

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



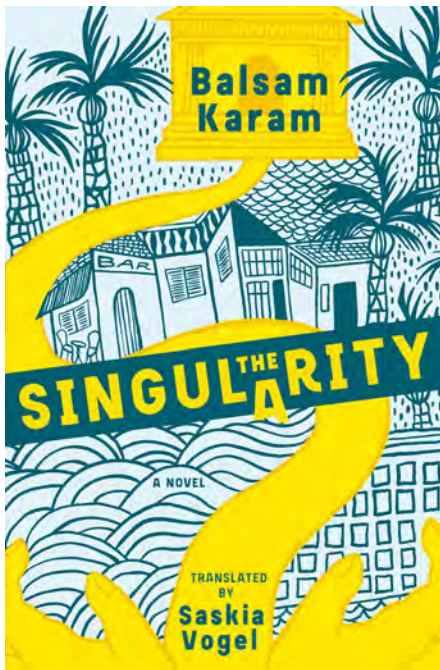
Book\***hug**  
Press

\*20 years of  
adventures in  
literary publishing

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Catalogue  
Winter 2024

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“I don't know anyone who writes like Balsam Karam. She blows me away. Truly one of the most original and extraordinary voices to come out of Scandinavia in...forever. You'll realize twenty minutes after you've finished this book that you're still sitting there, holding on to it.”

—Fredrik Backman, author of *A Man Called Ove*

Paperback / 9781771668897  
CAD 23.00

To read an excerpt of this book,  
visit [bookhugpress.ca](http://bookhugpress.ca)

## THE SINGULARITY

Written by Balsam Karam  
Translated by Saskia Vogel

Pub Date: January 24, 2024

Extent: 212 pp

Trim: 5.00 in x 8.00 in

FICTION / Cultural Heritage  
FIC051000

FICTION / Disaster  
FIC070000

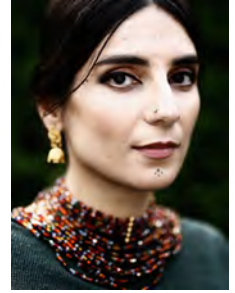
FICTION / Family Life / General  
FIC045000

Lyrical and devastating, *The Singularity* is a breathtaking study of grief, migration, and motherhood from one of Sweden's most exciting contemporary novelists.

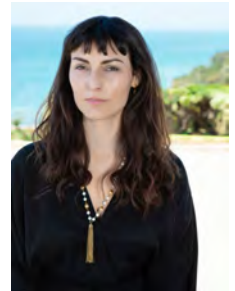
In an unnamed coastal city filled with refugees, the mother of a displaced family calls out her daughter's name as she wanders the cliffside road where the child once worked. The mother searches and searches until, spent from grief, she throws herself into the sea, leaving her other children behind. Bearing witness to the suicide is another woman—on a business trip, with a swollen belly that later gives birth to a stillborn baby. In the wake of her pain, the second woman remembers other losses—of a language, a country, an identity—when once, her family fled a distant war.

Balsam Karam weaves between both narratives in this formally ambitious novel and offers a fresh approach to language and aesthetic as she decenters a white European gaze. Her English-language debut, *The Singularity* is a powerful exploration of loss, history, and memory.

**BALSAM KARAM** is of Kurdish ancestry and has lived in Sweden since she was a young child. She is an author and librarian and made her literary debut in 2018 with the critically acclaimed novel, *Event Horizon*, which was shortlisted for the Katapult Prize and won the Smaland Literature Festival's Migrant Prize. Her second novel, *The Singularity*, originally published in Sweden in 2021, was shortlisted for the European Union Prize for Literature, the August Prize, and Svenska Dagbladet's Literature Prize.



**SASKIA VOGEL** is the author of the novel *Permission* and a translator of more than twenty Swedish-language books. Her writing has been awarded the Berlin Senate Endowment for Non-German Literature. Her translations have won the CLMP Firecracker Award for Fiction (Johannes Anyuru's *They Will Drown in Their Mothers' Tears*), have been shortlisted for the PEN Translation Prize (Jessica Schiefauer's *Girls Lost*), and supported by grants from the Swedish Arts Council, the Swedish Authors' Fund, and English PEN. She was Princeton's Translator in Residence in Fall 2022 and lives in Berlin. Her work can be read in *Granta*, *Literary Hub*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and elsewhere.



### KEY SELLING FEATURES

- Karam is a shining star in contemporary European literature who bucks traditional notions of Swedish literature, writing from a marginalized perspective.
- Karam is of Kurdish ancestry and spent her first years as a refugee throughout the Middle East before arriving in Sweden at age seven.
- A formally inventive, powerful, political, and devastating novel about migration, war, displacement, living in exile, loss, grief, and mothers and daughters.
- Written in dense, rhythmic, atmospheric prose. Karam combines literary aesthetics with complicated intellectual and political themes.
- For fans of Jhumpa Lahiri, Ananda Devi, Kate Zambreno, and Alexis Schaitkin, although Karam's style is uniquely her own.
- Loss is a major theme in *The Singularity*: the loss of a language, a country, an identity, a child.



“Part suspense novel, part character study, *Blue Notes* takes us into the world of Big Pharma, greed, and the pathologization of emotion. But at its heart, it is a touching meditation on love and loss and what it means to be truly human.”

—Elyse Friedman, author of *The Opportunist*

Paperback / 9781771668675  
CAD 23.00 / USD 20.00

To read an excerpt of this book, visit [bookhugpress.ca](http://bookhugpress.ca)

## BLUE NOTES

Written by Anne Cathrine Bomann  
Translated by Caroline Waight

Pub Date: February 22, 2024

Extent: 244 pp

Trim: 5.25 in x 8.00 in

FICTION / Thrillers / Medical  
FIC031040

FICTION / Medical  
FIC035000

FICTION / Psychological  
FIC025000

How much grief is too much? How far should we go to avoid pain? From the author of the international bestselling novel *Agatha* comes a literary medical thriller about grief, love, science, and societal norms.

A Danish university research group is finishing its study of a new medicine, Callocain: the world's first pill for grief. But psychology professor Thorsten Gjeldsted suspects that someone has manipulated the numbers to hide a disturbing side effect. When no one believes him, he teams up with two young students to investigate: Anna, who has recently experienced traumatic grief herself, and Shadi, whose statistical skills might prevent her from living a quiet life in the shadows. Together, these sleuthing academics try to discover what's really happening before the drug is released to the entire population.

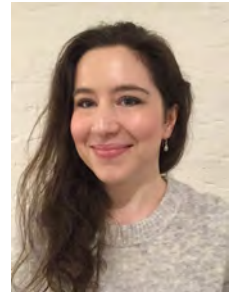
*Blue Notes* is brimming with ethical and existential ideas about the search for identity and one's place in the world, while offering a highly original literary adventure that ultimately underscores the healing power of love.

## Literary Fiction / Literary Thriller

**ANNE CATHRINE BOMANN** lives in Copenhagen dividing her time between writing and working as a psychologist. She also played table tennis for Denmark and won the national championship twelve times. She is the author of two novels, *Blue Notes* and *Agatha*, which became a word-of-mouth success following publication in Denmark and has been translated into twenty-three languages.

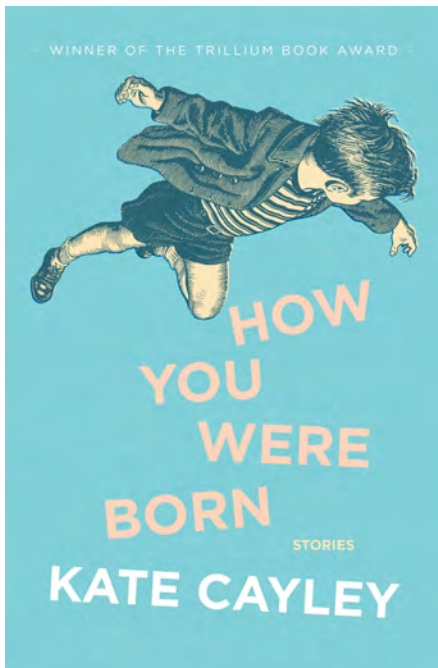


**CAROLINE WAIGHT** is an award-winning literary translator working from Danish, German, and Norwegian. She has translated a wide range of books, including *The Lobster's Shell* by Caroline Albertine Minor, *Agatha* and *Blue Notes* by Anne Cathrine Bomann, *Island* by Siri Ranva Hjelm Jacobsen and *The Chief Witness* by Sayragul Sauytbay and Alexandra Cavelius. She grew up travelling around the world, living in eight different countries. Having first studied music at Cambridge, Oxford, and Cornell, she worked in publishing before transitioning into full-time literary translation. She now lives and works near London.



### KEY SELLING FEATURES

- From the author of the international bestselling debut novel *Agatha*.
- An intriguing, psychologically nuanced, page-turner with exciting and existential twists and turns all along the way.
- Bomann works part-time as a psychologist and this background makes *Blue Notes* a well-researched and realistic read, even though she invented the grief pill 'Callocain' featured in the book.
- Asks many questions about mental health and well-being, including examining the boundaries between "normal" suffering vs. mental illness.
- Examines how grief, love, and empathy are connected, and questions what happens if we attempt to cure grief.
- A literary medical thriller that leaves the reader with a lot to think about, including ethical and existential questions.



“*How You Were Born* is a stunning collection. These stories are unsettling in the best possible way: tender and pitiless, they take the reader by the hand, by the chin, sometimes even by the throat. Look, they say, this is what it is to be human. This is how strange, how unspeakably beautiful, it can be.”

—Alissa York, author of *Far Cry*

Paperback / 9781771668705  
CAD 23.00 / USD 20.00

To read an excerpt of this book,  
visit [bookhugpress.ca](http://bookhugpress.ca)

## HOW YOU WERE BORN

*Written by Kate Cayley*

*Foreword by Alayna Munce*

Pub Date: March 12, 2024

Extent: 232 pp

Trim: 5.25 in x 8.00 in

FICTION / Short Stories (single author)  
FIC029000

FICTION / LGBTQ+ / Lesbian  
FIC018000

FICTION / Literary  
FIC019000

This tenth-anniversary edition of Kate Cayley's award-winning collection includes three new stories.

A young mother intrudes into the life of an older woman, thinking she knows what's best. An academic becomes convinced that he is haunted by his double. Two children spy on their supposedly criminal neighbours. A man enables his cousin's predatory impulses out of loyalty, and a circus performer dreams of a perfect wedding. These characters fail despite their best intentions and continue on despite their failures.

The stories in *How You Were Born*, each more incisive and devastating than the last, examine the difficult business of love, loyalty, and memory. Sharing the bizarre and tragi-comic of life—whether in present-day Toronto or in small towns of the early 20th century—Cayley champions the importance of connections, even when missed or mislaid, and the possibility of redemption.

## Literary Fiction / Short Stories



**KATE CAYLEY** is the author of several books, including the poetry book, *Lent*, and the short story collection, *How You Were Born*, winner of the Trillium Book Award and shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction. She has won the O. Henry Short Story Prize, the Mitchell Prize for Faith and Poetry, and the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction. She has been a finalist for the K. M. Hunter Award, the Carter V. Cooper Short Story Prize, and the Firecracker Award for Fiction, and been longlisted for the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Prize and CBC Books Prizes in both poetry and fiction. Cayley lives in Toronto with her wife and their three children.



**ALAYNA MUNCE** is a writer, editor, and publisher. In 2019, Alayna was named publisher of Brick Books, Canada's poetry-only press. Though her first love is poetry, she also writes and edits fiction. Her first novel, *When I Was Young and In My Prime* was nominated for the Trillium Book Award and appeared on the national bestseller list. She lives in the Parkdale neighbourhood of Toronto in a bustling blended family of six.



### KEY SELLING FEATURES

- Originally published in 2014, *How You Were Born* won the Trillium Book Award and was a finalist for a Governor General's Literary Award.
- This tenth anniversary edition brings together the original stories along with three new stories. Includes a Foreword by Alayna Munce and a Preface by the author.
- Cayley is an award-winning prose stylist whose work has been compared to Alice Munro, Yiyun Li, and William Trevor.
- Explores queer domestic life, marriage and childhood, gentrification, cities, and fairy tales, in a realistic framework.
- Stories are firmly rooted in small personal moments, capturing something strange and peculiar about everyday life.



“In *Play*, Jess Taylor has created a uniquely gentle sort of dread, weaving a story that is compelling and compassionate, and burning with profoundly moving insight about trauma, the power of art, and our deep need for connection.”

—Jessica Westhead,  
author of *Avalanche*

Paperback / 9781771668798  
CAD 23.00 / USD 20.00

To read an excerpt of this book,  
visit [bookhugpress.ca](http://bookhugpress.ca)

## PLAY

*Written by Jess Taylor*

Pub Date: April 23, 2024

Extent: 350 pp

Trim: 5.25 in x 8.00 in

FICTION / Friendship  
FIC071000

FICTION / Disaster  
FIC070000

FICTION / Coming of Age  
FIC043000

*You will talk about 2016.*

*You will talk about The Lighted City.*

*You will be brave and truthful.*

*You will get to the bottom of what happened.*

Paul (Paulina) Hayes loves her cousin Adrian. Inseparable from a young age, they play The Lighted City, an imaginary world where they pretend to live together and can escape a childhood that seems both too sad and too grown-up. But The Lighted City isn't without danger.

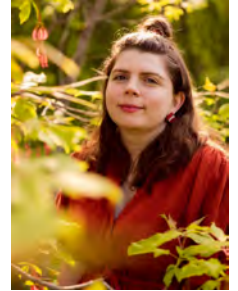
Years later, Paul is struggling with PTSD after a season of turmoil—one in which Adrian is dead, and radio and television are filled with reports of missing children. Just as stability is settling into her life and relationships, Paul is dragged back into the fate that Adrian seems to have scripted for them. And so she finds herself journeying across the country, down into a ravine, and back to The Lighted City, where so much of her childhood played out. Only by doing so can she begin to come to terms with “the day everything happened”—and what has unfolded since then.

With a unique blend of contemporary storytelling and psychological fiction, *Play* is a haunting, riveting novel that reminds us of both the beauty and danger of imagination.



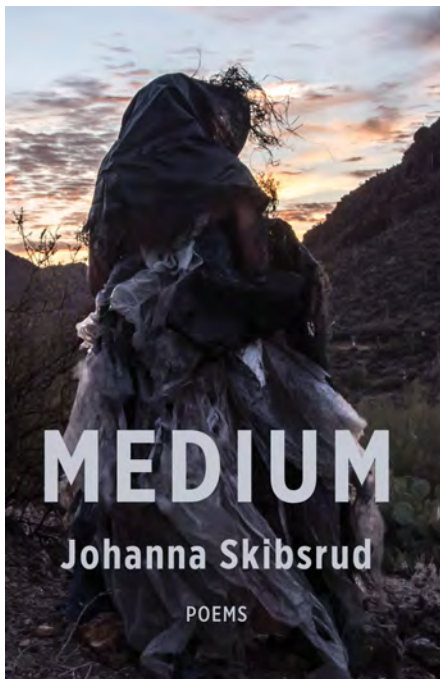


**JESS TAYLOR** is a Tkaronto (Toronto) writer and poet. She is the author of the novel, *Play*, and two story collections: *Pauls*, the title story of which won the 2013 Gold Fiction National Magazine Award, and *Just Pervs*, a finalist for the 2020 Lambda Literary Award in Bisexual Fiction. Her story, "Two Sex Addicts Fall in Love," was longlisted for the 2018 Journey Prize.



## KEY SELLING FEATURES

- From the acclaimed author of *Pauls* and *Just Pervs*.
- Continues the story of Paul (Paulina) from Taylor's debut story collection, *Pauls*; *Play* is Taylor's opportunity to give Paulina's story the weight it deserves and to uncover the layers of her character that were previously only hinted at.
- Main themes: Shame, childhood trauma, mental health, healing and recovery, and the different ways that kids and people play and how that is expressed (positive and negative; imaginative and literal; illustrative and metaphorical; dangerous and healing).
- For fans of Jessica Westhead and Liz Harmer.
- Deals with trauma and shame in a sensitive way, and foregrounds healing alongside trauma.
- Readers who are interested in stories of healing and recovery will hold this novel close.



“Readers will delight and be haunted by the invocation of the ‘divine feminine,’ of the creative birthing essence, of who exists across time, where the past eats the tail of the future, inside the unequivocal vocalizations of ‘wave that never breaks.’”

—Annie Guthrie, author of *The Good Dark*

Paperback / 9781771668736  
CAD 20.00 / USD 18.00

To read an excerpt of this book,  
visit [bookhugpress.ca](http://bookhugpress.ca)

## MEDIUM

*Written by Johanna Skibsrud*

Pub Date: March 5, 2024

Extent: 120 pp

Trim: 6.00 in x 8.00 in

POETRY / Epic  
POE014000

POETRY / Women Authors  
POE024000

POETRY / Canadian  
POE011000

From award-winning writer Johanna Skibsrud, *Medium* uses language as a bridge across experience, sensibility, and time.

These deeply resonant and performative poems share the lives and perspectives of women who—in their roles as biological, physical, or spiritual mediums—have helped to shape the course of history. Reckoning with the dominant historical narratives of each woman’s era, Skibsrud underscores the power of poetry to bring about new formulations for understanding the relationship between past and present, self and other.

Helen of Troy, Anne Boleyn, Shakuntala Devi, Hypatia of Alexandria, Marie Curie: *Medium* interprets the voices of women vilified by history, silenced by famous husbands, forced into sex work, or wrongly accused.

Each exploration begins with a brief vignette inspired by the “vidas” that once began manuscripts of the troubadours. Both vidas and poems provide lyrical reinterpretations of real and imagined elements in the lives of scholars, scientists, computer engineers, mystics, entrepreneurs, artists, nurses, and other leaders.

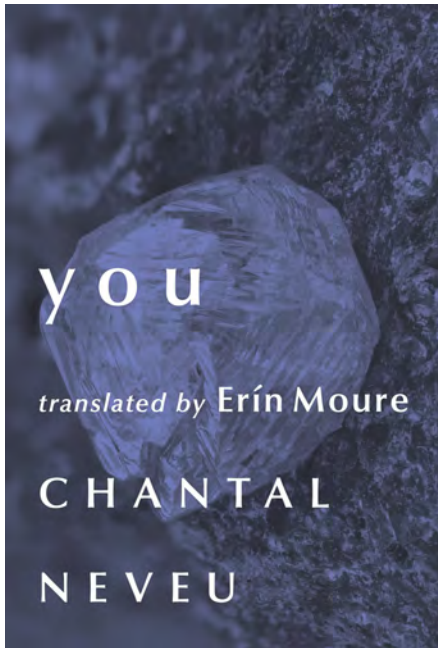


**JOHANNA SKIBSRUD** is the author of multiple poetry collections and books—including the Scotiabank Giller Prize–winning novel, *The Sentimentalists*. An Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Arizona, Johanna divides her time between Tucson, Arizona, and Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.



## KEY SELLING FEATURES

- Skibsrud is a Canadian-American writer, whose debut novel, *The Sentimentalists*, was awarded the 2010 Scotiabank Giller Prize, making her the youngest writer to ever win Canada's most prestigious literary prize.
- An innovative new poetry collection from award-winning writer and scholar with an international following.
- Explores and celebrates the lives and perspectives of historical women who have acted as biological, physical, or spiritual mediums over the course of history.
- Combines poetry and prose styles; borrows from medieval poetic form.
- Main themes: vulnerability, feminism, parenthood, longing, desire, spirituality, dreams, visions.
- For fans of the podcast, *You're Wrong About*. Skibsrud adapts the medieval poetic form of the *Vida*—in Occitan languages, meaning simply "life"—to introduce a diverse cast of characters, ranging from Helen of Troy to Mary Mallon (commonly known as Typhoid Mary) to Norma McCorvey (more famous as Jane Roe from *Roe v. Wade*) to Anne Boleyn. *Vidas* were short biographical poems characterized by their unreliability.



Paperback / 9781771668828  
CAD 20.00 / USD 18.00

To read an excerpt of this book,  
visit [bookhugpress.ca](http://bookhugpress.ca)

## YOU

*Written by Chantal Neveu*  
*Translated by Erin Moure*

Pub Date: March 19, 2024

Extent: 80 pp

Trim: 5.75 in x 7.75 in

POETRY / Subjects & Themes / Love & Erotica  
POE023020

POETRY / Subjects & Themes / Death, Grief, Loss  
POE023010

POETRY / Women Authors  
POE024000

From poet Chantal Neveu, author of the award-winning collection *This Radiant Life*, comes a book-length poem that plunges us more deeply into the notion of the idyll and into the polyhedric structure of love.

*you* demonstrates with exceptional beauty how in the interval between words or verses, language can glimmer, absorb, and refract the changing realities and attractions of an all too human relationship.

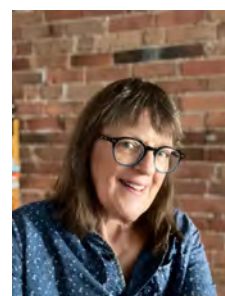
Personal autonomy and the formation of “self” are nourished here by multiples—I, you, s/he. The voice in *you* reclaims life from change and time and affirms it anew.



**CHANTAL NEVEU** is the author of several books of poetry, including *you*, *La vie radieuse* (*This Radiant Life*, winner of the 2021 Governor General's Literary Award for Translation and the 2021 Nelson Ball Prize); *coït* (*Coit*); and *Une spectaculaire influence* (*A Spectacular Influence*). She has created numerous interdisciplinary literary works, in Canada and abroad. Her work has appeared in many magazines and anthologies. She has held residencies at Maison de la poésie de Nantes (France), Passa Porta and Villa Hellebosch (Belgium), and Villa Waldberta (Germany). Neveu lives in Montreal.

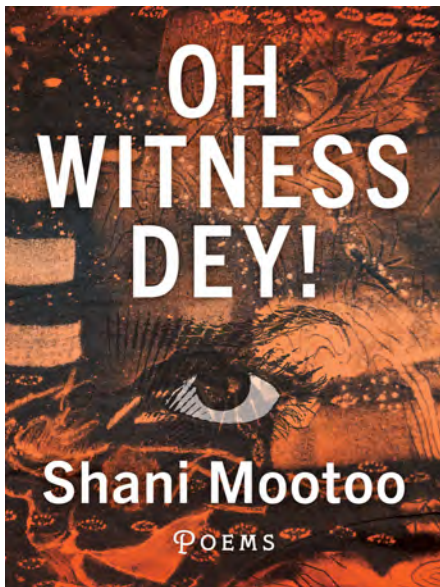


**ERÍN MOURE** is a Montréal poet and translator curious about what's active in the poetry of others. Moure's most recent books are *Kapusta* and *Insecession*, a biotranspoetics published in one volume with her translation from Galician of Chus Pato's biopoetics, *Secession*. Other recent translations include *White Piano* by Nicole Brossard, translated with Robert Majzels from the French, and Galician Songs by Rosalía de Castro, translated from the Galician.



## KEY SELLING FEATURES

- The previous work Erin Moure translated by Chantal Neveu, *This Radiant Life*, won the Governor General's Literary Award for Translation; *you* is conceived of as a fractal of *This Radiant Life*.
- A beautiful and heartrending long poem about a love affair in all its stages.
- Written in precise, sparse, radiant, and lush language.
- For fans of Annie Ernaux and Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station, I Lay Down and Wept*.
- Readers who will love this work include poets, poetry readers, translators, visual artists, musicians, theatre lovers, people interested in philosophy and ethics.
- Everyone is attracted to love poems and to how they change us and our lives, even when they end.



“The story of how Europe’s rapacity accelerated in the wake of ‘discovery’ is timely and inexhaustible, and these poems bear impassioned witness to a world that has raced past its precipice.”

—Kaie Kellough, Griffin Poetry Prize–winning author of *Magnetic Equator*

Paperback / 9781771668767  
CAD 20.00 / USD 18.00

To read an excerpt of this book, visit [bookhugpress.ca](http://bookhugpress.ca)

## OH WITNESS DEY!

*Written by Shani Mootoo*

Pub Date: March 26, 2024

Extent: 190 pp

Trim: 6.00 in x 8.00 in

POETRY / Caribbean & Latin American  
POE012000

POETRY / Subjects & Themes / Places  
POE023040

POETRY / Subjects & Themes / Family  
POE023050

Shani Mootoo’s great-great-grandparents were brought to Trinidad as indentured labourers by the British. There is no record of where they were from in India or whether it was kidnapping, trickery, or false promises of wealth that took them to the Caribbean.

In *Oh Witness Dey!* Mootoo expands the question of origins, from ancestry percentages and journey narratives, through memory, story, and lyric fragments. These vibrant poems transcend the tropes of colonial violence through saints and spices, rebellion and joy, to reimagine tensions and solidarities among various diasporas. They circumvent traditional conventions of style to find new routes toward understanding. They invite the reader to witness history, displacements and the legacies of our inheritance.



SHANI MOOTOO was born in Ireland and raised in Trinidad. Mootoo's highly acclaimed writing includes the novels *Cereus Blooms at Night* and *Polar Vortex*, a finalist for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, as well as the poetry collections *Cane | Fire* and *Oh Witness Dey!*. Her poetry has appeared in *Wasafiri*, *Poetry Magazine*, and *Room Magazine*. She has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters honoris causa from Western University, is a recipient of Lambda Literary's James Duggins Outstanding Mid-Career Novelist Prize, and the Writers' Trust Engel Findley Award. She lives in Southern Ontario, Canada.



## KEY SELLING FEATURES

- These poems are a deliberate mash-up of non-conventional structures, alignments, uses of the page, and include quotations from historical documents and the purposeful usage of prose.
- This book is an attempt to comprehend something as incomprehensible as genocide and forced migrations. In these poems, Mootoo casts off traditional conventions of styles in order to find a new route to understanding and identity.
- The title of the poem that began this book is "Witness, Oh Witness Dey." The "Dey" part is a Trinidadianism, meaning "hey, you over there!" In this sense, Mootoo is addressing the reader as a witness—the reader becomes a witness through her address. It also suggests that Mootoo is a witness to all the history, displacements, victimizations, power-plays that she writes about. Lastly, the text itself is a witness to all that is inside of it. The witness sees, hears, listens—and witnesses. In the face of conflicting stories, the witness validates.

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