



A Life Misspent

By Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, Satti Khanna

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The tone of the book is comic. It would be good if people did not take offence at it and thereby reveal their inadequacy as readers.' -Nirala

Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', the first modern Hindi poet of India, is all of sixteen and not conversant with the Khari Boli Hindi of the litterateurs yet, when his father gets him married and sends him off to his in-laws' in Dalmau, UP to fetch his bride. There he meets a strange man called Kulli Bhaat who claims descent from a family of bards and, despite his mother-in-laws' reservations about Kulli being not quite straight, Nirala finds himself spending most of his time with Kulli. Then an influenza epidemic breaks out, claiming numerous lives, and Nirala's bereavement leaves him without mooring. Adrift on the boat of time, he seeks employment in various places but finds himself unable to stay away from Dalmau for long. Kulli, in the meanwhile, has taken a Muslim wife and become a champion of the untouchables.

Set in pre-Independence India, A Life Misspent is as much the account of an unlikely friendship as it is a coming-of-age story. A memoir on the making of one of the greatest poets of all time.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Suryakant Tripathi Nirala (1896-1961) is associated with the Chhayavaad movement in Hindi poetry in the first half of the twentieth-century. He was a prolific poet and essayist, who altered the landscape of Hindi letters by the range and intensity of his art. Some of his most important works are Parimal, Anaamika, Gitika, Tulsidas, Sandhya Kakali, Chaturi Chamar and Ravindra Kavita Kaanan. Satti Khanna is Associate Professor at Duke University, USA, where he teaches Indian Cinema and Modern Hindi Literature. He interprets the lives and works of contemporary Indian writers to an international audience through a series of documentary films and translations. He has translated Vinod Kumar Shukla's novels Naukar ki Kameez (The Servant's Shirt, Penguin, 1999) and Khilega to Dekhenge (Once It Flowers, HarperCollins, 2014) and Mohan Rakesh's travelogue Aakhiri Chattan Tak (To the Farthest Rock, HarperCollins, 2015). He has also translated Shukla's novella for young adults, Hari Ghas ki Chhappar Vaali Jhopdi Aur Bauna Pahadd, to be published by HarperCollins later this year.

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