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Writer's Block



Daphne du Maurier has been the single-most influential writer in my life. *Rebecca*, Frenchman's Creek, Jamaica Inn shaped my world...

Kunal Mukherjee is a San Francisco-based poet and writer. His work has appeared in *India Currents* and *Hot Flashes: Sexy Little Stories and Poems*. *My Magical Palace* is his first novel.

Q Describe your favourite writing space.

My favourite writing space is in a café, surrounded by people who are either busy on their laptops or reading or chatting with their friends. I am a people watcher. When I am writing, I tune the world out and write in my own soundless universe. And then I tune the world in and take in all the activity around me which stimulates me and prepares me to write again.

Q Do you have a writing schedule?

I try to write a couple of nights a week and over the weekend.

Q Ever struggled with writer's block?

Hmmm.... That is a good question. I believe that there is a creative space that is required for writing. This space can be cultivated and created. I like to create a blueprint when I start on a project. It helps to create a plotline and a chapter by chapter breakdown of my book. I know that this will change. I know that my characters will speak to me and, sometimes, surprise me. If I am not inspired to write one chapter, I look for another. If all fails, I write poetry or edit an old piece. For me, leaving a writing session without some creative activity is not an option.

Q What inspires you to write? Do you have a secret trick, or a book/author that helps?

I like to look at images, photographs, mementos, memorabilia or any symbols that inspire me to write about the subject at hand. I rely on my imagination and think about why I am writing and what I want my reader to experience. Occasionally, I will read my favourite author to get inspired.

Q Coffee/tea/cigarettes — numbers please — while you are writing?

I love coffee and tea — in the mornings I have coffee and later in the day I like tea.

Q Which books are you reading at present?

I like to read more than one book at a time. I am reading *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende and *Riding Fury Home* by Chana Wilson. I also like reading inspirational and spiritual books. Currently, I am reading *Ask and It is Given* by Esther and Jerry Hicks.

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Columnists

The misadventures of Anna and his men



Mujtaba Khan

With Team Anna's U-turn from their "anshan" approach to weeding out corruption, a new epoch is visible in Indian politics, and the electoral battle for the 16th Lok Sabha is bound to be an interesting event. Like the UPA-1, the

Anna Hazare movement also started with a big bang, thanks to media activism, eventually to take a steady dive into oblivion as the movement's second phase failed to elicit both media enthusiasm and public warmth.

Anna's political plunge

Q Who are your favourite authors?

Daphne du Maurier has been the single-most influential writer in my life. *Rebecca*, *Frenchman's Creek*, *Jamaica Inn* shaped my world and my writing style in a way that no one else has. I also love books by Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Rohinton Mistry, A.J. Cronin, J.K. Rowling, Armistead Maupin, P.G. Wodehouse, Agatha Christie and Isabel Allende among others.

Q Which book/author should be banned on grounds of bad taste?

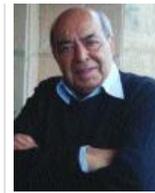
I believe that there is a lot of amazing literature out there and taste is entirely subjective and personal. As the saying goes, "One man's rubbish is another man's treasure." Same holds true for books and reading.

Q Which is the most under-rated book?

Anne Bronte's books were underrated even though she was a brilliant writer like both her sisters, Charlotte and Emily.

Q Which are your favourite children's books?

I grew up reading Enid Blyton. I lived in the alternate reality she created for an entire generation. I loved the Hardy Boys, too.



S. Nihal Singh

acknowledged.

You win some and lose some, and in the case of the latest Anna Hazare agitation in New Delhi's Jantar Mantar, he was the loser. To begin with, the frequent use of fasts which are never taken to their logical conclusion has become rather tiring, as the leader himself

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