BOOK REVIEW

The father's comic gift

BAPSI SIDHWA

It wasn't until Seepersad Naipaul's stories were aired on a BBC series *Caribbean Voices* in 1950, three years before his death, that he got the affirmation so vital to the creative process. His son, VS Naipaul, refers to the effect this had on his father in a poignant and illuminating *Foreword to Adventures of Gurudeva* when he says: 'my father, I believe, found his voice as a writer, developed his own comic gift, and wrote his best stories.'

Many of these stories are seamlessly incorporated in the *Adventures of Gurudeva*. It is a funny and readable book, and the ironic slant on life it presents is doubly valuable for the influence it has had V.S. Naipaul's own 'way of looking'.

'Gurudeva was only fourteen years old when he was taken away from the Mission School in the village in order to be married….' writes Seepersad Naipaul, and launches us directly on the *Adventures of Gurudeva* and the tribulations of the unfortunate Ritu, his twelve-year-old bride. This is how he describes the girl: 'Ritu was plump and pretty with a full brown face. Her eyes were large and dark, her movements slow, and there was something in her attitude that suggested the significant casualness of the martyr. She hardly spoke and seldom smiled, and it was difficult to say when she had last laughed.' Gurudeva does not approve of newly married girls laughing 'and if she sometimes forgot and did laugh out, he promptly silenced her with a look, if not with a slap.'

If, like me, you are a fan of Seepresad Naipaul's son VS Naipaul's earlier novels, *A House For Mr. Biswas* and *The Mystic Masseur* [which I read only recently], reading about Ritu, and the other characters in *Adventures of Gurudeva* is like watching layer upon layer of images grow transparent and unveil the prototypes of my favorite characters. There is a sense of *deja vu*, and the delectable shock of familiarity. I begin to wonder as I read on: have we here a father who seeded the remarkable writing of his gifted son? The book is worth reading for this, if for no other reason.

Having said this, I must say that *Adventures of Gurudeva* affords us a giddy yet gripping ride on the unbridled ego of its young protagonist. Commensurate with his standing and authority as a husband, Gurudeva exchanges his shorts for long trousers and finds 'ways to impress his wife that he was not one to be trifled with: that, in fact, he was his own man - her man at any rate - and that by virtue of it, he could beat her with impunity whenever he chose to do so.'

After a chapter titled *The Beating of Ritu* we arrive at the chapter headed - *The Making of a Bad-John* - and are informed: 'Gurudeva was ambitious. From boyhood he was obsessed with a craving for fame.' Since fame in the seedy little village in the West Indies is equated to notoriety, he 'wanted people to point at him and whisper, "See that fellow going there? He is Gurudeva, the bad-John!"'

The Adventures of Gurudeva By Seepersad Naipaul Buffalo Books

Gurudeva begins his climb to Bad-Johnhood by cutting and curing a collection of bamboo sticks which he hones into weapons. But the sticks need to be mounted, and he has yet to learn how to wield them as a stick-fighter, or *gatka* player. He approaches his father - [I quote the passage because there is a distinctive voice at work here, a transparency wrought by words through which images shine, and because, irresistibly, one finds its echoes in the Nobel Laureate's writing.] Gurudeva seeks out his father Jaimungal one morning to ask: '"Tell me Bap … wey I can find a good stick-mounter?"

The old man was squatting on his heels out in the yard, scraping his tongue with a split bit of twig as part of the morning ablutions. A glad gleam came into his eyes. His little sparrow was getting to be a hawk. He finished scraping his tongue and said: "A mounter? Why, there is no better man than Bhakhitan."'

There is a fight between three *gatka* teams, and Gurudeva plots his way to prison-glory by repeatedly whacking a drunken old man on the head with his *gatka*-stick and then bashing in the head of the poor policeman who tries to intervene. The joy-ride hits a snag around here, and the novel doesn't hold too well for a while when Gurudeva returns from prison. It soon picks up however, and the final chapters are again riveting.

Seepersad Naipaul's comedy, I suspect, is born out of his pain. Comedy often is. He was never able to get over the brutal way his father banished his mother from his house. His later life, too, was a struggle. In a letter he wrote his son he says: 'I have hardly written a story in which the principal characters have not been members of my own family'.

In another letter to his son he wrote: 'As soon as you can, get working on a novel. Write of things as they are happening now, be realistic, humorous when this comes in pat, but don't make it deliberately so. If you are at a loss for a theme, take me for it. Begin "He sat before the little table writing down the animal counterparts of all his wife's family … He wanted to be correct, went to work like a scientist. He wrote, 'The She-Fox.' Then 'The Scorpion'…"'

And his son in the *Foreword* writes: 'His stories, specially the earlier ones, never ceased to be important to me … I valued them for a way of looking, a knowledge of the literary process, a sense of the order and special reality (at once simpler and sharper than life) that written words could be seen to create. I thought of them, as I thought of my father's letters, as a private possession…'

Buffalo Books is to be congratulated for publishing *The Adventures of Gurudeva* in India, and doubly so because it is the first book to be published by them.

PAPERBACKS

A bagful of fictions

The Smiling School for Calvinists
Bill Duncan
Bloomsbury £6.99, pp199

BILL Duncan roots this collection of short stories in post-industrial Dundee and its surrounding coastal areas. The first chapter is a lovingly recounted description of the city and some of its lore, like the day in 1903 when an Inuit washed up on the Dundee shore and lived in the city for two years.

This is the only chapter in standard English; the rest are written in a muscular, energetic Scots slang that lends grit to Duncan's semi-magical stories. There's a great sense of fun here, with the ingenuity of boyish mischief. In 'A Bedtime Story', a young lad inflates his Puffa jacket with helium and floats to Scandinavia. Elsewhere, a boy is led astray by an irresistible urge to tamper with gas appliances.

Duncan has a fine ear for the texture of colloquial language, and he puts some sentences of unexpected elegance and descriptive intensity into the mouths of his teenage narrators.

Having It and Eating It
Sabine Durrant
Time Warner £5.99, pp343

HAVING It and Eating It is what Graham Greene might (if he was feeling generous) have called an 'entertainment' - that is, a well-executed example of light fiction. Maggie Owen, the narrator, is presented to us as a typical suburban thirtysomething: two young children, long-term partner in advertising, and bored with her stay-at-home existence.

Then she bumps into the most popular girl at her old school, Claire Masterson, a glamorous blonde who has jetted around the world for Vogue instead of settling down. Predictably enough, we follow Maggie's subsequent journey of self-discovery, via worries that her partner Jake is having an affair with Claire - and an affair of her own.

This novel is made by the well-observed details, the conversational prose and the sharp humour, along with Durrant's particular talent for the cadences of spoken English. Tracing Maggie's emotional curve, the likes of which have been written about more than a few times, is always good fun.

The Red Room
Nicci French
Penguin £6.99, pp407

THE Red Room leaves the reputation of Nicci French (aka journalists Nicci Gerrard and Sean French) for well-crafted thrillers wholly intact. This book, like their previous stories, is a masterclass in commanding the reader's attention.

The narrator is Kit Quinn, a young criminal psychologist. In chapter one she is attacked at a police station by the man she's interviewing. The incident leaves a scar on her cheek and an understandable fear of her work. But when Kit finally returns, she finds herself involved in a murder inquiry in which the prime suspect is her attacker.

French's lead character is brilliantly drawn - made credible by the subtle use of internal monologue and well-observed descriptions of her mixed feel ings for the underworld that she finds herself sucked into. For the most part, the prose is pleasingly economical - the right medium for such a tightly structured, intelligently paced story.

The Love of Stones
Tobias Hill
Faber £7.99, pp465

THIS novel moves Tobias Hill out of the territory occupied by some of our more fashionable young writers and into a space that his writing has defined as its own. The first paragraph is a seven-line description of a jewel called the Three Brethren, a triangle of stones connected by gold. What follows spans six centuries and encompasses three lives.

Hill gives us the obsessive searching of three people for the jewel, via a panoramic history that encompasses Elizabeth I and Victorian London. As in Underground, Hill's conceit is to combine the pace of a thriller with the stillness of an examination of the life of the mind. His dense prose is difficult to do well, and the writing can still fail under the the weight of too much over-wrought, rarefied description. But when Hill succeeds he writes beautifully and captures the essence of his characters' fixation with preciousness.

DAVID MATTIN
Courtesy: The Guardian

FEATURE

The real Lewis Carroll

KAROLINE LEACH

TWELVE photographs of Alice Liddell and her sisters, taken by Lewis Carroll and sold last year to an anonymous American buyer, are to remain in England after government intervention, and at a cost of over £ 600,000 to a consortium led by the National Museum of Film, Photography and Television and the National Portrait Gallery. They were auctioned in June 2001, along with books, letters, manuscripts and personal effects that had belonged to Alice Pleasance Hargreaves, as Alice Liddell became, and some of this material has presumably already made its way to join existing Carroll collections in Texas and Princeton. Not so the photographs (including Alice as the "Beggar Maid"), which, so the Arts Minister, Tessa Blackstone, is reported as saying, "are a very important part of our cultural heritage, taken by a widely acknowledged pioneer of photography".

Our fascination with Lewis Carroll and his works remains undiminished, but at its centre is the image of a Victorian clergyman, shy and prim, locked in perpetual childhood; a man who, said Virginia Woolf, "had no life", who sought comfort and companionship exclusively through friendships with "little girls", and who almost invariably lost interest in them when they reached puberty. In his biography (reviewed in the TLS , November 17, 1995), Morton N. Cohen describes Carroll as a man with "differing sexual appetites", who "desired the companionship of female children". More crudely, but perhaps also more honestly, the popular press has labelled him a "paedophile". It is certainly true that, if Dodgson was alive to take the "Beggar Maid" and others of his photographs today, he would probably find himself the object of less flattering attention from the authorities.

A previously unknown letter by Carroll which sheds light on the whole question went on sale more recently at Sotheby's (December 13, 2001). The letter was written in 1893 to a woman friend, Ethel Moberly Bell, and concerned child nudity. "Were I really able to draw", Carroll writes, "& had the offer of numerous child-friends as models, I think I would not dare to accept any over (say) 13. With the dawn of womanhood comes a new set of feelings, & new views of life, with which I should dread to interfere. But I hope Iris will be available for at least another year . . . ." The catalogue entry comments that the letter, clearly setting out the difficulties of an acquaintance with a child-friend once she had reached adolescence, would appear to be the most explicit expression of his sense of the loss of innocence entailed in what he called elsewhere "the transition". It clearly shows his sensitivity to the age of a child beyond which it was unsuitable for her to be drawn or photographed in the nude.

That it does, though it is harder to see where the writer gets the idea that the "difficulties" lay in Carroll's acquaintance with "a child-friend once she had reached adolescence", rather than in portraying her.

What commentators tend to overlook is that when Dodgson claims a feeling of delicacy over using models above the age of thirteen, he is partly adopting the orthodoxy of his time, which dictated that the naked child was the embodiment of innocence, while post- pubescent bodies were to be avoided by the artist with truly decent motives. (By the end of the century, as the catalogue points out, this orthodoxy was beginning to be questioned.) It should be stressed that to some extent this stance was a piece of attitudinizing on his part, for, contrary to his own claim, Dodgson did frequently employ models well over the age of thirteen indeed, in another part of the Sotheby's letter he frankly admits to having made nude studies of "two professional" adult models. He also made an unknown number of studies of "semi-draped" post-pubescent girls and women. Writing to Alice Kitchin in the summer of 1880, Dodgson clearly states his appreciation of such models: "I have accepted . . . the fact that Xie [aged sixteen] won't be taken in one [an "acrobatic dress"] ", but there ARE other damsels in the world, and it is quite possible that I might find one not averse to figure as an acrobat. I must however admit that it is less likely I shall find one as beautiful." (May 31, 1880.) Two months later, he informs Mrs Kitchin that "I used one of the 'swimming dresses' the other day for Gerida Drage [aged about sixteen] , and got a very picturesque result . . . she is rather handsome." (July 25, 1880.)

The same Sotheby's catalogue entry quotes Cohen's biography, in order to offer an apparently damning example of Carroll's peculiarities over children: the month before this letter (September 1893) Carroll had answered an enquiry from his sister, Mary, in which she raised the issue of his "unusual friendships". He replied that "the only two tests I now apply . . . are, first my own conscience, to settle whether I feel it to be entirely innocent and right, in the sight of God; secondly, the parents of my friend, to settle whether I have their full approval for what I do".

This would seem to bear out the story told by Cohen: that Carroll's sister, shocked at his inappropriate friendships with little girls, wrote to him in order to try to persuade him to give up this odd compulsion. But in reality the "child"-friends referred to in the letter were Gertrude Chataway, aged twenty-seven, and Edith Miller, aged twenty-three. Gertrude was at the time staying with Dodgson, unchaperoned, in his seaside lodgings in Eastbourne, and Edith was a local girl, a close friend of his and frequent visitor. Not for the first or last time, gossip about these highly unconventional relationships of his had become so virulent that it reached the ears of his sister Mary in Sunderland. Her letter and his reply deal, not with her disquiet over his associating with children (as few Victorians would have had any disquiet about that), but his scandalous relationships with wholly adult women.

Two years before, in September 1891, he had reported triumphantly to Ina Skene (née Liddell): "Mr Toole's company was on tour at Eastbourne . . . and his 'leading lady' was staying with me! Please don't be more shocked than is absolutely necessary." (Irene Vanbrugh, the leading lady referred to, was nineteen at the time.) And a year later he took Beatrice Hatch, aged twenty-eight, to stay with him at Eastbourne, and wrote to Edith (September 1894): "Please remember that, so long as Beatrice is here, it will be strictly proper for either of you to call, even alone . . . . And even after she has left, need you be supposed to know it, for a week or so? Your sexagenarian lover, C.L.D." (Edith's mother had begun to be nervous of the relationship between Dodgson and her daughter, and imposed a ban on Edith visiting his rooms alone. The letter clearly suggests a way round it.) On November 16, 1896, Dodgson wrote to Rachel Poole, one of his married women-friends: "Child-society is very delightful to me: but I confess that grown-up society is much more interesting!"

Internet

POEMS

Krishnakali by Rabindranath Tagore

TRANSLATED BY FAKRUL ALAM

I call her Krishnokoli, my dark blossom,
Though villagers call her the dark girl.
On a cloudy day I had seen her in the field
Had seen the dark girl with doe-black eyes!
Her veil had fallen and her head was bare.
Her tresses were swinging over her neck.
Dark? No matter how dark she was to others,
I had seen her beautiful doe-black eyes then!

Thick clouds had made darkness descend.
Her dappled cows had lowed in dismay.
Perplexed, this dark beauty
Had rushed out from her hut anxiously.
Casting her eyebrows intently at the sky,
She had heard the thunder rumbling.
Dark? No matter how dark she was to others
I had seen her beautiful doe-black eyes then!

Suddenly, the wind swept in from the east.
The paddy field lilted playfully in the breeze.
Standing by myself in a corner of the aisle,
I saw only her in the middle of the field.
Whether we had exchanged glances then,
I guess no one will ever know besides us.
Dark? No matter how dark she was to others,
I had seen her beautiful doe-black eyes then!

And so always and ever moist dark clouds
Sweep in from the northeast during summer.
And so always and ever dark soft shadows
Tell of the monsoon settling in *tamal* woods.
And thus it is during late monsoon nights
In flashes of happiness her face lights up for me.
Dark? No matter how dark she was to others.
I had seen her beautiful doe-like eyes then!

I call her Krishnakali, my dark blossom.
Let others call her what they will!
I had seen her in Mainapara's field
Had seen the dark girl's doe-black eyes.
She hadn't rolled her veil over her head.
Hadn't got the time to feel embarrassed!
Dark? No matter how dark she was to others,
I had seen her beautiful doe-like eyes then.

Krishna is of course divine, an incarnation of the divine sage Narayana; the word is also used to refer to someone with a dark complexion; however, "krishnakali" is also a flower-plant and also its flower, dark in hue.

A song for the new year

ENAMUL HAQ

Let's say happy new year
To greet 2002 into the 21st century
Blessed be the new-born year
For us and for everybody else
There is joy in sharing God's blessings
Which are boundless, uncountable
And unfathomable.

Let the new year bring smiles on every face
Of child, of youth, of old
Let every lip utter gratitude to god
For his mercy and kindness
For giving us life, wisdom and love in heart.

Let the new year not repeat
The twin-tower tragedy
Nor the Afghan war
Nor the massacre in Palestine.
The ocean waters should be for whales
To swim around in joy
Not for aircraft carriers to carry
Agents of death and destruction.
The mountains should stay clad in snow
Not be pounded to hunt for a distant enemy
The green pastures should invite
Young and old to waddle around in mirth
And not hide landmines
To maim people for life.
The air should be pure and life-giving
And not bear poison to kill.

Let the new year make the globe
Even a smaller village
Let people here call people there
As close neighbours
Let distance vanish into closeness
Let technology build bridges
Of friendship and amity
And not of deadly confrontation.

Let the new year proclaim universal friendship
As the new philosophy for the humanity
To bind each other into a bondage
Eternal and beautiful.

INTERVIEW

'The Kamakhya priests issued death threats against me'

***Indira Goswami**, winner of this year's Jnanpith Award, started writing when still in school. She lost her husband at a very young age, an event that left an indelible impression on her and consequently, her work. Recently, she was in the news, not only for having won the country's highest literary award, but also for having raised her voice against animal sacrifice at the legendary Kamakhya temple in Assam. She received death threats for doing that.*

When I go to meet her at her Probyn Road residence in Delhi University, Goswami is receiving guests. These are not friends dropping in for a cup of tea, but strangers, mostly Assamese, dropping in to ask for favours, a piece of advice. Goswami indulges them, like a politician giving evening darshan; often she gets the names mixed up but does not apologize. There is no doubt that Goswami is flamboyant - the nails on her left hand are painted bright red; kohl-lined eyes and a jet-black sari complete the Prima Donna effect. An unchained dog sits behind a walking stick slung diagonally across a doorway that opens into the drawing- room. Each time I move the Dictaphone closer to Goswami, he growls protectively. 'Don't worry,' she jokes reassuringly, '…

he's just expressing his concern.'

The dog's a credit to the training his master has imparted. No matter how lofty or whimsical the conversation gets - abortion, widowhood, suicide; the loneliness of writing or Goswami's work on the 'many Ramayanas' - the dog never once crosses the lakshman rekha. Excerpts from the interview…

You've said that you write from the heart. Yet your writing has been described as being completely unsentimental. How do you manage that - writing from the heart, which is, at the same time, unsentimental?

I am a restrained person. Yet, I also believe, that everything should begin from the heart. My characters are always realistic. I want the reader to be always able to touch them, and this is probably the reason why, rather than become emotionally drained, they remain practical. Which is not to say that I am not emotional when I describe certain scenes like the sacrifices of buffaloes at the Kamakhya temple, or the conditions of the widows at Vrindavan. At the same time, as I said before, the protagonists remain very practical and straightforward because the reader needs to be convinced

The Assamese film *Adajya*, by Dr Santwana Bardoloi, based on a novel by you won national and international fame. What was it like to see your words being turned into visual images? Do you think novels and stories can be turned into movies that do full justice to the written word? Arundhati Roy, for example, refused movie rights to *The God of Small Things*.

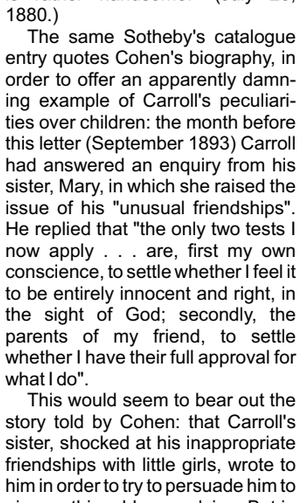
Santawana is a powerful director; she's taken some of the stories and adapted them for the big screen. A serial starring Nandita Das has also been shot based on the novel. This is not to say that in the past there haven't been bad adaptations. But I am not that possessive about my work - I want my work to be shared by other people, I want it scattered all over. I want people to play with it. Besides, I'm not as big a writer as Arundhati Roy!

You've said that Delhi gave you loneliness. But, would you say that it has been a productive loneliness? Do you think that your distance from Assam has actually been an asset when it comes to writing about that society?

You're right. Distance purifies one's feelings. I was lonely because no one from my family was present in Delhi. Every writer is a lonely person. I have a lasting friendship with loneliness. I have no social life; it's almost nil. I am totally devoted to my writing.

You've said that you haven't got creative satisfaction from any of your works? Why and do you expect to in the future? Do you feel you are moving towards your most perfect work? I don't think any artist can say: oh, this is my masterpiece. Kurosawa used to say that after he made a film would never see it again - it gave him a feeling of emptiness.

For instance, *Une Khowa Hawda*, is listed in the Sahitya



INDIRA GOSWAMI

Academy as a classic. Still, I feel that the elephant I portray there, my playmate whom I loved very much, the one who got mad and was shot dead in front of my eyes - I can never be sure if I managed to portray that feeling and real life situation successfully. That question still lingers. I used to taste opium from the mahout's mouth; in fact, the entire village was under the spell of opium. I always have this emptiness inside that I could have done better.

1972's *The Current of the Chenab* is about the plight of women labourers engaged in a bridge construction project across the Chenab. How did you get interested in that subject? Did you spend a lot of time with the women?

I had a godfather while I was writing in school. He was the editor of a widely circulated Assamese newspaper. He read my stories and predicted that I would be a very big writer. He began to publish some of my stories, and if he was not there, then, maybe, I would have become a painter because at the time I used to paint as well. He once told me that when you write, you should write about the plight of the downtrodden; write about your servants.

That advice stayed with me when I went to Kashmir after my marriage. Madhav, my husband, was an engineer with Hindustan Construction. The engineer's quarters were next to the barracks. It became a blessing for me since I could stay in close proximity to the workers in the barracks.

On the very first day, when I went for a walk with Madhav, I saw 6-7 pyres. I asked my husband what was going on by the riverbank. He was reluctant to tell me, probably because it was my first day there. Later, I found, that these workers had died in an accident, and they were cremated like this, without any ritual. Their family packed up and went away after a week or so. I was stunned. I asked my husband: what about their compensation but he didn't say anything.

Did you become friends with some of these workers? There was Bamdev who used to come and wash my utensils. The very first day I asked him to get some fish for my husband and he got me a *bam* fish! His own namesake! Most of the workers were from Kalahandi, Orissa. I have never seen such poverty in my life. I had seen Assamese villagers but they were never as bad as these labourers. They would assemble near our house. In 1965, women labourers used to get Rs 1.50 a day, half of what the men folk got. The others used to get Rs 3.50. My husband was killed in an accident, god knows if it was sabotage. The compensation for such a young, handsome and talented person of 26 years was just 10,000 rupees. You can imagine then, what would have been the compensation for labourers.

Vrindavan has figured a lot in your work, especially the plight of widows. Could you talk a little about your days in the town - apparently a time when you were often 'set upon by hoodlums' .Why did you decide to live there, and how influential was your relationship with Dr Upendra Lekharu of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy. What did Vrindavan teach you in the end?

At that time Vrindavan was, for some people, a fairyland with tongas, beautiful bushes, blooming flowers and a gently flowing Jamuna. Boats laden with flowers and passengers would come in from Mathura. But there was a dark side too; the city had fallen into ruins. When I went in 1968 and 1960, I found that most of the widows were from East Pakistan.

I went immediately after the death of my husband. I was under extreme depression. and used to carry sleeping tablets with me, ready to end my life any moment. But my guru was a great guide. He took me to show the hovels in which the widows lived; they hardly had any place to stay, they had a few boxes maybe and a couple of tattered clothes. A lot of them would be thrown out on the streets when they could not pay the rent for the hovel. Some of them would even end up dying on the streets. Still, they would go on singing for many days and nights, they would live on bhajans in the bhajan ashrams - begging and bhajans were their only source of sustenance. The rich people would donate blankets and rice after the singing was over. God knows if these donations ever reached their rightful recipients. The greatest fear of these widows was what would happen to their bodies after they died. Because of this fear, whatever they earned they put into a temple fund. Needless to say, seldom was the money used for its real purpose.

In the beginning, when I went there, I was around 25 years old and people used to think that I was a discarded widow. I stayed in the temple downstairs, my guru slept upstairs. Ruffians would follow me wherever I went.

Thankfully, my guru said: you have to collect material for your book; I'll come with you. He was very kind about the whole thing. It was a miracle, my guru going wherever I did. Luckily, I could do my research work, and at the same time, finish my novel. The novel is the evidence of my mental condition at the time.

Assamese has a huge readership like Malayalam and Bengali, doesn't it?

Assamese people have welcomed my novels even though most of them are set outside Assam and even the protagonists are not Assamese. You'll be surprised to know that my novels became bestsellers in my place; some have gone into more than 12 editions. If I go to villages in Assam now, people will collect money and erect big gates for me. Mostly, people do this for ministers but in our village that is the kind of love I get. It has to be seen to be believed. My books sell like anything. The publishers line up outside my house.

That's quite remarkable, I don't think Hindi writers have publishers queuing up outside?

I've heard about the state of Hindi and feel sorry for it. But it just might be improving. Kamleshwar sent me his Kitne Pakistan and I hear it was sold out in the very first year. Big writers like Kamleshwar and Bhishm Sahni seem to be doing well, they have read my works also. Bhishm Sahni has written a beautiful passage on my Une Khowa Howda. I consider him one of the greatest Indian writers.

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