Concert of

VOICES

An Anthology of World Writing in English

edited by Victor J. Ramraj
Concert of VOICES
“To redeem the word from the superstition of the word is to humanize it, to make it participate once more in a living concert of voices . . .”

Geoffrey Hartman, *Beyond Formalism*
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# Table of Contents

Table of Contents: Genres  x
Table of Contents: Regions  xv
Acknowledgements  xxi
Introduction  xxvi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Work Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)</td>
<td><em>Girls at War</em> (story)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ama Ata Aidoo (Ghana)</td>
<td><em>No Sweetness Here</em> (story)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agha Shahid Ali (Pakistan)</td>
<td><em>Snowmen</em> (poem)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulk Raj Anand (India)</td>
<td><em>Duty</em> (story)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Arasanayagam (Sri Lanka)</td>
<td><em>I Have No Country</em> (poem)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>We Have Our Genealogies</em> (poem)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ven Begamudré (India-Canada)</td>
<td><em>Honestly, as in the Day</em> (story)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Bennett (Jamaica)</td>
<td><em>Anancy an Ticks</em> (folk tale)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Bissoondath (Trinidad-Canada)</td>
<td><em>Man as Plaything, Life as Mockery</em> (story)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerry Bostock (Australia)</td>
<td><em>Here Comes the Nigger</em> (play)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionne Brand (Trinidad-Canada)</td>
<td><em>Return I</em> (poem)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>... Seen</em> (story)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Kamau Brathwaite (Barbados)</td>
<td><em>Red Rising</em> (poem)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Brutus (South Africa)</td>
<td><em>I Am Alien in Africa and Everywhere</em> (poem)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I Am Out of Love with You For Now</em> (poem)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buhkwujjenene (Canada)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanaboozhoo Creates the World (folk tale)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willi Chen (Trinidad)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam’s Iron Chest (story)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Clarke (Barbados-Canadian)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Man (story)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saros Cowasjee (India-Canada)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Father’s Medals (story)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rienzi Crusz (Sri Lanka-Canada)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred D’Aguiar (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril Dabydeen (Guyana-Canada)</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senorita (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephants Make Good Stepladders (poem)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Dabydeen (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catching Crabs (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Poetry (poem)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamala Das (India)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Introduction (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Looking Glass (poem)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manoj Das (India)</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounters (story)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Davis (Australia)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Fantasy—Black Fact (story)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Back (story)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita Desai (India)</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Textures (story)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice de Souza (India)</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Mother (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return (poem)</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissim Ezekiel (India)</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna Goodison (Jamaica)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadine Gordimer (South Africa)</td>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet? (story)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Hagedorn (Philippines-USA)</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Song of Bullets (poem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Claire Harris (Trinidad-Canada)
- Framed (poem)
- And So . . . Home (poem)
- Backstage at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary (poem)

Wilson Harris (Guyana-UK)
- Kanaima (story)

Bessie Head (South Africa)
- The Collector of Treasures (story)

Keri Hulme (New Zealand)
- Hooks and Feelers (story)

Witi Ihimaera (New Zealand)
- A Game of Cards (story)

Sally Ito (Canada)
- Sisters of the Modern Mind (poem)

Arnold Itwaru (Guyana-Canada)
- arrival (poem)
- roomer (poem)
- separate ways (poem)

Sunita Jain (India)
- Fly the Friendly Skies (story)

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (India-USA)
- The Old Lady (story)

Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua-USA)
- My Mother (story)
- On Seeing England for the First Time (essay)

Thomas King (Canada)
- Coyote Goes to Toronto (poem)

Joy Kogawa (Canada)
- What Do I Remember of the Evacuation (poem)
- When I Was a Little Girl (poem)

Shirley Geok-lin Lim (Malaysia-USA)
- Ah Mah (poem)
- To Li Poh (poem)

Jayanta Mahapatra (India)
- The Abandoned British Cemetery at Balasore (poem)

Lee Maracle (Canada)
- Charlie (story)

Dambudzo Marechera (Zimbabwe)
- Black Skin What Mask (story)
Pauline Melville (Guyana-UK)
*The Truth is in the Clothes* (story) 235

Sudesh Mishra (Fiji)
*The Black Pagoda: Konarak* (poem) 247
*Mt. Abu: St. Xavier’s Church* (poem) 247

Rohinton Mistry (India-Canada)
*Swimming Lessons* (story) 248

Timothy Mo (Hong Kong-UK)
*One of Billy’s Boys: A Memoir* (story) 268

Tololwa Marti Mollie (Tanzania-Canada)
*A Night Out* (story) 273

Toshio Mori (USA)
*Slant-Eyed Americans* (story) 277

Mervyn Morris (Jamaica)
*To an Expatriate Friend* (poem) 283
*Family Pictures* (poem) 284

Es’kia Mphahlele (South Africa)
*The Coffee-Cart Girl* (story) 286

Bharati Mukherjee (India-USA)
*Hindus* (story) 292

V. S. Naipaul (Trinidad-UK)
*B. Wordsworth* (story) 300
*Jasmine* (essay) 306

Satendra Nandan (Fiji)
*Return to a Certain Darkness* (essay) 312

R. K. Narayan (India)
*Mother and Son* (story) 323

Mudrooroo Narogin (formerly Colin Johnson; Australia)
*A Missionary Would I Have Been* (story) 327

Njabulo S. Ndebele (South Africa)
*Guilt and Atonement: Unmasking History for the Future* (essay) 336

Ngitji Ngitji (formerly Mona Tur; Australia)
*The Possum Woman* (story) 344

Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Kenya)
*Goodbye Africa* (story) 346

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (formerly Kath Walker; Australia)
*Gooboora, the Silent Pool* (poem) 353
*The Past* (poem) 354
Gabriel Okara (Nigeria)
The Snowflakes Sail Gently Down (poem) 355

Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lanka-Canada)
Light (poem) 357

Sasenarine Persaud (Guyana-Canada)
Tiger Swami (poem) 360

M. Nourbese Philip (Trinidad-Canada)
She Tries Her Tongue; Her Silence Softly Breaks (poem) 362
Transfiguration (poem) 362

Jean Rhys (Dominica-UK)
I Used to Live Here Once (story) 364

Salman Rushdie (India-UK)
"Commonwealth Literature" Does Not Exist (essay) 366

Samuel Selvon (Trinidad-UK-Canada)
Brackley and the Bed (story) 374
Turning Christian (story) 378

Olive Senior (Jamaica)
The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream (story) 385

Vikram Seth (India)
from The Golden Gate 12.1-12.8 (poem) 397

Philip Sherlock (Jamaica)
The Warau People Discover the Earth (folk tale) 401

Leslie Marmon Silko (USA)
Yellow Woman (story) 405

Wole Soyinka (Nigeria)
The Trials of Brother Jero (play) 414

Subramani (Fiji)
Sautu (story) 438

Mary TallMountain (USA)
There is No Word for Goodbye (poem) 447

Edwin Thumboo (Singapore)
Ulysses by the Merlion (poem) 448

M. G. Vassanji (Tanzania-Canada)
The London-Returned (story) 450

Alafina Vuki (Fiji)
Four-Year Wisdom (poem) 459

Fred Wah (Canada)
from Breathin' my name with a sigh (poem) 461
Derek Walcott (St. Lucia)
   Ruins of a Great House (poem) 462
   A Letter from Brooklyn (poem) 464
   Midsummer LII (poem) 465
Albert Wendt (Western Samoa-New Zealand)
   Crocodile (story) 466
May Wong (Singapore)
   The Shroud (poem) 473
Arthur Yap (Singapore)
   2 Mothers in a HDB Playground (poem) 474
Biographical Notes 477
Index of Titles 487

Table of Contents: Genres

Fiction

Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)
   Girls At War 1
Ama Ata Aidoo (Ghana)
   No Sweetness Here 14
Mulk Raj Anand (India)
   Duty 30
Ven Begamudré (India-Canada)
   Honestly, as in the Day 38
Louise Bennett (Jamaica)
   Anancy an Ticks 47
Neil Bissoondath (Trinidad-Canada)
   Man as Plaything, Life as Mockery 49
Dionne Brand (Trinidad-Canada)
   . . . Seen 69
Buhkwujjenene (Canada)
   Nanaboozhoo Creates the World 77
Willi Chen (Trinidad)
   Assam's Iron Chest 78
Austin Clarke (Barbados-Canadian)
   The Man 82
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saros Cowasjee (India-Canada)</td>
<td><em>His Father's Medals</em></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manoj Das (India)</td>
<td><em>Encounters</em></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Davis (Australia)</td>
<td><em>White Fantasy—Black Fact</em></td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Pay Back</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita Desai (India)</td>
<td><em>Surface Textures</em></td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadine Gordimer (South Africa)</td>
<td><em>Is There Nowhere Else Where</em></td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>We Can Meet?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Harris (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td><em>Kanaima</em></td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bessie Head (South Africa)</td>
<td><em>The Collector of Treasures</em></td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keri Hulme (New Zealand)</td>
<td><em>Hooks and Feelers</em></td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witi Ihimaera (New Zealand)</td>
<td><em>A Game of Cards</em></td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunita Jain (India)</td>
<td><em>Fly the Friendly Skies</em></td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (India-USA)</td>
<td><em>The Old Lady</em></td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua-USA)</td>
<td><em>My Mother</em></td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Maracle (Canada)</td>
<td><em>Charlie</em></td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dambudzo Marechera (Zimbabwe)</td>
<td><em>Black Skin What Mask</em></td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Melville (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td><em>The Truth is in the Clothes</em></td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohinton Mistry (India-Canada)</td>
<td><em>Swimming Lessons</em></td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tololwa Marti Mollel (Tanzania-Canada)</td>
<td><em>A Night Out</em></td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toshio Mori (USA)</td>
<td><em>Slant-Eyed Americans</em></td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Es’kia Mphahlcle (South Africa)
The Coffee-Cart Girl

Bharati Mukherjee (India-USA)
Hindus

V. S. Naipaul (Trinidad-UK)
B. Wordsworth

R. K. Narayan (India)
Mother and Son

Mu’dorooro Naregin (formerly Colin Johnson; Australia)
A Missionary Would I Have Been

Ngitji Ngitji (formerly Mona Tur; Australia)
The Possum Woman

Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Kenya)
Goodbye Africa

Jean Rhys (Dominica-UK)
I Used to Live Here Once

Sam Selvon (Trinidad-UK-Canada)
Brackley and the Bed
Turning Christian

Olive Senior (Jamaica)
The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream

Philip Sherlock (Jamaica)
The Warau People Discover the Earth

Leslie Marmon Silko (USA)
Yellow Woman

Subramani (Fiji)
Sautu

M. G. Vassanji (Tanzania-Canada)
The London-Returned

Albert Wendt (Western Samoa-New Zealand)
Crocodile

Poetry

Jean Arasanayagam (Sri Lanka)
I Have No Country

Dionne Brand (Grenada-Canada)
Return I

Edward Kamau Brathwaite (Barbados)
Red Rising
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Brutus (South Africa)</td>
<td>I Am Alien in Africa and Everywhere</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I Am Out of Love with You For Now</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rienzi Crusz (Sri Lanka-Canada)</td>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred D’Aguiar (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril Dabydeen (Guyana-Canada)</td>
<td>Senorita</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elephants Make Good Stepladders</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Dabydeen (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td>Catching Crabs</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The New Poetry</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamala Das (India)</td>
<td>An Introduction</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Looking Glass</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice de Souza (India)</td>
<td>Catholic Mother</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Return</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissim Ezekiel (India)</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna Goodison (Jamaica)</td>
<td>Survivor</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Hagedorn (Philippines-USA)</td>
<td>The Song of Bullets</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Harris (Trinidad-Canada)</td>
<td>Framed</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And So . . . Home</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Backstage at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Ito (Canada)</td>
<td>Sisters of the Modern Mind</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold Itwaru (Guyana-Canada)</td>
<td>arrival</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roomer</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>separate ways</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas King (Canada)</td>
<td>Coyote Goes to Toronto</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy Kogawa (Canada)</td>
<td>What Do I Remember of the Evacuation</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When I Was a Little Girl</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shirley Geok-lin Lim (Malaysia-USA)
   *Ah Mah*
   *To Li Poh* 218

Jayanta Mahapatra (India)
   *The Abandoned British Cemetery at Balasore* 220

Sudesh Mishra (Fiji)
   *The Black Pagoda: Konarak*
   *Mt. Abu: St. Xavier’s Church* 247

Mervyn Morris (Jamaica)
   *To an Expatriate Friend*
   *Family Pictures* 283

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (formerly Kath Walker; Australia)
   *Gooboora, the Silent Pool*
   *The Past* 353

Gabriel Okara (Nigeria)
   *The Snowflakes Sail Gently Down* 355

Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lanka-Canada)
   *Light* 357

Sasenarine Persaud (Guyana-Canada)
   *Tiger Swami* 360

M. Nourbese Philip (Trinidad-Canada)
   *She Tries Her Tongue; Her Silence Softly Breaks*
   *Transfiguration* 362

Vikram Seth (India)
   from *The Golden Gate 12.1-12.8* 397

Mary TallMountain (USA)
   *There is No Word for Goodbye* 447

Edwin Thumboo (Singapore)
   *Ulysses by the Merlion* 448

Alafina Vuki (Fiji)
   *Four-Year Wisdom* 459

Fred Wah (Canada)
   from *Breathin’ my name with a sigh* 461

Derek Walcott (St. Lucia)
   *Ruins of a Great House*
   *A Letter from Brooklyn*
   *Midsummer LII* 462

May Wong (Singapore)
   *The Shroud* 473
Arthur Yap (Singapore)
  2 Mothers in a HDB Playground  474

Drama

Gerry Bostock (Australia)
  Here Comes the Nigger  60

Wole Soyinka (Nigeria)
  The Trials of Brother Jero  414

Essays

Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua-USA)
  On Seeing England for the First Time  209

Timothy Mo (Hong Kong-UK)
  One of Billy's Boys: A Memoir  268

V. S. Naipaul (Trinidad-UK)
  Jasmine  306

Satendra Nandan (Fiji)
  Return to a Certain Darkness  312

Njabulo S. Ndebele (South Africa)
  Guilt and Atonement: Unmasking History for the Future  336

Salman Rushdie (India-UK)
  "Commonwealth Literature" Does Not Exist  366

Table of Contents: Regions

Africa

Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)
  Girls At War (story)  1

Ama Ata Aidoo (Ghana)
  No Sweetness Here (story)  14

Dennis Brutus (South Africa)
  I Am Alien in Africa and Everywhere (poem)  75
  I Am Out of Love with You For Now (poem)  75

Nadine Gordimer (South Africa)
  Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet? (story)  133

Bessie Head (South Africa)
  The Collector of Treasures (story)  152

Dambudzo Marechera (Zimbabwe)
  Black Skin What Mask (story)  229
Tololwa Marti Mollel (Tanzania-Canada)
A Night Out (story) 273

Es’kia Mphahlele (South Africa)
The Coffee-Cart Girl (story) 286

Njabulo S. Ndebele (South Africa)
Guilt and Atonement: Unmasking History for the Future (essay) 336

Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Kenya)
Goodbye Africa (story) 346

Gabriel Okara (Nigeria)
The Snowflakes Sail Gently Down (poem) 355

Wole Soyinka (Nigeria)
The Trials of Brother Jero (play) 414

M. G. Vassanji (Tanzania-Canada)
The London-Returned (story) 450

Canada

Ven Begamudré (India-Canada)
Honestly, as in the Day (story) 38

Neil Bissoondath (Trinidad-Canada)
Man as Plaything, Life as Mockery (story) 49

Dionne Brand (Trinidad-Canada)
Return I (poem) 68
... Seen (story) 69

Buhkwujjenene (Canada)
Nanabozho Creates the World (folk tale) 77

Austin Clarke (Barbados-Canadian)
The Man (story) 82

Saros Cowasjee (India-Canada)
His Father’s Medals (story) 98

Rienzi Crusz (Sri Lanka-Canada)
Roots (poem) 103

Cyril Dabydeen (Guyana-Canada)
Señorita (poem) 106
Elephants Make Good Stepladders (poem) 107

Claire Harris (Trinidad-Canada)
Framed (poem) 140
And So... Home (poem) 141
Backstage at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary (poem) 142
Sally Ito (Canada)
*Sisters of the Modern Mind* (poem) 186

Arnold Itwaru (Guyana-Canada)
*arrival* (poem) 189
*roomer* (poem) 189
*separate ways* (poem) 190

Thomas King (Canada)
*Coyote Goes to Toronto* (poem) 214

Joy Kogawa (Canada)
*What Do I Remember of the Evacuation* (poem) 216
*When I Was a Little Girl* (poem) 217

Lee Maracle (Canada)
*Charlie* (story) 222

Rohinton Mistry (India-Canada)
*Swimming Lessons* (story) 248

Tololwa Marti Mollel (Tanzania-Canada)
*A Night Out* (story) 273

Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lanka-Canada)
*Light* (poem) 357

Sasenarine Persaud (Guyana-Canada)
*Tiger Swami* (poem) 360

Sam Selvon (Trinidad-UK-Canada)
*Brackley and the Bed* (story) 374
*Turning Christian* (story) 378

M. G. Vassanji (Tanzania-Canada)
*The London-Returned* (story) 450

Fred Wah (Canada)
*From Breathin' my name with a sigh* (poem) 461

Caribbean

Louise Bennett (Jamaica)
*Anancy an Ticks* (folk tale) 47

Neil Bissoondath (Trinidad-Canada)
*Man as Plaything, Life as Mockery* (story) 49

Dionne Brand (Grenada-Canada)
*Return I* (poem) 68
... *Seen* (story) 69

Edward Kamau Brathwaite (Barbados)
*Red Rising* (poem) 72
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title/Genre</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willi Chen (Trinidad)</td>
<td><em>Assam’s Iron Chest</em> (story)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Clarke (Barbados-Canadian)</td>
<td><em>The Man</em> (story)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred D’Aguiar (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td><em>Home</em> (poem)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril Dabydeen (Guyana-Canada)</td>
<td><em>Senorita</em> (poem)</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Elephants Make Good Stepladders</em> (poem)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Dabydeen (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td><em>Catching Crabs</em> (poem)</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The New Poetry</em> (poem)</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna Goodison (Jamaica)</td>
<td><em>Survivor</em> (poem)</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Harris (Trinidad-Canada)</td>
<td><em>Framed</em> (poem)</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>And So... Home</em> (poem)</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Backstage at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary</em> (poem)</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Harris (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td><em>Kanaima</em> (story)</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold Itwaru (Guyana-Canada)</td>
<td><em>arrival</em> (poem)</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>roomer</em> (poem)</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>separate ways</em> (poem)</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua-USA)</td>
<td><em>My Mother</em> (story)</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>On Seeing England for the First Time</em> (essay)</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Melville (Guyana-UK)</td>
<td><em>The Truth is in the Clothes</em> (story)</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mervyn Morris (Jamaica)</td>
<td><em>To an Expatriate Friend</em> (poem)</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Family Pictures</em> (poem)</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. S. Naipaul (Trinidad-UK)</td>
<td><em>B. Wordsworth</em> (story)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Jasmine</em> (essay)</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasenarine Persaud (Guyana-Canada)</td>
<td><em>Tiger Swami</em> (poem)</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Nourbese Philip (Trinidad-Canada)</td>
<td><em>She Tries Her Tongue; Her Silence Softly Breaks</em> (poem)</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Transfiguration</em> (poem)</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Rhys (Dominica-UK)</td>
<td>I Used to Live Here Once (story)</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Selvon (Trinidad-UK-Canada)</td>
<td>Brackley and the Bed (story)</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turning Christian (story)</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Senior (Jamaica)</td>
<td>The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream (story)</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Sherlock (Jamaica)</td>
<td>The Warau People Discover the Earth (folk tale)</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek Walcott (St. Lucia)</td>
<td>Ruins of a Great House (poem)</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Letter from Brooklyn (poem)</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midsummer LII (poem)</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Indian Subcontinent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mulk Raj Anand (India)</td>
<td>Duty (story)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Arasanayagam (Sri Lanka)</td>
<td>I Have No Country (poem)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ven Begamudré (India-Canada)</td>
<td>Honestly, as in the Day (story)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rienzi Crusz (Sri Lanka-Canada)</td>
<td>Roots (poem)</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamala Das (India)</td>
<td>An Introduction (poem)</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Looking Glass (poem)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manoj Das (India)</td>
<td>Encounters (story)</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita Desai (India)</td>
<td>Surface Textures (story)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice de Souza (India)</td>
<td>Catholic Mother (poem)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Return (poem)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissim Ezekiel (India)</td>
<td>Case Study (poem)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Hagedorn (Philippines-USA)</td>
<td>The Song of Bullets (poem)</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunita Jain (India)</td>
<td>Fly the Friendly Skies (story)</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (India-USA)
_The Old Lady_ (story) 194

Shirley Geok-lin Lim (Malaysia-USA)
_Ah Mah_ (poem) 218
_To Li Poh_ (poem) 219

Jayanta Mahapatra (India)
_The Abandoned British Cemetery at Balasore_ (poem) 220

Rohinton Mistry (India-Canada)
_Swimming Lessons_ (story) 248

Bharati Mukherjee (India-USA)
_Hindus_ (story) 292

R. K. Narayan (India)
_Mother and Son_ (story) 323

Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lanka-Canada)
_Light_ (poem) 357

Salman Rushdie (India-UK)
_“Commonwealth Literature” Does Not Exist_ 366

Vikram Seth (India)
from _The Golden Gate_ 12.1-12.8 (poem) 397

**South-East Asia**

Timothy Mo (Hong Kong-UK)
_One of Billy’s Boys: A Memoir_ (essay) 268

Edwin Thumboo (Singapore)
_Ulysses by the Merlion_ (poem) 448

May Wong (Singapore)
_The Shroud_ (poem) 473

Arthur Yap (Singapore)
_2 Mothers in a HDB Playground_ (poem) 474

**South Pacific**

Gerry Bostock (Australia)
_Here Comes the Nigger_ (play) 60

Jack Davis (Australia)
_White Fantasy—Black Fact_ (story) 115
_Pay Back_ (story) 121

Keri Hulme (New Zealand)
_Hooks and Feelers_ (story) 170

Witi Ihimaera (New Zealand)
_A Game of Cards_ (story) 181
Satendra Nandan (Fiji)

*Return to a Certain Darkness* (essay) 312

Mudrooroo Narogin (formerly Colin Johnson; Australia)

*A Missionary Would I Have Been* (story) 327

Ngiti Ngiti (formerly Mona Tur; Australia)

*The Possum Woman* (story) 344

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (formerly Kath Walker; Australia)

*Goobora, the Silent Pool* (poem) 353
*The Past* (poem) 354

Subramani (Fiji)

*Sautu* (story) 438

Alafina Vuki (Fiji)

*Four-Year Wisdom* (poem) 459

Albert Wendt (Western Samoa-New Zealand)

*Crocodile* (story) 466

**UK & USA**

Fred D’Aguiar (Guyana-UK)

*Home* (poem) 104

David Dabydeen (Guyana-UK)

*Catching Crabs* (poem) 108
*The New Poetry* (poem) 109

Jessica Hagedorn (Philippines-USA)

*The Song of Bullets* (poem) 137

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (India-USA)

*The Old Lady* (story) 194

Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua-USA)

*My Mother* (story) 204
*On Seeing England for the First Time* (essay) 209

Shirley Geok-lin Lim (Malaysia-USA)

*Ah Mah* (poem) 218
*Tô Li Poh* (poem) 219

Pauline Melville (Guyana-UK)

*The Truth is in the Clothes* (story) 235

Toshio Mori (USA)

*Slant-Eyed Americans* (story) 277

Bharati Mukherjee (India-USA)

*Hindus* (story) 292
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V. S. Naipaul (Trinidad-UK)</td>
<td><em>B. Wordsworth</em> (story)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Jasmine</em> (essay)</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Rhys (Dominica-UK)</td>
<td><em>I Used to Live Here Once</em> (story)</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salman Rushdie (India-UK)</td>
<td><em>&quot;Commonwealth Literature&quot; Does Not Exist</em></td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Selvon (Trinidad-UK-Canada)</td>
<td><em>Brackley and the Bed</em> (story)</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Turning Christian</em> (story)</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Marmon Silko (USA)</td>
<td><em>Yellow Woman</em> (story)</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary TallMountain (USA)</td>
<td><em>There is No Word for Goodbye</em> (poem)</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fred Wah

from *Breathin’ my name with a sigh*

my father hurting at the table
sitting hurting
at suppertime
deep inside very
far down inside
because I can’t stand the ginger
in the beef and greens
he cooked for us tonight
and years later tonight
that look on his face
appears now on mine
my children
my food
their food
my father
their father
me mine
the father
very far
very very far
inside
ACHEBE, Chinua (b. 1930) Born in Ogidi, Nigeria, he studied in Ibadan and London. His novels include *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1986). He has published stories, poetry, and essays, and has held teaching positions in Nigeria and the United States. He has been awarded honorary degrees in Canada, the USA, and the UK.

AIDOO, (Christina) Ama Ata (b. 1942) Born in Ghana, she was educated there and at Stanford University and now lives in the USA. A poet, playwright, and novelist, she has written the novel *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977), the play *Anowa* (1970), and several short stories.

ALI, Agha Shahid (b. 1949) Originally from Kashmir, he was educated in India and the USA. He currently lives in the USA, where he has taught at several universities and colleges. His publications include *The Half-Inch Himalayas* (1987) and *A Nostalgist’s Map of America* (1990).

ANAND, Mulk Raj (b. 1905) Born in Peshawar, India (now in Pakistan), he was educated in Punjab and in London. He earned his PhD in Philosophy in 1929. Actively involved in India’s struggle for independence, he served later as cultural advisor to the government. *Untouchable* (1935) was the first of many novels, stories, essays, and children’s books.

ARASANAYAGAM, Jean (b. 1940) Born in Sri Lanka into a Dutch Burgher family, she was educated there and in Scotland. She has published six volumes of poetry, including *Out of our Prisons We Emerge* (1987) and *Red Water Flows Clear* (1991), a collection of short stories, and a novel. She lectures at a teachers’ college in Sri Lanka.

BEGAMUDRE, Ven (b. 1956) Born in South India, he moved to Canada when he was six years old. He studied in the USA, Paris, and Ottawa. His publications include a collection of short stories, *A Planet of Eccentrics* (1990), and a novel, *Van de Graaff Days* (1993).

BENNETT, Louise (b. 1919) Born in Jamaica, she originally wrote poems in Standard English but abandoned that for Jamaican creole. She went to England on a drama scholarship and had a regular programme on the BBC. Now based
in Jamaica, she has written several volumes of poetry including *Jamaica Labrish* (1966), and has retold Jamaican folk tales in several published collections.


**BOSTOCK, Gerry** (b. 1942) Born in New South Wales, Australia, he became involved in street theatre and later in the political struggles for Aboriginal rights. He has written poetry, including *Black Man Coming* (1980), and several plays. He has done work for television. His documentary film *Lousy Little Sixpence* was produced in 1981.

**BRAND, Dionne** (b. 1953) Born in Trinidad, she immigrated to Canada in 1970. She is involved in the black community and in the educational system in Toronto. She has written *Sans Souci and Other Stories* (1988) and several volumes of poetry, including *Chronicles of the Hostile Sun* (1984) and *No Language is Neutral* (1990).

**BRATHWAITE, Edward Kamau** (b. 1930) Born in Barbados, he was educated at Harrison College, Barbados, and Cambridge University. His many volumes of poems include *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (1973), *Masks* (1968), and *Sun Poem* (1982). He has written several studies on Caribbean social and cultural history and has lectured in History at the University of the West Indies.

**BRUTUS, Dennis** (b. 1924) Born in Zimbabwe, he was educated in South Africa, where he studied English and Law. Because of opposition to apartheid, he was banned from South Africa. He currently lives and writes in the USA. His poetry collection *Letters to Martha* (1968) tells of his experiences of violence and degradation in prison.

**BUHKWUJENENE** (b. 1815-1900) He was the Ojibway chief who, in 1878, told the story of Nanaboozhoo creating the world to a group of Englishmen.

**CHEN, Willi** (b. 1934) Born In Trinidad, he is a short-story writer, poet, dramatist, painter, and sculptor. Some of his stories are collected in *King of the Carnival and Other Stories* (1988).

**CLARKE, Austin** (b. 1934) Born and educated in Barbados, he came to Canada in 1955 to study economics. He has published several novels, including *Survivors of the Crossing* (1964), *The Meeting Point* (1967), and *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* (1980) and several collections of short stories, including *Nine Men Who Laughed* (1986) and *In This City* (1992).
COWASJEE, Saras (b. 1931) Born in India, he studied at Agra University and the University of Leeds and now teaches English at the University of Regina. He has written two novels, including Goodbye to Elsa (1974), two collections of stories, and several essays and commentaries, and has edited several volumes of Indian stories.

CRUSZ, Rienzi (b. 1925) Born in Sri Lanka of Portuguese ancestry, he was educated at St. Joseph's College in Colombo and later taught there. In 1951, he studied library science in London. He immigrated to Canada in 1965 and has worked as a librarian. His volumes of poetry include Flesh and Thorn (1974) and A Time for Loving (1986).

D'AGUIAR, Fred (b. 1960) Born in London, he grew up in Guyana, but returned to England, where he now resides. A poet and dramatist, his volumes of poems include Mama Dot (1985) and Airy Hall (1989).

DABYDEEN, Cyril (b. 1945) Born in Guyana, he came to Canada in 1970 and attended Queen's University. He has published several volumes of poetry, including Distances (1977) and Coastland (1989), two volumes of short stories, and two novellas.

DABYDEEN, David (b. 1955) Born in Berbice, Guyana, he immigrated to England when he was thirteen years old. He attended the universities of Cambridge and London. His publications include a scholarly work, Hogarth's Blacks (1987), several volumes of poetry, including Slave Song (1984), and a novel, The Intended (1991).

DAS, Kamala (b. 1934) Born and educated in India, she has written several volumes of poetry, including The Descendants (1967), short stories, and an autobiography, My Story (1975).

DAS, Manoj (b. 1934) Born in Orissa, India, he has written several volumes of short stories, fables, and fantasies, including The Vengeance and Other Stories (1980).

DAVIS, Jack (b. 1917) Born in Australia, he has been active as a poet, dramatist, and critic since the 1960s. He was the editor of the Aboriginal magazine Identity. His poetry collections include The First-Born and Other Poems (1970).

DESAI, Anita (b. 1937) Born in India to a German mother and Bengali father, she has written several novels, including Fire on the Mountain (1977) and Baumgartner's Bombay (1988), children's books, and a volume of short stories, Games at Twilight (1978). She currently teaches in the USA and Delhi.

DE SOUZA, Eunice (b. 1940) Born in Poona, India, she was educated in the
USA and in Bombay, where she is now Lecturer in English. She has written three volumes of poetry, including *Ways of Belonging* (1990), and children's books.

EZIKIEL, Nissim (b. 1924) Born in Bombay, India, of Jewish parents, he was educated in Bombay and London. He worked as a journalist, broadcaster, and teacher. He has written several volumes of poetry, including *The Unfinished Man* (1960), plays, reviews, and art criticism.

GOODISON, Lorna (b. 1947) Born in Jamaica, she attended the University of Iowa and Radcliffe College. An artist and poet, she has written several volumes of poetry, including *I Am Becoming My Mother* (1986) and *Heartease* (1988), and a collection of short stories, *Baby Mother and the King of Swords* (1990).

GORDIMER, Nadine (b. 1923) Born in Springs, near Johannesburg, she attended the University of Witwatersrand. She published her first collection of stories, *Face to Face*, in 1949. Since then she has published many other volumes of stories and such novels as *The Conservationist* (1974) and *My Son’s Story* (1990). She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991.

HAGEDORN, Jessica (b. 1949) Born and raised in the Philippines, she now lives in the USA. She has performed in the theatre and has published numerous poems, reviews, essays, and fiction, including two volumes of poetry and a novel, *Dog eaters* (1990).

HARRIS, Claire (b. 1937) Born in Trinidad, she was educated in Trinidad, Ireland, Jamaica, and Lagos. She now lives in Calgary. She has written many volumes of poetry, including *Fables from the Women’s Quarters* (1984) and *The Conception of Winter* (1988).


HEAD, Bessie (1937-86) Born in South Africa of a Scottish mother and black father, she became a teacher and later a journalist. She left South Africa in 1964 and spent the rest of her life in Botswana. She wrote four novels, including *Maru* (1971) and *A Question of Power* (1974), and two short-story collections.

HULME, Keri (b. 1947) Born in New Zealand, she lives in Okarito on the West Coast. She is of Maori (Kai Tahu) and Pakeha ancestry. She has written poetry and fiction. Her novel *the bone people* (1984) won the Pegasus Prize for Maori literature and the 1985 Booker Prize.

ITO, Sally (b. 1965) Born in Alberta, Canada, of Japanese ancestry (“my mother having come from Japan and my father being a third generation Japanese Canadian”), she studied in Japan and at the University of British Columbia. Her poems have appeared in Canadian magazines.

ITWARU, Arnold (b. 1942) Born in Guyana, he immigrated to Canada in 1969. He has written three collections of poetry, including *Entombed Survivals* (1987), a novel, *Shanti* (1988), and three non-fiction works, the most recent being *The Invention of Canada: Literary Texts and the Immigrant Imagination* (1990).

JAIN, Sunita (b. 1941) Born in India, she has studied in the USA and India. She writes in both Hindi and English and has published two volumes of stories, including *Eunuch of Time and Other Stories* (1982).

JHABVALA, Ruth Prawer (b. 1927) Born in Germany to a Polish/Jewish family, she immigrated to Britain in 1939. Educated in England, she lived in India for 25 years after her marriage. Her novels include *The Householder* (1960) and *Heat and Dust* (1975). She has written several collections of short stories and screenplays. She has been living in the USA since 1976.

KINCAID, Jamaica (b. 1949) Born in Antigua, she now lives and writes in the USA. Her fiction includes *At the Bottom of the River* (short stories, 1984) and *Annie John* (novel, 1985). She has written many critical essays.

KING, Thomas (b. 1943) Born in Canada of a Cherokee father and a Greek-German mother, he was Chair of Native American studies at the University of Minnesota. He also teaches at the University of Guelph, Canada. His publications include *Green Grass, Running Water* (novel, 1993), a number of short stories, poems, and a children’s book.

KOGAWA, Joy (b. 1935) Born in Vancouver, Canada, of Japanese ancestry, she grew up in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. She and her family were interned during the Second World War. Her volumes of poetry include *A Choice of Dreams* (1974). She has written a novel, *Obasan* (1981), based on her experiences during the war.

LAM, Dominic Man-Kit Raised in Hong Kong, he attended the University of British Columbia, and now divides his time between Hong Kong and Texas; he is a scientist as well as an internationally recognised artist.

LIM, Shirley Geok-Lin (b. 1843) Born in Malaysia, she immigrated to the USA and is a poet, critic, and academic. Her poetry collections include *Crossing the Peninsula*, which won the 1980 Commonwealth Poetry Prize. She is
MAHAPATRA, Jayanta  (b. 1928) Born and educated in Calcutta, India, he taught Physics for many years in Orissa. He has written thirteen volumes of poetry, including *The False Start* (1980), short stories and essays and has won several awards for his poetry.

MARACLE, Lee   (b. 1950) Born in Canada, she is a Native poet, who is immersed in the social and cultural life of her people. She was part-time writer in residence at the International School for Native People in British Columbia. She now lives in Toronto. Among her books of fiction is *Sojourner's Truth and Other Stories* (1990) and *Ravensong* (1993).

MARECHERA, Dambudzo  (1952-87) Born in Zimbabwe, he was educated at the University of Zimbabwe and Oxford University. He travelled extensively in Europe and Africa. He was a controversial but acclaimed writer whose publications include *The House of Hunger* (novel, 1978) and *Cemetery of Mind* (poetry, 1992).

MELVILLE, Pauline  Born in Guyana, she immigrated to London, working there on stage and in film. Her poems have been published in various anthologies. *Shape-shifter* (1990) is her first collection of short stories.

MISHRA, Sudesh  Born in Suva, Fiji, he received his doctorate from the Flinders University of South Australia. He has published three volumes of poetry, including *Memoirs of a Reluctant Traveller* (1994), and has recently made his debut as a playwright and actor. He is working on a novel set in Fiji.

MISTRY, Rohinton  (b. 1952) Born in Bombay, India, he came to Canada in 1975. He studied at the University of Bombay and the University of Toronto. His publications include *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (stories, 1987) and *Such a Long Journey* (novel, 1991).

MO, Timothy  (b. 1950) Born in Hong Kong to English and Cantonese parents, he has spent much of his life in the UK. His works include the novels *Sour Sweet* (1982) and *An Insular Possession* (1986).

MORI, Toshio  (b. 1910) Born in California, of Japanese ancestry, he has written several volumes of fiction, including *Woman from Hiroshima* (novel, 1979) and *Yokohama, California* (stories, 1949).

MOLLEL, Tololwa Marti  Born in Tanzania, he immigrated to Canada and has been teaching at the University of Alberta. His stories, many written for children, have been broadcast on the BBC, and have been published in such periodicals as *Kunapipi* and the *Greenfield Review*. 

482 / CONCERT OF VOICES
MORRIS, Mervyn (b. 1937) Born in Jamaica, he was educated there and at Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship. He has published several collections of poetry, including The Pond (1973), has edited a number of anthologies, and is a journalist and theatre critic. He teaches at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica.

MPHAHLELE, Es’kia (b. 1919) Born in Pretoria, South Africa, he has taught at universities in the USA and in South Africa, where he currently lives. His publications include The Wanderers (novel, 1971), Man Must Live (stories, 1946), and The African Image (essays, 1962, rev. 1974).

MUKHERJEE, Bharati (b. 1940) Born and educated in Calcutta, India, she attended universities in India and the USA. She spent some years in Canada before returning to the USA in 1981. Her publications include Wife (novel, 1975), Darkness (stories, 1985), and The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy (1987), with Clark Blaise.

NAIPAUl, V. S. (b. 1932) Born in Trinidad and educated at Queen's Royal College, Trinidad, he left for Oxford University in 1950, and has lived in England since then. His novels include The Mystic Masseur (1957), A House for Mr Biswas (1961), The Enigma of Arrival (1987), and A Way in the World (1994). He has published several collections of essays and travel books, including Among the Believers (1981) and India: A Million Mutinies Now (1990).

NANDAN, Satendra (b. 1939) Born in Fiji, he was educated there in the UK and Australia. He moved to Australia after the Fijian coups in 1987. He has published several volumes of poems, including Voices in the River (1985), and a novel The Wounded Sea (1991). His autobiography, Relics of a Rainbow: A Fijian Story, is due in 1995.

NARAYAN, R. K. (b. 1906) Born in Madras, India, he has spent most of his life in Mysore. He has published fourteen novels including Swami and Friends (1935) and The World of Nagaraj (1990), and numerous collections of stories, essays, and memoirs. He has travelled and lectured in the USA, and has received India's highest literary award, the Padma Bhushan award.

NAROGIN, Mudrooroo / Colin Johnson (b. 1938) Born in Narogin, Western Australia, he changed his name to reaffirm his tribal identity. He writes poetry, fiction, and literary criticism. His publications include Wild Cat Falling (novel, 1965) and The Song Circle of Jacky and Selected Poems (1986). He has taught Aboriginal Literature at Murdoch University and at the University of Queensland.

NDEBELE, Njabulo S. (b. 1948) Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, he was educated there, at Cambridge University, and the University of Denver. His
publications include *Fools and Other Stories* (1983) and *South African Literature and Culture* (1994).

NGITJI, Ngitji / Mona Tur  Born in South Australia, she writes poetry and prose, and is a teacher and translator of Aboriginal languages. She has written several critical articles on Aboriginal literature in *Identity*.

NGUGI WA THIONG'O  (b. 1938)  Born in Kenya, he was educated at universities in Uganda and Britain. His novels include *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *Petals of Blood* (1977). He has written plays and cultural and political commentaries, including *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986).

NOONUCCAL, Oodgeroo / Kath Walker  (1920-93)  Born in Australia, she was a member of the Noonuccal tribe and was an activist for her people. She published several poetry volumes, including *We Are Going* (1964), children's stories, and such traditional tales as *Stradbroke Dreamtime* (1972).

OKARA, Gabriel  (b. 1921)  Born and educated in Nigeria, he worked as a schoolteacher, bookbinder, and businessman until 1953, when his poem "Call of the River Nun" won a poetry award. His publications include *The Fisherman's Invocation* (poetry, 1978) and *The Voice* (novel, 1964).

ONDAATJE, Michael  (b. 1943)  Born in Sri Lanka of mixed Tamil, Sinhalese, and Dutch ancestry, he immigrated to Canada in 1962. His many volumes of poetry and prose include *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), *There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do* (1979), *Running in the Family* (1982), and *The English Patient* (1992), for which he won the Booker Prize. He is also a filmmaker and has written a critical study on Leonard Cohen (1970).

PERSAUD, Sasenarine  Born in Guyana, he now lives in Canada. A poet, novelist, and critic, his publications include *The Ghost of Bellow's Man* (novel, 1992) and *Demerara Telepathy* (1988).


RHYS, Jean  (1890-1979)  Born in Dominica to a Welsh father and Creole mother, she spent the first seventeen years of her life there. She left for Britain and Paris where she spent the rest of her life. She wrote five novels, including *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), several short-story collections, and an autobiography.

RUSHDIE, Salman  (b. 1947)  Born in Bombay, India, Rushdie was educated

SELVON, Sam (1923-94) Born in Trinidad, the son of an East Indian father and half-Scottish mother, he immigrated to England in 1954 and moved to Calgary in 1978. He wrote ten novels, including *An Island Is a World* (1955), *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), and *Moses Migrating* (1983), numerous short stories, essays, screenplays, and plays for radio and television.

SENIOR, Olive (b. 1941) Born in Jamaica, she was educated there, in Canada, and in Britain. An editor and journalist, her publications include *Talking of Trees* (poems, 1985), *Summer Lightning* (stories, 1986), and *The Arrival of the Snake Woman* (stories, 1989).


SHERLOCK, Philip (b. 1902) Born in Jamaica, he became Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies. He is the author and editor of more than fifteen volumes of poetry, history, and folk tales, including *Anansi the Spider Man* (1954).

SILKO, Leslie Marmon (b. 1948) Born in New Mexico, she is of mixed ancestry, part Laguna, part Mexican, and part white. She is the author of the novel *Ceremony* (1977), and several collections of stories, including *Laguna Woman* (1974). *Storyteller* (1981) is a selection of her poems and stories.


SUBRAMANI (b. 1943) Born in Fiji, he has studied in Suva, New Zealand, and Canada. His publications include *The Fantasy Eaters* (1988) a collection of stories and a number of critical essays. He now teaches at the University of the South Pacific in Suva.

TALLMOUNTAIN, Mary / Mary Randle (1918-94) Born in Alaska, the daughter of a Koyukon-Athabascan Indian mother and Scottish-Irish father,

THUMBOO, Edwin (b. 1933) Born in Singapore to a Tamil father and a Chinese mother, he now lectures at the University of Singapore. He has published six volumes of poetry, including *Gods Can Die* (1977) and *Ulysses by the Merlion* (1979).

VASSANJI, M. G. (b. 1950) Born in Kenya, he grew up in Tanzania but moved to London and later to the USA, where he obtained a doctorate in Physics. His publications include *The Gunny Sack* (novel, 1989) and *Uhuru Street* (stories, 1992). He currently lives in Toronto.

VUKI, Alafina Born in Suva, Fiji, she is a graduate of the University of the South Pacific and has taught at Dudley High School.

WAH, Fred (b. 1939) Born in Saskatchewan, Canada, he has written several collections of poetry, including *Selected Poems* (1980), *Breathin’ My Name with a Sigh* (1981), and *Waiting for Saskatchewan* (1986), which won the Governor General’s Award for Poetry, and *Rooftops* (1988). He teaches at the University of Calgary.

WALCOTT, Derek (b. 1930) Born in St. Lucia, he has lived in Trinidad and the USA. He currently teaches at Boston University. His volumes of poems include *25 Poems* (1948), *In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960* (1962), *Midsummer* (1984), and *Omeros* (1989). He has written several plays, including *Henri Christophe* (1950) and *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (1970). He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992.

WENDT, Albert (b. 1939) Born in Western Samoa, he is of Samoan and German ancestry. He has taught at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and at the University of Auckland. His novels include *Pouliuli* (1976) and *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* (1979). He has published several collections of stories and poems.


YAP, Arthur (b. 1943) Born in Singapore, he has written four collections of poetry, including *Commonplace* (1977) and *Man Snake Apple and Other Poems* (1986).