

ALMOST ISLAND

Contributors: Monsoon 2009

Adil Jussawalla was born in Bombay in 1940. He was a student of Architecture in London between 1957 and 1958. He read English Language and Literature at Oxford and taught at a language school in London before returning to Bombay in 1970. His published works include two books of poems, *Land's End* (1962) and *Missing Person* (1976). Jussawalla is also the editor of the influential anthology, *New Writing in India*, Penguin, 1974.

Ashis Nandy is one of India's most significant thinkers and public intellectuals. His work spans the fields of political psychology, sociology, nationalism, public conscience and culture. He is the author of many books, some of them seminal in Indian thought, such as *The Intimate Enemy*, and *The Savage Freud*. For many years he was a Fellow and a Director of the Centre for Developing Societies in New Delhi. He was awarded the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize in 2007.

Bei Dao was born in 1949. He spent eleven years working as a construction labourer. He is one of China's most significant poets, and has lived in exile since the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. His work has been widely translated into English. His books in translation include *The August Sleepwalker* (1990), *Old Snow* (1991), *Forms of Distance* (1994), *Landscape Over Zero* (1996), and *Unlock* (2000). He is one of the founder editors of the literature journal *Jintian*, begun in 1978. *Jintian* published a new literature which expressed the importance of the imagination and of individual perception, long suppressed in the Chinese context. It was banned in 1980, and was later revived by Bei Dao in exile, and he continues to edit it today. He currently lives in Hong Kong.

Bhanu Kapil was born in England in 1968, to Punjabi parents. Her mother now lives in India. Bhanu lives in Colorado, in the United States, where she is an Assistant Professor at Naropa University, a liberal arts college founded by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche thirty years ago. She teaches poetry, prose and cross-genre writing within Naropa's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, which was started (a kind of fire) by Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman. Bhanu also teaches writing in the graduate school of Goddard College, in Vermont. She has given readings throughout the United States, and is the author of three

full-length collections which, for some readers, function as prose, and for others as poetry: *The Vertical Interrogation of Strangers* (Kelsey Street Press), *Incubation: a space for monsters* (Leon Works), and *Humanimal* [a project for future children] (Kelsey Street Press). Forthcoming is a cross-genre project, *Schizophrene*, a lyrical research document of the intersection of mental health, racism and domestic violence in Indian diasporic communities in north-west London, with the proviso that such enclaves have already mutated twelve or seventeen times.

Ge Fei is one of China's most important fiction writers. His novels include *Flag of Desire*, *Ren Mian Tao Hua*, (winner of the Chinese Media Outstanding Novel and Dinglun Biennial Literature Award), and *Shan He Ru Meng*. He is also the author of the novellas, *Encounter*, *Fool's Poetry*, and *Only Rubbish*, and of many acclaimed short stories. His scholarly works include *On Fiction Narration*, *Pendulum of Kafka*, and *Syren Songs*. He is currently Professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Born in 1939, **Li Tuo** spent twenty years as a construction worker. One of China's leading thinkers and critics, he is the author of numerous essays, many of them pioneering ones, on literature, cinema and painting. He is the editor of several literature anthologies, especially of experimental literature. He has also written fiction and scripts for films. Li Tuo has been executive editor for the literary journals *Jintian*, and *Beijing Literature*. He lives in Beijing.

Mani Rao (b. 1965, India) is the author of seven books of poetry, including *Mani Rao: 100 Poems* (Selected Poems 1985-2005), and *Echolocation* (2003). Her essays and poems have featured in *Tinfish*, *Wasafiri*, *West Coast Line*, *Iowa Review*, *91st Meridian*, *Fulcrum*, *Meanjin*, *Zoland Poetry*, and anthologies by WW Norton, BloodAxe and Penguin. Translations of her poems have been published in seven languages. She was a visiting fellow at the Iowa International Writing Program in 2005 and 2009, and won the University of Iowa International Programs writing fellowship in 2006. Mani worked in the advertising and television field in India and Hong Kong for twenty years. Since 2004, she has been writing and studying, and living in USA, India and Hong Kong. Mani is completing a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* via 'postmodern' poetics. *Ghostmasters* is a manuscript of poems about the gone present, and *After Ovid & Co.* is a manuscript of poems drawn from Greek and Indian myths. More writing, links and multimedia work are on manirao.com **Ouyang**

Jianghe was born in 1956. He is one of China's foremost poets. Jianghe is the author of several collections of poetry, including *Through the Glass of Words* (1997), *Who Leave Who Stay* (1997), *Tears of Things* (2008), as well as a book of reviews and essays, *Standing on the Side of Fiction* (2000). He lives in Beijing.

Togara Muzanhamo was born to Zimbabwean parents in Lusaka, Zambia in 1975. He was brought up in Zimbabwe, and then went on to study in The Hague and Paris. He became a journalist in Harare and worked for a film script production company. His work has appeared in magazines in Europe, South Africa and Zimbabwe. His debut collection, *Spirit Brides*, is published by [Carcenet Press](#).

Shrikant Verma (1931-86) was a central figure in the "Nai Kavita" movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Born in Bilaspur, Madhya Pradesh, he did his Masters in Hindi from Nagpur University in 1956, then moved to New Delhi, where he worked in journalism and politics. Verma served as special correspondent for "Dinman", a major Hindi periodical, from 1966 to 1977. In 1976, he was elected a member of the Rajya Sabha on a Congress (I) ticket, and served as an official and spokesman of the party through the late 1970s to the early 80s. He published two collections of short fiction, a novel, a travelogue, literary interviews, essays and five collections of poetry, of which the most important are "Jalasagar" (1973) and "Magadh" (1984). The latter, a groundbreaking work that remains one of the best-known books in contemporary Hindi poetry. Verma was a visitor at the Iowa International Writing Program twice (1970-71 and 1978), and won the Tulsi Puraskar (1976), the Kumaran Asan Award, and the Sahitya Akademi Award (posthumously, for "Magadh", in 1987).

Rahul Soni is a writer, editor and translator of no fixed address. Founder and co-editor of [Pratilipi](#). Chief editor at *Writer's Side*. He is translating Geetanjali Shree's novel "Tirohit" for Harper Collins India, and Dharamvir Bharati's "Suraj ka Saatvan Ghoda". Other works in progress include a documentary and a novel.

Yongming Zhai is among the leading poets in China today. She is the author of six volumes of poetry: *Woman, Above All Roses*, *Collected Poetry of Yongming Zhai*, *The Plainsong in the Night*, *Call It As All*, and *Finally Make Me Not Have Enough To Go Around*. She has also

published several collections of essays. She lives in Chengdu province where she runs a bar that doubles as a poetry and performance space.