

## Introduction

This is an anthology of Indian poetry in English. It includes poems by twenty-one modern and contemporary resident Indian poets. Six of the poets—A. K. Ramanujan, Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes, Arun Kolatkar, Kamala Das, and Dilip Chitre—are deceased (Das and Chitre died in 2009, and Ezekiel, Moraes, and Kolatkar died in 2004). The others—Keki Daruwalla, Eunice de Souza, Adil Jussawalla, Jayanta Mahapatra, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Bibhu Padhi, Gieve Patel, Jerry Pinto, E. V. Ramakrishnan, Manohar Shetty, Menka Shivdasani, Arundhati Subramaniam, C. P. Surendran, and Tenzin Tsundue—represent both the old guard of Indian poetry in English and younger, emerging voices.... While there is much to savor in this anthology of poems culled from a large and growing literature, the selection, while ambitious in its attempt to distill several decades of poetry and embrace a variety of voices, is, needless to say, by no stretch of the imagination comprehensive...

The impulses underlying the poems range from imagistic (Shetty's "Stills from Baga Beach" and Surendran's "Conflagration" and "Crucifixion") to ekphrastic (Moraes's "Kanheri Caves" and Kolatkar's "Heart of Ruin") to self-elegaic (Moraes's "After the Operation" and Chitre's "Thanatos") to narrative (Nair's "Telescope").

The themes embraced or evoked in the poems, in settings both rural and urban, include nature (Ramanujan's "Foundlings in the

Yukon”) and the environment (de Souza’s “I Disentagled the Moon” and “Learn from the Almond Leaf”), erotic love (Ramanjuan’s and Mehrotra’s translations), divine love (Kolatkars, Chtire’s, and Mehrotra’s translations), country (Das’s “The Flag” and Tsundue’s “Betrayal”), identity (Ezekiel’s “Background, Casually” and Das’s “An Introduction”), sectarian violence (Patel’s “The Ambiguous Fate of Gieve Patel, He Being Neither Hindu nor Muslim in India”), illness (Ramakrishnan’s “Alzheimer’s Day”), juvenile infatuation (Subramaniam’s “Imran Khan”), alcoholism (Jussawalla’s “Government Country”), divorce (Surendran’s “Family Court”), work (Shivdasani’s “Stet”), art (“Mehrotra’s “Company Period”), politics (Daruwalla’s “To a Palestinian Poet”), and family (de Souza’s “Forgive Me, Mother,” Ramakrishnan’s “Grandmother’s Soliloquy,” Padhi’s “For the Child to Come,” and Pinto’s “Today My Mother Is in the Audience”).

It should not be surprising that poems from a country with such a rich, multifaceted history as India’s will allude to Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism....