have no money, will you buy one?' DS bought one. Madan drank most of it.

'What's the use of dying over money. This fucking Mandal, spent seven years in jail before opening this liquor joint, do you think he's poor? His daughter goes to a convent school. But every time you look at him, he's moping.'

'Why?'

'Suspicion. Very suspicious of his wife. Don't go telling him.'

'Of course not.'

'Did you watch the English movie on TV last Saturday?'

'No, I didn't.'

'Obviously. Why should you care for good cinema? Fucking scary, the film. A bunch of flying fish. Flying up in the air and biting people on their throats till they die.'

'Vampires.'

'No no, vampires are bats. These are fish. They live in the hull of a sunken ship. Come out at times in a group to kill people.'

'Flying fish!'

'Must be some sort of shark or alligator. Whatever, the film was terrifying. Let's go. Time to get some air. My name's Madan, you know.'

'I do.'

'How did you know?'

'That's how Mandal addressed you.'

DS and Madan crossed the dark and uneven patch of land in front of the drinking dive. There was a row of garages next door. In one of them some

people were playing cards by the light of a candle inside a car. A bald man appeared on a cycle, a sack stuffed with bottles in his hand. A scooter was parked nearby. DS stumbled. Madan said, ‘Watch your step. Elections next year. Congress will go to hell. There’ll be a mixed chowmein government at the centre. Good days ahead for you.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘I’ve been studying your forehead. You’ll see, the markets will boom.’

‘What markets?’

‘Share prices. Buy some cheap shares now. Janak Turbo, Reliance Petro, Vrindavan Aqua—you’ll see.’

‘Last I bought was a hundred of DCM Toyota.’

‘It’s at seventy, seventy-two now. But it’ll gain. Don’t sell.’

‘You know the share market quite well. Do you trade?’

‘Are you crazy? Who’s got the cash? And I don’t need any either. I’ll live out the few days I have as a Flapperoo.’

‘As a what?’

‘A Flapperoo.’

‘What the hell is a Flapperoo?’

‘Very interesting creatures. Here I was, studying your forehead, but you won’t be able to study mine even if you try.’

Arunava Sinha translates classic, modern and contemporary Bengali fiction and non-fiction into English. Over thirty of his translations have been published so far. Twice the winner of the Crossword translation award, for Sankar’s *Chowringhee* (2007) and Anita Agnihotri’s *Seventeen* (2011), he has also won the Muse India award for translation for *When the Time Is Right* (2012) and been shortlisted for *The Independent Foreign Fiction* prize (2009) for his translation of *Chowringhee*. Besides India, his translations have been published in the UK and US in English, and in several European and Asian countries through further translation. He was born and grew up in Kolkata, and lives and writes in New Delhi.

MANGIFERA INDICA

A BIOGRAPHY OF THE MANGO

SOPAN JOSHI

In poet Mirza Ghalib's reckoning, India's mango comes before the Taj Mahal in a very short list of the two things that have no substitute anywhere in the world. Were he to come alive and browse through the bookstores (analog and digital) of modern Hindustan, Ghalib would find a glut of information and narratives on the Taj Mahal, but very little on the mango. Being Ghalib, he would argue: Why buy books when you can buy mangoes?

Be that as it may, for a country obsessed with the mango, India is ignorant of the several dimensions of the fruit. The business, the botany and the history of the mango provide juicy, dramatic stories. This biography of the mango is an attempt to tell those stories. The success of angiosperms—plants that produce flowers and fruits, and are the dominant form of vegetation on Earth today—is largely down to their co-evolution with animals and other plants. This is a very complex relationship, because the plant hires animals to do its bidding, and rewards them for services rendered. But an excess of pollinators and seed dispersal agents can also be counterproductive. Trees and animals are constantly redrawing the line. About 95–99 per cent of the seeds that a plant produces do not germinate; the plant compensates by producing a lot of seeds.

Plants have evolved ways to deter animals that extract a big cost for small returns: poison. The genus *Mangifera* belongs to the botanical family *Anacardiaceae*, which includes the likes of poison ivy and cashew, known to produce the poison urushiol. Urushiol is a potent irritant, but there is not much of it in the ripe mango fruit. That's because the plant produces the poison only until the seed attains maturity.

When the seed becomes mature, the plant withdraws the deterrent poisons—and changes the colour of the fruit from a green that resembles the unappetizing



leaves, to a yellow which is a blingy invitation to seed dispersal agents. Feral animals like monkeys go for the sugar in the fruit, little realizing that they have already been domesticated; that they are doing the plant's bidding.

Sopan Joshi has worked as a reporter and editor since 1996. Most of his work is for magazines taking him to diverse locations and subjects, which he has learned to examine through the filters of science and the environment. To escape the seriousness of environmental themes, he has written on motorcycles, football and other such fun topics. Now a freelance journalist in Delhi, he contributes to several publications and websites. *Mangifera Indica* is his first book.

ALL OF US IN OUR OWN LIVES MANJUSHREE THAPA

All of Us in Our Own Lives, the latest novel from Nepal's best known living writer, is the story of an encounter between strangers who shape each others' lives in unexpected and fateful ways, told against the background of the earthquake that devastated Nepal in April 2015.

Ava Berrimann, a Canadian lawyer, quits her corporate law firm in Toronto, leaves her passionless marriage, and moves to Nepal, from where she was adopted as a baby. In Kathmandu she struggles to launch a new career in international aid, and to forge a personal connection with the country of her birth.

Ava's work brings her into contact with Indira Sharma, a high-ranking woman in Kathmandu's powerful aid world. It also takes her to a small village in central Nepal, where bright young Sapana Adhikari dreams of seeing her village, and country, prosper. Sapana's more world-weary half-brother Gyanu, who works as a chef in Dubai, is back to settle his sister's future after their father's death.

Each person is on a separate journey of his or her own. These journeys intersect when Gyanu and Ava have a chance meeting in the village. In the aftermath, Ava's decisions affect the ways in which Indira, Sapana and Gyanu move forward with their lives.

Manjushree Thapa's previous novels are *Seasons of Flight* and *The Tutor of History*. *All of Us in Our Own Lives* has won the Canada Council for the Arts' annual Joseph Stauffer Prize, and it has been awarded grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Writers' Trust of Canada and the Toronto Arts Council.

SHILAPPADIKARAM
ILANGO ADIGAL
TRANSLATED BY **ALAIN DANIELÉLOU**



Shilappadikaram or *The Ankle Bracelet* is one of the five major epics of Tamil literature. It was composed as a verse romance in Tamil by Ilango Adigal, a Jain prince who lived in the second century AD and was one of the most renowned classical poets of ancient India.

Shilappadikaram is a tale of wonders and misfortunes, of hapless mortals and capricious deities, of magic and heroism in a bright but also cruel world in which the law of karma rules: ‘actions committed in past lives must always bear fruit’. Thus the peerless young Kovalan will leave his loyal wife Kannaki for the courtesan Madhavi, and though he returns to her, still meets his death because of her ill-omened ankle bracelet. It has been called an epic and even a novel, but it is also a book of general education. Ilango packed his story with information: history merging into myth, religious rites, caste customs, military lore, descriptions of city or country life. And four cantos are little anthologies of the poetry of the period (seashore and mountain songs, hunters’ and milkmaids’ songs), thereby giving us a vivid picture of early Indian life in all its aspects.

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We shall compose a poem, with songs,
To explain these truths: even kings, if they break
The law, have their necks wrung by dharma;
Great men everywhere commend
Pattini of renowned fame; and karma ever
Manifests itself, and is fulfilled. We shall call the poem
The Shilappadikaram, the epic of the anklet,
Since the anklet brings these truths to light.



Alain Daniélou (1907-1994) was a French historian, intellectual, musicologist, Indologist, and a convert to and expert on Shaivite Hinduism. In 1991, he was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship.

STRANGERS NO MORE?
CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION IN INDIA'S NORTHEAST
SANJOY HAZARIKA



In 1994, Sanjoy Hazarika's first book on the Northeast, *Strangers of the Mist*, was published and immediately acclaimed as a path-breaking, powerful narrative on the state of the country's Northeast region. It has been used as course material in governments and colleges, and has been cited widely in studies of the region. Twenty years later, with more travel, stories, interviews and research under his belt, Hazarika asks in *Strangers No More?* whether the region and its people are still 'different' to the rest of India and to each other and destined to remain so. Or, he asks, whether a reconciliation is possible and is taking place. While lingering hatreds, divisions and differences may not be overcome by brute power or economic might or cultural assimilation, there are other ways forward. These include the process of engagement: by accepting if not embracing the 'Idea of India' and working on forging connections between disparate cultures that overcome the mutual mistrust that has existed between the two sides for decades. The new book looks at little known stories, drawn from personal experience and knowledge, of how insurgencies and insurgents seek to walk the talk, of the way in which insurgents operate, of the reality of border towns in the region, the pain of victims, the courage of fighters on either side of the battlefield, in the jungles, in lands awash with rain and swamped by mist. Hazarika walks across borders and mountains, listening to the people of the region and those who live in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Tibet and Myanmar. He critiques the categorization of the 'Bangladeshi', challenges the standard stereotype of the 'Northeasterner', deals with issues of 'race and discrimination', and looks at best practices that could be used to deal with intractable issues and combatants. Most importantly, he tries to present a clear picture of how new generations are grappling with today's issues and questions with an eye to the future.

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Not all the frustration is directed against the Indian state. It is important to state here that those who are gently called ‘non-state actors’ are as brutal and nasty as the state’s, and those oppressed by them have no access to any form of justice or ability to bring them to book.

Among the most vulnerable groups in such situations across the world are women, mothers of children and wives of the wounded, those killed and those who have ‘disappeared’; they are innocent victims of wars and conflicts not of their making. They suffer as civilians with greater restrictions placed on them. They are assaulted, raped, humiliated, beaten and murdered during conflicts. They are displaced, turned out of their homes, disinherited, widowed and orphaned; they lose their children to bullets and beatings. Many just disappear, without a trace. Others are trafficked across state and national borders and face a nightmarish lifetime of sexual abuse and disease.

The loss that they face is not just emotional or physical but transfers into the economic and social spheres as well. Most women face a decline in social legitimacy and find themselves relegated to the fringes of society with no one to care for them or to speak on their behalf. Since they form the bulk of the unemployed and the uneducated, they find themselves unable and ill equipped to take on the burden of the household and as a result become completely poverty stricken. Young widows are forced to head households, even though in a patriarchal feudal setup they have little or no access to land and property. In tribal societies the economic burden is generally considered a primary responsibility of women and for this reason perhaps women get very little help from their menfolk or from the state in the aftermath of violence when the work of reconstruction begins. In Nagaland, for example, the women do extensive field work as in so many hill communities. In addition, they carry on with ‘normal’ life and do ‘normal’ chores to sustain their households—cooking, washing, fetching water, bringing up and nurturing children.

Other impacts of conflict include loss of livelihoods and food scarcity as a result of the destruction of fields and farmland, the destruction of basic

infrastructure like roads and bridges, hospitals and shelters and schools. The women are forced to take on the role of food providers and caretakers of the old and the infirm, the wounded and young. In times of war women's access to public spaces becomes even more restricted and their mobility further hampered by the presence of security forces and armed militias. All too often their bodies become the site of battle with both sides treating them as the spoils of war. Women who lose their 'honour' find it extremely difficult to lead normal lives and to live down the stigma.

Continued violence, especially in the rural areas, has resulted in the large-scale migration of young women and men to urban centres. Without any effective support system, they become extremely vulnerable to exploitation, violence and trafficking. The incidence of HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, alcohol and substance abuse increases substantially in such situations. The feminization of the AIDS epidemic is becoming all too apparent and the increased vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS in situations of conflict is an area of growing concern to social and health activists. The presence of armed forces in large numbers also increases the demand for sex workers and young women are sucked into this and become pawns in a larger brutal network that thrives on human misery and conflict: human and drug trafficking proliferate with women and children being sent to other parts of the country.

The state of women's health is another picture of neglect and apathy in areas of conflict. There is a lack of infrastructure, of adequate facilities, of health personnel. Most of the centre's much hyped health schemes remain just on paper with few being able to access these. Travels to the remote hinterland of both Nagaland and Assam showed us how the most marginalized segments of its population hardly figure in the 'Incredible India' promoted by large corporations and governments, marching, the public is informed, towards 'development' and 'health for all'.

Another point important to flag here is what is happening to the young people 'the children of the conflict', who are increasingly leaving their violent

homelands for education and jobs elsewhere in the country. There are large numbers of students who flock to Delhi University every year. A Manipuri professor in Delhi says that there is a Manipuri student in every house in a colony behind the capital's Patel Chest Hospital. There has been a social impact of this out-migration: even vegetable sellers there have picked up the Meitei language. While this is significant, we must also look at the other side of the social dimensions of this migration: what does the movement of a large amount of human resource capital mean for a small conflict-ridden state? Do these youth ever go back and if so to what do they go back to?



Sanjoy Hazarika is director of the Centre for Northeast Studies and Policy Research at Jamia Millia Islamia. He is an award-winning journalist, formerly with the *New York Times*. His books include *Bhopal, The Lessons of a Tragedy*; *Strangers of the Mist: Tales of War and Peace from India's Northeast*; *Rites of Passage: Border Crossings and Imagined Homelands in India's Northeast and Bangladesh*; and *Writing on the Wall*, a collection of essays. He has written and published extensively on draconian laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, the Eastern Himalaya, and freedom fighters from the Northeast. He is founder and Managing Trustee of C-nes (www.c-nes.org) which has pioneered the work of boat clinics on the Brahmaputra river; these provide hundreds of thousands of poor people with regular health care. Hazarika has made over a dozen documentary films on a number of subjects including the Brahmaputra, the endangered Gangetic river dolphin, and the danger that women face in conflict situations. These have been screened across India, in Bangladesh, at national and international film festivals and also at the Nehru Centre in London, Rubin Museum in New York, at Göttingen University and the University of Vienna.

Jawaharlal Nehru described Bangalore as an air-conditioned city. Today only mad dogs and Englishmen walk in its summer sun. The cliché about Bangalore used to be that it was a pensioners' paradise. Today, it is an entrepreneurs' battleground. Bangalore had 608 lakes with surrounding greenery. Today, it has eighty with surrounding encroachments. So what happened?

Bangalore became a boom town. The IT revolution turned the idyllic city into an international hotspot. Real estate forces zeroed in and, as is their wont, proceeded to ignore all building regulations to make Bangalore grow haphazardly, dangerously. Bangalore went askew.

The soul of the city is trying to survive. Literature, music and drama are alive. Scholarship is respected. Epicureans abound. From the cuisine developed as neivedyam to Udipi's Lord Krishna emerged what is renowned as South Indian food. Its quality is zealously guarded by a string of legendary eateries in the city.

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A relatively new entrant to the big league of cities, Bangalore's vitality is linked to some well-known families and personalities that reflect the city's history of traditionalism and values. Khoday's is a brand name that is quintessentially Bangalorean although the family originally came from outside the state. The Premjis have their roots in Gujarat but they are now an integral part of Bangalore's history, culture and aspirations. The Murthys and the Mallyas are native to the soil of Karnataka though they have travelled along different trajectories to their present status, Vijay Mallya celebrating life with yachts and private jets (until a slight inconvenience caused by Kingfisher Airlines) and N. R. Narayana Murthy famously cleaning his own toilets. Those preferences and the cultural influences behind them naturally played a part in shaping the character and outlook of their heirs.

Siddharth Mallya and Rohan Murthy have etched a narrative of Bangalore in a manner no one else could. They are both young and modern, enterprising and independent. Yet no two men could be unlike each other in style and temperament, in ambition and character. They are the only sons of their respective parents. They grew up in diametrically opposed family surroundings, Siddharth bearing the brunt of dysfunctional parentage and Rohan basking in enlightened parental solidarity. One grew up as an English boy in London, the other had the aesthetics of Kannada served to him by a writer-mother. One developed a strong, almost obsessive, desire to prove himself; the other quietly set out to do what he could for himself and others. One became extroverted and demonstrative, the other moderate and withdrawn. But both drifted towards anchorages away from their Bangalore roots. What did that imply for the evolving idea of Bangalore?

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Many people built many parts of Bangalore over many decades, every bit different in its essence from every other. Basavangudi's distinctness was so marked that it attained the status of a capital within a capital. Intellectually, spiritually, politically, administratively and, not the least, gastronomically, this precinct set the pace for Bangalore.

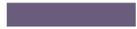
YNK, a denizen of Gandhi Bazar, the heart of Basavangudi, was always in search of culinary items he could call the 'world's best'. One evening he took me to a small decrepit shop in Malleswaram. A board carried the name Veena Stores. This was the place, YNK said, where you got the world's best idli-vada. The shop owner knew YNK. (This was another thing about the man. Every eatery owner in Bangalore knew him and he knew not just the owners but many waiters as well by name).

'Get an extra helping of the chutney, it's the world's best', YNK advised me, pointing to the security man seated on the footpath and serving the spicy mixture from a big pot in front of him. Paper plates with our orders safely in hand, I asked:

'Good. Where do we sit?'

‘Sit?’ exclaimed YNK. ‘We don’t sit. We stand on the footpath and eat. This is Veena Stores. This is the world’s best idli-vada.’

I have walked past Veena Stores many times since, looking at the queues that snake past the shops and stretch up to the next crossroad. The security man is always there dispensing chutney from his big pot on the footpath. People, after waiting for ten and fifteen minutes, stand around savouring the fare with respect.



T. J. S. George is a journalist who began his career at the *Free Press Journal* in 1950, and was the founding editor of *Asianweek*. He established himself as a serious political author and biographer with a series of major books, including *The First Refuge of Scoundrels: Politics in Modern India*, *MS: A Life in Music* and *Krishna Menon: A Biography*. He is editorial adviser to the *New Indian Express* and lives in Bangalore with his wife.

IN THE JUNGLES OF THE NIGHT

A NOVEL ABOUT JIM CORBETT

STEPHEN ALTER



Perched on the branch of a pipal tree, he sits above the mangled corpse of the man-eater's victim, surrounded by the darkness of the forest and alone with his thoughts.

Who was Jim Corbett? A hunter who tracked down marauding tigers and leopards. A naturalist who spoke the language of the jungle. One of the first wildlife photographers to capture images of large predators in their natural habitat. A conservationist who voiced the earliest warnings about India's dwindling natural heritage. His bestselling books on shikar and jungle lore have inspired generations of wildlife enthusiasts. But much of Corbett's life remains enigmatic, though two biographies have been written about him and he has been the subject of several films. Through the lens of fiction, Stephen Alter takes us inside the man behind the legend and explores both the shadows and the sunlight of his jungle world.

In this novel, we see Jim first as a young boy of fourteen, growing up in Nainital, confronting demons that haunt the hill station where he was born. In the second part of the book, he hunts the man-eater of Mayaghat, a tigress who preys on labour camps in the foothills of Kumaon where forests are being felled to fuel the Indian railways. The final section of the novel takes us to Kenya, where Corbett settled after 1947 and lived out the final years of his life. We see this complex yet simple man at different stages of his life and discover the hidden fears and desires that make all of us human. Corbett's personal relationships with family and friends, companions and strangers, villagers and Viceroys were all marked by an earthy compassion that set him apart from other figures of the British Raj.

The intimate connection between man and nature comes alive in this book as Jim

Corbett's story reveals his integrity, courage and vulnerability. His knowledge of the forests of India and the birds and animals that he encountered was unsurpassed. Corbett found solace in wild places, where he could escape the cruel realities and prejudices of colonial society and his terrible memories of a world at war.

In the Jungles of the Night will surprise and delight Corbett's many fans and entice new readers who have yet to experience his books.



Stephen Alter is the author of fifteen works of fiction and non-fiction. His honours include a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Fulbright award. He was writer-in-residence for ten years at MIT and directed the writing programme at the American University in Cairo. He is founding director of the Mussoorie Writers' Mountain Festival. He lives with his wife in Mussoorie.

THE TALENT SUTRA
AN INDIAN APPROACH TO LEARNING
DEVDU TT PATTANA I K



Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge in Hinduism, as well as in Buddhism and Jainism. Her name is derived from the fluidity (saras) of the imagination. Human imagination enables us to invent and innovate, visualize, plan and de-risk. Yet imagination is a bad word in the world of business and management. It strips us of certainty. We want to control the imagination of those who work for us, prevent their minds from wandering from work. Yet, every human being lives in an imagined reality. Recognizing this enables us to work with talent, build strong relationships and nurture people to face any situation with faith and patience. Failure to recognize imagination is why family-owned businesses are unable to manage professionals and how professionally run companies end up creating ineffective, mechanistic talent management systems. Training, learning and development, are not just about skills and knowledge and competencies, they are about appreciating the human-animal, recognizing that neither we nor those around us are programmable machines that we can plug and play. Managing people, hence relationships, is key to the survival of an organization. Derived from Devdutt Pattanaik's influential bestseller *Business Sutra*, this book explores concepts like creativity in the workplace, nurturing talent, and the importance of teamwork. It will help employers and managers become more inclusive leaders, who are able to carry their team along with them.

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In the forest, while searching for Sita who had been abducted by Ravan, Ram and Lakshman meet an old lady called Shabari who invites them to a meal in her house. She offers them her frugal meal: berries she has collected in the forest.

Lakshman is horrified to see Shabari taking a bite of each berry before passing it on to his brother. Sometimes, she does not even pass the berry and just throws it away. 'How dare you give leftover food to my brother?'

Lakshman snarls. ‘Do you know who he is? He is Ram of the Raghu clan, king of Ayodhya!’ An embarrassed Shabari throws herself at Ram’s feet and apologizes for her mistake.

Ram looks at Lakshman with amazement, ‘What are you seeing, Lakshman? Here is a woman who is sharing the best of the food she has gathered for herself with two complete strangers, armed men at that. And you are angry with her? Look at her: she lives in the forest, and you expect her to know palace etiquette? She is biting the berries to make sure she feeds us the sweetest, most succulent ones. And instead of appreciating her generosity and kindness, you are angry with her! What does that say about you? Ayodhya and the Raghu clan may be important to you but they mean nothing to her. You expect her to see me as you see me. But do you really see me? Do you see anything except the way you imagine the world?’

The way Lakshman sees Shabari says nothing about Shabari; it reveals everything about Lakshman. The decisions, instructions and attitude of a yajaman reveal how he sees the yagna and the devata, and his own role. More often than not, a workplace is full of Lakshmans, ready to judge and instruct the other, unlike Ram who appreciates people for who they are.

SUPERHUMAN RIVER
A BIOGRAPHY OF THE GANGA
BIDISHA BANERJEE



Worshipped as a living goddess for centuries, the river Ganga is one of the most significant rivers in India, if not the world. From its icy origins in the Gangotri glacier in the Himalaya, the river wends its way for 2,525 kilometres through five major northern states before ending its journey in the east at the Bay of Bengal through the Sundarbans delta, the largest mangrove system in the world. The Ganga's significance transcends the spiritual and mythological as it sustains millions of people who live by its banks or eke out a living by tilling lands that the river fertilizes. Its waters have spawned hundreds of towns and cities, foremost amongst them Varanasi, or Kashi, the city favoured by Lord Shiva himself —one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world.

For tens of millions of people, the Ganga is the living threshold between the human and the superhuman. This is the river that supposedly originated in the Milky Way and extends all the way to the underworld. It is the river that medieval Europeans considered one of the four rivers of Eden. The same river that drove Alexander and Columbus mad. Famous for its gold, its muslins, its malabathrum and spikenard, today, apart from being one of the most venerated, it is also one of the most polluted rivers in the world. The amount of sewage dumped into its waters is 2.9 billion litres, roughly the amount of water that would pump out of the Niagara Falls if you were to stare at it for an hour. The Gangetic river dolphin, an emblem of its waters and once present in the thousands, is now a severely endangered species and nearly impossible to see. In September 2014, the Modi government pledged 510 billion rupees for the next five years to stop the discharge of untreated sewage disposal along the river. Will Modi's ambitious plan do for the Ganga what billions of dollars and the collective effort of five European nations did for the River Rhine?

One of the world's legendary rivers, spoken of in the same breath as the Nile, the Danube, the Amazon and the Mississippi, curiously there has been no major biography of the River Ganga. There are nearly a dozen travelogues of varying quality of journeys on or alongside the river, but this is the first substantial account of a river that supports over 400 million people and is worshipped and venerated by millions more.

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At the beginning of time, the great gods churned the ocean and found the nectar of immortality, only to have the demon-god Rahu steal it and gulp it down. The sun and moon gods tattled to Vishnu, who beheaded the demon; his body perished, but his head, having absorbed the nectar, had become immortal. Since then, whenever he can manage it, Rahu, the lord of petroleum mining, fertilizers, chemicals, stock markets, and destructive growth—that is to say, the lord of contemporary India—swallows the sun and the moon. But they always sail back out of his gaping throat and rearrange themselves in the sky.

At 6.24 a.m. on 22 July 2009, I stood with seventy thousand people hip-deep in the grey, gluey mud of the Ganga, swirling with ashes, flowers, sloughed-off sin, and faecal bacteria. Although the sun had stumbled into a stratus sky only an hour ago, the clouds gave way and starlight began to play on the opalescent tides. We battled a compulsion to stare straight into the cosmic misalignment; we mutely implored the sun to pass through Rahu's mouth, throat, and neck once again.

Varanasi's monkeys had turned their backs to the sun as soon as the strangeness started, and the flight patterns of the city's birds became as erratic as ruffled feathers. The total solar eclipse was a cosmological epic, the longest such eclipse in this century. The darkness revealed itself most fully to North Iwo Jima, an uninhabited island off the coast of Japan, where the eclipse lasted six minutes and thirty-eight seconds. Varanasi, where darkness lingered for three minutes and ten seconds, had cloudless skies and the best view in India. No eclipse will outlast this one until the year 2132.

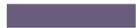
At Tuli Ghat, one of the city's hundred stone-stepped entranceways into the river, more than a thousand of us pressed close, clapping and cheering with the rapidly darkening sun. Our quotidian star glows at 10,800 degrees Fahrenheit, but a total eclipse reveals the sun's own atmosphere, the corona, white-hot at 3.6 million degrees and poised to slice vision out of an upturned eye. Some viewers wore cardboard 3-D glasses. One family peered through an X-ray of a child's femur—deeply opaque, as long as the light didn't pass through the white bone. Looking through my rectangle of welder's glass, I wasn't sure that I wouldn't go blind. The after-images return to me again and again, dim yolks; to this day, certain radiant surfaces (glinting buttons, a refrigerator's bright white reflection, the liquid rays of sweat running down a cold plastic bottle) have the power to bring them back.

Bit by bit, the moon's shadow slid over the sun, hooding its glow until only the thin corona encircled the erasure. Some call this sight God's eye. 'Sita Ram, Sita Ram', I mouthed along with everyone else, hoping that the once-human deities would annihilate the rumblings of my belly, ritually empty except for a sneaked cup of predawn tea. In the few seconds before the moon extinguished the sun, a flash ate through a lunar valley. We gasped. God's eye had morphed into a diamond ring. The national networks would obsessively replay this moment, like a cosmic De Beers commercial.

That darkness reigned long enough for a boatman's wordless song to propel his oars to the middle of the inky, glittering river. It was long enough for me to screw my eyes shut, clamp my nose against the faecal bacteria, and dip my head with everyone else's under the warm water. I expected to be revolted, but I wasn't. Hindus worship the filthy river as a goddess, and during my childhood in Kolkata, my great-grandmother and grandparents had regarded both faeces and the gods with a singular affection—two parts awe, one part comedy. 'Nyar, nyar nyareshwari, tumi go ma parameshwari,' my great-grandmother used to croon about a legendary queen's impressive bowel movements: 'Turd, turd, supreme darling turd, you, my mother, are the empress of all beings.' Head held under the dark water, I imagined unclamping my nose. With my right nostril I would breathe in the river's might and muck, with my left breathe out the mantra vibrating up and down the currents: 'Sita Ram, Sita Ram.'

When I came back up, the scene was playing backward—the boatman departing, the shadow sliding off the sun, the diamond ring iridescent. The horrific, seductive misalignment of the world, compressed into three minutes, could be—was being—reversed. Everyone was cheering and taking a ritual second dip. A few exulting men swam out towards the vast centre of the river, their bare chests tiny and distant, as if bobbing out at sea. Even after the sun re-emerged, I didn't want to leave the water. The light was so powerful that it penetrated my retinas and reached into my gums. I had a scorched flavour in my mouth well into the evening.

A Vedic hymn suggests that a land without the Ganga is like a sky without the sun. But the Vedas were composed during a more expansive time, when India was a loose collection of tribes and kingdoms isolated by frontiers. In the oldest hymns, the paramount river is the Saraswati, now a dry riverbed spanning western India and parts of Pakistan. As the Saraswati dried, the Vedic people moved east, to the fertile and sparsely populated Gangetic plain, where they started growing rice four thousand years ago; much of the Saraswati's sacred imagery was transferred to the Ganga, which has the most densely populated river basin in the world. In India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, one thousand people per square mile, 430 million people total, live in the Gangetic basin. The river irrigates 47 percent of India's farmland: rice, lentils, sugarcane, mustard, jute. If the Ganga were to falter, India's food supply would dwindle, and there would be nowhere eastward for the country's one billion people to move.



Bidisha Banerjee has been obsessed with the Ganga ever since she pretended, as a child, that ordinary shower water was Ganga water. She lives in Oakland, California, the obvious midpoint between her two homes, Kolkata and Kansas. She has written for *Slate*, the Yale Forum for Climate Change and the Media, *Triple Canopy*, and the *Stanford Journal of Law, Science, and Policy*. She is an ethical leadership curriculum designer for Dalai Lama Fellows. This is her first book.

A LIFE IN POLITICS
A MEMOIR
JAYANTHI NATARAJAN



Jayanthi Natarajan became one of India's youngest MPs when she was only thirty years of age. Thereafter, she quickly made her mark on Indian politics and went on to hold a number of important ministerial positions. Her extraordinarily distinguished political lineage stretches back to her great-grandfather who was the Congress president of Tamil Nadu, and a member of India's constituent assembly, and her grandfather who was the last Congress chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

In this candid memoir, Jayanthi talks about her storied political heritage, as well as her own remarkable political journey this far.

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I grew up in a high-octane political household. My maternal grandfather was the chief minister of the state and my paternal grandfather the leader of the Opposition. The atmosphere at family functions was interesting, to say the least. When I was born, although my maternal grandfather was not yet chief minister, the political barometer in our home was so volatile that my grandmother had to exercise considerable ingenuity to ensure my paternal grandfather's visits to see his granddaughter at the home of his political opponent went off without a hitch.

Throughout school and college I used to do battle to defend the fair name of the Congress party from teasing classmates, especially after the party's defeat in 1967. It was thus perhaps natural for me to move into political work after practising as a lawyer for a few years in the Madras High Court. The arrival of Rajiv Gandhi into politics was a seismic event in my life, and that of many young Indians at the time. Although already an active member of the Congress party, I was genuinely inspired by his idealism and vision for a modern, dynamic twenty-first-century India, and threw myself into full-time political work.

One day, while arguing a case, I was called to my chambers, and told that the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, wanted to speak with me. I thought it was a prank call and ignored it. Minutes later I received an official summons to Delhi to meet the prime minister. When I reached Delhi the same evening, all I was happily looking forward to was the chance to meet with the prime minister. I had no other expectations of the meeting and was therefore dumbstruck when Rajiv Gandhi cheerfully informed me that I had been selected as an official candidate for election to the Rajya Sabha. I became one of the youngest MPs in Parliament at the age of thirty.



Jayanthi Natarajan is one of the country's most distinguished political leaders.

MANY MALALAS
ORDINARY PEOPLE FIGHT FOR CHANGE IN PAKISTAN
MEHR TARAR



Many Malalas is a selection of profiles of diverse Pakistanis who are striving within the confines of their own lives to create a more healthy, inclusive and safe society. These twelve profiles of individuals—some of whom are internationally feted and many others who are relatively unknown—highlight the sociological, cultural, religious and personal challenges facing people who live in Pakistan today. From fighting for the right to education to opposing blasphemy laws, religious extremism and corruption to changing societal mind-sets, the stories of these individuals show us the true reality of their country. Comprehensively researched and brilliantly narrated, the stories reflect, on the one hand, the sores of a dysfunctional society on the verge of collapse and, on the other, a nation of ordinary individuals with remarkable courage.

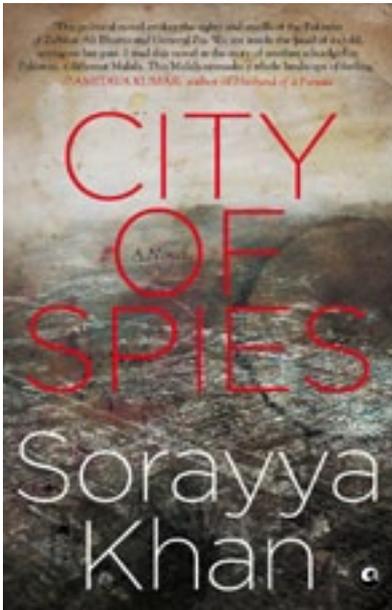


Mehr Tarar is the former op-ed editor of the *Daily Times*, one of Pakistan's leading national dailies. She is a freelance columnist for the *Daily Times* and *Express Tribune*, Pakistan; *Khaleej Times*, UAE; and a blogger for the *Huffington Post*.

CITY OF SPIES

A NOVEL

SORAYYA KHAN



Winner of the Best
International Fiction Book,
Sharjah International
Book Fair 2015

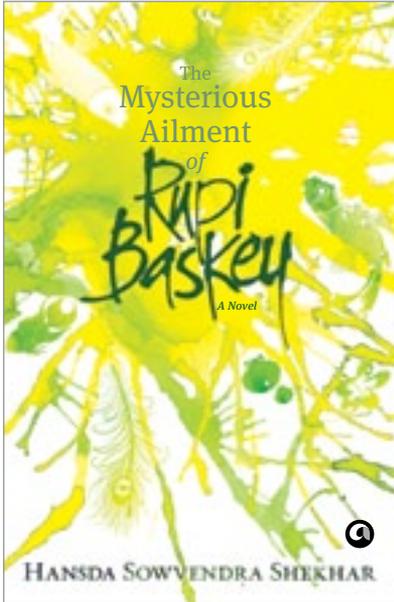
It is the summer of 1977 and Pakistan swelters in the unrelenting heat. Weeks after her eleventh birthday, Aliya Shah wakes up to the news that there has been a coup d'état, General Zia has taken over the country and Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is in jail. Although the shadow of the general and his increasingly puritanical edicts threaten to disrupt their comfortable existence, life goes on for Aliya much as before as she attends the American School in Islamabad. However, when a much-loved young boy, the son of the family retainer, dies tragically in a hit-and-run accident, her world is turned upside down, especially when she discovers the terrible secret of the murderer's identity. *City of Spies* is a coming-of-age story that explores Aliya's conflicting loyalties and her on-going struggle to make sense of her world. Set in late 1970's Islamabad and Lahore, this is a gripping novel that unfolds over thirty months in Pakistan's tumultuous history.



Sorayya Khan is the author of two previous novels, *Noor* and *Five Queen's Road*. Her writing has appeared in several anthologies and literary reviews. She is the recipient of a Fulbright research award, a Malahat Review Novella Prize and a Constance Saltonstall Artist Grant that took her to post-tsunami Banda Aceh. She lives in New York.

THE MYSTERIOUS AILMENT OF RUPI BASKEY

HANSDA SOWVENDRA SHEKHAR



Winner of the Sahitya
Akademi Yuva Puraskar for
Best Novel in English 2015

Finalist for the Crossword
Book Award for Fiction 2015

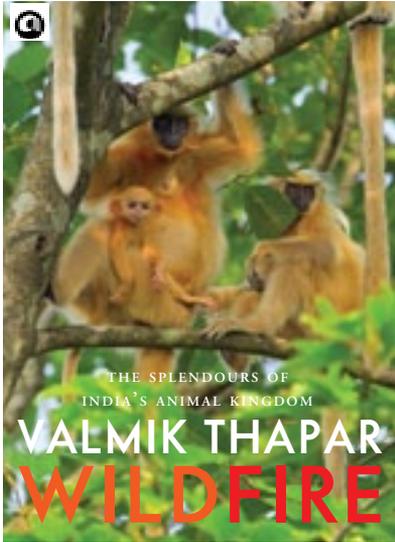
Rupi birthed her eldest son squatting in the middle of a paddy field, shin-deep in mud and slush. Soon after, Gurubari, her rival in love, gave her an illness that was like the alakjari vine which engulfs the tallest, greenest trees of the forest and sucks their hearts out. Now Rupri, once the strongest woman in her village, lives out her days on a cot in the backyard and her life dissolves into incomprehensible ruin around her.

The Mysterious Ailment of Rupri Baskey is the story of the Baskeys—the patriarch Somai; his alcoholic, irrepressible daughter Putki Khorda; Putki's devout, upright husband, and their sons Sido and Doso; and Sido's wife Rupri. Equally, the novel is about Kadamdihi, the Santhal village in Jharkhand in which they live. For it is in full view of the village that the various large and small dramas of the Baskeys' lives play out, even as the village cheers them on, finds fault with them, prays for them and most of all, enjoys the spectacle they provide.



Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar is a medical officer with the government of Jharkhand. His stories and articles have been published in *Indian Literature*, *The Statesman*, *Asian Age*, *Times of India*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The Northeast Review*, *Four Quarters* and in the anthology *Alchemy: The Tranquebar Book of Erotic Stories II*. *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupi Baskey* is his first book.

WILD FIRE
THE SPLENDOURS OF INDIA'S ANIMAL KINGDOM
VALMIK THAPAR



Winner of Publishing Next Awards, Printed Book of the Year 2015

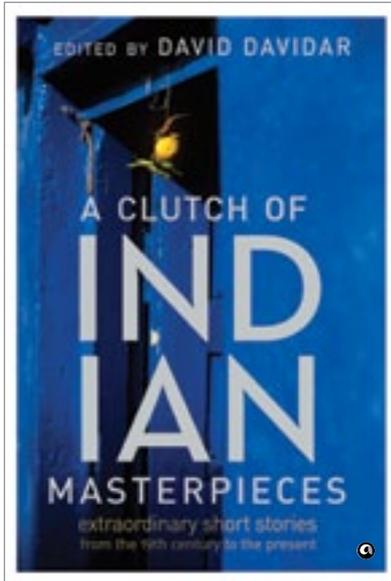
India's spectacular animal life has attracted the attention of naturalists, photographers, writers, conservationists and hunters for centuries. This book brings together, for the very first time, the finest writing, photography and art on Indian animals over the past two thousand years. Developed and edited by Valmik Thapar, one of our foremost wildlife experts, the book is divided into three sections. The first section, 'Thoughts from Elsewhere', written by Thapar, takes the reader on a quick tour of the country's natural heritage in the twenty-first century. It provides an overview of mammalian distribution, the characteristics of individual species, the evolution of the country's wildlife habitats, threats to the environment and much else besides. The second section, 'The Wildlife Chronicles', collects the finest accounts of predators—tigers, leopards, snow leopards, lions, golden cats and others; magnificent herbivores like the elephant, rhino, wild ox and the various species of

deer and antelope; evocative accounts of some of the most striking animals in the country including monkeys, squirrels and other arboreal creatures; as well as reports of rare sightings of river dolphins, bats, shrews and other lesser-known members of the animal kingdom. Contributors to this section include travellers, hunters, writers, photographers and naturalists such as Pliny the Elder, Ibn Battuta, Babur, Akbar, François Bernier, Isabel Savory, Jim Corbett, George Schaller, Kenneth Anderson, M. Krishnan, E.R.C. Davidar, Peter Jackson and Ruskin Bond. The third section, 'Wild Fire', contains a selection of some of the finest photographs ever taken of India's mammals. Conceived and composed over five years, during which the author sifted through several million words and thousands of photographs to make this selection, *Wild Fire* (the second book in the trilogy that started with *Tiger Fire: 500 Years of the Tiger in India* and ends with *Winged Fire: A Celebration of Indian Birds*) brings the splendour and diversity of India's animal kingdom to glorious and vivid life.

A CLUTCH OF INDIAN MASTERPIECES

EXTRAORDINARY SHORT STORIES FROM THE 19TH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT

EDITED BY DAVID DAVIDAR



Winner of Publishing Next Awards, Printed Book of the Year 2015

The thirty-nine short stories in this book will blow you away. Starting with a ghost story by Rabindranath Tagore, India's most famous writer, and ending with a fable by Kanishk Tharoor, a writer who has come of age in the twenty-first century, these literary masterpieces showcase the extraordinary range and diversity of our storytelling tradition. The first recognizably modern Indian short stories were written in Bengal (by Tagore and others) in the second half of the nineteenth century, and writers from other regions were quick to follow suit, often using the form to protest colonial oppression and the various ills afflicting rural and urban India. Over the next century and a half, some of the finest writers the world has seen produced outstanding fiction in every conceivable genre. Many of these stories find a place in this volume, as does work by emerging talent that has never been published in book form before. Here you will find stories of classical realism, ones rooted in folklore and myth, tales of

fantasy, humour, horror, crime, and romance, stories set in villages, small towns, cities and the moon. They will entertain you, and shock you, they will lighten your mood and cast you down, they will move you, and they will make you reflect on life's big and little questions. Most of all, they will make you see the world differently—as the greatest stories always do.

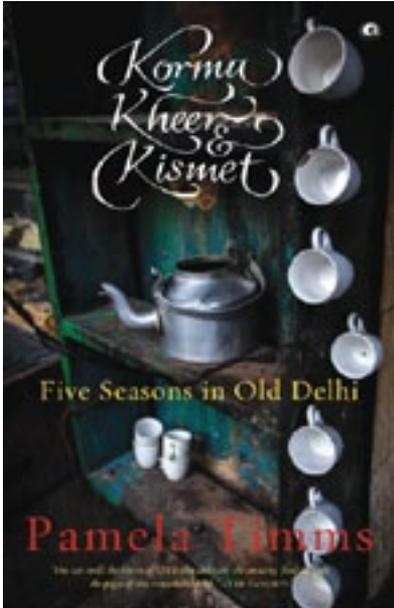


David Davidar is a novelist, publisher, editor and anthologist.

KORMA, KHEER & KISMET

FIVE SEASONS IN OLD DELHI

PAMELA TIMMS



Winner of Publishing Next Awards, Digital Book of the Year 2015

Pamela Timms leaves cold, damp Scotland with her family to embark on the trip of a lifetime to Delhi, but soon finds herself frustrated with expatriate life and stranded far from the ‘real India’ she set out for. Then the chaotic, medieval gullies of the old city provide her with an unexpected escape. Several gastronomic adventures change forever the way she thinks about food and cooking and she embarks on a quest to discover the stories and secret ingredients of Old Delhi’s beloved street food. She unravels the mysteries surrounding Ashok and Ashok’s mutton korma, Bade Mian’s kheer, the ‘Old and Famous’ jalebis, and that most elusive of Shahjahanabad’s winter treats, daulat ki chaat. The journey takes her deep into the heart of the old city, where she is welcomed into the lives of those who make and sell its extraordinary dishes. With them she celebrates festivals, learns about their families, finds recipes and makes treasured friends, soon realizing Old Delhi has become a place she can call home.

Quite literally a feast for the senses, *Korma, Kheer and Kismet* is an unforgettable portrait of a place, its people and their food.

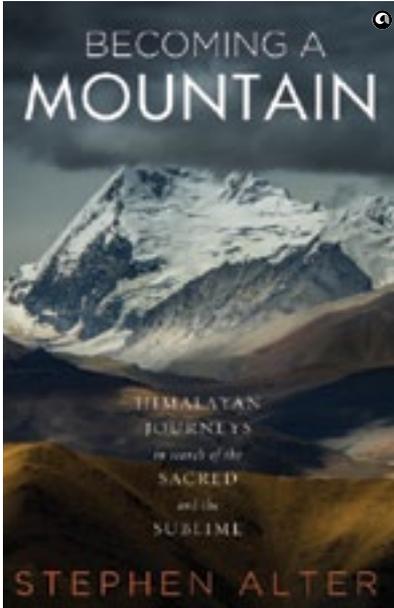


Pamela Timms is a Scottish journalist who has written for a wide range of publications.

BECOMING A MOUNTAIN

HIMALAYAN JOURNEYS IN SEARCH OF THE SACRED AND THE SUBLIME

STEPHEN ALTER



Winner of the 9th Himalayan Club Kekoo Naoroji Book Award 2015-16

Stephen Alter was born and raised in the hill station of Mussoorie, in the foothills of the Himalayas, where he and his wife, Ameeta, now live. Their idyllic existence was shattered when four armed intruders invaded their home and viciously attacked them, leaving them for dead. The violent assault and the trauma of almost dying left the author questioning assumptions he had lived by since childhood. For the first time, he encountered the face of evil and the terror of the unknown. He felt like a foreigner in the land of his birth.

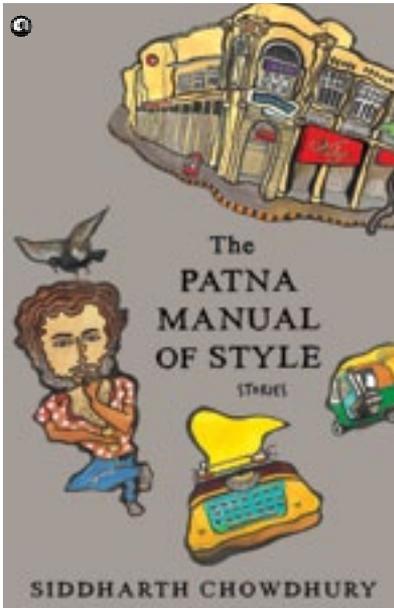
This book is an account of a series of treks he took in the high Himalayas following his convalescence—to Bandarpunch (monkey's tail); Nanda Devi, the second highest mountain in India; and Mount Kailash in Tibet. He set himself this goal to prove that he had healed mentally as well as physically and to re-knit his connection to his homeland. Undertaken out of sorrow, the treks became a moving personal quest,

a way to rediscover mountains in his inner landscape. Weaving together observations of the natural world, Himalayan history, folklore and mythology, as well as encounters with other pilgrims along the way, Stephen Alter has given us an affecting meditation on the solace of high places, and on the hidden meanings and enduring mystery of the mountains.

THE PATNA MANUAL OF STYLE

STORIES

SIDDHARTH CHOWDHURY



Shortlisted for the Hindu
Literary Prize for Fiction 2015

‘Go to any party, in any country, on any moonlit terrace of the world, the best dressed man is always the one from Patna.’

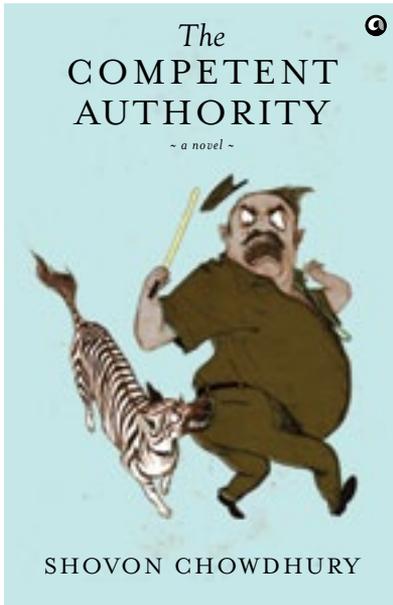
In these nine interlinked stories we meet the not so quintessential Patna man—Hriday Thakur, literature junkie, aspiring writer, inveterate lover of women and rain; Jishnu da, his acquaintance from Delhi University, who is now an ‘importer of blondes’; Samuel Crown, the fastidious proofreader who mentors Hriday and instils in him an irrevocable love for the art of ‘book-making’; the parade of women in Hriday’s life: austere, doe-eyed Charulata, love of his youth, the one who got away; Chitrangada, his wife, who works hard to be accepted into his world of books, art, politics and activism; the beautiful Anjali Singh Nalwa, ex-flame who is now a fiery, controversial novelist; Imogen Burns, the intrepid chronicler of graveyards; Sadaf Khan Abdali, who loves the smell of Listerine early in

the morning; and ‘Sophia Loren’, dream girl of many schoolboys, now a mother of two.

Unsentimental to a fault, **Siddharth Chowdhury’s** stories deal with relationships that are intimate and sensuous and sometimes hard to define; taken together, they are an affectionate nod to an idealist generation, insulated in a world of publishing, academia, gin-soaked brunches and Marxist philosophy.

Born in Patna in 1974, Siddharth Chowdhury is the author, most recently, of *Day Scholar*, shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize 2009. He works as an editorial consultant with the house of Manohar.

THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY SHOVON CHOWDHURY



Finalist for the Crossword
Book Award for Fiction 2015

A couple of decades from now, India is not shining—the Chinese have nuked large parts of the country; Bombay has been obliterated; Delhi is in the throes of rigorous reconstruction; Bengal has seceded and is now a protectorate of China; the Maoists have taken over much of what remains. The southern states are a distant and tranquil place that nobody has visited in years.

The most powerful person in the country is a deranged bureaucrat called the Competent Authority, who has used his official position as the head of the Bureau of Reconstruction, to subvert all forces of governmental authority. Cloaked in anonymity, his identity known only to his terrified minions, the CA rules the remnants of India with an iron fist.

Although, in theory, the government and the armed forces still exist, the Prime Minister, who looks very familiar, and the General, who commands the Army, are mere puppets in the hands of the Competent Authority. All they can do is watch in horror as he tries to

put in motion a fiendish plan to annihilate everyone in the country, for reasons that are completely logical.

The only person who can stop him is Pintoo, a mutant 12-year-old from Shanti Nagar, where all the poor people live. Determined to thwart the CA's plan and save the country from disaster, Pintoo employs three reluctant henchmen to help him: Pande, a corrupt and vicious policeman, Chatterjee, a pessimistic but determined CBI officer, and Ali, the last surviving member of Al Qaeda. And then there's also the matter of the hand that has a mind of its own...

Laugh-out-loud funny and a blistering satire on Indian society, *The Competent Authority* is a superlative feat of the imagination that is unlike anything you have ever read before.

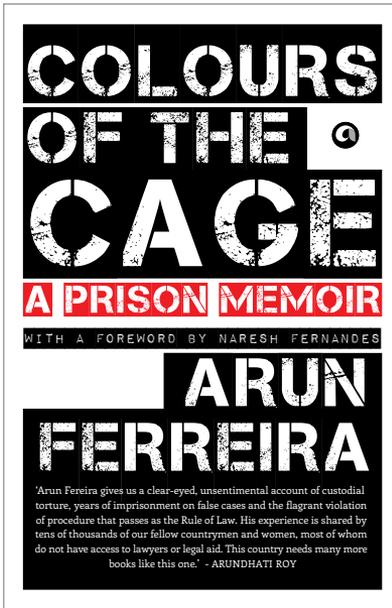


Shovon Chowdhury is a Delhi-based amateur humourist. His blog, *shovon.wordpress.com*, has been widely condemned. In his spare time, he does advertising work for clients who cannot find anyone cheaper. His grandfather ran away from Dhaka to escape the Japanese bombing of 1945, not realizing that the war was about to end, and arrived in Calcutta just in time for the Great Calcutta Killings of 1946. These shared family experiences have left him deeply averse to sudden movement, which is why he has lived in Delhi for the last twenty years.

COLOURS OF THE CAGE

A PRISON MEMOIR

ARUN FERREIRA



Finalist for the Crossword Book Award for Non-fiction 2015

In May 2007, human rights activist Arun Ferreira was picked up from the railway station and arrested by the Nagpur Police on charges of being a Naxalite. Over the next few months, he was charged with more crimes—of criminal conspiracy, murder, possession of arms and rioting, among others—and incarcerated in one of the most notorious prisons in Maharashtra, the Nagpur Central Jail. This is an account of the nearly five years that Ferreira was imprisoned. We read in stark and unsparing detail about life in prison—the torture; the beatings; the corrupt system; the codes of behaviour among inmates; the strikes mounted by prisoners to protest brutality; the general air of helplessness and the small consolations that keep hope alive. In September 2011, Ferreira was acquitted of all charges and was a breath away from freedom when he was re-arrested by plainclothes policemen at the prison gates. He never got a glimpse of his family who were waiting just outside. He began

to fight the system all over again, until with the help of courageous friends and activists, he was cleared of all the trumped up charges that had put him in prison. *Colours of the Cage* is the real story of what goes on behind bars—not the celluloid or novelistic version that readers will be familiar with. However, it is not just a gritty, harrowing account of life in prison but also a memoir of astonishing power and grace—about a man’s stubborn fight for justice and the triumph of the human will.

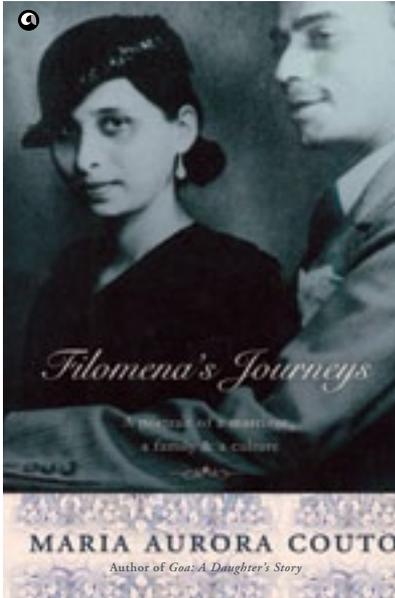


Arun Ferreira is from the East Indian community, the original Mumbaikars, whose villages became distinct neighbourhoods in the sprawling metropolis. He graduated from the prestigious St Xavier’s College, Mumbai, and has been an activist since his student days. Ferreira is also a cartoonist whose drawings on social and political issues have appeared in various publications, as well as in student and workers’ magazines. Since his release in 2012, he continues to actively engage with issues of political prisoners, prison reforms and democratic rights. He is presently pursuing a degree in law and researching the history of the democratic rights movement in Mumbai.

FILOMENA'S JOURNEYS

A PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE, A FAMILY AND A CULTURE

MARIA AURORA COUTO



Finalist for the Crossword
Book Award for Non-fiction
2015

Filomena's Journeys is a daughter's moving tribute to the mother who held her world, and that of her six siblings, together through long years of insecurity and hardship. It is also an often heartbreaking attempt to come to terms with the painful memories of her father.

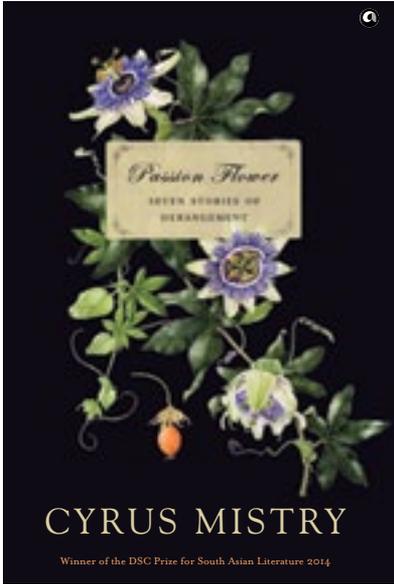
In 1935, Filomena Borges, aged twenty-six, married for love and moved from her grandmother's village, Raia—where she had arrived as an orphaned child—to one of Goa's most prominent and fashionable towns of the time, Margão. This move, from rural peace and simplicity to urban buzz and formality, from a modest landowning family to one of formidable eminence, was to transform her life, but in ways she could not have imagined. Chico, the man who had charmed her with his wit and intelligence, turned out to be as troubled as he was passionate. An unusually gifted musician, he lacked the discipline and conviction to rise above the limitations of the great but

vanishing privilege that was the bane of Goa's Catholic elite in the twentieth century. The frustration broke Chico, and his decline threatened to destroy his family. Until Filomena took a leap into the unknown and moved with her young children to Dharwar, a town across the border, in Karnataka. Here, in unfamiliar surroundings, with no source of income apart from a share of the harvest from dwindling family lands back in Goa and rent from students whom she took in as lodgers, Filomena raised her seven children, shielding them from tragedy, and gave them the best opportunities to fashion secure futures for themselves. In her last years, when they were all settled, she chose to live alone, sustained till the end by the qualities she had absorbed as a young girl from her grandmother: pragmatism, faith, compassion, love of family, and a strong connection with the land and Goa's ancient traditions.

A compelling family memoir, *Filomena's Journeys* is also a revealing examination of Goan society and culture.

Maria Aurora Couto was born in Goa and studied in Dharwar and New Delhi (where she later taught English literature at Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University). She is the author of the widely acclaimed *Goa: A Daughter's Story* and *Graham Greene: On the Frontier*, and has translated, from the Portuguese, A.B. Braganza Pereira's *Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu*. In 2010 the Government of India honoured her with the Padma Shri for her contributions to literature and education. She lives in Aldona, a village in North Goa.

PASSION FLOWER
SEVEN STORIES OF DERANGEMENT
CYRUS MISTRY



Award-winning author Cyrus Mistry's first collection of short stories is dark, mysterious and inhabited by characters that walk a thin line between fantasy and reality. A serendipitous discovery on the floor of a local bus transforms the melancholic life of Percy, who meets a ghost in the washroom of a public library; a new mother struggling with depression and the urge to end her newborn's life opens the door to a stranger; stalked by mysterious men, Jacintha believes her enemies are out to eliminate her because she knows too much; on New Year's Eve, an aged couple clashes, replaying an

annual ritual that shrouds the unacknowledged secret buried between them exactly twenty-three years ago; two childhood friends, now co-workers at an advertising agency, indulge in a never-ending display of one-upmanship, false camaraderie and intense, unspoken resentment; Bokha tries to counter the powerful black magic of his wicked old mother in order to shield his helpless lover; and Mahendroo, full of himself, is consumed by his obsessive search for an elusive species of *Passiflora*. Original and disturbing, *Passion Flower* is another triumph from one of the country's most gifted storytellers.

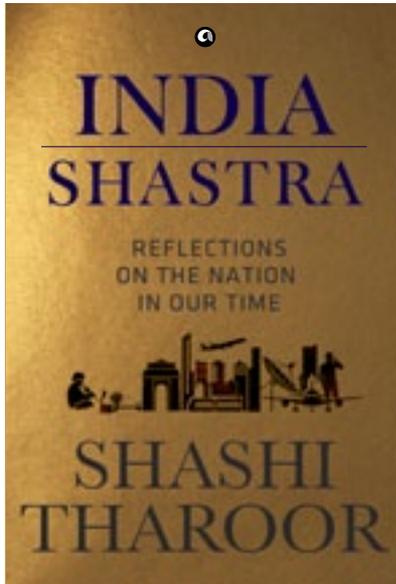
REVIEWS

'While the undercurrent is grim and even morbid, Cyrus Mistry notches up another high with this anthology of short stories.' —*Tehelka*

INDIA SHASTRA

REFLECTIONS ON THE NATION IN OUR TIME

SHASHI THAROOR



This has been a time of unprecedented change in the country. The transformation of India's politics, economy, foreign policy, media, civil rights, governance and a myriad other aspects of our society and government has been swift and disruptive, sometimes brutally so. Narendra Modi, the nation's Prime Minister, and his Bharatiya Janata Party, dominate the political scene, as the Congress once did, and are attempting to change the way we work, think, pray and conduct ourselves as citizens of the planet's most populous democracy. There are signs that the nation is moving in directions

that will benefit its people—the economy has begun to revive, its foreign policy appears to be purposefully pursuing a visible place in the world, polls show that a significant percentage of the nation's youth is optimistic about the future; at the same time, there are serious concerns about the rise of majoritarianism and religious fundamentalism (often, this is one and the same thing), and disquieting intolerance of free speech; moreover, there appears to be no end to corruption, hate speech, criminals in politics, terrorism, violence against women, bureaucratic lethargy, governmental incompetence, endemic poverty, environmental degradation, and a host of other problems that India has been struggling to overcome for decades.

What does the future hold? Is the promise of good times a mere illusion? Have we forgotten the democratic, humane, secular and liberal values that our founding

fathers endowed us with? Shashi Tharoor, one of our most distinguished and insightful writers, attempts to answer these and other important questions that have been thrown up by the ongoing transformation of the nation.

REVIEWS

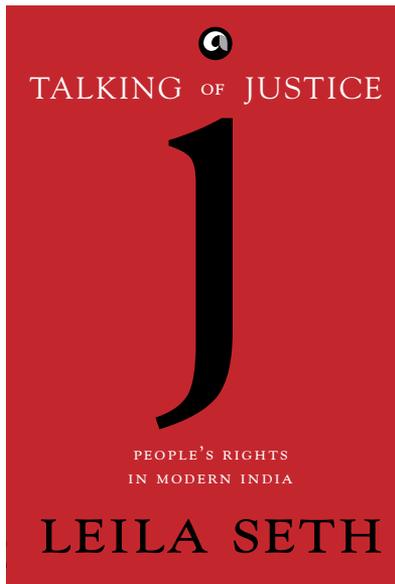
‘Compulsive and engaging...the book is a mixture of delight and surprise.’

—*The Hindu*

TALKING OF JUSTICE

PEOPLE’S RIGHTS IN MODERN INDIA

LEILA SETH



In *Talking of Justice*, eminent jurist Leila Seth discusses several critical issues that she has engaged with in a legal career spanning over fifty years—violence against women; the nurture of the girl child; the need for a uniform civil code; women’s rights; prisoners’ rights; gender sensitization of the judiciary; and judicial administration, among others.

From the landmark Justice Verma Committee (2012-2013), as a member of which she suggested amendments to the law as well as speedier trials and more effective punishment for all

those accused of sexual assault and violence against women, to her experience as a member of the 15th Law Commission of India (1997-2000), to her appointment as the one-member commission to enquire into the custodial

death of Rajan Pillai (1995-1997), Leila Seth shares her insights into some of the most substantive and contentious matters facing the nation today.

Keenly observed and elegantly argued, *Talking of Justice* goes deep into the laws of the land that need to be reviewed and revised, and offers suggestions for protecting the rights of the people, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable.

REVIEWS

‘The real merit of the book lies in Seth’s simplicity of language and lucidity of thought, so essential for meaningful human rights discourse. The book is a must for every thinking Indian.’—Soli Sorabjee

‘A slender, gem of a book [that] covers a gamut of contentious issues that have engaged the nation for the last 65 years.’—*Indialegalonline.com*

THE PAST AS PRESENT

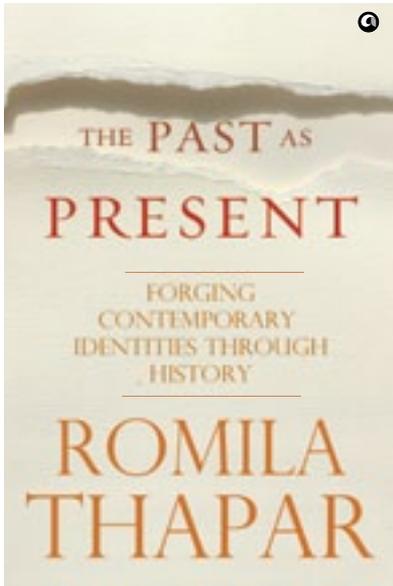
FORGING CONTEMPORARY IDENTITIES THROUGH HISTORY

ROMILA THAPAR



Understanding our past is of vital importance to our present. Many popularly held views about the past need to be critically enquired into before they can be taken as historical. For instance, what was the aftermath of the raid on the Somanatha temple? Which of us is Aryan or Dravidian? Why is it important for Indian society to be secular? When did communalism as an ideology gain a foothold in the country? How and when did our patriarchal mindset begin to support a culture of violence against women? Why are the fundamentalists so keen to rewrite history textbooks?

The answers to these and similar questions have been disputed and argued about ever since they were first posed. Distinguished historian Romila Thapar



has investigated, analysed and interpreted the history that underlies such questions throughout her career; now, in this book, through a series of incisive essays she argues that it is crucial for the past to be carefully and rigorously explained, if the legitimacy of our present, wherever it derives from the past, is to be portrayed as accurately as possible. This is especially pertinent given the attempts by unscrupulous politicians, religious fundamentalists and their ilk to try and misrepresent and wilfully manipulate the past in order to serve their present-day agendas. An essential and necessary book at a time when sectarianism, bogus ‘nationalism’ and

the muddying of historical facts are increasingly becoming a feature of our public, private and intellectual lives.

REVIEWS

‘Romila Thapar’s pen is as forceful as ever. India’s premier historian urges us to continually question received wisdom, examine the potential of unconventional views, and debate interpretations of history if we are to grow as a society.’
—*India Today*

UNFORGETTABLE KHUSHWANT SINGH
99 EXTRAORDINARY PIECES OF FICTION, NON-FICTION, POETRY & HUMOUR
KHUSHWANT SINGH



Unforgettable Khushwant Singh (which was published as *99* in hardcover) collects in a single volume the finest pieces the author published over the course of a long and prodigiously creative life. The essays, extracts, stories and poems (one for each year of his life) have been chosen for their excellence or because they represent an aspect of his versatility and range. Some of the selections are well known. Others have never been published in book form. The book is divided into fifteen sections and showcases his exceptional achievement as a writer.

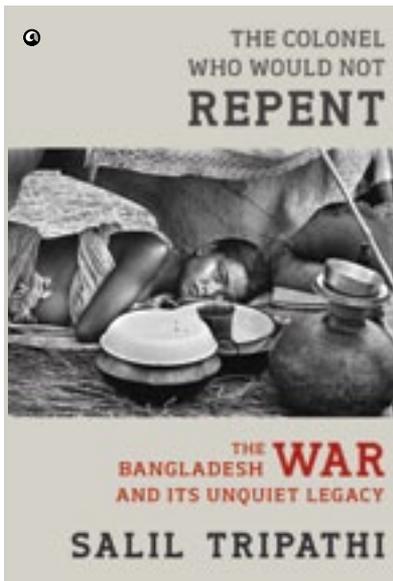
‘Family Matters’ contains extracts from his autobiography and some personal narratives; ‘My Beloved Country’ has some extraordinary writing about India, ‘The Sikhs’ comprises excerpts from his books *A History of the Sikhs* and *Ranjit Singh*, and essays on the community and translations of the Sikh hymns; ‘The Uses and Abuses of Religion’ features his articles on the dangers of communalism, and a sublime meditation on religion; Khushwant Singh’s accounts of Pakistan and Pakistanis (including one of the most dazzling examples of journalism in our time, ‘The Hanging of Bhutto’) are included in ‘Passage to Pakistan’; he wrote interestingly about famous people all his life, and twelve of his profiles feature in ‘Singular People’; a self-taught naturalist, he was passionate about the world of nature—‘The Ferocity & Flamboyance of Nature’ has writings on this theme; ‘All About Sex’ contains some entertaining ruminations on sex, one of the subjects that he was most associated with in the popular

imagination. As with sex, so with humour—a few of his funniest jokes find a place in ‘A Merry Heart’. ‘Enthusiasms, Rants & Soliloquies’ has a fair representation of his electrifying polemics on a variety of subjects. A wise and honest man, his most insightful pieces on life, dealing with adversity, ageing and death find a place in ‘How to Live, How to Die’. As a novelist, he was superlative—selections from the six novels he published are to be found in ‘The Novels’; ‘Portrait of a Lady and Other Stories’ features the eponymous story along with a few others; a great admirer of writers in Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi, he translated many of their works, some of which can be found in ‘Exchange of Lunatics: Fiction in Translation’ and ‘A Passion for Poetry’.

THE COLONEL WHO WOULD NOT REPENT

THE BANGLADESH WAR AND ITS UNQUIET LEGACY

SALIL TRIPATHI



Between March and December 1971, the Pakistani army committed atrocities on an unprecedented scale in the country’s eastern wing. Pakistani troops and their collaborators were responsible for countless deaths and cases of rape. Clearly, religion alone wasn’t enough to keep Pakistan’s two halves united. From that brutal violence, Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation, but the wounds have continued to fester. The gruesome assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—the country’s charismatic first prime minister—and

most of his family, the coups and counter-coups which followed, accompanied by long years of military rule were individually and collectively responsible for the country's inability to come to grips with the legacy of the Liberation War. Four decades later, as Bangladesh tries to bring some accountability and closure to its blood-soaked past through controversial tribunals prosecuting war crimes, Salil Tripathi travels the length and breadth of the country probing the country's trauma through interviews with hundreds of Bangladeshis. His book offers the reader an unforgettable portrait of a nation whose political history since Independence has been marked more by tragedy than triumph.

REVIEWS

'I really admired Salil Tripathi's superb and harrowing *The Colonel Who Would Not Repent*, a fine and judicious account of the horrors of the Bangladesh war of independence.'—*The Guardian*

'Salil Tripathi brings together the narrative skill of a novelist and the analytical tools of a political journalist to give us the story of a nation that is absorbing, haunting and illuminating.'—Kamila Shamsie

'Unputdownable...'—*India Today*

'What a great read the book is. It tells the political intrigue-driven story of Bangladesh with the aim of entertaining the reader and not just inform, and succeeds at that.'—*Dhaka Tribune*

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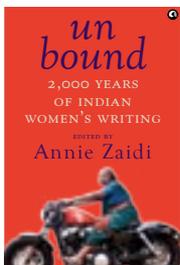
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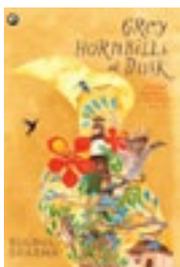
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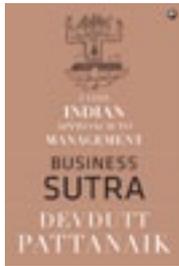
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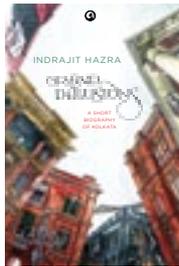
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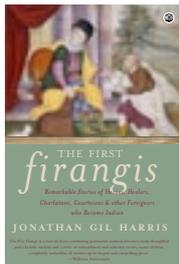
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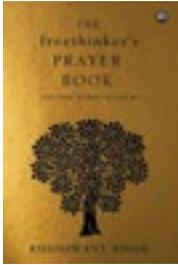
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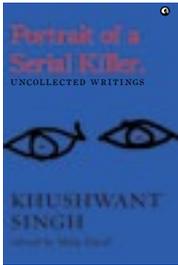
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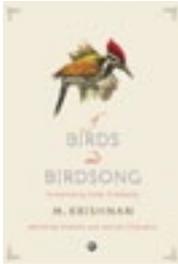
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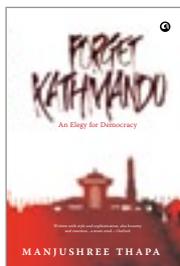
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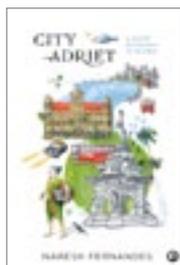
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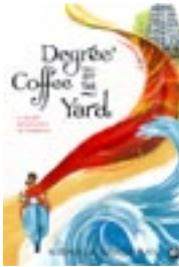
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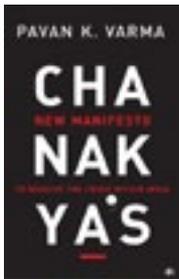
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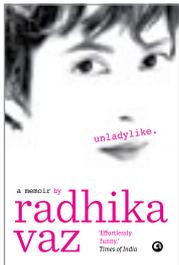
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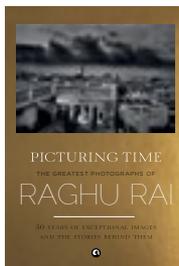
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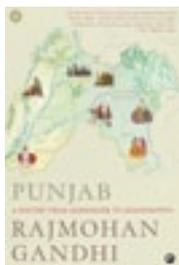
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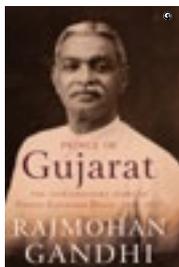
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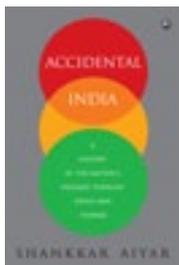
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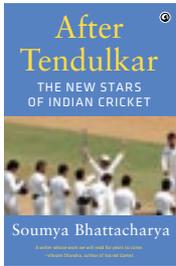
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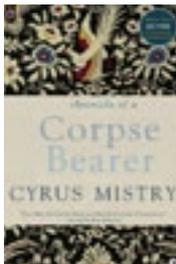
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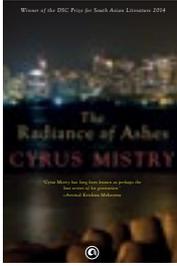
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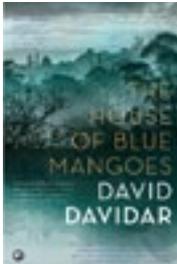
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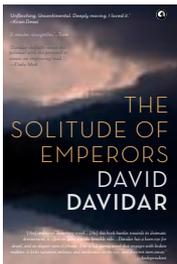
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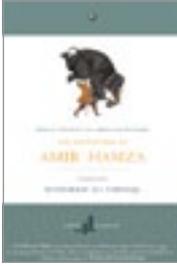
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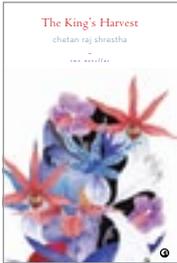
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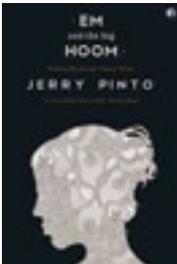
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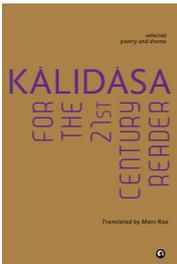
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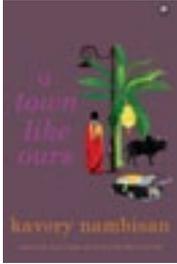
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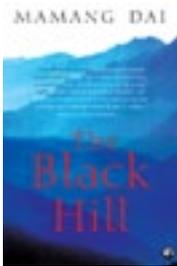
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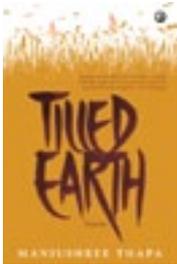
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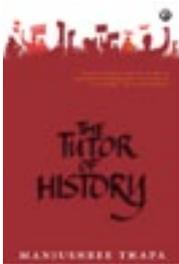
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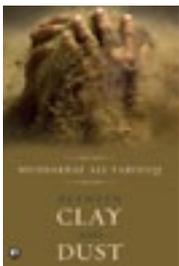
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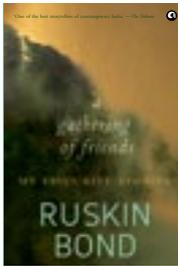
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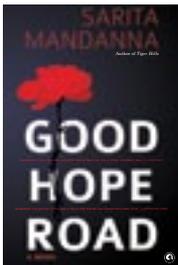
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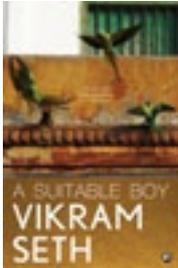
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INDEX



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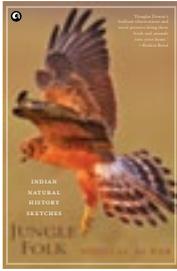
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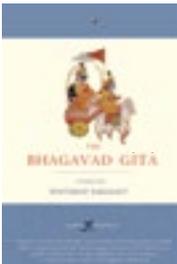
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