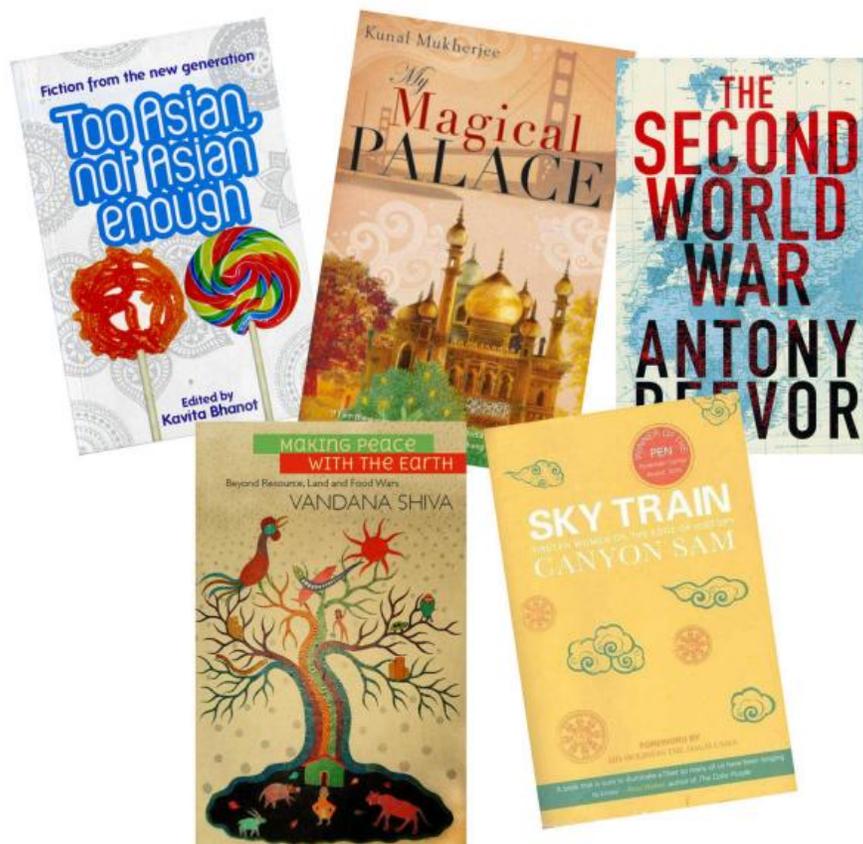


## Arts » Books

### First Look

SWATI DAFTUAR



Clockwise from top left: *Too Asian, not Asian enough* edited by Kavita Bhanot; *My Magical Palace* by Kunal Mukherjee; *The Second World War* by Antony Beevor; *Sky Train* by Canyon Sam; *Making Peace with the Earth* by Vandana Shiva

#### **The Second World War; Antony Beevor, Hachette India, Rs.1,250**

Over the past two decades, Antony Beevor has established himself as one of the world's premier historians of WWII. In his newest and most ambitious book, he turns his focus to one of the bloodiest and most tragic events of the 20th century, World War II. The war in Europe appeared completely divorced from the war in the Pacific and China, yet events on opposite sides of the world had profound effects. Beevor assembles the whole picture in a gripping narrative that extends from the North Atlantic to the South Pacific, from the snowbound steppes to the North African Desert, to the Burmese jungle, SS Einsatzgruppen in the borderlands, Gulag prisoners drafted into punishment battalions and to the unspeakable cruelties of the Sino-Japanese War.

#### **Sky Train: Tibetan Women on the Edge of History; Canyon Sam, Tranquebar, Rs.350**

Twenty years after her first encounter with Tibet, Canyon Sam re-visits the place she loves. Even as she disembarks China's infamous *Sky Train*, the author confronts a series of changes — all seemingly irrevocable — the devastation of Lhasa's once-pristine landscape; the corrosion of cultural artefacts; the slow death of a vibrant civilisation. In an attempt to acknowledge the past, the Chinese-American writer documents her spiritual home by recording the voices of four Tibetan women: a visionary educator, a freedom fighter, a gulag survivor, a child bride. Gracefully connecting these women's poignant histories to larger cultural, political and spiritual themes, Canyon Sam finds wisdom and wholeness, as she comes to grips with the future.

#### **Too Asian, Not Asian Enough Edited; Kavita Bhanot, Tindal Street Press, Rs. 399**

This is a new collection of short stories from up-and-coming and established British Asian authors that tries to

reconcile the gap between the school of Kureishi and the school of Shamsie. In her introduction, Kavita Bhanot argues that the clichés dominating British Asian authors is stifling a new generation of writers who do not want to conform to its conventions. This collection brings a new, diverse and original range of stories by both established authors like Gautam Malkani and Nikesh Shukla, as well as new voices. The 21 stories deal with everything from coke-fuelled parties to cultural clashes and arranged marriages.

**My Magical Palace; Kunal Mukherjee, HarperCollins India, Rs.399**

Haunted by dreams of an unforgettable loss, Rahul, a young man of 30 living in San Francisco, suddenly becomes secretive and withdraws from his partner Andrew. When Andrew discovers that Rahul is still interviewing girls for an arranged marriage, he hands out an ultimatum: stop living a lie or give up their relationship. In response, Rahul tells Andrew a story. About a boy who lived in a palace. A boy named Rahul. Set in San Francisco today and in Hyderabad in the early 1970s, *My Magical Palace* is a tale about a boy's coming of age, and the many hurdles he must cross to heal and find himself.

**Making Peace with the Earth; Vandana Shiva, Women Unlimited, Rs.375**

Vandana Shiva, who has been selected by the Fukuoka Prize Committee (Japan) as the Grand Prize Laureate for 2012, explores the biggest war of our times — the on-going war against the earth — in her latest book. Shiva suggests that the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya can be seen as wars for the earth's resources, especially oil. The war against the earth has its roots in an economy that fails to respect ecological and ethical limits. *Making Peace with the Earth* also tells the stories of struggles to defend the earth and people's rights to land and water, forests, seeds and biodiversity. It outlines how a paradigm shift to earth-centred economics, politics and culture is our only chance of survival.

Keywords: [Antony Beevor](#), [Vandana Shiva](#), [Kunal Mukherjee](#), [Kavita Bhanot](#), [Canyon Sam](#)

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