A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb

Amitava Kumar
Amitava Kumar is a novelist, poet, journalist, and Professor of English at Vassar College. He was born in Bihar, India; he grew up in the town of Patna, famous for its corruption, crushing poverty, and delicious mangoes.


Kumar is represented by the literary agency Aitken Alexander Associates.

*A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb*
Amitava Kumar
Publication Date: August 2010

*Nobody Does the Right Thing: A Novel*
Amitava Kumar
Publication Date: August 2010

Publicity Contact: Laura Sell, Duke University Press, 919-687-3639, lsell@dukeupress.edu
Praise for Amitava Kumar’s Previous Books

*Husband of a Fanatic* (2005)

“Kumar exposes his, and his country’s, complex interiors in this important work of
provocation.”—*Independent* (UK)

“Kumar’s soul-searching is unsparing even of his own liberal reactions as a post-
independence ‘secular’ Indian raised to question all religiosity. His finely nuanced essay
on hate is a must-read for anyone concerned with the Other.” —*Newsweek-International*

“…challenging and at times eloquent rumination on Hindu-Muslim tensions in India and
its diaspora.” —*New York Times*

“A remarkable book… [It] creates a vivid portrait of the volatile region.” —*Far Eastern
Economic Review*

“[Amitava Kumar’s] research is both concentrated and comprehensive, supported by
sensitive documentation of telling details, and significant nuances… Kumar organizes his
material like a novelist, in patterns of counterpoint and situational correspondence… [He]
has harnessed his energies to a monumental cause. Already, the subcontinental political
discussion is focusing on individual contact and conflict resolution. This may be the
beginning of a shift in attitudes, a change of mind that books like Amitava Kumar’s will
help to serve.” —*Times Literary Supplement*

“Kumar’s magnificently quiet, poetic and observant book is the model of a different way
to look at the world.” —*Chicago Tribune*


“….a wilful, engaging book on Indian fiction in English, where it is always clear that
there is a relationship between literary journeys and those embarked on in real life,
between the flow of words and the movement of people and things, and between the
reader’s act of finding the literary centre and the writer’s task of illuminating the
periphery.” —*Times Literary Supplement*

“This intriguing book illuminates both the writers examined and the act of writing as a
means of re-creating the past. Highly recommended for literary collections and all large
public and academic libraries.” —*Library Journal*
“Kumar is a skilled storyteller… His prose is always elegant, his ideas always pulsate with energy and his humanity shines through every page. Bombay-London-New York is a riveting book. Kumar’s passion for his subject matter is infectious. But he is doing much more than simply providing illuminating insights into Indian cultural life in the West. He is showing a way forward for cultural criticism, with the critic as an insightful storyteller. It is the wave of the future.” —Independent

“What a relief to read criticism of South Asian fiction that is immune to ‘the desperate grasping for authenticity that produces … the mistress of spices, the heat and dust, the sweating men and women in lisping saris, brought together in arranged marriages, yes … and the whole hullabaloo in the guava orchard.’” —Village Voice

And coming soon from Duke University Press:

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Nonfiction Reviews: Week of 5/3/2010

★ A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb
Kumar’s searching and humane account of the global consequences of the U.S. “war on terror” gets behind the rhetoric and state public relations campaigns in a brisk but thoughtful narrative. Kumar covers intellectual and artistic responses to American domestic and foreign security policies, including the work of conceptual artist Hasan Elahi, who after being randomly interrogated by the FBI after 9/11, has taken to documenting and uploading to his Web site every move he makes. In his own reportage, Kumar (Husband of a Fanatic) focuses on two legal cases, in whose details, including his own interviews with the defendants, he astutely deconstructs the logic of what he sees as a burgeoning police state and the global order (or disorder) it encourages. The first is that of Hemant Lakhani, a boastful 70-year-old smalltime London clothier arrested in a sting operation delivering a sample shoulder-fired missile to an FBI informant. The other concerns Shahawar Matin Siraj, drawn into a bomb plot by undercover New York police. An arresting and heartrending work of public protest and valuable social analysis, this work contributes forcefully to a subtle, human-scaled accounting of 21st-century geopolitics. (Aug.)

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