

Desilicious: Sexy. Subversive. South Asian.

edited by the Marsala Trois Collective

It's a daringly delirious plunge into forbidden territory! *Desilicious* traces a carnal journey and denotes everything that is 'sexy', 'subversive' and 'South Asian', just like its editors proclaim. Spanning a total of 38 writers from Canada, US, UK and India, the collective is one of its kind exploring taboo topics. Thematically erotic and evocatively thought-provoking, *Desilicious* pieces together fiction, poetry and essays of little known and well-established South Asian writers. The book reveals dark secrets in a new light challenging cultural norms and stereotypes.

An opening quote from Shirley MacLaine states, "Sex is hardly ever about sex" even as the book takes a sensual take on the 'sex' subject. *Desilicious* becomes steamy at times yet adheres to its subtle vein. With short stories from a wide array of writers, the book assimilates sensational experiences of both sexes. An under current of repressed issues like arranged marriages, gay and lesbian relationships persists in the collection along with some interesting observations on late night chatting, cyber sex and incestuous relationships.

Neelanjana Banerjee's 'The Roof at Chotoma's House' is the story of a young girl from overseas visiting her Aunt's place in Calcutta. The trip is suddenly cut short when the blazing rays of the sun and her cousin's warm hands lead to a passionate moment and both young explorers are caught kissing on the rooftop.

Milan Bose's 'Sex, Lies and Hash Pakoras' shares the vexation of single desi girl friends who are frequently asked by parents if they've met the 'one'. In complete Sex and City style the three ladies get together at a New York restaurant to discuss their sex lives, fads of online dating and analyze the different categories of male suitors from Mama's boys to the downright delicious.

Sharmeen Khan's 'Confessions of a Paki with Colonized Desire of How Giving White Men Blowjobs Reproduces Colonialism' explores the issue of racism and a concept of de-colonization.

Nazneen Sheikh's 'Polishing my Skin' is an account of how a bride in Lahore is prepared for her night of union. The secret polishing ritual makes the bride shimmer with luminosity in just a few hours. In the contemporary context a wayward western bride who is marrying a Hispanic American participates in the ritual in her ancestral home to satiate her curiosity as her benefactress promises... "I can make you into a river of silk and he will never want to cross to the other side. I will turn you into the milky flesh of green almond, which he will hold in his mouth without ever swallowing..."

Other notable *Desilicious* contributors include, Tanuja Desai Hidier, Raywat Deonandan, Kareena Besh and Roohi Choudhry.

Edited by the Marsala Trois Collective comprised of Deborah Barretto, Gurbir Singh Jolly and Zenia Wadhvani the book is available at Chapters/ Indigo, Toronto Women's Bookstore. *Desilicious* is an Arsenal Pulp Publication. The book was recently launched in New York.

by Preeti Thandi

