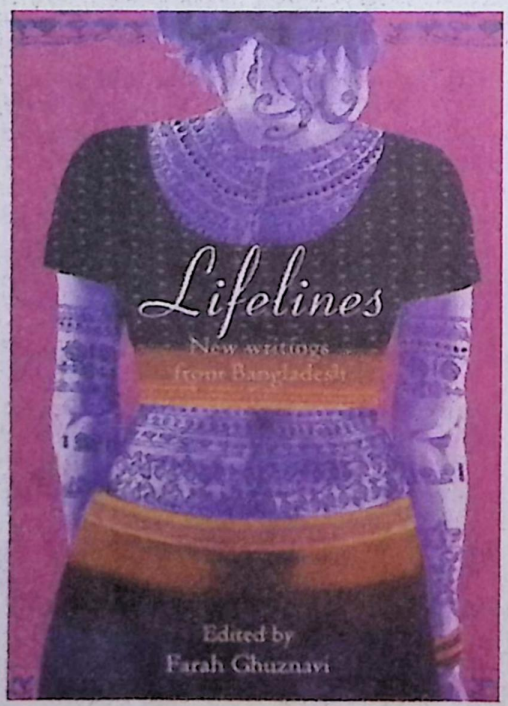


May 'The Flow' Be With You

FARAH GHUZNAVI

This is the eighth in a series of articles written by Farah Ghuznavi as Writer in Residence at the Commonwealth Writers website, based in the UK. Commonwealth Writers is the cultural initiative from the Commonwealth Foundation, and Farah is their first Bangladeshi Writer in Residence.

As someone who is remarkably bad at making life easier for herself, I have only recently reached the conclusion that often, it really *is* best just to go with the flow. And by that, I refer not only to the longed-for surge of words that (all too rarely) pours itself effortlessly onto the page, but also the capacity to spontaneously surf whatever wave life sends your way. In my first post for Commonwealth Writers, I discussed the roundabout route that I took to embracing my identity as a writer. Sadly, I am now beginning to suspect that I must simply be a very slow learner. Because my most recent project, editing the *Lifelines* anthology for Zubaan Books, also travelled a fairly winding path to reach its natural - some might say inevitable – conclusion.



Three years ago, the idea of doing a collection of new writing from Bangladesh for the Indian market was floated when I met up with a friend in Delhi, She was working for Zubaan Books, which has over the years built a strong reputation as an independent press. I thought the anthology proposal was a great idea. It brought together a number of themes: the book would consist of contemporary short stories written by a newer generation of Bangladeshi women, and all the stories would be written originally in English.

There was just one small problem with this plan. I didn't, as my friend was suggesting, want to edit the collection.

For one thing, I was already struggling to find time to write the stories dancing around in my head. So the prospect of editing the work of others held little appeal. But I really loved the idea of having a collection by Bangladeshi writers on Indian and international bookshelves.