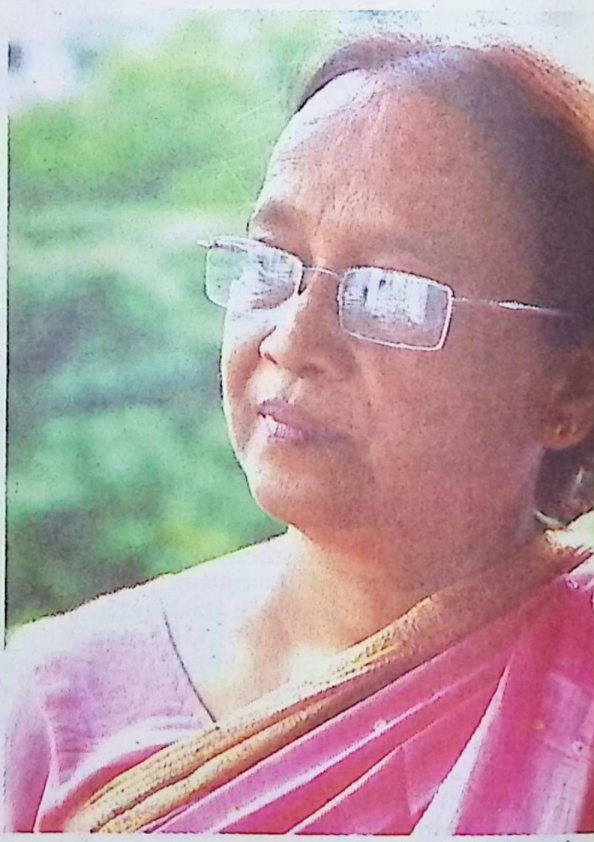
In Conversation with Selina Hossain

Selina Hossain has been awarded the 'Ekushe Padak' this year. She has been writing for more than four decades. One of the leading female writers in Bangladesh, Hossain was born on June 14, 1947 in Rajshahi. She started writing in the 60s and her first book, a collection of short stories, came out in 1969. She has written more than 60 books so far. *Japito Jibon*, one of her books, is taught at Rabindra Biswa Bharati University and another book named *Nirontor Ghontadhoni* is being taught at Jadhovpur University. Many of her works have been translated into different languages. JACKIE KABIR talks to her about her life and works.



Selina Hossain

How long have you been writing?

I have been writing from 1964. So it has been forty years.

Did you start writing fiction from the beginning?

I wrote poems first. When we were young, we used to live in Rajshahi because of my father's job. I used to fill the dairies up with poems. Some of which were published in different magazines in Dhaka. But as I grew older I realised that the background that I grew up needed to be portrayed on a bigger canvas and poems would be insufficient for that, so I switched to stories and narratives. In 1964 there was a writing competition in the Rajshahi division. I was an intermediate student at that time; all the colleges participated in that competition. I sent a short story and won the first prize. That was the first time I ventured into writing.

You have mostly portrayed the less fortunate or sometimes even the oppressed, why is this so?

Well I always look for variation of subjects in my work. The reason behind this is that we stayed in Bogra near the mighty river Korotoa in the fifties. Besides his regular job, my father used to practice Homeopathy. As a child I was appointed as his helper for making the small beads of sugar. As I would do this I would hear different stories from people. As my father would treat the villagers they would narrate sad, happy episodes of their lives. I was curious to know these stories,