



ALEPH

TEN



ALEPH

TEN

aleph //ˈɑːlɪf/►n 1. an independent Indian publisher of fine writing. 2. a magical entity that contains the world and everything in it, as imagined by Jorge Luis Borges in his short story 'The Aleph'. 3. the first letter of the Proto-Canaanite alphabet continued in descended Semitic alphabets as Phoenician **Aleph** א, Syriac **ʿĀlaph**, Hebrew **Aleph** א, and Arabic **ʿAlif** ا; the letter from which the Greek Alpha **Α** is derived. 4. used as a symbol in set theory to denote aleph numbers, which represent the cardinality of infinite sets. 5. a psychedelic drug.



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ALEPH

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JANUARY-DECEMBER

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BREAKING INTO THE LIGHT

THE ALEPH DECADE

A lifetime ago, in the bright glare of the noonday sun raining down on a small cottage on the southern tip of the Indian peninsula, my grandfather gave me the gift of reading. I must have been six or seven at the time and an indifferent student. The headmaster of a local school, my grandfather had despaired at my poor academic performance and had recently told my mother that I would never amount to anything. One Friday, more out of desperation than any sort of design aforethought, he went to his school library and pulled out half a dozen books—abridged classics of the *Treasure Island* variety, along with a couple of adventure stories for boys, and a gorgeous illustrated edition of Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*—and brought them home for me. To his astonishment, I finished the books in two days and asked for more. At first, he was suspicious, he didn’t think his indolent grandson could have actually read the books, and quizzed me on their content. However, once he was sure that I wasn’t bluffing, he would routinely plunder his library for books to feed my appetite for reading. The unlikely book of the first lot that was handed to me that long-ago Friday was *The Wind in the Willows*. Its setting and story couldn’t have been more different from my own surroundings and reality: kites soaring in the thermals above a red-tiled cottage fringed by coconut palms, cashew, and jackfruit trees; and a ‘reading nook’ that looked out onto an enchanted garden in which ‘bloodsucker’ lizards nodded along the garden wall, squirrels chattered in a blue mango tree, and sunbirds hung like jewels of molten amethyst and jade beneath carmine and gold hibiscus flowers. Surrounded by all this, I sprawled on a planter’s chair that stood on the veranda, eating banana chips and reading about a cold, alien land in which a river glistened, gleamed, sparkled, rushed, and swirled (to paraphrase Grahame) between banks crowded with rushes, purple loosestrife, and willows among which Toad of Toad Hall, Ratty, Mole, and Badger went about their lives for the most part in snow and lashing rain. I had never seen snow or loosestrife, had no idea what bubble-and-squeak was, and only knew what a badger or mole looked like because of the glorious E. H. Shepard illustrations in the book. The unfamiliarity of the setting and characters mattered not at all, the story was so well told and engrossing that I became a reader for life. Moreover, the book was so beautifully made that somewhere in my subconscious an idea lodged itself that it would be fun to be involved in the making of stunning books.

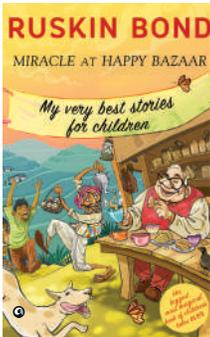
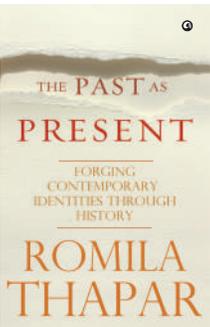
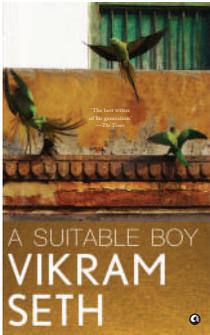
Fast forward to 2011. It’s thrilling when you are thinking of starting something new, and

it's even more exciting when the venture is something that you are passionately invested in. After decades in the publishing industry, a long-held idea to set up an independent literary publishing house began to take shape. The company would put out singular books of fiction and non-fiction which would be on a par with the finest books published anywhere in the world—not just in terms of editing and design but also where paper, printing, and binding were concerned. As the notion started to firm up, I thought back to the time when as a boy I had dreamt of making beautiful books—circles do have a way of closing! My wife, Rachna, suggested that I share my vision with my friends Rajan and Kapish Mehra of Rupa Publications India, one of the country's oldest and most successful publishing firms. They were enthusiastic and agreed to promote the new enterprise. A few months after we began confabulating, we became partners in a publishing venture that I named Aleph Book Company (more on how this came about a little later). It was decided that Aleph's books would be as perfect as we could make them, and if that meant reading proofs one extra time, colour-correcting covers until they were true, and working with our authors for as long as it took to get the text absolutely right, that's what we would do. If that seemed excessive in an age where most products, books not excepted, were seeing a fall in creative, material, and production values, with expediency and shortcuts being the norm, so be it. Our age, which could be variously designated the Age of Rage or the Age of Credulity or the Age of Mediocrity, depending on which angle you chose to look at it from, seemed only to celebrate anger, illiteracy, ignorance, incompetence, and their offshoots, and the book industry reflected all this and more. In such an environment would a publishing concern whose only focus was literary quality be able to survive, or would market forces spell its demise? Given that there wasn't an exactly similar model for us to follow, the only option seemed to be to try, following the well-worn dictum: Build it and they (writers, readers) will come.

Before I go into some detail about our early years, a bit about Indian publishing to provide some idea of the opportunities and challenges an operation like Aleph faced. India is one of the world's largest producers of books in the English language, and has been so for at least half a century. Indigenous publishing in the trade publishing segment, though, was rather undeveloped until the advent of Penguin in the 1980s—today, this part of the industry has at least a dozen world-class companies. Trade publishing, while the most visible, is dwarfed by



In the beginning



textbook publishers (who also publish exam guides and generic children's books), who are the behemoths of Indian publishing, followed by academic publishers. Be that as it may, trade publishing has now become a significant player in Indian publishing, having grown exponentially from a small base. Many of the leading houses have diverse lists and will usually try to balance their literary publishing with commercial books in order to generate adequate revenues and profits. Most of them are defined by the 80-20 rule, common to many industries—in which 20 per cent of the products provide 80 per cent of the revenues and profits. Naturally, every promoter or CEO would like 100 per cent of their products to succeed, but it's hard to make this happen, and even harder in the so-called creative industries—a term that includes firms that make movies, TV programmes, books, and so on—where it is difficult to tailor products to suit the needs of the consumer unlike, say, cell phones, cars, or cement. It isn't hard, therefore, to see why textbook publishers or the publishers of tried and tested board books for toddlers, are the largest corporations in the publishing ecosystem of an aspirational society like ours, as they can, to the extent possible, publish what their market needs.

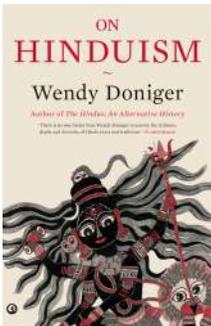
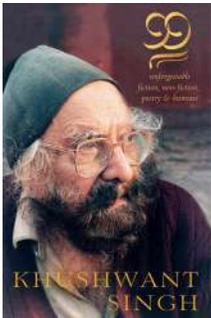
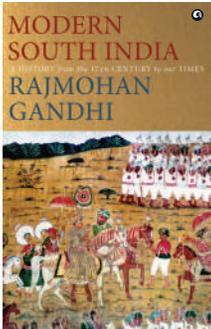
We wanted to try something different—we wanted a higher percentage of our books to succeed than was normally the case. This, of course, was easier said than done. If it were that easy, why wasn't every single trade publisher in the country doing exactly that? Despite the nature of the challenge, we figured we had a few things going for us—we had the experience, we were backed by one of the largest and most efficient selling and distribution networks in the country, and we had some ideas that we felt might work. We decided to keep the size of our list small, not more than fifty books a year, a number that we would build up to gradually, so we could control the quality of the books that we put out—quality, quality, quality, that would be the hallmark of every book we published. Also, if we weren't too big, it would give us the sort of agility we would need if we were going to track down ideas and authors that larger outfits might miss. We would publish only literary fiction and non-fiction, so the Aleph colophon was sharply defined. Nor would we publish just any book that could be deemed literary, we would look for keepers, timeless books as defined by the Argentine maestro, Jorge Luis Borges: 'A timeless book...would be just as admirable if it had been published a hundred years before or if it were published a hundred years later. A book that can only be defined by its perfection.' Such books are, of course, rarer than blue tigers and are what every publisher, agent, and scout is constantly on the lookout for. Despite the desperation with which these books are sought, no more than a handful are published every year. These are books that transcend

awards, reviews, bestseller lists, and literary fashion, they are books that will be read and discussed fifty years, a hundred, from the date on which they were first published. I'd been a publisher for almost thirty years when I co-founded Aleph, and hadn't published more than a score or so of such titles, how on earth were they suddenly going to materialize out of nothing to be the foundation of Aleph's future? We had a simple solution to that conundrum, but one which would prove almost impossible to engineer at the outset—we would, we thought, bypass some of the more established ways of acquiring books (we would try not to participate in agents' auctions for all but the very biggest books, for example) and commission virtually all the books we wanted to publish. We would look for gaps in the market, and look in places we hoped no one else was looking, to find the phenomenal writers and staggering books that would fuel our ambition. And, once we had commissioned them, we would do everything we could to make the books monumental. I felt that readers would buy books that were ambitious, superbly written and imagined, and unlike anything that had hitherto been seen on the subject. And it didn't matter that the world seemed to be dumbing down, there would be still enough people who valued quality.

For some years, it appeared that our experiment wasn't working quite the way we wanted it to. The books were fine, we had a few masterpieces, along with other good books, some of the country's best writers published with us, my business partners were patient and supportive, and my colleagues worked themselves ragged to keep up the high editorial, design, marketing, and sales standards we wanted to become known for. Despite all this, for the most part, sales remained modest, while overheads were what they were; as a result, the company did not break even let alone make a profit. But we persevered and then, all at once, things changed. We had a run of books that sold briskly followed by the game changer. In 2015, the eminent writer and thinker Shashi Tharoor made a speech at the Oxford Union debate excoriating colonial injustice, greed, arrogance, racism, and incompetence when the British ruled India. The speech rolled like a tidal bore through the internet. Soon after, I asked Shashi, a long-time friend, many of whose books I had published at Penguin, whether he would consider expanding the speech into a book. He allowed himself to be persuaded and wrote a superlative history of colonial rule in India, *An Era of Darkness*, which sold exceedingly well—sales in hardback



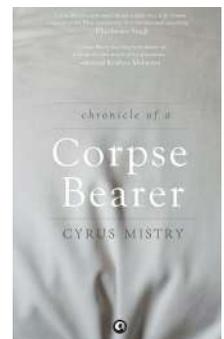
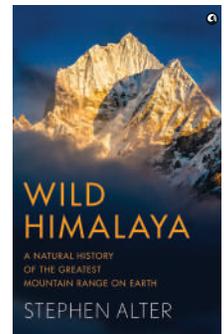
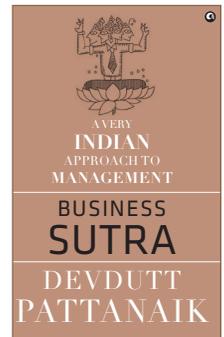
At the launch of *An Era of Darkness*

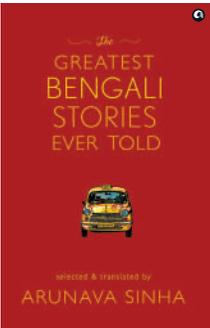
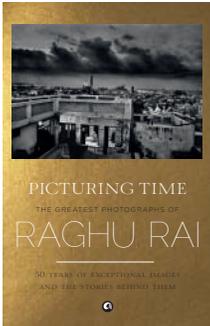


have exceeded 150,000 copies. Since then, we haven't looked back, and, until the pandemic struck, progress was steady and, more to the point, for all of us who believed in and were committed to Aleph, exhilarating.

Our joy obviously sprang from the extraordinary books that we were able to publish and the success they were having. As we have nearly three hundred books in print at the moment, and a forward publishing programme of approximately fifty books a year, I can't write about all of them, but I'd like to mention at least a few. I have already mentioned Shashi's bestseller on British rule but he has also written several other books for us, including his non-fiction magnum opus, *The Battle of Belonging*, on contested ideas of nationalism, patriotism, and what it means to be Indian; and talking of magnum opuses we are privileged to be the publisher of Vikram Seth's magnum opus, *A Suitable Boy*, although he might well outdo that work of genius with *A Suitable Girl* that we are looking forward to publishing in the not too distant future. Some of the country's best historians produced magnificent books, such as Romila Thapar's insights into the past's influence on the present (*The Past as Present*), Rajmohan Gandhi's history of South India (*Modern South India*), and Rudrangshu Mukherjee's disquisition on an idea that seems to be doomed to extinction, *Twilight Falls on Liberalism*. There isn't a photographer anywhere in the world who has photographed India in quite the way Raghu Rai has done and it gave us immense pride to publish a folio of his finest pictures, *Picturing Time*. In similar fashion, Valmik Thapar, who has been studying Indian tigers all his life, published the last word on them, *Tiger Fire*. And, while we are on the subject of peerless books of natural history, we were delighted to have been able to publish Stephen Alter's *Wild Himalaya*. Amazingly, there hadn't been a major biography on the Mughal emperor Akbar until Ira Mukhoty rose to the task and wrote one (*Akbar: The Great Mughal*) that gave the iconic ruler his due. Then there were a bunch of marvellous Bombay novels by Jerry Pinto (*Em and the Big Hoom* on madness and family), Jeet Thayil (*The Book of Chocolate Saints* on the golden age of Bombay poets and their particular forms of insanity), and Cyrus Mistry (whose *Chronicle of a Corpse Bearer* illuminated a rarely glimpsed aspect of the Parsi community). Another Bombay writer, Annie Zaidi, wrote a slim novel with an edge of steel, *Prelude to a Riot*, that laid bare the festering poison of sectarianism that lay just beneath the skin of the country; its equally powerful non-fiction counterpart, *My Son's Inheritance*, by Aparna Vaidik, showed how widespread the rot had become. There were first-rate books of popular history, especially when it came to war—Shiv Kunal Verma's account of the 1962 war with China (*1962: The War That Wasn't*),

Salil Tripathi's reconstruction of the 1971 war with Pakistan (*The Colonel Who Would Not Repent*), and Sudeep Chakravarti's portrait of a short war which cast long shadows (*Plassey: The Battle That Changed the Course of Indian History*). There were other works of popular history whose subject matter was not as grim, such as Jonathan Gil Harris's *The First Firangis*, on early European visitors and adventurers in India. Wendy Doniger produced a landmark study of Hinduism (*On Hinduism*), that she called her 'book of books', and the bestselling mythologist and philosopher, Devdutt Pattanaik, published a profoundly original work, *Business Sutra*, that crafted unusual and effective business and management precepts out of Hindu scriptures and philosophy. Canonical classics found renewed life in lucid, contemporary translations that didn't eschew scholarship, notably Gopalkrishna Gandhi's translation of the *Tirukkural* and Meena Arora Nayak's retelling of the *Kathasaritagara*. Sumptuous cookbooks, especially *The Lucknow Cookbook* by Chand Sur and Sunita Kohli and *Bengali Cooking* by Chitrita Banerji, worked well for us, as did feted fiction debuts such as *Swimmer Among the Stars* by Kanishk Tharoor, *The Competent Authority* by Shovon Chowdhury, and *The Wildings* by Nilanjana Roy. From across the border, noteworthy books by Pakistani writers included *Between Clay and Dust* by Musharraf Ali Farooqi (this novel was our first ever published title, and is doubly beloved for that reason), *New Kings of the World* by Fatima Bhutto, and *The Sensational Life and Death of Qandeel Baloch* by Sanam Maher. To end this glimpse of our greatest hits, I should mention a couple of long-running series—one of brief, striking books on our storied cities—by, among others, Amitava Kumar (*A Matter of Rats*, a book on Patna that he tossed off in between novels that we published to acclaim), Nirmala Lakshman (*Degree Coffee by the Yard* on Chennai) and Naresh Fernandes (*City Adrift* on Bombay)—and the other of translations into English of matchless short fiction written in the major Indian languages, kicked off by Arunava Sinha's *The Greatest Bengali Stories Ever Told*. And, finally, a couple of books it gave me especial pleasure to publish, were definitive editions of the work of writers I have published throughout my career—99: *Unforgettable Fiction, Non-fiction, Poetry & Humour* brought together the very best pieces by Khushwant Singh, one for every year of his life, and *Miracle at Happy Bazaar* is the definitive edition of the children's stories of Ruskin Bond, arguably India's best-loved writer for kids. Most of the books I have singled out have won awards, or been otherwise feted, and many have sold very well. Importantly, we are proud of some books that have, in a time of corruption, deceit, and growing authoritarianism, spoken truth to power, investigated injustice, and exposed falsehood. However, the single surpassing quality that characterizes pretty much all these books is their timelessness, the Borgesian quality I referred to earlier in





this piece—it is because of this attribute that decades from now many of them will still be read, discussed, and cherished.

Our writers make us what we are, we wouldn't exist otherwise, but our people are an equally important asset. Aleph wouldn't have been able to establish itself without the immense contribution of its talented, committed, and hard-working team of editors, designers, marketers, salespeople, and support staff. We are fortunate in that, without exception, members of our top team have been with us for a long time. A. K. Singh, Executive Director (Sales and Operations), at Rupa Publications, was in at the inception, and has managed Aleph's sales, along with Rupa's, ever since our company came into being. Bena Sareen, our Creative Director, whose brilliance has ensured our covers and overall book design are world-class, joined us soon after. A few months later, our Publishing Director, Aienla Ozukum, came on board, and brought her superb editorial skills to bear on the publishing programme that she oversees in addition to the list of authors she works with. Neeraj Gulati, the group's Executive Director (Finance), who takes care of all our finance, admin, and operations needs has been with us for most of our existence, as has been Vasundhara Raj Baigra, our Marketing and Publicity Director, who has been responsible for the supercharged marketing of the group's books. Supporting this top group is a core team across the various departments of the company—Editorial: Pujitha Krishnan (Executive Editor), Pallavi Goswami (Senior Commissioning Editor), and Isha Banerji (Assistant Editor); Marketing and Digital Publishing—Geetu Martolia (Senior Executive), Nupur Bhatia (Assistant Manager), Rizwan Khan (Senior Executive), and Kamakshi Sharma (Assistant Graphic Designer); Production—Purushottam Kumar Sharma (Production Manager), Amit Bhattacharya (Senior Executive), and Rajkumari John (Typesetting Manager); and Operations and Admin—Rahul Verma (IT Manager). This group is, in turn, bolstered by the Rupa sales, distribution, operations, warehousing, and administrative team, without whose efforts our books wouldn't get out to every outlet in the country where good books are sold.

Anniversaries are a time for introspection and the restating of objectives. As we contemplate the next decade of our existence, I return to what we set out to do when we started out—we wanted to *publish exceptional literary books from India and the subcontinent to world-class standards*. But what were we hoping to achieve beyond commercial and literary success? At the time I was mulling over the possibility of starting a publishing company, I read a few accounts of those who had gone before. One founder wanted his company to be a beacon, lighting the path to knowledge and enlightenment, another intended to put worthy literature in everyone's pockets, a third looked to resurrect forgotten classics and books of quality that others had overlooked; all very worthwhile objectives but what was it that we wanted to be? For that I should take you back to the inspiration for the name of our



In the company of Alephs

company. One of my favourite stories is 'The Aleph' by Jorge Luis Borges. In its English language version, here is how the Aleph is described by the narrator of the story:

I saw a small iridescent sphere of almost unbearable brilliance [our colophon, created by Rymn Massand, with the letter A spinning within a turquoise sphere, was inspired by the Borgesian artefact]. At first, I thought it was revolving; then I realized that this movement was an illusion created by the dizzying world it bounded. The Aleph's diameter was probably little more than an inch, but all space was there, actual and undiminished.... In the Aleph I saw the earth and in the earth the Aleph and in the Aleph the earth.... I felt dizzy and wept, for my eyes had seen that secret and conjectured object whose name is common to all men but which no man has looked upon—the unimaginable universe.

13

Sublime books make known the unimaginable universe, or parts thereof, within their pages and further kindle it in the minds of readers. Every great book that we were able to publish at Aleph broke into the light that which had barely been imagined until then. It was at the beginning, and continues to be a fundamental reason to exist. Especially in a publishing environment like India, where despite all the ground-breaking trade publishing that has taken place over the last forty years, much remains to be done. We are an ancient civilization, so there is a lot to be written about, and we have hardly begun. We have enough unworked material and unimagined books to keep thousands of writers and dozens of publishers busy for a hundred years. And so, we go on.

Our tenth anniversary year, which begins in January, will be, we hope, our best year yet. As we slowly emerge from the gloom that the pandemic has plunged us into, we trust the brilliance of the books that you find in the following pages will do their bit to dispel the darkness that surrounds us.

David Davidar
25 December 2020



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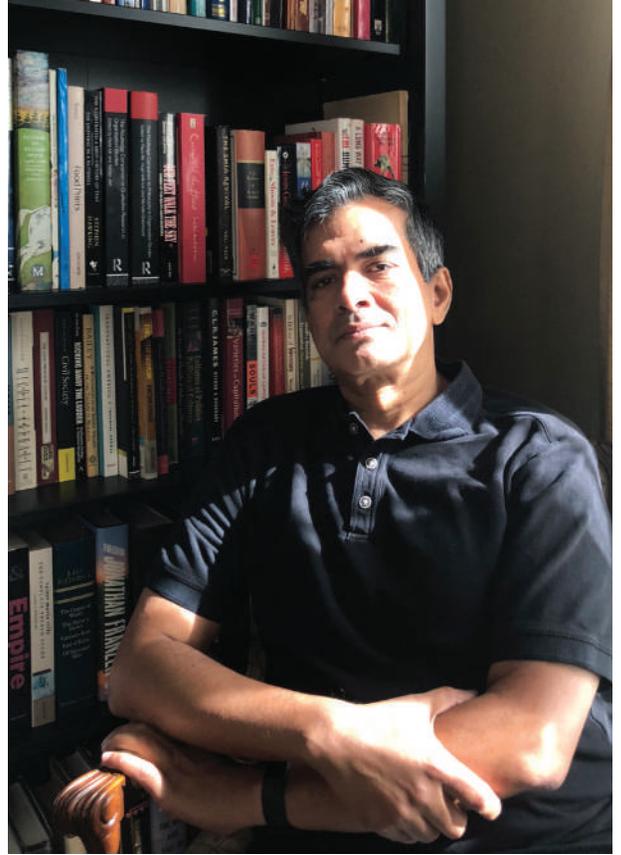
HIGHLIGHTS



Pride, Prejudice & Punditry
The Essential Shashi Tharoor

SHASHI THAROOR

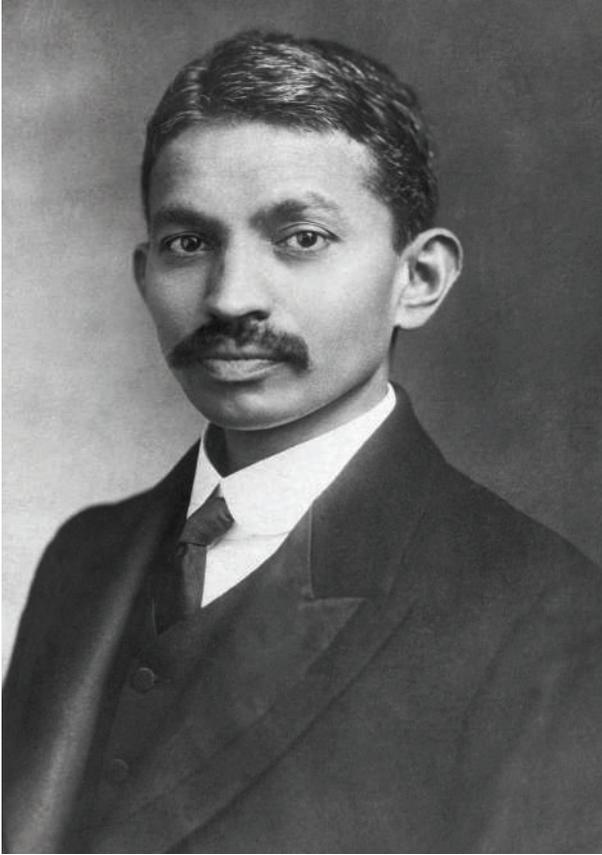
Electrifying fiction and non-fiction, including over twenty-five pieces that have never been published before, by India's No. 1 bestselling writer.



Murder at the Mushaira
A Novel

RAZA MIR

Reminiscent of *The Name of the Rose*, this is a cracking murder mystery, literary novel, and perhaps the finest work of historical fiction in twenty-first-century Indian literature.



Restless as Mercury
My Life as a Young Man

M. K. GANDHI

Edited by Gopalkrishna Gandhi

The extraordinary story of the householder and lawyer who would become the Mahatma—told in his own words. This book complements his famously incomplete autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*.



Ancient India
Culture of Contradictions

UPINDER SINGH

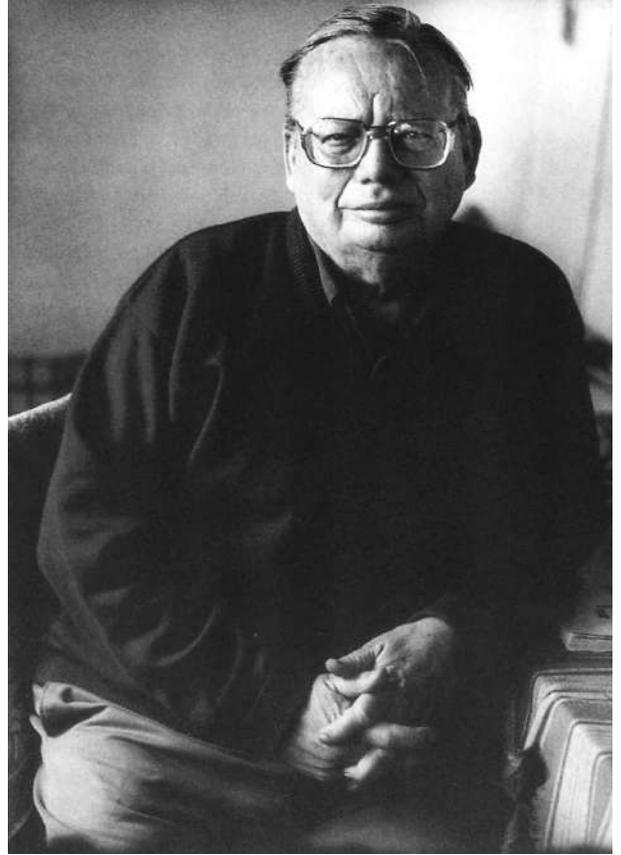
One of India's finest historians examines the contradictions and conundrums of ancient India.



Song of Draupadi
A Novel

IRA MUKHOTY

A vivid and imaginative novel revolving around the epic figure of Draupadi.



It's a Wonderful Life
Roads to Happiness

RUSKIN BOND

A brand-new work by India's best-loved writer is always a cause for celebration—this book talks of the small joys to be found in everyday living even in times of extreme stress.



A Country Called Childhood
A Memoir

DEEPTI NAVAL

An award-winning actor and filmmaker recreates a childhood packed with adventure, incident, romance, loss, and encounters with real-life movie stars.



How Prime Ministers Decide

NEERJA CHOWDHURY

Based on several hundred interviews, and the author's interactions with numerous prime ministers from Indira Gandhi to Narendra Modi the book provides the inside story of some of the most important (and sometimes controversial) decisions ever taken at the highest level of government.



One of Them

A Novel

ANNIE ZAIDI

The brilliant new novel by the award-winning writer about people who live on the margins of a big city.



From the Tables of My Friends

SUNITA KOHLI

A collection of mouth-watering recipes from an eclectic group of celebrities.



The Making of a Catastrophe

*The Disastrous Economic Fallout of
the COVID-19 Pandemic in India*

JAYATI GHOSH

A damning indictment of the way the government handled the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic.



1965

A Western Sunrise

SHIV KUNAL VERMA

From the bestselling military historian, the definitive account of the 1965 war between India and Pakistan.

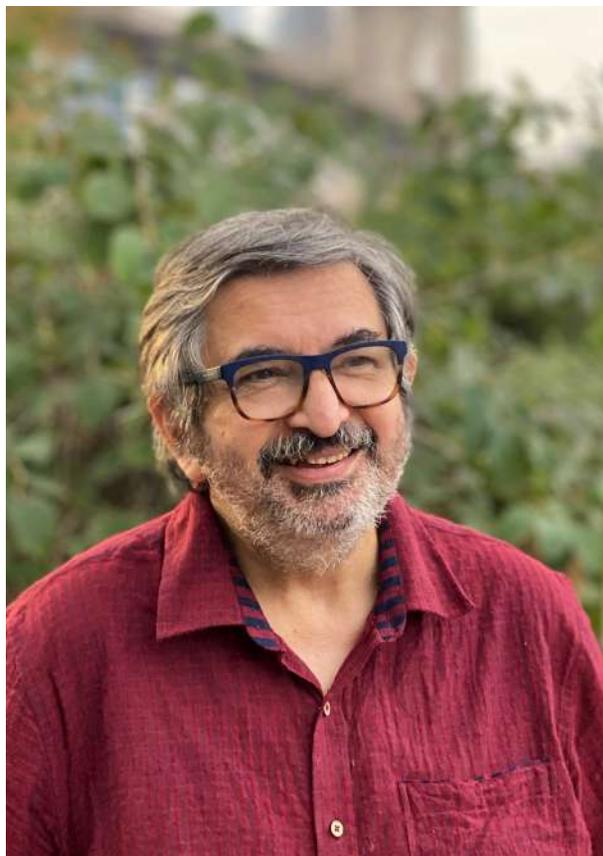


Revolutionaries on Trial

Sedition, Betrayal, and Martyrdom

APARNA VAIDIK

Using a variety of sources, many of them hitherto untapped, an exciting young historian reconstructs a dramatic period in India's struggle for Independence.



The Gujaratis

A Portrait of a Community

SALIL TRIPATHI

A deep dive by a native son into one of India's most distinctive and enterprising communities that has thrown up some of the country's greatest sons and daughters, including Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, and a host of other icons, including prime ministers, scientists, sportspeople, literary stars, actors, and business titans.



Tagore and Gandhi

*Walking Alone,
Walking Together*

RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE

The first in-depth study of the deep bond between Mahatma Gandhi and Gurudev Tagore by one of our greatest historians.



A Time Outside This Time

A Novel

AMITAVA KUMAR

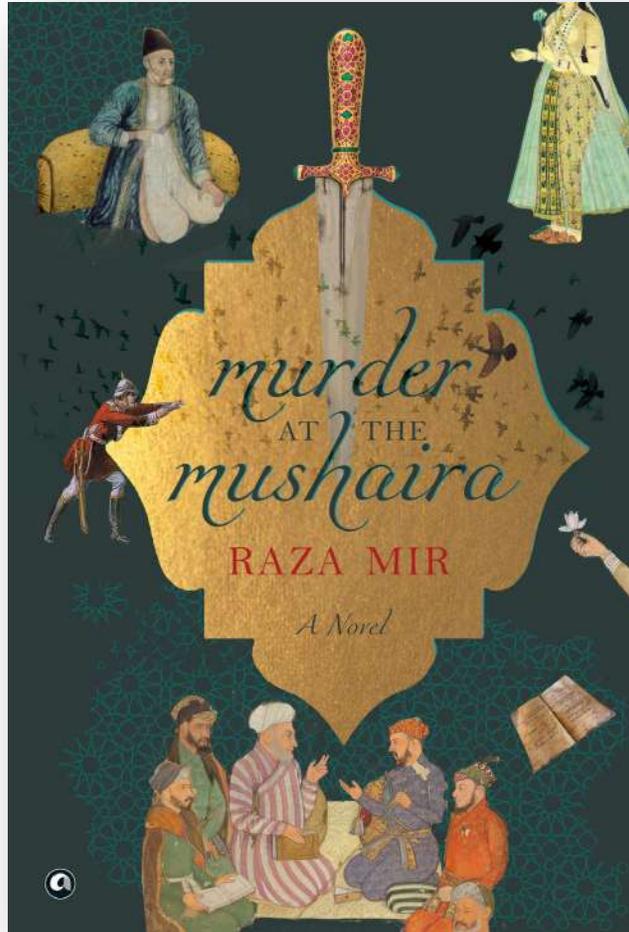
A one-of-a-kind novel by the celebrated novelist about fake news, memory, and how truth gives way to fiction.



W

I N

T E R



Murder at the Mushaira: A Novel

RAZA MIR

3 May 1857. India stands on the brink of war. Everywhere in its cities, towns, and villages, rebels and revolutionaries are massing to overthrow the ruthless and corrupt British East India Company, which has taken over the country and laid it to waste.

In Delhi, the capital, even as the plot to get rid of the hated foreigners gathers intensity, the busy social life of the city hums along. Nautch girls entertain clients, nawabs host mushairas or poetry soirees in which

the finest poets of the realm congregate to recite their latest verse and intrigue, the wealthy roister in magnificent havelis, and the drinking dens of the city continue to pack in customers.

One morning, Kallu, a retainer at a Delhi haveli, cleaning up after a grand mushaira, discovers a poet stabbed to death with a polished agate dagger. Gruesome as it is, the murder appears to be a fairly run-of-the-mill crime until anxious officials of the East India Company make it a matter of the highest priority. Instructions are issued for the murderer to be found and arrested immediately. But who is the killer? The dead man had many enemies and the investigating officer, Kirorimal Chainsukh, soon discovers there are dozens of suspects, an equal number of motives, and waves of secrets and lies that threaten to overwhelm him. As the pressure on him to solve the crime increases, Chainsukh turns to Mirza Ghalib, poet laureate and amateur detective, for help. Ghalib's tools are his formidable intelligence, intimate knowledge of the machinations of Delhi high society, ferocious curiosity, and reliance on the new science of forensics that his friend the scientist Master Ramachandra has introduced him to. As Ghalib begins to collect evidence and dig into the case, he uncovers an ever-widening list of suspects, and a sinister conspiracy that involves many of Delhi's most important men and women.

Set against the backdrop of India's First War of Independence, *Murder at the Mushaira* is at once a brilliantly constructed murder mystery and the finest historical novel by an Indian author in recent times.

Excerpt

Kallu felt a tingle of fear run up his spine. He wondered if he was going to be berated for slights unknown. Khairabadi was known for his irrationality, especially when inebriated. He had once kicked Ghouse on the backside for not bringing him his huqqah. When Ghouse had protested that Khairabadi sahib had never asked for the huqqah, Khairabadi had punched him so hard for his 'insolence' that the poor man had to go to a jarrah for balm, and to get his shoulder joint reset. Kallu was one of his favourite victims; besides the incident Ishrat had witnessed, Khairabadi had once squirted paan spittle at him for 'showing me the eye', when he had done no such thing.

Even as he steeled himself for abuse, Kallu noticed that Khairabadi's

expression was strangely vacant. His eyes were open, but he did not look particularly awake.

Not wishing to provoke him, Kallu tried to walk quietly past the hulking figure, when he noticed the hilt of the dagger sticking out of Khairabadi's chest, and the circle of congealed blood around it.

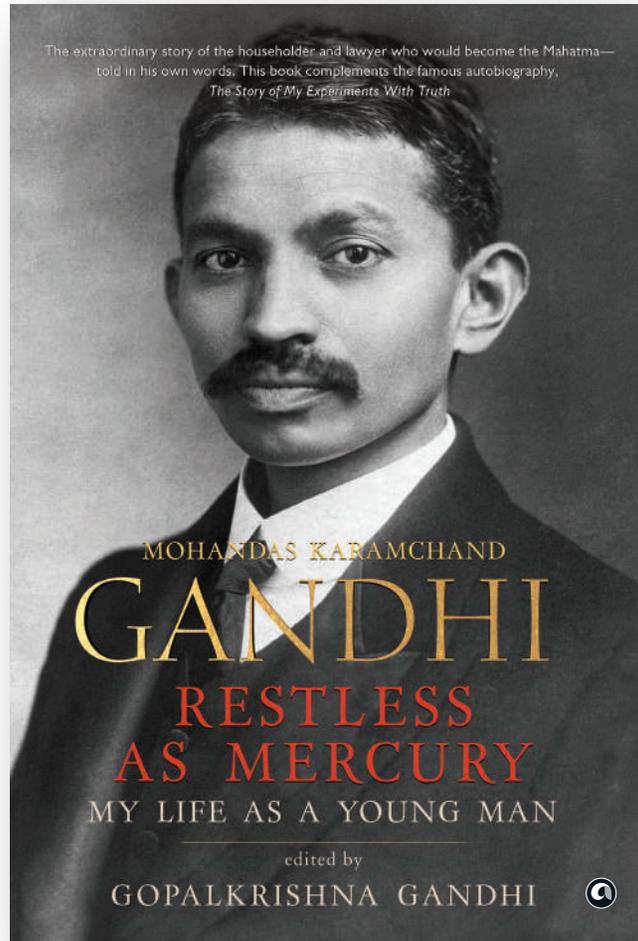
Later, when recounting the incident to Ishrat, he would recollect that his first emotion on realizing that Khairabadi was dead was neither fear nor horror but, unexpectedly, one of aesthetic appreciation for the murder weapon. He noted that the hilt of the dagger sticking out of the Nawab's chest was made of such a well-polished agate that it seemed like a candle that had just been extinguished, with a hint of shiny moistness. It had a beautifully calligraphed inscription on it, which Kallu could not read.

He wondered whether it was Persian or Arabic. Could it be that line that he had heard quoted by a maulana at a majlis, 'La fata illa Ali, la saifilla Zulfiqar?' That there is no youth like Ali, and no sword like his Zulfiqar? That would be an appropriate inscription for such a magnificent weapon.

The next emotion he felt was elation. *I'm so thrilled you are dead, you gross, abusive haraami!*

After admiring the workmanship of the dagger hilt for a few more moments, Kallu walked out of the kothi and raised the alarm.

RAZA MIR is the author of *Ghalib: A Thousand Desires*, *The Taste of Words: An Introduction to Urdu Poetry*, and the co-author of *Anthems of Resistance: A Celebration of Progressive Urdu Poetry*. He can be reached at urduwallah@gmail.com.



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*Restless as Mercury
My Life As a Young Man*

M. K. GANDHI

Edited by Gopalkrishna Gandhi

M. K. Gandhi's autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth, is famously incomplete, stopping abruptly in 1920.

But while he gave up writing his memoirs, Gandhi continued to speak and write about his life, family, work, colleagues, those who opposed and venerated him, his hopes, anxieties, challenges, fasts, many jail stints,

his enthusiasms, and disappointments. When knitted together, these autobiographical observations, scattered over several pages of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, as well as in some works that were published in his lifetime under his gaze, make for a gripping and powerful story. ‘Restless as mercury’, is how his only sister, Raliyat, described the young Mohandas and her stunningly accurate characterization of her brother provides the title of this work, which Gopalkrishna Gandhi has reconstructed from Gandhi’s own words.

The account is divided into six sections: Book I starts with Gandhi’s birth in 1869 and focuses on his early years in Gujarat, his schooling, immediate family, and marriage to Kasturba. In Book II, we see him away from his home and family in a new environment—England—where he goes to study law. He continues his commitment to vegetarianism and engages in a brief flirtation with becoming an English gentleman. He then makes a quick visit home to Rajkot before going to South Africa to practise law. There, he experiences racial prejudice and struggles to balance the demands of home and public life. In Book III, we see Gandhi being drawn into two wars in South Africa—the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) and the Bambatha Rebellion (1906). He sets up the Ambulance Corps with other Indians, becomes politically engaged, and starts fighting for the rights of Indians in South Africa. It is during this period that he starts his journal, *Indian Opinion*, and his first ashram in Durban—the Phoenix Settlement. As his ethics and values firm up, he finds himself in a battle at home with his wife, Kasturba. In Book IV, as Gandhi’s politics come under assault by all three major sections of South Africa’s population—the ruling European, the majority African, and the minority Asian—his belief in non-violent struggle becomes stronger and his idea of satyagraha comes to the fore. He begins courting imprisonment and encourages his friends, family, and fellow Indians to do so as well. In Book V, we see that his deep and constantly renewed bonds with the family have to reckon with his commitment to the larger cause. It is in this period that Gandhi sets up Tolstoy Farm for the families of the satyagrahis. Book VI sees him leading disciplined mass movements the likes of which have not been seen before. When the demands of the South African satyagraha are conceded, Gandhi decides the time has come for him to return to India. Accompanied by Kasturba, he leaves South Africa for India in 1914 for the

great appointment with history that awaits him in the motherland.

Restless as Mercury is a candid and unflinching account of the struggles, experiences, and philosophies that informed and influenced the young Mohandas. It also shows how Gandhi kept, not without stumbling, his love of family in step with his sense of his public duties.

Excerpt

That year was one of double shame for me. I was in high school and conscious, with Shravana as a role model, of duties towards my parents. And yet, carnally obsessed that I was, I had made Kasturba, then sixteen, pregnant. Even as I nursed my father, my thoughts would wander off to the bedroom upstairs, to Kasturba.

Tulsidas Gandhi, my uncle, who was deeply devoted to my father, had come to Rajkot during the time when my father's health entered a critical phase. On the fateful night, which I had no idea would be my father's last, at about ten-thirty or eleven, my uncle said to me, 'Mohan, you go now, I will sit beside your father.' I felt relieved and went straight to the bedroom. Kasturba, poor thing, was in deep slumber. Would I let her sleep? I woke her. Not more than five or seven minutes would have elapsed when there was a knock on the door. The servant I have written about said to me, 'Get up, Bapuji is very ill.' I immediately understood what 'very ill' meant. Jumping out of the bed, I opened the door.

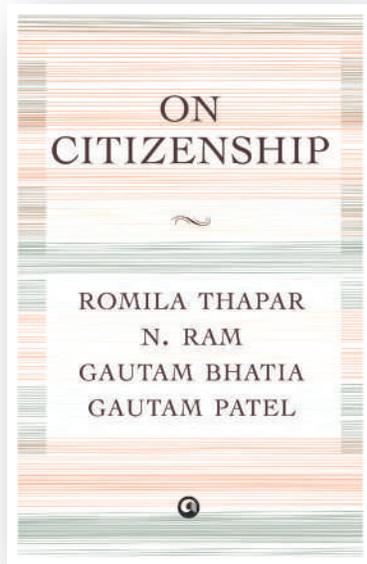
'Tell me, what is it?'

'Bapuji is no more.' I doubled down to his room.

'He has left us,' moaned my uncle.

My father had made a sign for pen and paper and written: 'Tayarikaro' (prepare for the last rites). He then snapped the amulet on his arm and tore off from his neck a gold chain. The very next moment, his soul had flown.

GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI read English Literature at St. Stephen's College, Delhi. A former administrator and diplomat, he has translated *The Tirukkural* from the Tamil, authored a novel, *Refuge*, and a play in English verse, *Dara Shukoh*. He is currently Distinguished Professor at Ashoka University.



On Citizenship

ROMILA THAPAR, N. RAM, GAUTAM
BHATIA, AND GAUTAM PATEL

In On Citizenship, four of India's finest public intellectuals go deep into key aspects of what constitutes citizenship in India, an issue that has lately been the subject of furious public debate, as a result of controversial decisions by the government in power.

In the lead essay in this volume, 'The Right to be a Citizen', the historian Romila Thapar explores how citizenship evolved in India and the rest of the world. In addition, she examines the rights of citizens and analyses the state's duties towards its citizens.

In his essay, 'The Evolving Politics of Citizenship in Republican India', the editor and political commentator N. Ram provides a cogent and succinct political history of citizenship in the sovereign, secular, democratic republic of India.

In 'Citizenship and the Constitution', the legal scholar and writer Gautam Bhatia explores constitutional provisions relating to citizenship. He shows how Part II of the Constitution 'articulates a vision of Indian

citizenship that is interwoven with the Indian constitutional identity as a whole: secular, egalitarian, and non-discriminatory’.

The essay by the jurist Gautam Patel, ‘Past Imperfect, Future Tense’, looks at, among other things, the organization of key provisions of the Constitution, and how they relate to citizenship, with an emphasis on the relationship between citizenship and fundamental rights.

Taken together, the essays in *On Citizenship* provide the reader with clear, informed, compelling insights into the vexed issue of citizenship in India today.

ROMILA THAPAR is Professor Emerita of History at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She was elected General President of the Indian History Congress in 1983 and a Fellow of the British Academy in 1999. In 2008, she was awarded the prestigious Kluge Prize of the US Library of Congress which complements the Nobel in honouring lifetime achievement in disciplines not covered by the latter. N. RAM, a director of *The Hindu* publishing group and former editor-in-chief of *The Hindu*, is a political journalist with literary interests. He has written on a range of socio-political subjects and specialized in investigative journalism. Along with Susan Ram, he is the biographer of the great Indian writer R. K. Narayan, whom he knew well. Ram was awarded the Padma Bhushan for Journalism (1990). He also received the Asian Investigative Journalist of the Year Award from the Press Foundation of Asia (1990); Raja Ram Mohan Roy Award for contributions to journalism from the Press Council of India (2018); and a Columbia J-School Alumni Award (2003).

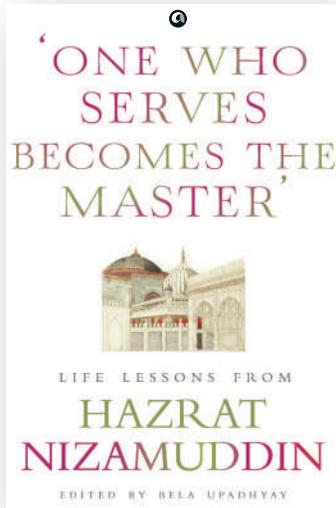
GAUTAM BHATIA graduated from the National Law School of India University. He has BCL and MPhil degrees from the University of Oxford and an LLM from Yale Law School. At Oxford, he won the Herbert Hart Prize for the best essay on jurisprudence and political theory, and his essay on the jurisprudence of Ronald Dworkin was published in the *Australian Journal of Legal Philosophy*. His essays have

appeared in the *Oxford Handbook for the Indian Constitution*, *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law*, and in journals such as *Constellations* and *Global Constitutionalism*. He has published three books—*Offend, Shock, or Disturb: Freedom of Speech Under the Indian Constitution*, *The Transformative Constitution: A Radical Biography in Nine Acts*, and a novel, *The Wall*.

As a lawyer, he has been part of legal teams involved in contemporary constitutional cases such as the challenge to criminal defamation, the nine-judge bench right to privacy case, the Section 377 challenge, and the Aadhaar challenge. His work has been cited thrice by the Indian Supreme Court, and once by the High Court of Kerala. He founded and writes the Indian Constitutional Law and Philosophy Blog (<http://indconlawphil.wordpress.com>).

JUSTICE GAUTAM PATEL began his practice in 1987 at the Bombay High Court, working in civil litigation and environmental public interest matters. He held positions in the Bar Association, taught briefly at the Government Law College, wrote regularly for a local newspaper, and contributed articles to journals. He was appointed a judge of the Bombay High Court in June 2013. He has delivered several public lectures including the T. K. Tope Lecture (February 2018), Charles Correa Memorial Lecture (September 2018), the first J. B. D'Souza Memorial Lecture (June 2019), Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy Annual Lecture (December 2019), the 27th Bansari Sheth Memorial Lecture for the Asiatic Society of Mumbai (August 2020), and an address at the Manthan Samvaad 2020 (October 2020).

He is passionate about books, law, music, photography, fountain pens and stationery, cinema, science, computers, technology, art, travel, and dogs, not necessarily in that order.



'One Who Serves Becomes the Master': Life Lessons from Hazrat Nizamuddin

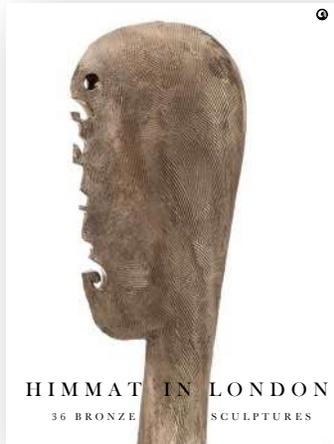
Edited by Bela Upadhyay

Nizamuddin Auliya (1238-1325), also known as Hazrat Nizamuddin, is one of the most revered of the Sufi saints in the subcontinent and the founder of the Chishti Nizami order.

Born in Badaun in great poverty, he chose to dedicate his life to the Sufi vision of love and peace and service to the poor. At the age of twenty, he became a disciple of the Sufi saint known as Baba Farid (of Ajodhan), and eventually took over as his spiritual successor. Renowned for his simplicity, he emphasized that love and service to humanity was the way to realize God. Nizamuddin Auliya's religious vision was imbued with a strong sense of plurality. He believed in the unity of mankind and decried all distinctions based on social or economic inequalities. His life was marked by a disregard for religious orthodoxy and political hegemony. He left an indelible mark on the city where he lived and his disciples spread the message of Sufism all over the world. Centuries later, his teachings continue to inspire his followers who flock to his dargah in Delhi in search of solace and guidance.

Edited by Bela Upadhyay, this volume collects together some of Hazrat Nizamuddin's core teachings.

BELA UPADHYAY is a curator and storyteller. Under her venture, *Delhi Eventalist*, she facilitates storytelling workshops and experiences for children, young adults, corporates, and organizations around stories from folk tales, literature, and history. She holds a certification from Kathalaya's International Academy of Storytelling as well as a diploma in Advertising and Public Relations.



Himmat in London *36 Bronze Sculptures*

HIMMAT SHAH

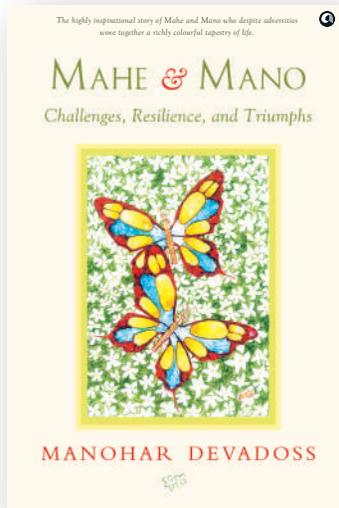
Himmat Shah is one of India's greatest living sculptors.

His sculptures, both in terracotta and bronze, explore materiality as well as texture, presenting life and its realities in various ways. The elongated heads, abstracted features, and phallic references in his bronzes, all form key themes of his oeuvre. This book showcases the thirty-six bronzes he produced over a decade (2007–18) at the Bronze Age Foundry in London.

HIMMAT SHAH was born in 1933 at Lothal in Gujarat. After studying art at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (1956–61), he spent two years at the legendary Atelier 17, Paris (1966–67), on a scholarship from the French government, under S. W. Hayter.

A versatile artist, Shah has experimented across forms and mediums, making burnt paper collages, architectural murals, drawings, and sculptures. His works have been part of many group and solo exhibitions in India and abroad, such as 'Drawings and Sculptures' presented by Studio Confluence at the Jehangir Nicholson Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 2007; a show at Saffronart and Berkley Square Gallery, London, in 2007; 'The Art of Drawing' at the Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 2011; among many others. In 2016, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art exhibited the first-ever comprehensive retrospective of Himmat Shah's works.

In 1988, he was awarded the Sahitya Kala Parishad Award, New Delhi. Shah has also received the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS) Award, New Delhi, in 1996, and the Kalidasa Samman by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in 2003.



Mahe and Mano Challenges, Resilience, and Triumphs

MANOHAR DEVADOSS

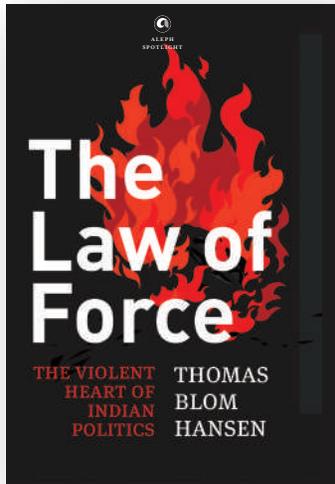
A scientist, artist, and writer, Manohar Devadoss was leading a happy life with his wife, Mahema, until their lives were turned upside down by a tragic road accident that left Mahe paralysed below the shoulder.

Around the same time, Mano was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a degenerative retinal disorder, which eventually made him go blind. But the couple never lost heart, refused to complain, and instead tackled life's challenges head-on. For more than three decades, Mano remained Mahe's most faithful nurse and attendant.

Mahe and Mano is a chronicle of their extraordinary life together and the ways in which they triumphed over adversity.

MANOHAR DEVADOSS is a recipient of the prestigious Padma Shri award. Due to a degenerative retinal disease, Mano no longer has colour perception, and the little he can see is as if seen through a pinhole. Using special eyedrops, which help dilate his pupils, strong lights, and special magnifiers, along with a photographic memory and an uncompromising attention to detail, he has made several intricate artworks over the years. He and Mahe would work on a special set of greeting cards every year. Mano made the drawings and Mahe prepared the brief accompanying write-up. They donated the sales proceeds of the cards to charity. Mano has written seven books and these have seen a total of twenty-one editions.

In 2008, Mano lost his beloved wife. They were an exceptional couple who, because of their warm and charismatic personalities, are a continued inspiration to their readers and everyone associated with them.



The Law of Force: The Violent Heart of Indian Politics

THOMAS BLOM HANSEN

The political forces that 'deepened' India's democracy in the 1980s and 1990s—regional movements, the empowerment of lower-caste communities but also Hindu nationalism—reflected among many other things a deeply illiberal underside of Indian politics.

Theirs was a language of deprivations and anger, and a politics of passion claiming to represent hitherto voiceless majorities. This language of strength was not based on a commitment to the liberal values of the Constitution but, rather, a realist belief in popular sovereignty, the moral right of electoral majorities, and violence as a legitimate expression of political will.

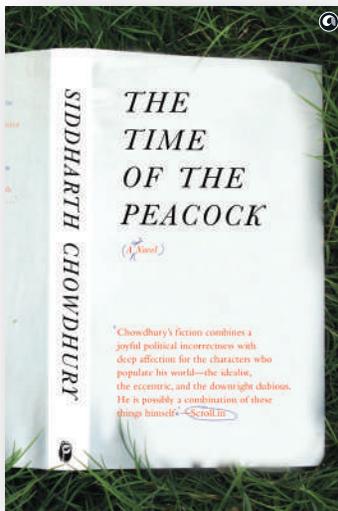
In this book, Hansen discusses the discrepancy between the liberal language of rights in the Constitution and the largely illiberal and often violent ways in which the 'force of law' is visited upon non-elite Indians by the country's police powers. He argues that an intensified sense of intimacy and hurt has facilitated the rise of a popular politics of passion and action that, in turn, has made public violence and the mobilization of public anger into some of the most effective means of political expression in the country. These sentiments and techniques of what Hansen calls 'the law of force' have been honed and perfected by the Hindu nationalist movement over the past decades.

The Law of Force is a searing critique of the illiberal and violent forces that continue to dominate our everyday life and politics, while we claim to be a country proud of being a 'sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic'.

THOMAS BLOM HANSEN is the Reliance–Dhirubhai Ambani Professor of Anthropology, and Chair of the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University. He has written on Hindu nationalism, Hindu Muslim conflicts, and urban

politics in India, as well as melancholia, memory, and cultural politics in post-apartheid South Africa.

He is the author of *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*; *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay*; *Cool Passion: The Political Theology of Convictions*; and *Melancholia of Freedom: Social Life in an Indian Township in South Africa*; as well as a number of edited collections, most recently, *Majoritarian State: How Hindu Nationalism is Changing India* (edited with Christophe Jaffrelot and Angana P. Chatterji).



The Time of the Peacock A Short Novel

SIDDHARTH CHOWDHURY

It is the book launch of Best in Show: The Peacock Book of Indo-Anglian Fiction and John Nair, managing editor, Peacock India, is throwing the grandest party of his life.

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The whole of literary India is in attendance. All the literary stars are here: the Seths, the Roys, the Chaudhuris, and the Ghoshes, among many, many others. And into this haloed mix walks Nair's old friend, Ritwik Ray, the slightly off-kilter bard of Patna, with a new novel in hand: *Godse Chowk*. Mayhem ensues.

Set in the goldfish bowl of the New Delhi publishing world, *The Time of the Peacock* provides an accurate yet compassionate reading of the contemporary Indian literary scene—both bhasha and metropolitan.

SIDDHARTH CHOWDHURY is the author, most recently, of *The Patna Manual of Style*, shortlisted for the 2015 Hindu Literary Prize. An omnibus edition of his fiction, *Ritwik & Hriday: Tales of the City, Tales of the Town*, was published in 2016. He works as an editorial consultant in New Delhi.



Six and a Third Acres FAKIR MOHAN SENAPATI

*Translated by
Leelawati Mohapatra, Paul St-Pierre & K. K. Mohapatra*

Over a century after it was first published, this sombre tale continues to attract readers because of Fakir Mohan Senapati's innovative technique, indelible characters, wit, imagination, and tremendous insights into the rural milieu.

The novel is about village politics, caste oppression, malpractices, and land-grabbing under the zamindari system in colonial Odisha. Ramchandra Mangaraj, a sly zamindar of the village of Govindpur, is notorious for taking over the lands of poor peasants and farmers. This time, his avaricious gaze falls on a small patch of land—six and a third acres—belonging to a humble, God-fearing weaver couple. Unable to fight the zamindar's devious schemes, the couple succumbs to the harsher realities of caste-ridden village life....

This exceptional translation by Leelawati Mohapatra, Paul St-Pierre & K. K. Mohapatra breathes new life into one of the most brilliant novels in Indian literature.

LEELAWATI MOHAPATRA published her debut novel, *Hanging by a Tail*, in 2008. She has co-translated (with K. K. Mohapatra & Paul St-Pierre) extensively from Odia into English. Her books of translation include, among others, *The Greatest Odia Stories Ever Told*; *The HarperCollins Book of Oriya Short Stories*; *Ants, Ghosts and Whispering Trees: An Anthology of Oriya Short Stories*; *J. P. Das: Sundardas*; *Fakir Mohan Senapati: The Brideprice and Other Stories*; and *Laxmikanta Mahapatra: Uncle One Eye*.

PAUL ST-PIERRE is a former professor of translation studies

at Montreal University. He has co-edited several books on translation theory and practice and has spent nearly a quarter-century collaborating with, apart from the Mohapatras, several Odia translators such as Ganeswar Mishra, Basant Kumar Tripathy, Himansu Sekhar Mohapatra, Rabindra Swain, and Dipti Ranjan Patnaik.

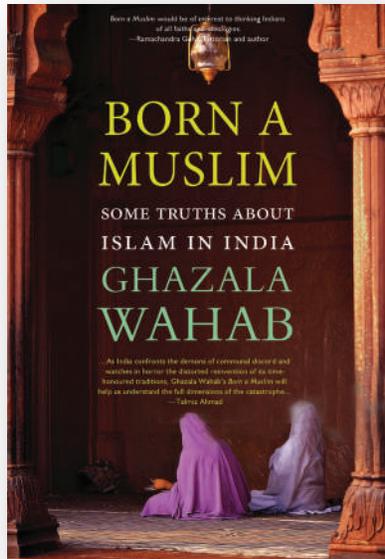
K. K. (KAMALAKANTA) MOHAPATRA has written three collections of short stories, a novel, a book of non-fiction, and an autobiography. He has also translated into Odia selected stories by Isaac Bashevis Singer, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Franz Kafka, as well as William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and collaborated with Leelawati Mohapatra and Paul St-Pierre on numerous works of translation from Odia into English, including, most recently, *The Greatest Odia Stories Ever Told*.



S

P R

I N G



Born a Muslim
Some Truths about Islam in India

GHAZALA WAHAB

Who are the Indian Muslims? Are they a monolithic community practising a faith alien to India? Or are they a diverse people, geographically rooted in the cultural ethos of the land?

Is there an 'Indian Islam', a religion that grew out of Arabia but was nurtured in India and influenced by local traditions and customs? Has the power of Islam declined over the centuries because the faithful have forgotten the spirit of the religion, and are sticking to dogma and rigid rules instead? *Born a Muslim: Some Truths about Islam in India* attempts to answer these questions by taking a hard look at how the world's second largest religion is practised in the country.

The book tracks the history of the religion from its revelation in Arabia in the seventh century to its spread through many parts of the world. It arrived in India by multiple routes—in the south, in the eighth and ninth centuries CE, with traders from Arabia, and in the north, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, with invaders, rulers, and mystics, largely from Central

Asia. Once it was established in India, it morphed and evolved through the centuries until it took on the distinctive contours of the religion that is presently practised here.

The author takes a clear-eyed look at every aspect of Islam in India today. She examines the factors that have stalled the socio-economic and intellectual growth of the Indian Muslims and attributes both internal factors—such as a disproportionate reliance on the ulema—as well as external ones that have contributed to the backwardness of the community. She shows at length, and with great empathy and understanding, what it is like to live as a Muslim in India and offers suggestions on how their lot might be improved. Weaving together personal memoir, history, reportage, scholarship, and interviews with a wide variety of people, the author highlights how an apathetic and sometimes hostile government and prejudice at all levels of society have contributed to Muslim vulnerability and insecurity.

Born a Muslim goes beyond stereotypes and news headlines to present an extraordinarily compelling and illuminating portrait of one of the largest and most diverse communities in India.

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GHAZALA WAHAB is executive editor, *FORCE*, where she writes on homeland security, terrorism, Jammu and Kashmir, left-wing extremism, and religious extremism, and contributes a column, First Person. She is the author of *Dragon on Our Doorstep: Managing China through Military Power* with Pravin Sawhney. She contributed a chapter on the changing profile of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir to the book *Operation Parakram: The War Unfinished*. A career journalist, Ghazala has worked with *The Telegraph* and *Asian Age*.



Rajinikanth: A Life

VAASANTHI

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Superstar Rajinikanth defies all conventional analyses: no one has reigned supreme for as long as he has in the world of Indian cinema.

With over 150 films under his belt, many of them blockbusters, he still plays the hero at seventy, and the devotion of his legions of fans has not waned during the forty-odd years of his stardom.

In a state that saw the Dravidian self-respect movement propagate atheism, fans worship his cut-outs and bathe them with milk and beer, as if he were their god. In a society famous for its pride in its language, it is curious that he, a Marathi-speaking Kannadiga from Karnataka, an outsider, should emerge as a ‘thalaivar’, or leader. With the death of the charismatic J. Jayalithaa, a former actor, and M. Karunanidhi, who was a scriptwriter for films—leaders of the AIADMK and DMK respectively (the two main Dravidian political parties that have been ruling Tamil Nadu for more than sixty years)—Rajinikanth’s fans believe there is a political vacuum that only he can fill. The Thalaivar has responded by promising that he will form his own party and contest all 234 seats in the next

assembly elections in 2021. With his supporters in the right-wing party at the centre expecting a paradigm shift in the politics of Tamil Nadu, will Rajinikanth now don a new role—as chief minister of the state?

Rajinikanth is the best account yet of the man who was born Shivaji Rao Gaekwad—once a coolie and a bus conductor in Bangalore and now virtually a god in Tamil Nadu.

VAASANTHI is a renowned author and journalist who writes in English and Tamil. She has been writing in Tamil for more than forty years and has published thirty novels, six short-story collections, four volumes of journalistic articles, and four travelogues. Her books in English include *Cut-outs*, *Caste and Cine Stars: The World of Tamil Politics*, and *Amma: Jayalalithaa's Journey from Movie Star to Political Queen*. She was the Editor of the Tamil edition of *India Today* for nearly ten years in Chennai. She now works as a freelance writer and journalist and lives in Delhi.



The Demoness
The Best Bangladeshi Stories, 1971–2021

Selected and edited by Niaz Zaman

Published to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Bangladesh's Independence, the twenty-seven stories in this collection feature the finest short fiction from the nation.

In her introduction, Niaz Zaman traces the unique nature of Bangladeshi writing that takes place in three major languages of the subcontinent—Bengali, Urdu, and English—as well as multiple languages indigenous to the country. The stories featured here all highlight important facets of Bangladesh's layered history and literary tradition.

Here the readers will find all the greats of Bangladeshi literature: in Kazi Nazrul Islam's timeless masterpiece, 'The Demoness', a woman's fury is revealed on learning that her husband is getting married again; 'The Raincoat' by Akhtaruzzaman Elias brings to life the traumatic effect of war on ordinary people; Shawkat Ali's 'The Final Resting Place' is concerned with love, grief, and the human capacity for recovery; in Hasan Azizul Huq's 'Nameless and Casteless,' an unnamed protagonist accidentally witnesses the hidden horrors of war; and Anwara Syed Haq's

‘Pagli’ is a sharp commentary on madness and trauma. Exceptional in subject, theme, and style, these and the other stories in the book paint an extraordinary picture of a land and its people.

NIJAZ ZAMAN retired as Professor of English, University of Dhaka, and is at present Advisor, Department of English, Independent University, Bangladesh. Her published work includes the award-winning *A Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh*. She is also a creative writer and has published novels as well as short stories.

She has edited several anthologies including *Selected Short Stories from Bangladesh*; *The Escape and Other Stories of 1947, 1971 and After: Selected Stories*; *Under the Krishnachura: Fifty Years of Bangladeshi Writing*; *Arshilata*; and *Contemporary Short Stories from Bangladesh*.

In 2016, she received the prestigious Bangla Academy Award for Translation. Her other awards include the Anannya Sahitya Puraskar (2013) and the Lekhika Sangha Award (2015).



Painting by Bani Verma

Song of Draupadi: A Novel

IRA MUKHOTY

Some of the most memorable themes of the Mahabharat are the great battles and the heroic deeds of the men in the story. However, the beating heart of the epic is the story of its women.

The real heroism—the resilience, wisdom, and courage—belongs to the women. From the indomitable Satyawati to the otherworldly Ganga, the indestructible Kunti and the great, passionate Draupadi, the exceptional women are legion. Their voices are a vast symphony in several

keys—arguing, pleading, reasoning. Rare in the Indian epics, they are also often raised in righteous anger, and because feminine anger can be so terrifying, through the aeons, these voices have been subdued. Carefully overlaid by the complacent tones of Brahminical sermonizing, the anger has been diffused and the fiery accusations forgotten. The fierce and furious voices are lost. But behind the veil of the men’s distracting posturing is a gritty story of a battle unto death over the control of women’s agency—their wombs, their choices, their very lives. This, then, is a story of those voices, clear and true once again.

Excerpt

GANGA

Poised on the threshold of Draupadi’s swayamvar, it may appear that the scene is set and the die cast for the inexorable unfurling of the banners of war that were to figure so prominently in Draupadi’s life. But it is further back in time, half a century or more, that the first small, subterranean, tectonic shifts occurred. Each action seemingly insignificant at the time and yet leading with a shearing and grinding movement to the cataclysmic events that were to take place.

And so it was that somewhere in the dense forests of northern Bharat, west of the territories of Panchala on the outskirts of the Kuru capital of Hastinapur, a rustling and a crackling was heard in the leaves of the peepul and kachnar trees. A ripple and a crepitation within the warp and weft of the very air itself, followed swiftly by a muffled bump and a subdued intake of breath as a beautiful young girl fell glowing and flailing from heaven, through the air, and onto the soft, alluvial humus of the Gangetic soil.

Or perhaps not. Perhaps a baby girl was born to one of the tribal communities that lived on the margins of the forest and of civilized society. A community of hunter-gatherers and subsistence farmers who dressed in animal skins and wove red hibiscus flowers into their hair, who lived away from the tyranny of the Fire Altar and worshipped instead the rich, red earth and the warm summer rain. Into this society the girl was born, abandoned perhaps by an unwed mother, or orphaned by a flash flood, and grew up tall and strong and beautiful. And because she was born under a full moon night near the river, and because her

complexion was the golden, burnished colour of ripe wheat, they named her Ganga.

IRA MUKHOTY is the author of *Akbar: The Great Mughal*, *Daughters of the Sun: Empresses, Queens and Begums of the Mughal Empire*, and *Heroines: Powerful Indian Women in Myth and History*. *Song of Draupadi* is her first novel. She lives in Gurgaon with her husband and two daughters.



Illustration by Raka Chowdhury

The Book of Indian Ghosts

RIKSUNDAR BANERJEE

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Every community, tribe, and sub-community in India has its own ghosts.

For centuries, the spirit world has captured the imagination of Indians. Some are believed to live near water bodies and sneak up on passers-by; others roam around fields on summer afternoons, seduce lost men, and, in some cases, protect you from evil. From the north Indian chudails, who are said to prowl neighbourhoods in search of their victims, and the mechho bhoot spirits from West Bengal that love fish, to the fearsome ghosts from Tamil Nadu called muni pei—the Indian ghost family is enormous, with no official head count.

Who are these shadowy creatures that haunt dense forests? What are the mysteries hidden beneath the surface of deep, calm waters? And how are we to understand these restless spirits who have permeated our memories, psyches, imaginations, and literatures?

Riksundar Banerjee, an authority on Indian ghosts, investigates stories of creatures from the spirit world from all over India, in an effort to unravel the truth behind the legends, beliefs, superstitions, and experiences all

of us are aware of. The result is *The Book of Indian Ghosts*—the first-ever authoritative, deeply researched, and spooky account of the otherworldly beings that haunt India and Indians.

RIKSUNDAR BANERJEE has a PhD in ghosts in literature from Jadavpur University. He has published several books in Bengali, including *Trainer Adda*, *Probase Doiber Boshe*, *Chhaya Sorir* (a collection of ghost stories), *Cholar Pother Khorkuto*, and numerous articles in various newspapers and magazines. He teaches at Burdwan University.

The Fourth Lion: A Festschrift for Gopalkrishna Gandhi

Edited by Venu Madhavgovindu and Srinath Raghavan

The Fourth Lion is a
festschrift in honour
of the distinguished
administrator, diplomat,
and scholar
Gopalkrishna Gandhi.

The volume consists of twenty-seven essays contributed by individuals drawn from many walks of life and from across the globe. Organized into thematic sections—Literature and Culture, History, the Environment, and Politics and Public Affairs—the essays speak to the incredibly diverse array of concerns and interests that have fascinated Gandhi for much of his life.

venu madhavgovindu has co-authored *The Web of Freedom: J. C. Kumarappa and Gandhi's Struggle for Economic Justice* (Oxford University Press, 2016). His professional interests are in computer vision and he is Associate Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.

srinath raghavan is Professor of International Relations and History at Ashoka University. He is the author of several books, including *The Most Dangerous Place: A History of the United States in South Asia* (Penguin Random House, 2018).

*Teaching a Horse to Sing:
Tales of Uncommon Sense from
India and Elsewhere*

DELSHAD KARANJIA

*This hugely entertaining
volume comprises
150 popular tales
of wit and wisdom,
old and new, retold
from a contemporary
perspective.*

Stories about Akbar and Birbal, Mullah Nasruddin, and Vikram and Vetal rub shoulders with Aesop's fables, and the antics of wise fools and foolish knaves from around the world. Great storytelling and generous dollops of humour and wisdom are common to all the stories. In addition, they point out the difference between good and evil in a nuanced way, and scrutinize the trials and tribulations that have tripped up human beings from time immemorial.

First-time author DELSHAD KARANJIA has worked as a journalist for over four decades across several continents, beginning with the Times Group in Mumbai. In the UK, she freelanced as a copy editor with the *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Times*, and BBC Publications, as a reporter/newsreader for BBC Local Radio, and as a researcher/producer for Channel 4 television. In the US, she worked as a copy editor at the *Houston Chronicle*, and subsequently as a writer/editor for the oil company Saudi Aramco in Saudi Arabia. Now settled in Pune, she continues to edit, write, and teach.

India: The Last Superpower

HIROSHI HIRABAYASHI

According to many experts, India is poised to become the world's fourth superpower along with Russia, China, and the United States.

In *India: The Last Superpower*, Hiroshi Hirabayashi, former ambassador of Japan to India, presents his perspective on the matter, formed largely by his experiences as a diplomat in this country. In addition, the book is a compelling analysis of the relationship between India and Japan and their history of economic cooperation.

Ambassador HIROSHI HIRABAYASHI was born in Tokyo in 1940 and graduated from the University of Tokyo. As an officer of the Japanese foreign service from 1963 to 2006, he was posted in Italy, China, France, Belgium, India, France, and the US (DCM). At home, he assumed many important posts, such as the director general of Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chief Cabinet Councillor for External Affairs at the PM's Cabinet Secretariat. Since 2007, he has been serving public interest foundations and private corporations as a director and trustee. He is currently the president of the 117-year-old Japan–India Association.



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Photo by Moma Eendra on Unsplash

It's a Wonderful Life: Roads to Happiness

RUSKIN BOND

In a grey and frightened world, driven to despair by the pandemic, Ruskin Bond's brilliant new book, It's a Wonderful Life, slants through the gloom like a flash of bright steel.

His unerring eye seeks out the joys and positive truths to be found in the smallest of incidents that occur in our lives, the good news and sources of happiness that we often miss out on as a result of the anxiety and bad news that has pervaded our daily existence over the past year. Perceptive,

uplifting, and deeply moving, *It's a Wonderful Life* is another triumph from one of our most beloved writers.

Excerpt

In a broken and contentious world, it can be difficult for an individual to find the happiness that he seeks, even if by nature he (or she) is not a contentious person. It is difficult to enjoy the flowers by the wayside if a tear-gas cylinder (or something worse) has just burst in front of you. Throughout history the peace-loving, happiness-seeking individual is caught in the crossfire of human conflict. But still he grows flowers, and sometimes he gets to enjoy them.

If you can grow flowers in your garden, or on your balcony, or on your windowsill, you have a chance of finding happiness—fleeting moments of it, anyway.

From my bedroom window, I can see a storm brewing over the distant hills. The sky has darkened. The wind is a low moan as it channels a pathway through the trees. Lightning strikes at random, zigzagging across the evening sky. Nature at her most elemental but also most beautiful.

That lightning and the violence of the storm are not aimed at me or mine, for the elements take no sides. I can stand and watch the beauty of this electrical display, knowing it is indifferent to the watcher. Lightning will strike by accident, not design.

I close the window and turn on the television. Tired, desperate refugees from bombed-out homes in Syria trek across no man's land in search of something and are turned back from another border. They sleep out in the open, the children shivering, hungry.

In America, a lone gunman goes on the rampage; a 'disturbed' individual. But we are all disturbed individuals. Trump shakes his hand, talks about money; there are white circles around his eyes; he is losing colour!

In New Delhi, there are communal riots. This suits many of the politicians. In Indonesia, an earthquake, Nature asserting herself. We are obsessed with outer space, forgetting the fires smouldering within our planet, ready to erupt without prior notice. This, the only green planet as far as we know, is looking less green by the day. There will be many Pompeiis.

RUSKIN BOND is the author of several bestselling 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*; *The Night Train at Deoli*; *Time Stops at Shamli*; *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award); *Angry River*; *The Blue Umbrella*; *Delhi is Not Far*; *Rain in the Mountains*; *Tigers for Dinner*; *Tales of Fosterganj*; *A Gathering of Friends*; *Upon An Old Wall Dreaming*; *Small Towns, Big Stories*; *Unhurried Tales*; *A Gallery of Rascals*; *Rhododendrons in the Mist*; and *Miracle at Happy Bazaar*.

A Shadow of the Past
A Short Biography of Lucknow

MEHRU JAFFER

The name Lucknow evokes ideas of composite culture—Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb, plurality, and complexity.

Over the centuries, Indo-Islamic and European ideas merged with Hindu traditions to make Lucknow a powerhouse of creativity. A city known for its art and artisans, the courts of nineteenth-century rulers of Lucknow swarmed with European painters and photographers. In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, poets from Delhi's Mughal court migrated to Lucknow in the hope of better emoluments. Lucknow's legendary status as a city of culture waxed with every new influx of creative geniuses.

A Shadow of the Past celebrates the people responsible for the city's fame. At a time when Uttar Pradesh has been reduced to one of the most backward states of the country, Mehru Jaffer explores how Lucknow's glorious cultural heritage ensures that it remains a city of substance.

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Born and brought up in Lucknow, MEHRU JAFFER teaches Islam in South Asia at the Webster University and the University of Vienna, Austria. She is the author of *The Book of Muhammad*, *The Book of Muinuddin Chishti*, and *The Book of Nizamuddin Aulia*.

The Oracle of Karuthupuzha *A Novel*

MANU BHATTATHIRI

*With two cows and
four mouths to feed,
Nareshan can barely
make ends meet selling
milk to the inhabitants of
Karuthupuzha.*

That is, until his daughter, Sarasu, is possessed by the demon-god, Chaathan. Now, the faithful from all over Karuthupuzha and beyond visit Nareshan with money and gifts to receive Chaathan's blessings. The sceptics of the town, meanwhile, believe that Nareshan is fooling everyone to make money. However, when one of the leading sceptics in town, Dasappan, member of the Communist Party, rationalist and atheist, loses his mind after loudly proclaiming that Chaathan is a farce, the people's belief in a divine power residing in Sarasu is reinforced.

With the number of faithful only growing as each day passes, Nareshan realizes that his daughter's possession might be the best thing to have happened to him. When the rich widow Ponnamma comes to his house to seek help from Chaathan for her son, Nanu, the fate of Nareshan and his family is set to change forever.

In *The Oracle of Karuthupuzha*, Manu Bhattathiri revisits the town of Karuthupuzha that was immortalized in *The Town That Laughed* and *Savithri's Special Room and Other Stories*.

MANU BHATTATHIRI is a Keralite settled in Bengaluru. He has worked as an advertising copywriter, a journalist, and a college lecturer. At present he co-owns a small advertising agency. He is the author of *The Town That Laughed: A Novel* and *Savithri's Special Room and Other Stories*, both set in the fictional town of Karuthupuzha.

*The Owl Delivered the Good News
All Night Long but the Woodpecker
Got the Reward of the Golden
Crown: Folk Tales, Legends, and
Modern Lore of India*

Edited by Lopamudra Maitra Bajpai

*Oral traditions form an
important part of the
cultural heritage of India.
This is especially
true of folklore.*

An exhaustive effort, this book retells stories from fifty-seven languages and dialects, including some which do not even have a script to this day. In many ways, the 108 tales in this volume, drawn from every corner of the country, collectively tell the story of the real India in an original and memorable fashion.

LOPAMUDRA MAITRA BAJPAI is a visual anthropologist, author, and international columnist. She works on history, popular culture, and the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of India and South Asia. She was recently deputed as the Culture Specialist (Research) at the SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka, and has also been a Research Grant Fellow of the Indian High Commission, Sri Lanka. A former Assistant Professor from Symbiosis International Deemed University, Pune, she continues to teach at universities in India and abroad.

Mahabharata *The Epic and the Nation*

G. N. DEVY

The Mahabharata ranks among the greatest works of literature ever produced.

In India, kingdoms and dynasties have come and gone, religious sects have formed and dissolved, schools of philosophy have come together and subsequently been replaced by others, yet the Mahabharata has never ceased to excite the Indian imagination.

The sheer volume of commentaries on the Mahabharata is awe-inspiring. But what is it in the Mahabharata that gives it its timeless magic? Is it the mythical characters with which it is replete and whose extraordinary lives make the epic so enchanting? Or is it the great wealth of profound philosophical and metaphysical thought present in it that dazzles the mind of its audiences? Or could it be the combination of all these that makes it ever-fascinating to scholars and readers around the world? And, most of all, what accounts for its incredible effect on the subconscious of millions of people through several generations?

In *Mahabharata: The Epic and the Nation*, renowned linguist and scholar G. N. Devy answers these and many other questions surrounding the Mahabharata and its undisputed place as one of India's national epics.

Former Professor of English at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information Technology, G. N. DEVY writes in English, Marathi, and Gujarati. He is the founder of the Bhasha Research Centre, Baroda, and Adivasi Academy, Tejgadh, and has worked extensively with the Adivasi and nomadic communities in India. He led the People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI), a comprehensive documentation of all living Indian languages in fifty volumes. He has received several awards for his writing as well as for his

community work, including the Padma Shri, Prince Claus Award, and Linguapax Award.

Among his better-known works are *After Amnesia*, *Of Many Heroes*, *Painted Words*, and *Nomad Called Thief*, *Vanaprastha* (in Marathi) and *Adivasi Jaane Chhe* (in Gujarati). He has co-edited a series of six volumes on indigenous cultures and knowledge. As an activist, he played a leading role in the movement for the rights of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes and, more recently, has initiated the Dakshinayan Movement of Writers and Artists. The author is based in Dharwad.

A is for Prayagraj *A Short Biography of Allahabad*

UDBHAV AGARWAL

*A Hindu Rashtra needs
Hindu metropolises.*

Borders are easier built than lived, or are they? In *A is for Prayagraj*, a young writer returns to his hometown to reclaim its stories and histories lost to monochrome. As he accompanies the city's residents—from a whisky-swigging criminal lawyer to a closeted Grindr date—into *their* cityscapes, the lines between the past and present start to blur. Part memoir, part reportage, part travelogue, this book renders Allahabad as neither ageing and grey, nor polarized saffron—instead we see a sangam of contrasts.

UDBHAV AGARWAL is a PhD candidate in Political Science at Johns Hopkins University. He was born in Allahabad and has studied at the Doon School and Vassar College. His writings have appeared in the *Economic and Political Weekly* and *Journal of Narrative Politics*. This is his first book.

Harijan

GOPINATH MOHANTY

Translated from the Odia by Bikram Das

Harijan is considered one of the most original and path-breaking Indian novels of the twentieth century.

It deals with the travails of the ‘untouchable’ manual scavengers living in a filthy slum on the edge of a town and their exploitation by the rich who want to drive the slum-dwellers out of their homes.

An extraordinarily powerful story, it lays bare the devastating agony and hopelessness that mehentars or manual scavengers go through in their everyday life.

GOPINATH MOHANTY was an eminent Odia novelist and short-story writer. His novels *Paraja* and *Danapani* are modern classics, and have been widely translated. He was the winner of the first National Sahitya Akademi Award in 1953 for his novel, *Amrutara Santaan*, and won the coveted Jnanpith Award in 1973.

BIKRAM DAS has translated three other novels by Gopinath Mohanty. His translation of *Paraja* received the first-ever Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize in 1989. He was formerly a Professor at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad. He now lives in Bhubaneswar.

The Boatman of Murshidabad *Selected Poems*

MADHU KAILAS

The Boatman of Murshidabad is a dazzling collection of poems by the poet and writer Madhu Kailas.

Melancholic and thoughtful, the poems reflect on identity, death, love, and memories.

Madhu Kailas is the pen name of KINGSHUK BASU. He is a native of Kolkata and has lived in various places in India and the USA. He is the author of *The Birds Fly in Silence*. He has been published in journals like the *Gateway Review*, *Marathon Literary Review*, *Literary Voyage*, *Indian Literature*, *The Amistad*, *Slippery Elm*, *Dragon Poet Review*, *New Mexico Review*, and *Langlit*. He studied Electrical Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, and Business Management at Michigan State University. He lives with his wife and children in Mumbai.



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Photo by Roxanne Shevchuk from Pixels

One of Them: A Novel

ANNIE ZAIDI

Annie Zaidi's new novel, One of Them, tells the story of six women and six men, each of them struggling to keep their balance in a metropolis that affords them little power, little hope, and little chance of redemption.

Their stories twine together to give us a deeply unsettling look into the lives that unfold on the peripheries of our vision. These are people you may encounter on the Metro, glimpse from the window of your car, or in brief items about accidents on the inside pages of the newspaper.

Again, they might be those who watch you as you hurry past, from silent balconies and from behind the glass partition at the bank. People who don't particularly interest you until a fragile moment shatters and you find yourself in the middle of someone else's crisis. Through knife-edged prose and great characterization, Zaidi forces us to pay attention to those who live on the margins, and those who must hold on tight as their lives come apart. As these separate stories begin to coalesce, you are drawn headlong into the drama.

One of Them is a great, darkened lens that reveals unnerving truths about great cities, and those who inhabit them.

Excerpt

WOMAN 1

Is so transparent, the evil eye cannot fall upon her. Perhaps the evil goes right through her body, falling on the person standing right behind her in queue for the renewal of a Second Class pass.

Not that she travels Second Class. She travels First Class bindaas. Who can challenge her? She wears sleeveless tops and big dangling earrings, just like a college girl. She has an office job and a faux leather handbag with a clasp in the shape of Hello Kitty that she polishes once a week with Brasso. Nobody would look at her and say that she doesn't look First Class. Besides, in the terrible crush of the morning, no ticket examiner dares enter the compartment. What's more, no commuter could be expected to reach into her purse to extract a ticket or a pass. All arms are trapped, pressed, and pinned down by a dozen other arms and shoulders. All the ladies have to suck in their bellies and squash each other's breasts as they make their way from seat to aisle to door. There is safety in such a crowd.

ANNIE ZAIDI is the author of *Gulab, Love Stories # 1 To 14, Known Turf: Bantering with Bandits and Other True Tales* which was shortlisted for the Crossword Book Prize (non-fiction), *Prelude to a Riot*, which won the Tata Lit Live! Award for Best Fiction, 2020, and was shortlisted for the JCB Prize and, most recently, *Bread, Cement, Cactus*. She is the editor of

Unbound: 2,000 Years of Indian Women's Writing. She won The Hindu Playwright Award in 2018 for her play *Untitled 1* and the Nine Dots prize in 2019 for her essay 'Bread, Cement, Cactus'.



Photo by Bekir Donmez on Unsplash

Who Are We? An Enquiry into the Indian Mind and How We Came to Be Who We Are

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RAJESH KASTURIRANGAN

India is both an ancient culture and a young society, with all the benefits and burdens of a long history.

Despite belonging to a vast spectrum of class, caste, and religion, Indians are bound by a sense of shared reality, of collective experience—all parts of a greater whole, which involves a network of thoughts and ideas. Underlying this network is a question worth asking ourselves: *who are we?*

It's all too easy to believe we know everything that's to be known about India by being Indian. But how do people across diverse cultures in our country perceive themselves, both as individuals and in relation to others? The Indian mind is at the heart of all this action, now more so than ever before, as we live in a world crisscrossed by information technology. The experience of being Indian is a combination of universal human capacities and uniquely Indian traits.

In this path-breaking book, cognitive scientist Rajesh Kasturirangan uses a multidisciplinary approach, especially the cognitive sciences, to

understand the Indian mind and, through this understanding, grasp who we are as a nation in the twenty-first century.

RAJESH KASTURIRANGAN is a mathematician and cognitive scientist. He brings an interdisciplinary approach to his work, combining mathematical theory, philosophy, and experimentation. He has worked on theoretical questions in consciousness and cognition as well as cross-species research on animal minds. Writing for a popular audience, he has applied these ideas to analyse a wide range of phenomena in Indian society. He has a PhD in Cognitive Science from MIT. He is the co-founder and CEO of Socratus, which seeks to be the midwife of collective wisdom.

The Greatest Malayalam Stories Ever Told

Selected, edited, and translated by A. J. Thomas

Selected, edited, and translated by A. J. Thomas, The Greatest Malayalam Stories Ever Told features some of the best short stories by writers in Malayalam, from the nineteenth century to the present day.

The writers featured in this volume include literary giants such as Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, Lalithambika Antharjanam, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, O. V. Vijayan, M. T. Vasudevan Nair, and Madhavikutty, as well as powerful contemporary voices like K. R. Meera, Paul Zacharia, Subhash Chandran, and many more. Covering themes of love, pain, anger, betrayal, humour, and more, *The Greatest Malayalam Stories Ever Told* is a truly unforgettable collection of Malayalam literature.

A. J. THOMAS is an Indian English poet, fiction writer, translator, and editor. He is an acclaimed translator of poetry, fiction, drama, and non-fiction from his mother tongue, Malayalam, with more than twenty titles to his credit including *Keshavan's Lamentations*, *Reflections of a Hen in Her Last Hour and Other Stories*, and *Like a Psalm*. He received the Katha Award for translation in 1993, the AKMG Prize in 1997, and the Vodafone Crossword Award in 2007.

*Smashing the Patriarchy
A Guide for the 21st-century
Indian Woman*

SINDHU RAJASEKARAN

*This is a feminist
manifesto for the
contemporary
Indian woman.*

Centred around the bold voices of millennials and Gen Zs, the book explores how young women from diverse backgrounds ingeniously overcome the patriarchy in their everyday lives. From beauty, body politics, and sexuality, to caste, power, and the paradox of choice—the book explores a wide range of women’s issues and draws important connections between seemingly unrelated themes. Taking its inspiration from transdisciplinary theories and interviews with knowledge experts, it delves deep into the incredible diversity of feminist thought.

SINDHU RAJASEKARAN is the author of a novel, *Kaleidoscopic Reflections*, which was nominated for the Crossword Book Award, and a collection of short stories, *So I Let It Be*. Her essays, poetry, and fiction have appeared in international publications and anthologies. She has a master’s degree in creative writing from the University of Edinburgh and is currently based in Vancouver, Canada.

The Violence in Our Bones

NEERA CHANDHOKE

*Do 'we the people of
India' have violence
in our bones?*

This work explores different aspects of our collective life to answer the question. Despite a blood-soaked Partition and various stumbling blocks that all emerging democracies encounter, India's record in upholding the democratic values enshrined in its Constitution is impressive. Yet, violence remains an inextricable part of everyday life. Parts of the country are rocked by 'low-intensity' operations against insurgency. Our society is also scarred by caste violence, communal riots, and viciousness against women, children, the transgender community, and minorities. *The Violence in Our Bones* maps different kinds of violence in India, and explores why, even as a successful democracy, violence continues to be endemic in the nation.

NEERA CHANDHOKE taught Political Science at the University of Delhi. She is a Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Equity Studies, Delhi. She writes about civil society, secularism, revolutionary violence, and democracy. Her latest work is *Rethinking Pluralism, Democracy, Tolerance: Anxieties of Coexistence*.



Photo by Taylor Kiser on Unsplash

From the Tables of My Friends

SUNITA KOHLI

Sunita Kohli, bestselling author of The Lucknow Cookbook, presents a treasure trove of iconic Indian dishes from the kitchens of her friends and well-wishers, including Shashi Tharoor, Gursharan Kaur, William Dalrymple, and Kusum and Salman Haider.

Representing the very best of India's rich culinary heritage, *From the Tables of My Friends* brings together mouth-watering recipes for biryani, payasam, a dazzling variety of cocktails, and much more.

Drawn from almost every region in the country, the book invites the reader to sample the incredible variety and excellence of India's food.

Excerpt

KARHI WITH PAKORAS

From the table of Gursharan Kaur, a musician with a BA in Music, the wife of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the mother of three daughters in academia.

Serves: 6

Preparation Time: 1½ hours

Ingredients

For the Pakoras:

Coarse besan (gram flour)	1½ cups
Onion	1 medium, chopped
Hari mirch (green chilli)	1 piece, chopped
Adrak (ginger)	1 piece, finely chopped
Oil	1½ cups, for frying
Dhania (coriander) leaves	a few, chopped
Water	as needed

For the Karhi:

Dahi (curd)	2 cups
Water	4 cups
Regular besan (gram flour)	4 tbsp
Jeera (cumin) seeds	½ tsp
Methi dana (fenugreek seeds)	½ tsp
Garam masala (ground spices)	½ tsp
Haldi (turmeric) powder	½ tsp or little less
Onion	1 medium, chopped roughly
Adhrak (ginger)	1 tsp, chopped or ground
Hari mirch (green chilli)	1 whole, chopped
Oil	2 tbsp
Salt	1½ tsp
Laal mirch (red chilli) powder	1 tsp

Method

For the Pakoras:

Mix together all the ingredients for the pakoras, adding a little water to start with. Add more water to make a smooth, medium-thick batter. Using a teaspoon, place the batter in oil and fry until the pakoras are golden brown. Make sure they are soft and not too large. Keep aside.

For the Karhi:

Make a lassi by mixing dahi and water. Take a small amount of the lassi, add the regular gram flour and mix well so that there are no lumps. Add this mixture to the rest of the lassi.

In a heavy-bottomed pan (pateela), heat the cooking oil and add cumin and fenugreek seeds—let them turn golden brown. Add the onions, ginger, and green chillies, and sauté for a while. Add turmeric, red pepper, and salt. Cook for 1–2 minutes and then add the lassi mixture. Cook on high heat till it starts boiling, stirring every now and then. Once it starts to boil, reduce the heat and let it cook for another 15–20 minutes. After drops of oil appear on the surface, add the pakoras and boil for 2–3 minutes. The karhi should now be ready.

Note: If you prefer, you can use vegetables instead of pakoras—a potato, a few beans, a bit of cauliflower or cabbage or even spinach. Chop the vegetables the way you want. Add them when the karhi starts to boil so that they are well cooked.

SUNITA KOHLI is an interior designer, a reputed leader in historical interior architectural restoration and, since 1972, a manufacturer of fine contemporary and classical furniture. She is also the author of *The Lucknow Cookbook*, along with her mother, Chand Sur. She was the first interior designer to be conferred the Padma Shri in 1992. She developed a passion for cooking from her mother and enjoys trying new recipes. Widely travelled, Sunita brings influences from different cultures into her architecture as well as her cooking.



*The Making of a Catastrophe
The Disastrous Economic Fallout of the
COVID-19 Pandemic in India*

JAYATI GHOSH

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent policy responses to it have dealt one of the biggest shocks in recent times to the Indian economy.

The pandemic has further affected the crumbling infrastructure and healthcare systems in the country. And the way the pandemic has been dealt with has affected the federal nature of the country, which, in turn,

has had an adverse impact on centre–state relations.

The book analyses the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns, and other policies that followed in its wake. It covers major financial factors such as investment, consumption, savings, finance, and employment, and goes deep into the specific consequences of government actions on agriculture, manufacturing, construction, old and ‘new’ services, and finance.

Cogently argued by one of India’s best-known economists, *The Making of a Catastrophe* takes a close look at the trajectory of the disease and its disastrous economic repercussions on the country.

Excerpt

In India, dealing with the pandemic was never really about lives versus livelihoods: it was—and continues to be—about lives versus lives, with some lives being much cheaper than others. India has been a world leader in economic disparities and social discrimination for a while; the pandemic policy response brought this upfront. The disease entered India through those who had travelled abroad—the top 2 per cent of the population. But the poor have had to suffer disproportionately because of it—and now, increasingly, are being blamed for its spread. Centuries-old practices of pollution, purity, and stigma that were part of caste-based hierarchical Hinduism have been repurposed as ‘social distancing’, with health concerns justifying crudely discriminatory behaviour. Elite and middle-class attitudes have been disgraceful: hypocritically banging plates to celebrate health workers, but then stigmatizing them as sources of infection and not ensuring pay or protection for the worst-paid frontline workers in community health and sanitation. Government responses also reeked of unequal treatment, requiring social (more accurately physical) distancing and frequent hand-washing of people living in crowded conditions with limited access to clean water. Similarly, attitudes to migrants varied by location and income: Indians stranded abroad were assisted with special repatriation flights, while internal migrants got no such relief. Deprived of their livelihood, they only rarely received even paltry compensation; when they first tried to get back to their homes, they were beaten, detained, and sprayed with dangerous chemicals, while the trains they were finally provided with were in mostly terrible condition.

JAYATI GHOSH taught economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for nearly thirty-five years. She is now Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, USA. She has authored and/or edited nineteen books (including the co-edited *Elgar Handbook of Alternative Theories of Economic Development*, 2014, and *Informal Women Workers in the Global South*, forthcoming 2021) and nearly 200 scholarly articles. She has received several national and international prizes for her research. She has advised governments in India and other countries, including as Member of the National Knowledge Commission of India (2005–09). She is the executive secretary of International Development Economics Associates (www.networkideas.org), an international network of heterodox development economists. She has consulted for international organizations including ILO, UNDP, UNCTAD, UN-DESA, UNRISD, and UN Women and is a member of several international commissions. She writes regularly for popular media like newspapers, journals, and blogs.

Chillies, Chhana & Rasa Heritage Recipes from Bengal

NINA MUKERJEE
FURSTENEAU

Chillies, Chhana & Rasa is more than just a cookbook—it traces the vastly rich culinary heritage of Bengal.

The book tells the story of how the region has assimilated recipes and ingredients from all around the world to create some of Bengal's best-known dishes. Here, the reader will travel along chilli trails to the seaports of Portugal, journey with the legendary gondhoraj lemon to the rest of the world, and discover mouth-watering Bengali recipes—some classics, others lesser-known delights—such as Lote Maacher Jhaal, Chingri Pithe, Pitha Patishapta Narole Gura, and many, many more.

NINA MUKERJEE FURSTENEAU is a journalist and author with a special interest in food and identity. She won the 2014 M. F. K. Fisher Book Award for her food memoir, *Biting Through the Skin: An Indian Kitchen in America's Heartland*, as well as the Les Dames d'Escoffier International Grand Prize for culinary literature. She has also written *Tasty! Mozambique*, *Savor Missouri: River Hills Country Food & Wine*, and published in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* and in periodicals such as *Feast*, *Sauce*, *Ploughshares*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and the anthology, *Pie & Whiskey*. She is the Editor of *Foodstory*. She retired from the University of Missouri Science and Agricultural Journalism programme where she was the director of food systems communication.

Chennai: A Biography

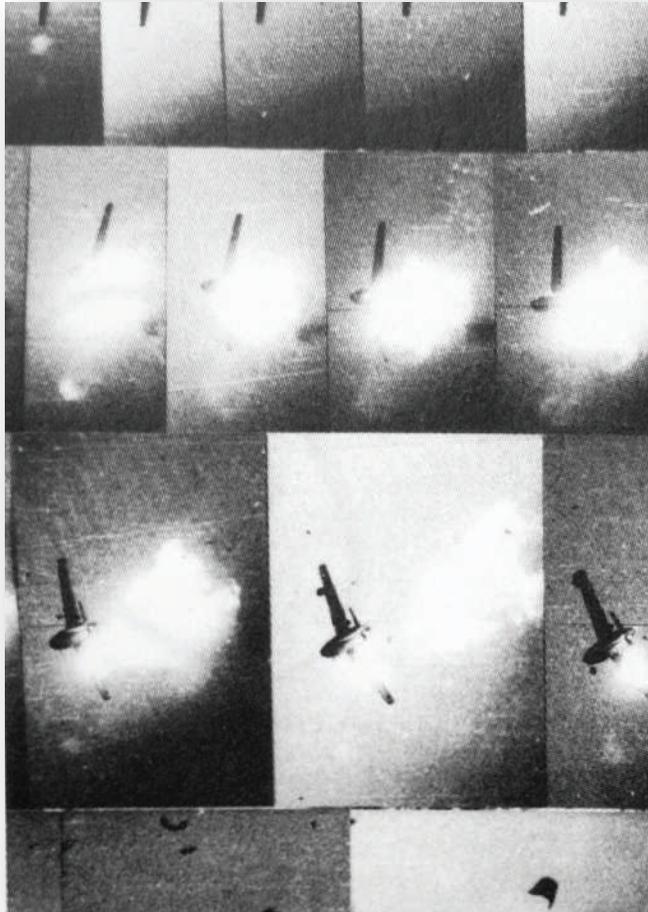
SRIRAM V.

Chennai is India's major southern metropolis.

Despite being one of the world's great cities, Chennai almost never gets its due, especially in other parts of India. Chennai plays along, preferring to hide its ancient history and heritage. The city is better known for its craze for movies and its larger-than-life film stars—some of whom have had a successful second career in politics—than its manifold achievements in fields as diverse as music and dance, education, automobiles and engineering, leather, software, and healthcare. Of late, the city has also regularly made headlines for its dreaded water scarcity—a historic problem with no solution in sight. Despite this huge challenge, and nearly year-long bad weather, Chennai is essentially a beloved, thriving city.

In *Chennai: A Biography*, Sriram V., who has spent the better part of two decades analysing and writing about the city, explores what makes it tick.

An entrepreneur by profession, SRIRAM V.'s passion is the history and heritage of Chennai, which he has been documenting since 1999. Having worked closely with the late S. Muthiah, the city's celebrated chronicler, Sriram is now the editor of the popular fortnightly *Madras Musings*, which espouses the cause of the city's heritage—built, cultural, and natural. Sriram is also the pioneer of heritage walks in the city, which he started in 1999.



1965: A Western Sunrise

SHIV KUNAL VERMA

In 1964, while India was still licking its wounds from the disastrous war against the Chinese in 1962, the belligerent Pakistanis decided to test the Indian armed forces in the Western Sector.

The first probes were launched in the Rann of Kutch and India came out of the initial skirmishes with egg on its face. Its success in the Rann of Kutch (Operation Desert Hawk I, II, and III) made the Pakistan Army extremely cocky, which led to the launching of the covert Operation

Gibraltar in Kashmir in August. The civil disturbance in Kashmir due to the alleged theft of the Moe-e-Muqaddas (Hair of the Prophet) from the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar provided the perfect backdrop for the covert war. Six thousand trained mujahids were deployed by the Pakistan Army, operating in four distinct forces. Confident that they had better armour (Patton tanks), better fighters (F-86 Sabres and F-104 Starfighters), and better submarines (Daphnes) than India, the Pakistanis expected that in the event of an armed clash, the Indians would collapse just as they had against China in NEFA.

However, India repulsed the Pakistani mujahids and Operation Gibraltar fizzled out; soon after India gave in to the UN and stood down the troops it had mobilized in Punjab. Pakistan then launched Operation Grand Slam in September 1965. The resultant Indian counter-attack saw the focus shift to various sectors all across the international border. The conflict became a full-blown war.

Starting with the wounds of Partition and the disagreements over Kashmir, the book gives a complete account of the war. It also shows the resurgence of the Indian army and air force as fighting forces.

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Excerpt

AN UNFINISHED AGENDA

Pakistan's failure to wrest control of the princely state of Kashmir from India in October 1947 triggered a spate of events that made the second armed clash between the two countries inevitable in 1965. For the Pakistani leadership, it was the unfinished agenda of Partition, while for the Indians, Kashmir was a problem that refused to be wished away. After India's military debacle against the Chinese in 1962, it was simply a question of when and how the Pakistan Army would make its move. From Pakistan's perspective, the PLA had shown the way and Kashmir was low-hanging fruit: the longer Pakistan's military (and political) leadership dallied, the smaller the 'window of opportunity' to take Kashmir.

As Pakistan remained obstreperous and truculent about Kashmir, India by 1964 had the look of a boxer who was on the ropes and taking a relentless pounding. The Pakistan Army (and more importantly GHQ analysts in Rawalpindi) believed that the 'Hindu Army of India' was incapable of fighting. Outwardly, nothing happened in the next two

years to change that assessment and with each passing day, optimism and superiority further entrenched themselves within the Pakistan Army.

There is little doubt that the Chinese military intervention in Ladakh in 1962 had been a major game changer in the geopolitical scenario. This was the second time in fifteen years that the Chinese had completely changed the existing equation. At the time of Independence and Partition, the China factor simply did not exist in the region as Sinkiang bordered the state of Kashmir to the north while Tibet flanked it to the east. However, after Mao Zedong's communist army drove the Kuomintang government out of mainland China into exile in May 1948, China was transformed into the People's Republic of China (PRC). Gambling on his assessment that the world was too exhausted from World War II to challenge his moves, Mao moved quickly to bring both Sinkiang (1949) and Tibet (1950) into the Chinese fold. This major land grab not only extended China's reach right up to Central Asia, it also redefined the equation with the Indian subcontinent that now had to deal with a new neighbour.

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Writer and filmmaker SHIV KUNAL VERMA, the author of the acclaimed bestseller *1962: The War That Wasn't*, has produced many critically acclaimed films for the Indian armed forces that include *Salt of the Earth* and *Aakash Yodha* on the air force; *The Naval Dimension* for the Indian Navy; *The Standard Bearers* (National Defence Academy); and *The Making of a Warrior* (Indian Military Academy). He filmed the Kargil War from the front lines, the film *Kashmir: Baramula to Kargil* being screened on various global platforms. He has also authored *The Long Road to Siachen: The Question Why* and the highly acclaimed *Northeast Trilogy*, a seminal work that covers the entire Northeastern region of India. More recently, he has co-authored with Dipti Bhalla an illustrated book on *Tamil Nadu and Puducherry* while the large format *Life and Culture in Northeast India* has been simultaneously released in India and the United States in October 2020.



*Revolutionaries on Trial
Sedition, Betrayal, and Martyrdom*

APARNA VAIDIK

Revolutionaries on Trial is the story of the revolutionary effervescence of the late 1920s when the Lahore Conspiracy Case Trial (1929-31) momentarily lit up the nationalists' night sky.

Named after the city where it was held, the trial was of young revolutionaries who belonged to the Hindustan Republican Socialist Association (HSRA). They were charged with waging a war against the

King, the murder of a British police officer, bombing the Delhi Assembly and committing political dacoities. It was one of the longest running and the most widely reported revolutionary conspiracy trials of the time. In this book, readers will witness the trial from different perspectives, that of the colonial state, the renegades, the revolutionaries, and the Indian public. Drawing on heretofore unseen trial records from the Anarkali Archives (Lahore, Pakistan), prosecution testimonies, newspaper records, revolutionary memoirs and reminiscences, and the letters and statements of revolutionaries, the book sheds new light on the chequered history of dissent in British India and challenges many of the established narratives on betrayal, sedition, and martyrdom.

Excerpt

Jatin Das breathed his last on 13 September 1929. He had asked his fellow revolutionaries to sing ‘Vande Mataram’ as he lay on his deathbed, wishing he could die with the sound of the song in his ears. Jatin’s dying wish was to be cremated ‘at Calcutta where the last remains of his mother and sister were consigned to fire’. Jatin’s desire to be cremated in Calcutta had set off a flurry of telegrams between the governments of India, Bengal, and Punjab, discussing if the arrival of Jatin’s corpse in Calcutta ‘would cause trouble’. The Bengal government preferred to have the ashes instead of the corpse brought to Calcutta. The Punjab government promised to persuade Jatin’s relatives to cremate the body in Lahore but felt that it could not legally refuse to hand over the body. However, Jatin’s brother Kiron Das had decided to take Jatin’s remains to Calcutta for cremation. Thousands joined the funeral procession as it wound through Lahore for nearly five hours. The bier was showered with flowers, coins, and rosewater. There was a hartal in Lahore with all the shops downing the shutters or putting out their lights and the suspension of tonga and motor traffic. The sky reverberated with cries of ‘Long Live Revolution’, ‘Down with Imperialism’, and ‘Hunger Strike Bill Namanzur’ as the procession moved towards the railway station.

APARNA VAIDIK is Associate Professor of History at Ashoka University. She previously taught at Georgetown University, Washington DC, and the University of Delhi. She studied

at St. Stephen's College and the University of Cambridge, and has a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is the author of *Imperial Andaman: Colonial Encounter and Island History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), *My Son's Inheritance: A Secret History of Lynching and Blood Justice in India* (Aleph, 2020), and *Waiting for Swaraj: Inner Lives of Indian Revolutionaries* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

Swami Vivekananda
The Revolutionary Philosopher

GOVIND KRISHNAN V.

Swami Vivekananda:
The Revolutionary
Philosopher argues that
Swami Vivekananda, one
of the Sangh Parivar's
biggest icons, is actually
its arch-nemesis.

Apart from Hinduism, the book analyses Vivekananda's views on Islam, Christianity, Muslim rule in India, caste, Brahminism, women's rights, and individual liberty, in the process demonstrating how Vivekananda's view of Hinduism is the polar opposite of the Sangh's Hindutva.

The book explores his philosophy through a critical lens and interprets his teachings in relation to crucial challenges we face today regarding religion, secularism, and individual rights.

GOVIND KRISHNAN V. is a long-form journalist based in Bengaluru. He has reported from several states in India, focusing on investigative journalism and human rights. In 2014, he received the Red Ink Award for human rights reporting. He has written on politics, corruption, science, development, agriculture, religious fundamentalism, and crime. He has worked for Fountain Ink, the *Sunday Guardian*, and *New Indian Express*. He received the Agha Shahid Ali Award for poetry instituted by *Poetry Chain* magazine.

Collected Stories

PAUL ZACHARIA

Award-winning novelist and short-story writer Paul Zacharia, who writes mainly in Malayalam, is considered one of the country's foremost storytellers.

Path-breaking and unconventional, Zacharia's fiction is marked by a deep sense of humour, experimental narrative techniques, and clear-eyed prose. This book collects his very best stories—including 'The Death and Funeral of Sister Alphonsa', 'The Sixty Watt Sun', 'The Bar', 'Rani', and 'Kanyakumari'.

Impressive in its depth and range, *Collected Stories* is a brilliant point of entry to Paul Zacharia's oeuvre and a literary trove that his fans, old and new, will return to many times over.

PAUL ZACHARIA is a Distinguished Fellow of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi. He has received the Kendra Sahitya Akademi and Kerala Sahitya Akademi awards. He lives in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.



A

U T U M N

W I N T E R



A Country Called Childhood: A Memoir

DEEPTI NAVAL

A Country Called Childhood is a beautifully told memoir of growing up in the Punjabi city of Amritsar in the 1950s and 60s by the award-winning actress Deepti Naval.

Although the horrific violence of Partition tore the city of her birth apart, the resilience, hard work, and grit of the community soon had the city back on its feet again.

In extremely visual and evocative prose, Naval describes an

unforgettable childhood filled with love, adventure, mystery, tragedy, and joy. She uncovers in great detail life in an unconventional Punjabi joint family and also plunges the reader into the distinctive sights, smells, and sounds of a fast vanishing India. As we track her journey to adulthood, we are shown how her early love affair with cinema and the experiences of her childhood shaped her career as one of the country's most admired actresses. Moving and illuminating, this is one of the best memoirs to have been published in years.

Excerpt

THE DANCE OF SONGS

It's getting dark in the city of Amritsar. The shops are shutting down. Street lamps come on, casting dim yellow pools of light. Rickshaws, bicycles, a handcart loaded with gunny bags clog the dusty streets. Even Dwarka's kite shop is winding up. The old Sardar tailor pulls his rickety shutter down, gets on his bicycle, and pedals away. Shahni's voice can be heard—she is urging her buffalos home. Grubby little boys, the mochis, play outside in the gully, and behind the threshold of the big iron gate, the phaatak, of the corner house facing the bazaar, two little sisters, Bobby and Dolly, go about their lives.

This scene could have taken place a hundred years ago, but it actually only dates back to 1956. It's one of my earliest memories, one in which I'm just four years old.

I dart out of my house crying, 'I want to go to my mama!'

'Come back!' shouts Mai Sardi, the nanny, from inside the big gate.

'No, I want to go to my mama!'

'Your mama has gone to the cinema, you get in here at once!'

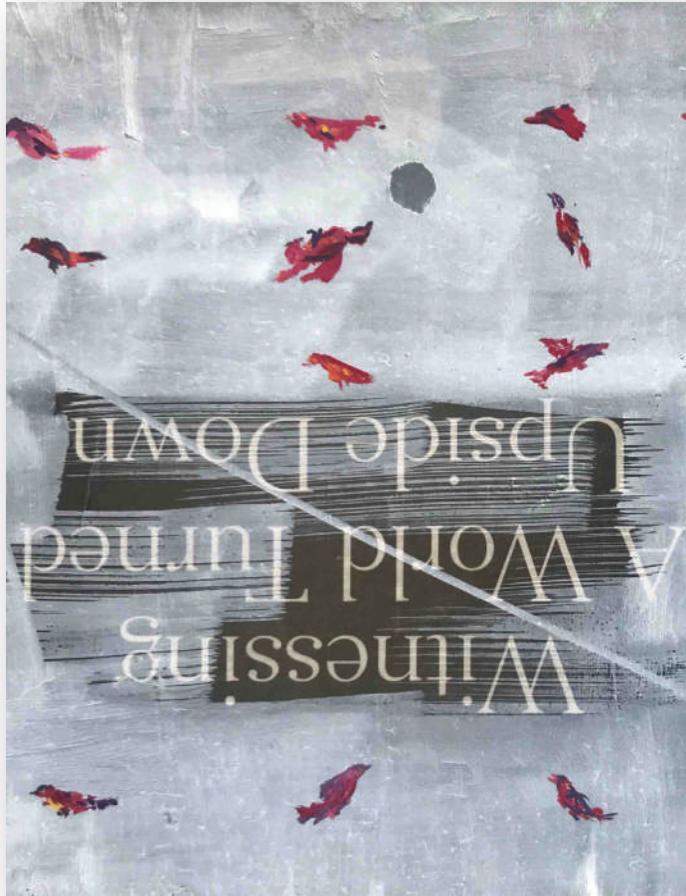
'I will also go to the cinema!' I retort, and run down the street, crying.

Suddenly, something stirs in the air, there is a muffled grumbling in the sky, and the breeze changes. The darkening sky turns red. The roofs of tin sheds begin to flap and rattle, there's the smell of wind on earth. It's a dust storm!

Stray pieces of paper that litter the ground outside roadside eateries fly up and float in the air. Bicycles fall in slow, studied motion right along the wall of the cinema hall. The wooden shutter of Gyaan Halwai's shop tilts and slips out of its clamp. He stands with his arms outstretched, holding it

with all his malai-lassi strength against the wind, his lungi threatening to fly off. Rickshaw pullers pedal backwards and sideways. The world seems to slant at the edges. Dust billows through the streets. Mai Sardi's voice cuts through the mayhem—'STOP! I say.... Get back girl.... It's dark!

DEEPTI NAVAL is an Indian film actor, director, writer, painter, and photographer. She is perhaps best known for her contribution to art cinema, for which she has won many national and international awards. She made her debut in 1980 with the path-breaking film *Ek Baar Phir*, and has since appeared in more than ninety films, including the iconic *Chashme Baddoor*, *Katha*, *Saath Saath*, *Mirch Masala*, *Ankahi*, *Main Zinda Hoon*, *Didi*, and *Leela*.



Painting by Amitava Kumar

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A Time Outside This Time: A Novel

AMITAVA KUMAR

From the acclaimed author of The Lovers, a one-of-a-kind novel about fake news, memory, and how truth gives way to fiction.

Satya is an Indian writer living in New York. When Satya attends a prestigious artist's retreat in Italy, he finds the pressures of the outside world won't let up: a dangerous virus envelopes the globe; Prime Minister Modi wants his citizens to bang plates and pots at 9 p.m.; President Trump continues spreading misinformation online, and the 24-hour news cycle

throws fuel on the fire. For most fellows at the retreat, such stories are unbearable distractions; but for Satya these Orwellian interruptions begin to crystallize into an idea for his new novel, *Enemies of the People*, about the lies we tell ourselves and each other.

Sifting through lynching videos, Trump's tweets, newspaper clippings, childhood memories from Patna, his investigation into a killing near Kolkata, and tales as a husband, father, and teacher, *A Time Outside This Time* is a brilliant meditation on life in a post-truth era. Balancing the public and private, the imagined and the real, Amitava Kumar ushers us across time and space in the name of art and humanity alike, capturing our feverish political moment with intelligence, beauty, and an eye for the uncanny.

Excerpt

When I was a boy in my hometown and it had been raining for three days, it became so that it was no longer possible to have any consciousness of a time when it wasn't raining. Rain soaked through the walls and slime grew on the inside, in the corners, and even on the ceiling. Phones stopped working. No newspapers came. Birds disappeared from the wet branches of trees. No question of going to school. There was no language outside of 'It is raining outside'. Water stood in the distant fields. It rushed down pipes and roared in the gutters. The roads became rivers in which people waded or swam. Brij Bihari brought his cows on to the veranda at the back of our house. Mother would switch on the fans in one room to try to dry the wet clothes. It was all in vain. The snake found in the toilet was proof that the world outside had changed, and the natural order had been turned upside down. Only rain was permanent. You could do nothing but wait. I'm saying all this because that is exactly what has happened to us politically. We cannot imagine—I cannot imagine, sometimes—a time outside this time. The people who are in power must also be deluded enough to believe this. They must think that their power is eternal. That they will sit on the throne forever. And it is this thought that is their failing, because it condemns them to missteps and errors. Stay alert. You will hear the rain stop and the wind shift. The powerful will not be waiting for it but that moment will come. It will mark the beginning of their doom, their end.

AMITAVA KUMAR is the author of *The Lovers*, *A Matter of Rats: A Short Biography of Patna*; *Home Products*, which was shortlisted for the Crossword Prize; and *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb*, which the *New York Times* described as a ‘perceptive and soulful...meditation on the global war on terror and its cultural and human repercussions’, and received the Page Turner Award. Kumar’s writing has appeared in *Caravan*, *Harper’s*, *The Guardian*, *New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, and the *New York Times*. His essay ‘Pyre’, first published in *Granta*, was selected by Jonathan Franzen for *The Best American Essays 2016*. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2016. Kumar is Professor of English at Vassar College.

A Shriek of Ghostliness

RUSKIN BOND

Ruskin Bond's tales of horror have kept millions of readers awake at night.

This book brings together his very best stories about ghosts, ghouls, haunted houses, djinns, and other creatures that stalk our dreams and the pathways of the night.

RUSKIN BOND is the author of several bestselling 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*; *The Night Train at Deoli*; *Time Stops at Shanti*; *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award); *Angry River*; *The Blue Umbrella*; *Delhi is Not Far*; *Rain in the Mountains*; *Tigers for Dinner*; *Tales of Fosterganj*; *A Gathering of Friends*; *Upon An Old Wall*; *Dreaming*; *Small Towns, Big Stories*; *Unhurried Tales*; *A Gallery of Rascals*; *Rhododendrons in the Mist*; and *Miracle at Happy Bazaar*.

The Greatest Assamese Stories Ever Told

Selected and edited by Mitra Phukan

*In this landmark volume,
Mitra Phukan selects the
finest short fiction written
in Assamese.*

These stories span more than a century of work by some of the greatest writers of short fiction in the language—tales that are contemporary yet timeless.

The writers represented in the anthology include Lakshminath Bezbaruah, Indira Raisom Goswami, Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Mahim Bora, and Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya. Carefully curated and sensitively translated, the stories in this volume offer a fascinating glimpse into the lives and landscapes of a distinctive part of India's literary culture.

MITRA PHUKAN is an Assamese writer, translator, and columnist who writes in English. She has to her credit four children's books, a biography, two novels, *The Collector's Wife* and *A Monsoon of Music*, several volumes of translations, and a collection of her newspaper columns. Her most recent works are a volume of her own short stories, *A Full Night's Thievery*, and a work of translation, *Blossoms in the Graveyard*. Her works have been translated into several languages and are taught in various colleges and universities.



Photo by World Economic Forum

Pride, Prejudice & Punditry
The Essential Shashi Tharoor

SHASHI THAROOR

Shashi Tharoor is one of the country's most treasured writers.

He has written over twenty books, many of which have won prestigious literary awards, and topped bestseller lists. His new book, *Pride, Prejudice & Punditry: The Essential Shashi Tharoor*, comprises pieces that have been carefully chosen from the millions of words that Tharoor has published in a writing career that has spanned over fifty years (he published his first story

when he was ten years old). In addition to the best pieces taken from the numerous subject areas he has made a mark on—politics, fiction, foreign policy, cricket, humour, history, biography, language, among others—about half the book comprises pieces written exclusively for this volume. An exceptional book by a consummate wordsmith, *Pride, Prejudice & Punditry: The Essential Shashi Tharoor* will appeal to his devoted fans as well as a host of others who are looking for the perfect introduction to his monumental body of work.

Excerpt

NEW YEAR'S WISHES FOR MY SONS

This year, my sons,
I wish you the joy of hopes and dreams,
and the fulfilment of achieving some of those dreams.

This year, my sons,
I wish you the intimate knowledge of what it means
to love and be loved as if there is nothing more important in the world.

This year, my sons,
I wish you the strength of your convictions, the passion to defend them,
and the wisdom to accept when you may be wrong.

This year, my sons,
I wish you laughter in your lives, music around you,
and the pleasure of silence when you crave it.

This year, my sons,
I wish you understanding, of people who may have hurt you,
misunderstood you, or been unjust to you,
because the world must be accepted as it is, and understood
rather than resented.

This year, my sons,
I wish you health, and strength, and virtue, all three together,
because they complement each other, and because one without the other
two is worthless.

This year, my sons,
I wish you intensity, never indifference; knowledge, never ignorance;
energy, never lassitude; desire, never hatred.

This year, my sons,
I wish you acceptance, because some pain is inevitable in life,
and accepting and dealing with it is part of what will make you men,
worthy of respect.

This year, my sons,
I wish you courage, to face whatever misfortunes and injustices
might come your way,
and I wish you determination, to fight for the right and resist the wrong.

This year, my sons, and every year,
I wish you to be happy,
And for that, above all,
I wish you to be yourselves, for no one can be a better you than you yourself.
Happy New Year!

SHASHI THAROOR is the bestselling author of over twenty books, both fiction and non-fiction, besides being a noted critic and columnist. His books include the path-breaking satire *The Great Indian Novel*, the classic *India: From Midnight to the Millennium*, the bestselling *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*, for which he won the Ramnath Goenka Award for Excellence in Books (Non-fiction), 2016, and, most recently, *The Battle of Belonging: On Nationalism, Patriotism, and What it Means to be Indian*. He was 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. In his third term, he is the longest-serving member of the Lok Sabha from Thiruvananthapuram and chairs Parliament's Standing Committee on Information Technology. He has won numerous literary awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award, a Commonwealth Writers' Prize, and the Crossword Lifetime Achievement Award. He was honoured as New Age Politician of the Year by NDTV in 2010, and in 2004 with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, India's highest honour for overseas Indians.



The Last Battle *India's Wars in the 21st Century*

PRAVIN SAWHNEY

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In the age of artificial intelligence and the rise of China, India faces the prospect of becoming strategically irrelevant in its own neighbourhood ten years from now.

India aspires to become a major power by allying with the United States, which itself is struggling to retain its clout in the Asia Pacific region—its exclusive domain since World War II. However, this might not be the best way in which to counter China which is poised to change the character of war with its Belt and Road strategy, and gains in the fourth industrial revolution of intelligent machines. The days of individual valour that the Indian military prides itself on will soon be over. Given its obsession with Pakistan, the Indian military, especially under the Modi government, has exposed its weaknesses. China has the most to gain from India's lack of military preparedness. *The Last Battle: India's Wars in the 21st Century* underscores why cooperation with China is essential, why peace with Pakistan is critical, and why the plan of India and its military for any future wars should be anchored in critical and far-sighted strategic thinking.

PRAVIN SAWHNEY has been editor of *FORCE* (a magazine on national security and defence) since 2003. He is the author of three books: *The Defence Makeover: 10 Myths That Shape India's Image*, *Operation Parakram: The War Unfinished*, and *Dragon on Our Doorstep: Managing China Through Military Power* with Ghazala Wahab. He has been visiting fellow at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, United Kingdom, and visiting scholar at the Cooperative Monitoring Center, United States. After thirteen years of commissioned service in the Indian Army, he became a journalist and has worked with the *Times of India*, *Indian Express*, and the UK-based *Jane's International Defence Review*.

*The Collected Stories of
Saadat Hasan Manto
Volume 1: Bombay & Poona*

Translated by Nasreen Rehman

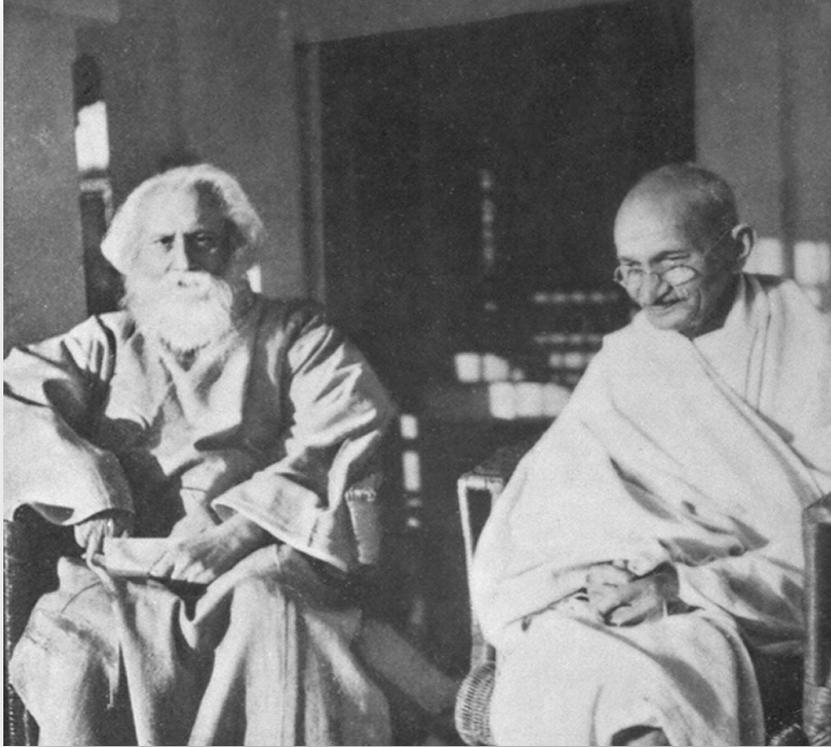
*Saadat Hasan Manto
(1912–55) was one of the
subcontinent’s greatest
writers ever.*

One of the brightest stars of Urdu literature, in a literary career spanning no more than two decades, Manto published over twenty collections of short stories. Several of these have been adapted into films and plays that have won a multitude of awards. His stories about the 1947 Partition are some of the best accounts ever written on the catastrophic event.

In *The Collected Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto*, award-winning writer and translator Nasreen Rehman translates all of Manto’s stories (over 200 in total) into English (this is the first time that such an effort has been made). Authorized by the Manto family, and to be published in three volumes over three years, this comprehensive collection will include well-known stories like ‘My Name is Radha’, ‘Toba Tek Singh’, ‘True Love’, ‘The Psychoanalyst’, and ‘Open’, as well as several that have never been translated into English before.

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NASREEN REHMAN was born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. She divides her time between England and South Asia. A lapsed economist, she was lured to history by the work of the late professor Sir C. A. Bayly (1945–2015). As a very mature student, she went to the University of Cambridge where, supervised by him, she completed her PhD dissertation on *A History of the Cinema in Lahore c. 1919–1947*. Rehman is an award-winning screenwriter who has worked with directors such as Yash Chopra, Deepa Mehta, and Mehreen Jabbar. *Kaifi and I* (2010), her translation of Shaukat Kaifi’s memoir, was a bestseller.



Tagore and Gandhi
Walking Alone, Walking Together

RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE

Tagore and Gandhi were both born in the 1860s and through their very different spheres of activity they became figures of global renown and shapers of modern India.

They also shared a deep personal friendship which was robust enough to bear the strain of differences on many public issues through the 1920s and

30s. Gandhi always addressed Tagore as Gurudev which, for Gandhi, was not an empty epithet. Gandhi sought Tagore's blessings at every critical juncture of his Indian public career. Tagore openly acknowledged Gandhi as the greatest Indian of his time. This book explores their relationship through their differences expressed in their writings and letters to each other and also tries to understand the beliefs that acted as the bond between the two of them. They differed with each other without a hint of acrimony and they looked towards building an India that was inclusive and free from hatred and bigotry. This is the first in-depth study of the very moving bond between Tagore and Gandhi.

Excerpt

WHEEL OF FRIENDSHIP

A few weeks after the violence in Chauri Chaura, Gandhi was arrested on 10 March 1922 in Ahmedabad. He was produced in court on 13 March and tried five days later. In court, he declared his occupation to be 'farmer and weaver'. By this declaration, he identified himself with the poorest Indian. He was also echoing the way Rabindranath had described him: 'Mahatma Gandhi came and stood at the cottage door of the destitute millions, clad as one of themselves, and talking to them in their own language.' In his statement to the court on 18 March, Gandhi made his famous declaration: 'Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed.' Gandhi was sentenced to six years in prison. He read extensively during his imprisonment and kept a record of what he was reading in his 'Jail Diary'. From this record, we learn that on 7 January 1923 he had finished reading Rabindranath's *Sadhana*; on 9 April, he read the poet's rendering of Kabir's songs; on 10 July, he writes he was reading Rabindranath's book on ancient literature; and in September he read two of Rabindranath's plays, one of which was *Muktadhara*. These are the earliest references that exist of Gandhi reading Rabindranath's writings. It is significant that *The Home and the World*, a copy of which was with Gandhi since October 1919 courtesy (C. F.) Andrews finds no mention in the books he read in prison in 1923. Had he finished reading it before his arrest and imprisonment? This is, of course, a possibility. But it is worth noting that according to one of his biographers, 'The last time [before his time in prison in 1922-23] he had read uninterruptedly was more than

eight years earlier, in a South African prison'. Thus, the possibility that Gandhi may not have had the time to read Rabindranath's novel cannot be ruled out. It is also worth noting here that in March 1917, Andrews had presented Gandhi with a copy of the translation of Rabindranath's play *The Post Office*.

On 12 January 1924, Gandhi had to be removed from prison to hospital to be operated upon for appendicitis. On 5 February, given his condition, he was released. On the same day, he received a two-word cable from Rabindranath: 'We Rejoice'. In 1925, on 29 May, Gandhi visited Santiniketan. This visit began on an amusing note. When he was shown into his room, which was decorated with leaves and flowers, Gandhi turned to Rabindranath and asked, 'Why bring me to this bridal chamber? Where is the bride?' Rabindranath replied with a smile, 'Santiniketan, the ever-young queen of our hearts, welcomes you.' Gandhi said, 'But surely, she would hardly care to look twice at the old, toothless pauper that I am.' And Rabindranath responded, 'No, our queen has loved truth and worshipped it unreservedly all these long years.'

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RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE is the Chancellor and Professor of History at Ashoka University of which he was also the founding Vice Chancellor. He studied History as an undergraduate at Presidency College, Calcutta, and completed his MA in History from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. He went up as an Inlaks Scholar to St Edmund Hall and was awarded a D.Phil in Modern History by the University of Oxford. He was Reader in the History department of Calcutta University. He has held visiting appointments at Princeton University, Manchester University, and the University of California, Santa Cruz. He was also the Editor, Editorial Pages, *The Telegraph*. He has written five books on the Revolt of 1857 of which the most notable is *Awadh in Revolt: A Study of Popular Resistance*. A sixth, *A Begum and a Rani: Hazrat Mahal and Lakshmbai in the 1857 Uprising*, is forthcoming in 2021. His last three books are *Nehru & Bose: Parallel Lives*, *Twilight Falls on Liberalism*, and *Nehru: A Short Introduction*.



How Prime Ministers Decide

NEERJA CHOWDHURY

How Prime Ministers Decide gives us the inside story on key decisions taken by various Indian prime ministers—Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, V. P. Singh, P. V. Narasimha Rao, A. B. Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh, and Narendra Modi, among others—during the years in which the author, one of the country's most senior journalists, has covered Indian politics.

Over a decade and more in the making, the book draws on a few hundred interviews and conversations with important decision makers, and political insiders, first-hand accounts of in-fighting, secret meetings and

other parleys, leaks, official documents, the author's personal contact with several of the featured prime ministers, and exhaustive research into the steps that led to the decrees that have been covered in the book. For the first time ever, we are given an unprecedented and authoritative look into how pivotal decisions were taken by most of India's major prime ministers.

Excerpt

V. P. SINGH

Before I was expelled from the Congress, Rajiv Gandhi called me twice. I was no longer defence minister. The first time he called me, I went to his office thinking that perhaps he wanted to smooth things out. I told Rajiv, 'Now we are not talking as the PM and his minister. We are talking as Rajiv and Vishwanath.' I asked: 'What is this, every day Kalpnath Rai and K. K. Tewary make statements that I am a CIA agent.'

Rajiv said, 'Nahin, nahin, gussa hai party mein. It is an expression of it.'

I said, 'I have run this machine with your mother; I know where every nut and bolt and taar is joined. K. K. Tewary and Kalpnath are loudspeakers, and the microphone is installed in this very office.'

Rajiv said, 'No, no, I'll tell them: kum karo.'

I said, 'What do you mean, kum karo? If I feel you are playing games with me, or vice versa, we cannot have a genuine dialogue.... I told him, you can call me an incompetent minister or a lousy party man, but if you challenge my love for the country, then, Rajiv, I will dig in and fight. Itihas mein is issue par logon ne sar kata diye. Is par hum khatam ho jayenge.' (It is immaterial to me what then follows).

Award-winning journalist NEERJA CHOWDHURY has covered the terms of eight prime ministers in the course of a distinguished career that has spanned over forty years. Starting out as a reporter for *Himmat* magazine during the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi in the 1970s, she has worked for *The Statesman*, *Economic Times*, *Indian Express* and *New Indian Express*. Among the major awards that she has won for her journalism are the Chameli Devi Award (1983), the India Today-PUCL Award (1983), Durga Rattan

Award (1987), and Prem Bhatia Award (2009). At present, she writes columns for various newspapers, and frequently comments on politics for TV news channels. This is her first book.

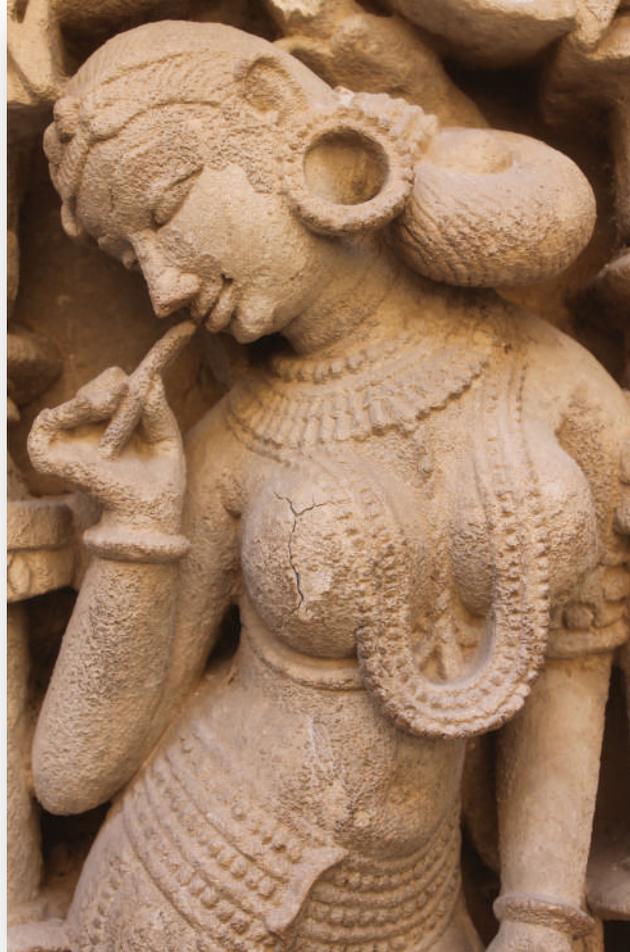


Image by Rinki Lohia from Pixabay

Ancient India: Culture of Contradictions

UPINDER SINGH

Is there really such a thing as ancient Indian culture or civilization?

Is it one or many? Is it revealed in the rhythms of the lives of ancient villagers, city dwellers, or forest tribes? Is it embodied in the experiences of kings, courtesans, or slaves? Is it represented in material form or ideas, in ordinary objects or grand monuments, in folk songs or classical literature? Is it possible to make sense of its uneven textures and endless detail, the many striking continuities broken by even more striking changes? Given

the distance, strangeness, and the fragmentary story that the sources tell, can it ever be fully grasped?

Upinder Singh answers these questions in *Ancient India: Culture of Contradictions*. She urges readers to abandon simplistic stereotypes and instead to think of ancient India in terms of the coexistence of certain radical oppositions—between social inequality and universal salvation, erotic desire and ascetic detachment, misogyny and goddess worship, violence and non-violence, and religious dialogue and conflict. These powerful contradictions are not part of a dead, fossilized past. They exist even today in refracted memories of that past and in the lived realities of the present.

Excerpt

In the late third century BCE, a Greek named Megasthenes arrived in Pataliputra as an envoy of the Hellenistic ruler Seleucos Nicator to the court of the Mauryan king Chandragupta. He wrote a book called *Indica* about the land and people of India. The book is 'lost', which means that the text has not survived into our time, but sections from it are cited and paraphrased in the works of later Greek and Roman writers. Megasthenes got some things right and many things wrong. For instance, he was wrong in his statements that Indian society was divided into seven classes and that there were no slaves in India. Megasthenes was familiar with slavery among the Greeks, where apart from being used in households, slaves routinely worked on the land, in manufacturing, mines, and quarries. Perhaps he reached a hasty conclusion about the absence of slaves in India because they were not as visible or numerous as they were back home. But slaves definitely existed in fourth century BCE India. In fact, the idea of freedom in ancient Greece and ancient India emerged due to the existence of slavery. Freedom was the opposite of enslavement.

UPINDER SINGH is Professor of History at Ashoka University. Her writings range over various aspects of ancient Indian history, archaeology, and the modern histories of ancient sites and monuments. She is the author of *Kings, Brāhmanas, and Temples in Orissa: An Epigraphic Study* (AD 300–1147) (1994); *Ancient Delhi* (1999); *The Discovery of Ancient India:*

Early Archaeologists and the Beginnings of Archaeology (2004); *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the Twelfth Century* (2008); and *The Idea of Ancient India: Essays on Religion, Politics, and Archaeology* (2016). She has edited *Delhi: Ancient History* (2006) and *Rethinking Early Medieval India* (2011), and co-edited *Ancient India: New Research* (2009), *Asian Encounters: Exploring Connected Histories* (2014), and *Buddhism in Asia: Revival and Reinvention*. Her most recent book is *Political Violence in Ancient India* (2017). She was awarded the Infosys Prize in Social Sciences–History in 2009.



Image by Greg Mortani from Pixabay

The Gujaratis: A Portrait of a Community

SALIL TRIPATHI

*Scattered on every continent, the Gujaratis have traded diamonds and spices,
written poetry and danced the dandiya, spoken of non-violence,
and killed their own.*

They have run motels in America, fought apartheid in South Africa, been expelled from Uganda, formed trade unions in London, sold opium to China, and financed Subhas Chandra Bose in Southeast Asia. They dominate the list of India's wealthiest yet their poor are to be found

breaking ships and cleaning drains. Hospitable yet calculating, mercantile and pragmatic, outwardly pious and yet tolerating violence, practical while claiming to be spiritual, cheerful and transactional, the Gujaratis see nothing wrong with any of these contradictions. In *The Gujaratis: A Portrait of a Community*, Salil Tripathi portrays every aspect of the community—how they eat, earn, make, learn, blend, protect, love, and kill.

Excerpt

ASMITA—A MANY-SPLENDURED THING

The word Gujaratis use to describe their uniqueness is asmita. Some Gujaratis name their daughters Asmita. I knew one at my school—her mother ran a radio programme for children in Gujarati in which I often took part in the early 1970s when I was a schoolboy. But the meaning politicians gave to that word, asmita, was different. It invoked Gujarati exclusiveness, marking them out from others. Asmita defies easy definition or explanation; and its nuances reveal more about the diversities within Gujarat than what the politicians who deploy it would like.

The word's origin is in Sanskrit. Rather than rely on a dictionary, I decided to ask people what the word meant to them. The answers I got showed the wide range of opinions within Gujarat, suggesting the different meanings Gujaratis give to their identity.

One afternoon in 2017, I sat with the poet Sitanshu Yashaschandra at his home in Vadodara, to understand its meaning. As we sat chatting after lunch, he told me: 'The origin of asmita is the word "as", which means "to be", or "to exist". It is at the root of the word "asti" and "astitva", or "existence". "Asti" is the third person singular, focusing on "him", not "me". The first person singular is "asmi", which means "am" in "I am". Both words are important here—"I" and "am". Asmita can thus be seen as the identity of one's own self. It means being aware of oneself.'

SALIL TRIPATHI studied at the New Era School and Sydenham College in Bombay and later at the Amos Tuck School at Dartmouth College in the United States. He has been a correspondent in India, Singapore, and Hong Kong, and written for leading publications around the world. His books include *The Colonel Who Would Not Repent* (Aleph,

long-listed at the Tata Literature Festival in 2015) and two other works of non-fiction. His honours include the Citibank Pan-Asia Award for economic journalism (Hong Kong), an award at the Bastiat Prizes (US), and an award for human rights journalism (Mumbai Press Club). He chairs PEN International's Writers in Prison Committee and lives in New York.

The Greatest Tamil Stories Ever Told

*Selected and edited by Sujatha Vijayaraghavan and
Mini Krishnan*

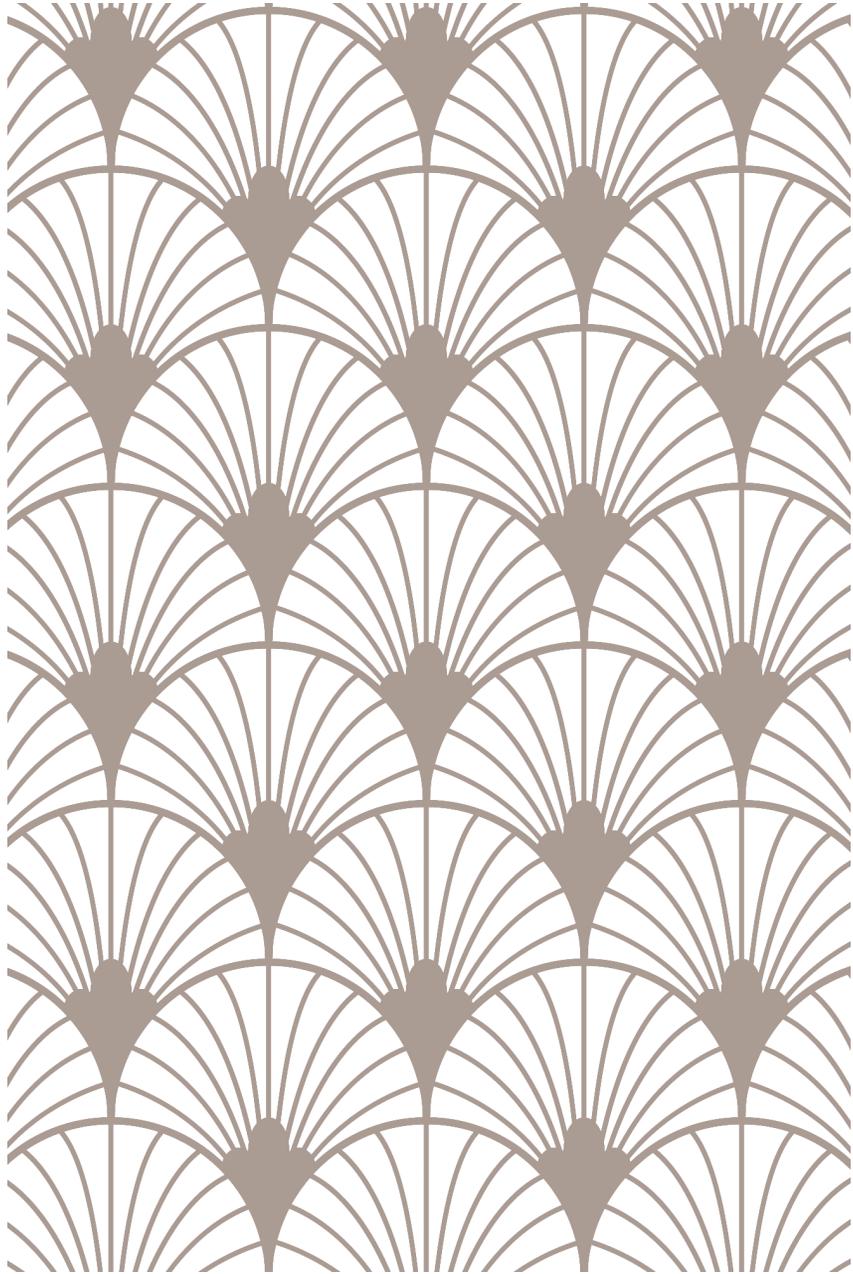
*Tamil literature is one
of the oldest in the
subcontinent, spanning
two millennia.*

Selected and edited by Sujatha Vijayaraghavan and Mini Krishnan, the stories in *The Greatest Tamil Stories Ever Told* reflect the imagination and richness of the short-story tradition in Tamil literary culture. Among the authors represented are Subramania Bharati, Ambai, Ashokamitran, Pudhumai Pithan, Perumal Murugan, and many others.

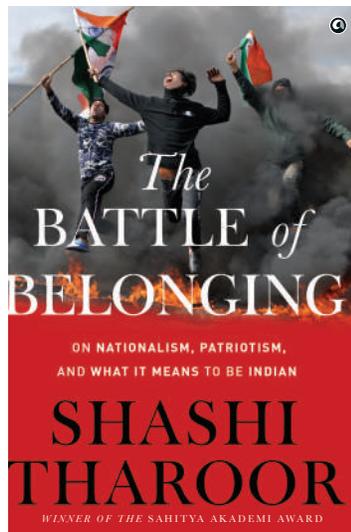
SUJATHA VIJAYARAGHAVAN is a bilingual writer, musician, and dance scholar. Her literary works in Tamil and English include collections of short stories, poems, a travelogue, several articles on environmental issues and the arts, and a novel in Tamil. Some of her books have been acquired by the American Library of Congress.

She holds master's degrees in English literature from Delhi and Madras Universities.

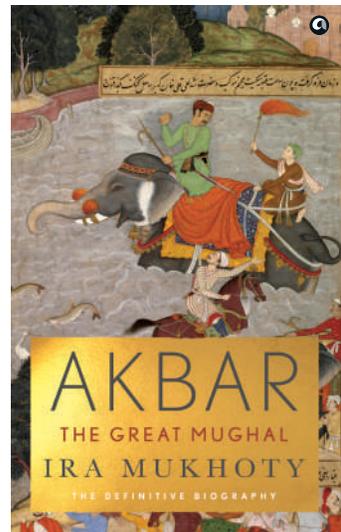
MINI KRISHNAN edited literary translations for Macmillan India Ltd (1992–2000) and for Oxford University Press (2001–20). Presently, she is coordinating a translation project for the Tamil Nadu Educational Services Corporation of the government and collaborating with multiple publishers. She has also written textbooks and served on the National Translation Mission.



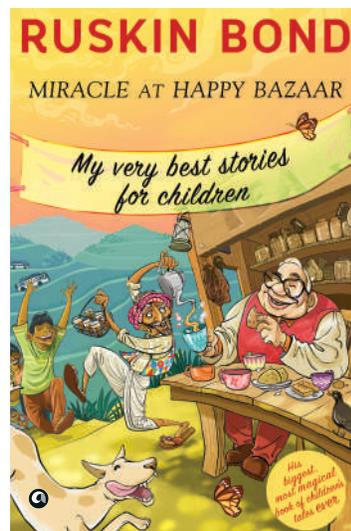
2020 HIGH LIGHTS



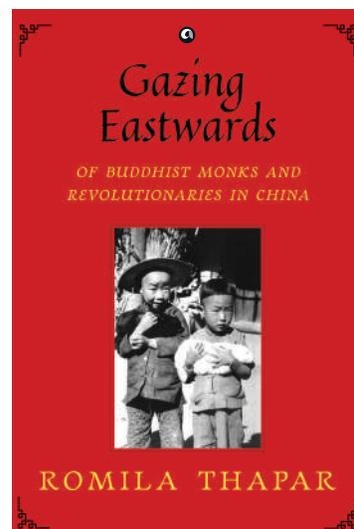
A book that establishes what it means to be a patriotic and nationalistic Indian.



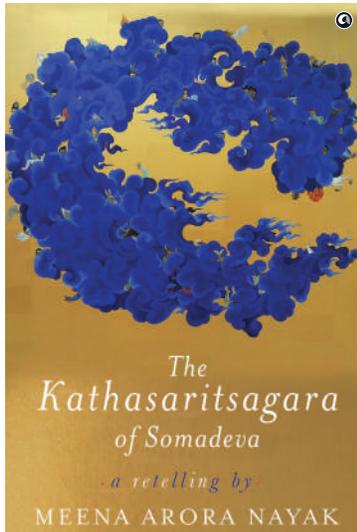
'[A] first-rate twenty-first century biography of a sixteenth-century monarch'—The Telegraph



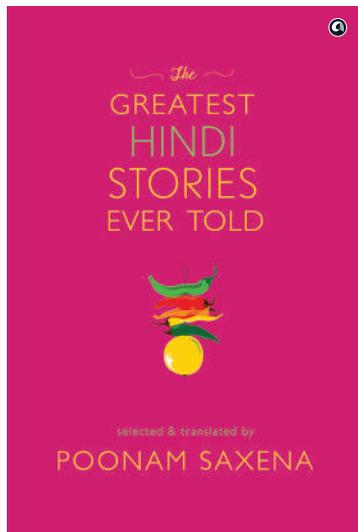
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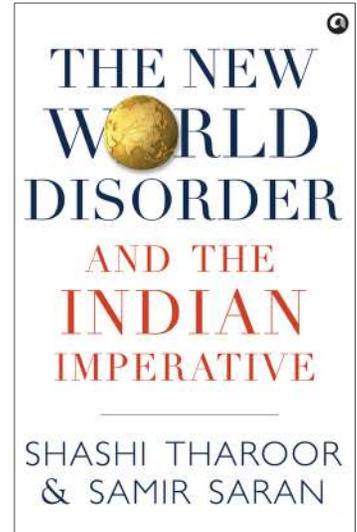
An original account by one of India's foremost historians, Romila Thapar, of a momentous period in China's history.



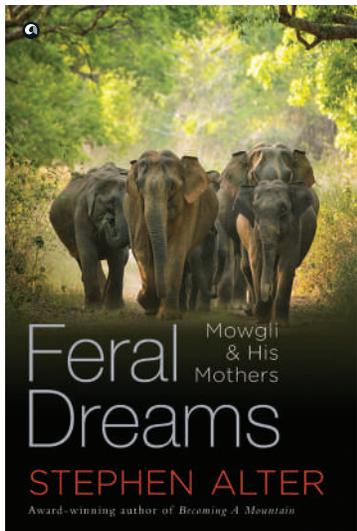
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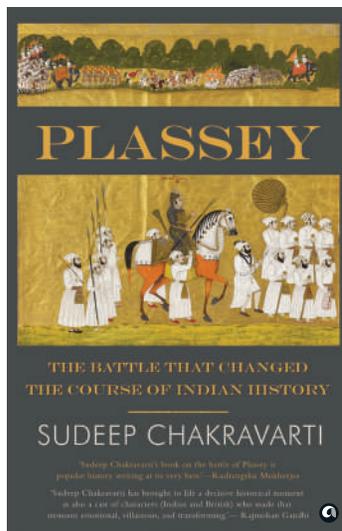
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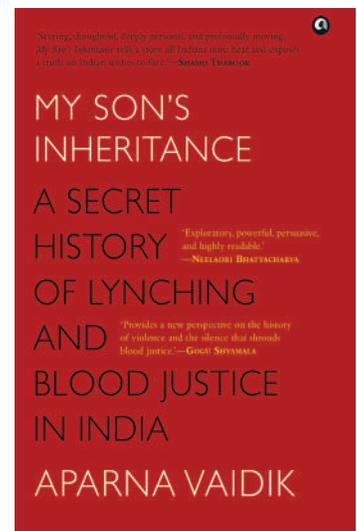
A clear-eyed look at the chaos that rules the world today.



The gripping sequel to *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling.



'Sudeep Chakravarti's Plassey proves to be as absorbing as the battle it recounts.... This is a book that librarians must list and buyers read for what it is worth, if not also for the battle itself that it recounts.'—India Today



'[Vaidik's] book has the potential to make an important intervention in the shaping of scholarly conceptualisations of our ancient land.'—The Hindu



AWARD WINNERS AND FINALISTS

PRELUDE TO A RIOT: A NOVEL

ANNIE ZAIDI

Winner of the Tata Literature Live! Fiction Book of the Year Award, 2020

Shortlisted for the JCB Prize for Literature, 2020

Longlisted for the VoW Book Awards, 2020

WILD HIMALAYA: A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE GREATEST MOUNTAIN RANGE ON EARTH

STEPHEN ALTER

Winner of the Mountain Environment and Natural History Award at the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival, 2020

Shortlisted for the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize, 2020

AKBAR: THE GREAT MUGHAL

IRA MUKHOTY

Longlisted for the Tata Literature Live! Non-fiction Book of the Year Award, 2020

THE PROSPECT OF MIRACLES: A NOVEL

CYRUS MISTRY

Shortlisted for the Atta-Galatta Bangalore Literature Festival Book Cover Prize, 2020

THE MERMAN AND THE BOOK OF POWER

MUSHARRAF ALI FAROOQI

Shortlisted for the Atta-Galatta Bangalore Literature Festival Book Cover Prize, 2020

THE CLIFFHANGERS: A NOVEL

SABIN IQBAL

Shortlisted for the Tata Literature Live! First Book Award, 2020

A BALLAD OF REMITTENT FEVER: A NOVEL

ASHOKE MUKHOPADHYAY

Longlisted for the JCB Prize for Literature, 2020

COMING OUT AS DALIT: A MEMOIR

YASHICA DUTT

Shortlisted for the VoW Book Awards, 2020

Shortlisted for the AuthHer Award, 2020

Longlisted for the Prabha Khaitan Woman's Voice Award, 2019

AN ERA OF DARKNESS: THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN INDIA

SHASHI THAROOR

Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, 2019

Winner of the Ramnath Goenka Award for Excellence in Books (Non-fiction), 2016

Shortlisted for the Tata Literature Live! Book of the Year Award, 2017

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Jury Award (Non-fiction), 2017

Shortlisted for the Printed Book of the Year, Publishing Next Awards, 2017

MODERN SOUTH INDIA: A HISTORY FROM THE 17TH CENTURY TO OUR TIMES

RAJMOHAN GANDHI

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Jury Award (Non-fiction), 2019

THE BLUE LOTUS: MYTHS AND FOLKTALES OF INDIA

MEENA ARORA NAYAK

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Jury Award (Fiction), 2019

Longlisted for the Atta-Galatta Bangalore Literature Festival Book Prize, 2019

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

PRASENJIT K. BASU

Winner of the Tata Literature Live! Best First Book Award, 2018

THE BOOK OF CHOCOLATE SAINTS: A NOVEL

JEET THAYIL

Shortlisted for the Tagore Prize, 2018

Longlisted for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, 2018

Longlisted for the JCB Prize, 2018

THE BENGALIS: A PORTRAIT OF A COMMUNITY

SUDEEP CHAKRAVARTI

Shortlisted for the Hindu Prize (Non-fiction), 2018

Shortlisted for Tata Literature Live! Book of the Year Award, 2018

DAUGHTERS OF THE SUN: EMPRESSES, QUEENS AND BEGUMS OF
THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

IRA MUKHOTY

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Jury Award (Non-fiction), 2018

MAID IN INDIA: STORIES OF OPPORTUNITY AND INEQUALITY INSIDE OUR HOMES

TRIPTI LAHIRI

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award (Non-fiction), 2018

Shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, 2017

Longlisted for the Tata Literature Live! First Book Award (Non-fiction), 2017

THESE CIRCUSES THAT SWEEP THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE: STORIES

TEJASWINI APTE-RAHM

Shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize (Fiction), 2017

Shortlisted for the Tata Literature Live! First Book Award (Fiction), 2017

HOW I BECAME A TREE

SUMANA ROY

Shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, 2017

Shortlisted for the Tata Literature Live! First Book Award, 2017

Shortlisted for the Book Cover of the Year, Publishing Next Awards, 2017

ASKEW: A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF BANGALORE

T. J. S. GEORGE

Shortlisted for the Best Non-Fiction (English) Prize for the Atta-Galatta Bangalore Literature
Festival Book Prize, 2017

IN THE JUNGLES OF THE NIGHT: A NOVEL ABOUT JIM CORBETT

STEPHEN ALTER

Shortlisted for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, 2017

TALKING OF JUSTICE: PEOPLE'S RIGHTS IN MODERN INDIA

LEILA SETH

Winner of the Oxford Book Cover Prize, 2016

THE SUCCESS SUTRA: AN INDIAN APPROACH TO WEALTH

DEV DUTT PATTANAIK

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award (Popular category: Business and Management), 2016

BEING THE OTHER: THE MUSLIM IN INDIA

SAEED NAQVI

Longlisted for the Atta-Galatta Bangalore Literature Festival Book Prize, 2016

THE BLACK HILL

MAMANG DAI

Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, 2017

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award for Fiction, 2016

EM AND THE BIG HOOM

JERRY PINTO

Winner of the Windham-Campbell Prize for Fiction, 2016

Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, 2016

Winner of the Crossword Book Award for Fiction, 2013

Shortlisted for the Commonwealth Book Prize, 2013

Winner of the Hindu Literary Prize, 2012

SWIMMER AMONG THE STARS

KANISHK THAROOR

Shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, 2016

Longlisted for the Crossword Tata Literature Live! First Book Award, 2016

Longlisted for the Atta-Galatta Bangalore Literature Festival Book Prize, 2016

PICTURING TIME: THE GREATEST PHOTOGRAPHS OF RAGHU RAI

RAGHU RAI

Runner-up for Printed Book of the Year Publishing Next Awards, 2016

A PLEASANT KIND OF HEAVY: STORIES

AMRITA NARAYANAN

Shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, 2016

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

KORMA, KHEER & KISMET: FIVE SEASONS IN OLD DELHI

PAMELA TIMMS

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

WILD FIRE: THE SPLENDOURS OF INDIA'S ANIMAL KINGDOM

VALMIK THAPAR

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

COLOURS OF THE CAGE: A PRISON MEMOIR

ARUN FERREIRA

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award for Non-fiction, 2015

THE PATNA MANUAL OF STYLE: STORIES

SIDDHARTH CHOWDHURY

Shortlisted for the Hindu Literary Prize, 2015

FILOMENA'S JOURNEYS: A PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE, A FAMILY AND A CULTURE

MARIA AURORA COUTO

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award for Non-fiction, 2015

A CLUTCH OF INDIAN MASTERPIECES: EXTRAORDINARY SHORT STORIES

FROM THE 19TH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT

EDITED BY DAVID DAVIDAR

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

CITY OF SPIES

SORAYYA KHAN

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

THE MYSTERIOUS AILMENT OF RUPI BASKEY: A NOVEL

HANSDA SOWVENDRA SHEKHAR

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

Shortlisted for the Hindu Literary Prize, 2014

CHRONICLE OF A CORPSE BEARER

CYRUS MISTRY

Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, 2015

Winner of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, 2014

ARCTIC SUMMER

DAMON GALGUT

Winner of the Tata Literature Live! Best Book Award for Fiction, 2014

SHADOW PLAY

SHASHI DESHPANDE

Shortlisted for the Hindu Literary Prize, 2014

BUSINESS SUTRA: A VERY INDIAN APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

DEV DUTT PATTANAIK

Winner of the DMA-NTPC Book Award, 2013

BUTTERFLIES ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD: A MEMOIR

PETER SMETACEK

Shortlisted for the Tata Literature Live! First Book Award, 2013

THE WILDINGS

NILANJANA ROY

Winner of the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, 2013

Shortlisted for the Commonwealth Book Prize, 2013

THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY: A NOVEL

SHOVON CHOWDHURY

Shortlisted for the Tata Literature Live! First Book Award, 2013

Shortlisted for the Hindu Literary Prize, 2014

Shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, 2014

Shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award for Fiction, 2015

THE KING'S HARVEST: TWO NOVELLAS

CHETAN RAJ SHRESTHA

Winner of the Tata Literature Live! First Book Award, 2012

Shortlisted for the Commonwealth Book Prize, 2013

BETWEEN CLAY AND DUST

MUSHARRAF ALI FAROOQI

Shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize, 2012





BACKLIST

NON-FICTION, ART BOOKS

ABHIJIT DUTTA

MYANMAR IN THE WORLD: JOURNEYS THROUGH A CHANGING BURMA

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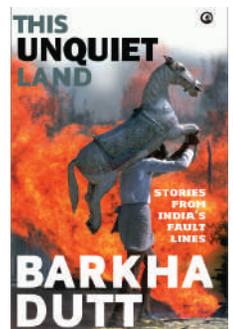
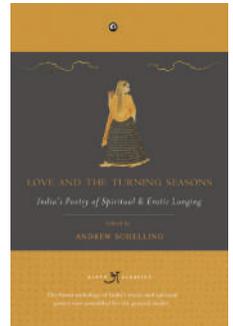
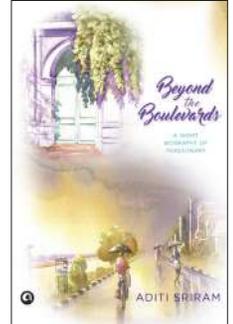
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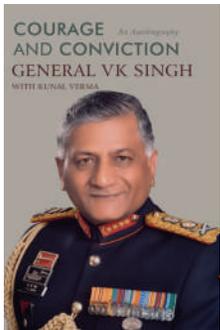
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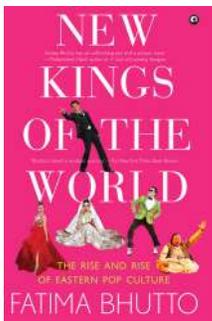
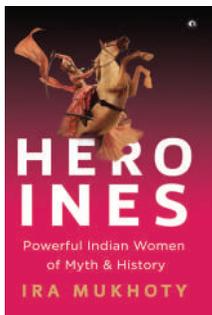
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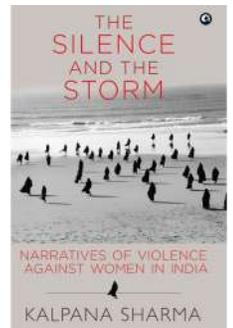
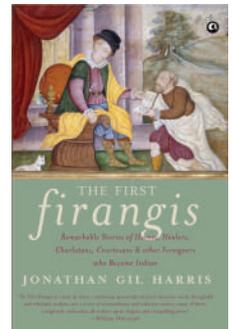
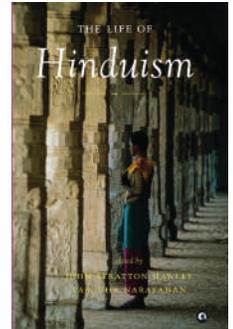
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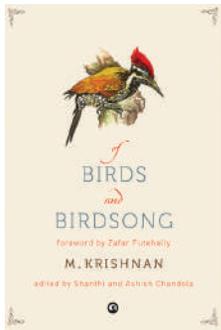
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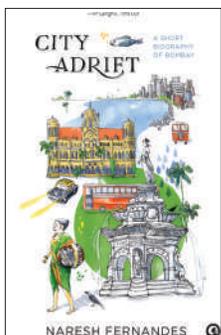
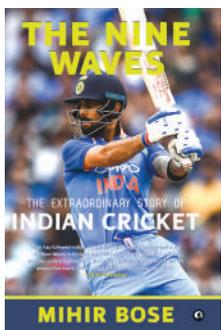
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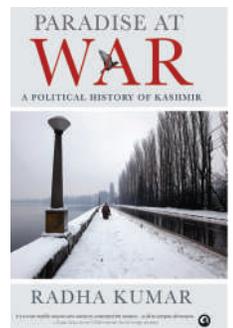
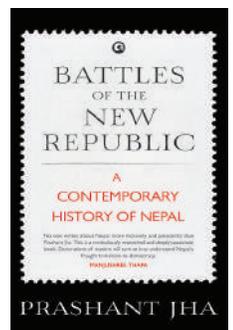
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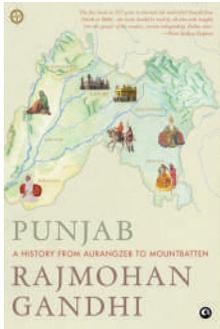
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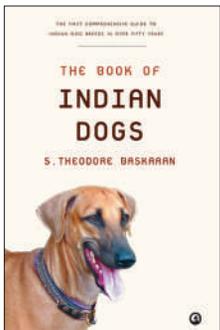
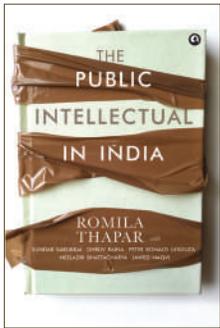
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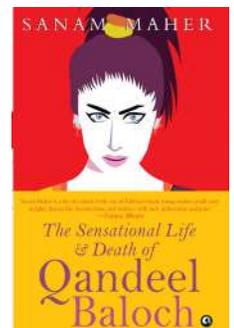
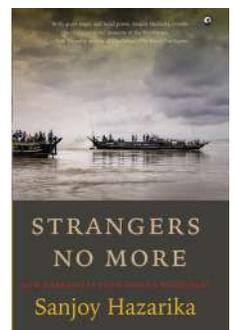
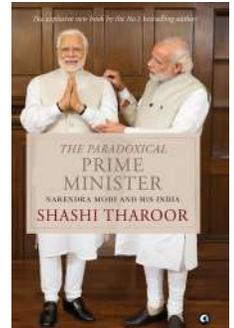
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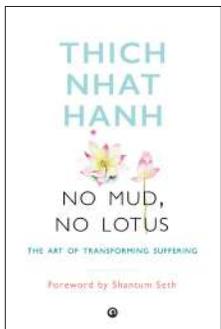
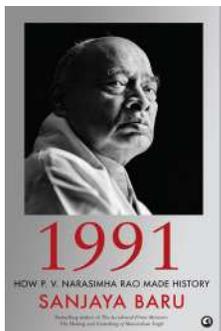
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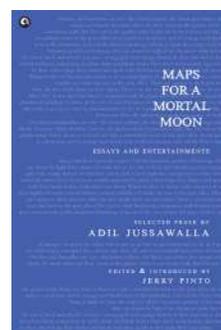
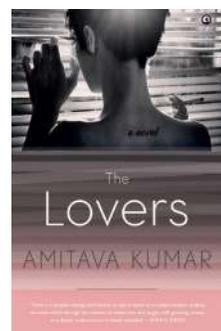
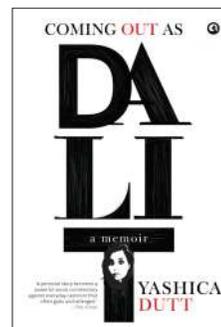
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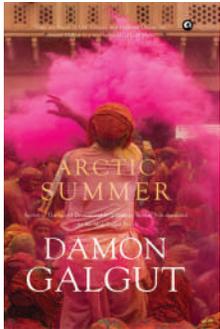
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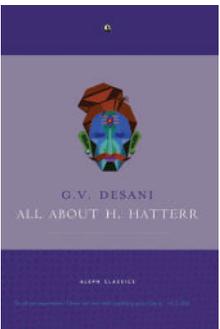
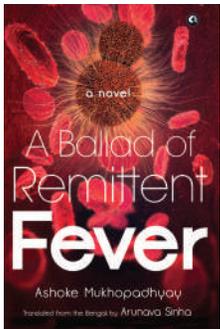
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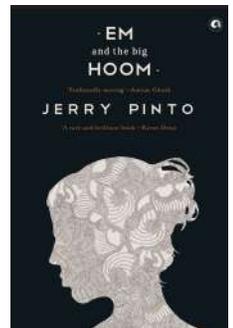
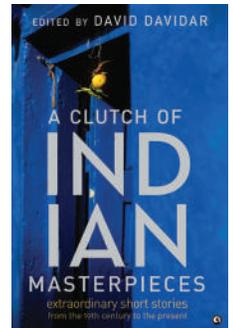
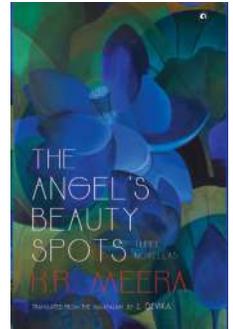
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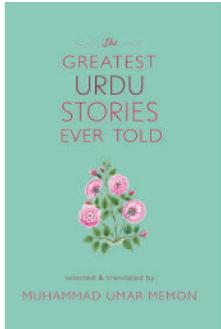
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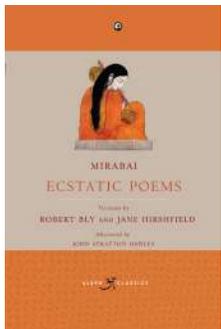
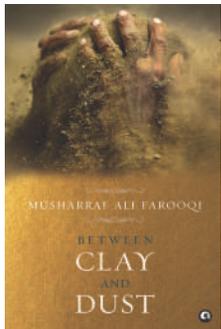
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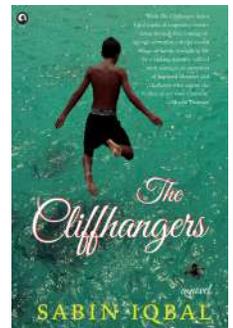
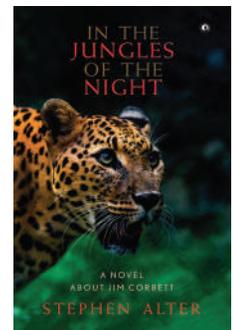
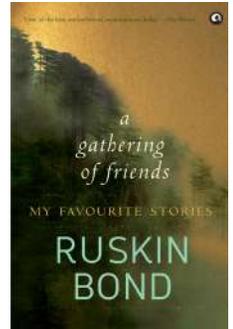
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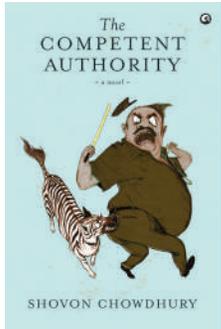
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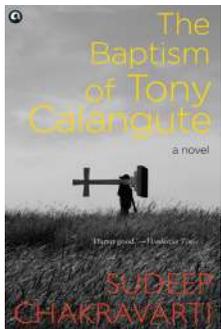
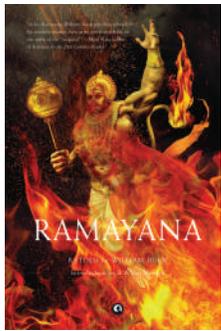
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