

Githa Hariharan Fugitive Histories

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Joel Kuortti Githa Hariharan*

Isquo githa hariharan rsquo s fiction is wonderful mdash full of subtleties and humour
and tenderness rsquo mdash michael ondaatje mala rsquo s home in delhi is empty
save for a lifetime of sketches left behind by her late husband asad and the memories
they conjure sifting through them on restless afternoons and sleepless nights mala
summons ghosts from her childhood relives the heady days of love and optimism when

asad and she robustly defied social conventions to build a life together and struggles to understand how events far removed could so easily snatch away the certainties they had always taken for granted as their story unfolds others emerge of sara mala and asad's daughter who unable to commit to a cause that will renew her faith in her parents' ideals and her own embarks on a search for purpose that brings her from mumbai to ahmedabad the venue of recent carnage of yasmin whom sara meets across a lately created 'border' a survivor of mayhem secretly dreaming of college and the miraculous return of her missing brother akbar as she navigates menacing by lanes to reach her school safely every day of innumerable other lives trapped in limbo — some caught in a mesh of memory anguish and hate others seeking release in private dreams and valiant hopes marked by an astonishing clarity of observation and deep compassion *fugitive histories* exposes the legacy of prejudice that sometimes insidiously sometimes perceptibly continues to affect disparate lives in present day india in prose that is at once elegant playful and startlingly inventive githa hariharan portrays with remarkable precision the of human connections that binds as much as it divides

i have gone through dr rajesh latane and dr shehjad sidiqui's book entitled *feminist perspective in githa hariharan's novels* the book consisted seventh chapters the first chapter presents the rise and development of feminism has been sharply focused further a brief profile of life and works of githa hariharan is also put forth a round up review of major novels crafted by githa hariharan is neatly presented besides literary influence on githa hariharan has also been given second to sixth chapters writer deal with the feminist perspective of githa hariharan novels like in the thousand faces of night the ghosts of vasu master when dreams travel in times of siege and *fugitive histories* the author has also significantly pointed out githa hariharan's use of myth fable parable fantasy tradition modernity etc as fictional techniques in an effective way besides the novelist's discussion on women's issues is vividly presented through the technique of third person narration the book has really presented the novelist's works affected by the otherness and opposition the study also investigates githa hariharan's use of meta fiction inter text and magic realism unique features of post colonial novel just to bring the feminist discourse in the forefront a book is really acknowledged when it become a source material for the future researchers and comparatives dr latane and

dr shehjad s book has that potential i heartily wish a good reception to the book

where is that land where water flows free a powerful beautifully imagined novel from githa hariharan asks when the tide will turn to make this dream real hundreds of years ago chikka son of a cattle skinner finds a home in anandagrama among people who believe everyone is equal people whose prayer is inseparable from song and work the river and the land friendship and love chikka becomes chikkiah the washerman who sings by his beloved river but the anandagrama movement against caste is torn apart and its men and women slaughtered or forced to flee in the present day professor krishna makes a discovery the saint singer kannadeva is none other than the son of chikkiah the poets and fighters of anandagrama have been forgotten kannadeva has been whitewashed into a casteless hindu saint professor krishna reconstructs many lives of resistance from his findings in a palm leaf manuscript but will the bigots armed with bullets bombs and hit lists let scholars and poets do what they must three dalit students asha ravi and satya dream of a future that will let them and their families live with dignity just like everyone else from chikkiah s story to theirs a few things may have changed but too much has remained the same three distinctive narratives intertwine past and present in compelling ways to raise an urgent voice against the cruelties of caste and the destructive forces that crush dissent but they also celebrate the joy of resistance the redemptive beauty of words and the courage to be found in friendship and love i have become the tide is deeply political but it never loses sight of humour tenderness or the human spirit

what makes a dutiful daughter wife and mother what makes a good indian woman devi returns to madras with an american degree only to be sucked in by the old order of things a demanding mother s love a suitable but hollow marriage an unsuitable lover who offers a brief escape but the women of the hoary past come back to claim devi through myth and story music and memory they show her what it is to stay and endure what it is to break free and move on sita has been the ideal daughter in law wife and mother but now that she has arranged a marriage for her daughter she has to come to terms with an old dream of her own mayamma knows how to survive as the old family retainer bending the way the wind blows but through devi she too can see a different life a subtle and tender tale of women s lives in india this award winning novel is

structured with the delicacy and precision of a piece of music fusing myth tale and the real voices of different women the thousand faces of night brings alive the underworld of indian women s lives

twenty stories of contemporary indian life that demonstrate the range of hariharan s writing executed with a precision of style and magical imagery sometimes comic yet tinged with sadness as in the much anthologized the remains of the feast where an old woman near the end of her life suddenly feels the urge to sample all the food she has been forbidden sometimes with a twist as in gajar halwa where chellamma a servant girl from a small town family finally understands hat makes a big city work sometimes moving as in the reprieve these stories never fail to surprise and delight

what does a medieval city in south india have in common with washington d c how do people in kashmir imagine the freedom they long for to whom does delhi city of grand monuments and hidden slums actually belong and what makes a city or any place home in ten intricately carved essays renowned author githa hariharan tackles these questions and takes readers on an eye opening journey across time and place exploring the history landscape and people that have shaped the world s most fascinating and fraught cities inspired by italo calvino s playful and powerful writing about journeys and cities harihan combines memory cultural criticism and history to sculpt fascinating layered stories about the places around the world from delhi mumbai and kashmir to palestine algeria and eleventh century córdoba from tokyo to new york and washington in narrating the lives of these place s vanquished and marginalized she plumbs the depths of colonization and nation building poverty and war the fight for human rights and the day to day business of survival in essays that bespeak a thoroughly cosmopolitan sensibility githa hariharan not only takes us on illuminating tours through cities rich in history but gives a voice to urban people from all over the world kashmir palestine delhi trying to live with basic human dignity under circumstances of dire repression or crushing poverty jm coetzee hariharan s writing in spare punctuated with passages of brilliant clarity and compassion verve she can do magic hariharan s greatest gift is the ability to weave story poetry and magic into the simplest of sentences so that reading her is an effortless pleasure india today born in coimbatore india githa hariharan grew up in bombay and manila she was educated in

those two cities and later in the united states she has worked as a staff writer for wnet channel 13 in new york an editor for orient longman a freelance professional editor for a range of academic institutions and foundations and visiting professor at a number of international universities her first novel the thousand faces of night 1992 won the commonwealth writers prize for best first book in 1993 her other novels include the ghosts of vasu master 1994 when dreams travel 1999 in times of siege 2003 and fugitive histories 2009 she has also published a highly acclaimed short story collection the art of dying and a book of stories for children the winning team her essays and fiction have also been included in anthologies such as salman rushdie s mirrorwork 50 years of indian writing 1947 1997 she lives in new delhi

theodore baskaran weaves the magic and matter of south indian films into a rich tapestry of readable essays they cover such topics as early cinema in the south trade unionism in south indian film industry and the need for historicizing southern cinema baskaran also investigates how tamil cinema is struggling to get free from the legacy of company drama and the persistence of stage features while his sharper focus rests on tamil cinema this collection will interest historians and students of indian film and the general readers who look for a sprightly introduction to the world of south indian films chapter titles include

this word home so easy to say so casually said every day why then is home so hard to see the way you see other places you visit for a week or two what do a medieval city in south india and washington d c have in common how do people in kashmir imagine the freedom they long for who does delhi city of grand monuments and hidden slums actually belong to most of all what makes a city or any place home in large parts of the world including india the prevailing view of people and places and their multiple voices has been a western version how does this story change when it is located in india and the view complicated by several cultures languages traditions and political debates from delhi bombay mumbai ooty and kashmir to palestine algeria and eleventh century cordoba these intricately carved essays explore cities and other places through the lives of people and how they see home and belonging combining memoir and polemic historical and imagined narrative anecdote and poetry githa hariharan recounts defining moments in which people experience the frictions of day to day survival or the collisions

of ideas culture war or colonization the result is a fascinating and layered story of home
a sense of home too many homes broken or lost homes

what makes a fanatic a fundamentalist what makes communities that have lived
together for years suddenly discover a hatred for each other new delhi in the year 2000
staff meetings lesson modules a half hearted little affair with a colleague this is the
bland but comfortable life of shiv murthy a history teacher in an open university but
disruption and change are on their way an outspoken young woman with a broken knee
comes into his life and turns it upside down then hindu zealots attack his writings on
basava the reformer poet when fundamentalism lands on his own doorstep shiv
discovers that the ideas he has inherited about history nations and patriots are liable to
shrink day by day the time of siege is not exclusively indian prejudice speaks different
languages but has the same destructive message only trust those of your kind with love
lust and a perverted nationalism at his heels shiv is forced to confront the demands of
his times and choose a direction for the future but first he must come to terms with his
own incomplete past his fears and his obsession with a woman who will give him the
strength he seeks

this anthology puts together some of the finest articles that discuss themes which
frequently figure in current literary debates centring round post independence indian
english fiction reinterpretation of indian history in artistic terms re evaluation of indian
culture postcolonial representation of india in fiction nation and national identity
diasporic indian experience and intertextuality it thus attempts a critical stock taking of
the indian english fiction of the fifty years since independence from these fresh
perspectives almost all the important novelists of the three generations have been
studied in this anthology raja rao r k narayan manohar malgonkar anita desai ruth
praver jhabvala arun joshi kamala markandaya shashi deshpane khushwant singh gita
mehta vikram chandra mukul kesavan arudhati roy and gita hariharan contributing to
this volume are some of the best scholars like ragini ramachandra antony johae rama
kundu m mani meitei d maya corrado micheli and christopher rollason

the powerless must have a dream or two dreams that break walls dreams that go
through walls as if they are powerless a magical tour de force by a writer at the height
of her powers when dreams travel weaves round scheherazade or shahrzad of the

thousand and one nights a vibrant inventive story about that old game that s never played out the quest for love and power the curtain opens on four figures two men and two women there is the sultan who wants a virgin every night there is his brother who makes an enemy of darkness and tries to banish it and there are their ambitious brides the sisters shahrzad and dunyazad aspiring to be heroines or martyrs travelling in and out of these lives to spellbinding effect is a range of stories dark poetic and witty by turns spanning medieval to contemporary times with its sharp and lively blend of past and present its skillful reworking of the historical tradition and its controlled use of evocative language githa hariharan s multi voiced narrative assumes the significance of modern myth

the essays in this volume not only provide an analytical study of the past 50 years or so but give suggestions regarding the path that india should take in the coming years

a moving tale of self discovery rich with fascinating stories and imaginary characters vasu master recently retired from his job in a local school allows himself to revisit the past and imaginatively discover the nature of teaching teacher and pupil this process of self discovery is speeded up by the arrival of mani who cannot or will not speak vasu master tells the reticent child one fantastic story after the other as he faces up to the biggest challenge of his life can he teach or heal mani using fantasy fable and a host of wonderfully imagined characters githa hariharan creates a richly textured work that eloquently explores the human condition and the underlying principles of all human action

suggesting that women are reshaping english as rushdie suggests kuortti interviews 7 women writers to find out why they write in english which cannot be neutral as a colony the language was inescapably associated with class race and power after independence it has grown in power and status yet the problematic of english as the language of the hegemonic west remains even so a new canon of women writing in english is being formed interviewing the writers shashi deshpane the late shama futehally githa hariharan lakshmi kannan sujatha mathai anuradha marwah roy and mina singh kuortti also presents extracts from their writings

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