Contents



Preface xiii

RABINDRANATH TAGORE	I
Letter	3
From Boyhood Days	3
From Final Poems	
"Sickbed 21"	6
"Recovery 4"	6
SAROJINI NAIDU	9
To Arthur Symons	10
From a Letter to Edmund Gosse	13
To Rabindranath Tagore (1912)	15
To Rabindranath Tagore (undated)	16
PREMCHAND (DHANPAT RAI)	17
"Two Autobiographical Sketches"	18
NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI	25
From The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian	
From "My Birthplace"	26
From "The English Scene"	34
From "The Englishman in the Flesh"	39
JIBANANANDA DAS	42
"The Professor"	43
"Name Me a Word"	43

"Poetry"	44
"The Windy Night"	45
R. K. NARAYAN	47
From My Days: A Memoir	48
VAIKOM MUHAMMAD BASHEER	56
From "Pattumma's Goat"	57
RAJA RAO	66
"Entering the Literary World"	67
LALITHAMBIKA ANTHERJANAM	73
"Childhood Memories"	74
AGYEYA (SACHCHIDANANDA VATSAYAN)	82
"The Signs"	83
"Words and Truths"	85
"Three Words to Make a Poem"	86
"The Revolving Rock XVI"	86
"The Revolving Rock XXV"	87
UMASHANKAR JOSHI	88
"My Four-Sided Field"	89
From "The World of Birds"	90
Acceptance Speech for the 1968 Bharatiya Jnanpith	
Award	93
SAADAT HASAN MANTO	97
"First Letter to Uncle Sam"	98
ISMAT CHUGTAI	104
"We People"	105
	,
AMRITA PRITAM	114
"To Waris Shah"	115

From The Revenue Stamp	
My Sixteenth Year	117
A Shadow	119
NISSIM EZEKIEL	122
"Background, Casually"	
"Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher"	123
Toel, Lovel, Bildwalcher	125
MAHASWETA DEVI	127
"So Many Words, So Many Sounds"	129
NAYANTARA SAHGAL	143
"Rejecting Extinction"	144
QURRATULAIN HYDER	152
"Beyond the Stars"	153
JAYANTA MAHAPATRA	163
From an Autobiographical Essay	164
"Grandfather"	164
"The Abandoned British Cemetery at Balasore"	167
"Hunger"	169
Trunger	109
A. K. RAMANUJAN	170
"Elements of Composition"	171
"Saturdays"	173
From "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?	
An Informal Essay"	175
NIRMAL VERMA	179
"Returning to One's Country"	180
K. AYYAPPA PANIKER	186
"Why Write?"	187
"Upon My Walls"	189
"Epitaph"	190
From "Passage to America"	190

ARUN KOLATKAR	193
"From an Undated Sheet"	194
From "Making Love to a Poem"	195
U. R. ANANTHAMURTHY	203
From "Five Decades of My Writing"	204
KAMALA DAS	209
From My Story	
"The Bougainvillea"	210
From "The P.E.N. Poetry Prize"	212
"The Old Playhouse"	213
From "An Introduction"	214
KEKI DARUWALLA	216
"The Decolonised Muse (A Personal Statement)"	217
ANITA DESAI	222
"On Being an Indian Writer Today"	223
GIRISH KARNAD	227
From Author's Introduction to Three Plays	228
NABANEETA DEV SEN	238
"In Poetry"	239
"Alphabets"	239
"Combustion"	240
"The Year's First Poem"	240
"Broken Home"	241
From My Life, My Work	241
ADIL JUSSAWALLA	248
"Being There: Aspects of an Indian Crisis"	249
	_
AMBAI (C. S. LAKSHMI)	259
From "Squirrel"	260

PAUL ZACHARIA	268
From "Sinning in Mysore"	269
K. SATCHIDANANDAN	278
"Gandhi and Poetry"	279
"Stammer"	280
"Burnt Poems"	281
"About Poetry, About Life"	282
ARVIND KRISHNA MEHROTRA	291
"Engraving of a Bison on Stone"	292
"Distance in Statute Miles"	292
"Where Will the Next One Come From"	293
"Inscription"	294
SALMAN RUSHDIE	295
"Imaginary Homelands"	296
AGHA SHAHID ALI	307
From "In Search of Evanescence"	308
NAMDEO DHASAL	314
"Approaching the Organized Harem	
of the Octopus"	315
"Mandakini Patil: A Young Prostitute,	
My Intended Collage"	316
"The Day She Was Gone"	318
MEENA ALEXANDER	319
From "Illiterate Heart"	320
"Crossroad"	324
GITHA HARIHARAN	327
"A Note on Writing When Dreams Travel"	328
VIJAY SESHADRI	332
"My First Fairy Tale"	333
1550	

15

AMITAV GHOSH	338
From "The Testimony of My Grandfather's	
Bookcase"	339
RAGHAVAN ATHOLI	350
"The Poet with a Forest Fire Inside"	351
JEET THAYIL	357
"The Heroin Sestina"	358
"Malayalam's Ghazal"	359
"Spiritus Mundi"	360
ARUNDHATI ROY	362
From "Like Sculpting Smoke: Arundhati Roy	
on Fame, Writing and India"	363
AMIT CHAUDHURI	374
From "Interlude"	375
SUDEEP SEN	386
"Photons, Graphite, Blood"	387
"Postcards"	389
ARUNDHATHI SUBRAMANIAM	392
"To the Welsh Critic Who Doesn't Find Me	
Identifiably Indian"	393
"First Draft"	395
)/)
S. SUKIRTHARANI	396
"Night Beast"	397
"Gigantic Trees"	398
"Untitled Poem—2"	399
"Pariah God"	400

Acknowledgments 401 Credits 405