

The Collected Short Stories of Bharati Mukherjee

Bharati Mukherjee

Ruth Maxey, Editor

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The Collected Short Stories of Bharati Mukherjee compiles the shorter works of the South Asian American author, showcasing Mukherjee's exquisite flow of language and diverse range.

Born to a Bengali Brahmin family, Mukherjee left India in the early 1960s to attend the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. She lived in Canada until 1980, then returned to the United States to continue writing and teaching until her death in 2017. Though known as a novelist, her short fiction is another "rich area" of "literary production."

Mukherjee's 1963 series of stories, *The Shattered Mirror*, introduces Tara, a fictional alter ego attending graduate school in Iowa. In London and America, Indian-born Tara experiences feelings of racial displacement. Often treated like an exotic curiosity, she is asked if she knows any "maharajahs," or if her parents have "lions and tigers" in their backyard. When Tara purchases a jar of Indian spices in San Francisco, the fragrant "red, yellow, and brown grains" evoke poignant memories of her family.

Wry yet unnerving, "A Father" is centered on Mr. Bhowmick, who relocated from Bombay to Detroit to work for General Motors. Though Mr. Bhowmick prays daily to the fierce Hindu goddess, Kali, he is afraid of his own "headstrong" and assertive daughter. And in "The Management of Grief," Mrs. Bhave learns that her husband and sons died in the 1985 Air India bombing. With anguished obligation, she travels with other grieving members of her Indo-Canadian community to the crash site in Ireland. There, beyond "the glassiness of waves," the mourners take part in the horrifying process of identifying recovered bodies.

While many of the stories have a South Asian focus, Mukherjee's works are also broadened by the presence of other immigrants and expatriates, including Chinese, Filipino, and Trinidadian characters.

The Collected Stories of Bharati Mukherjee expands upon the legacy of an astute, masterful writer.

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