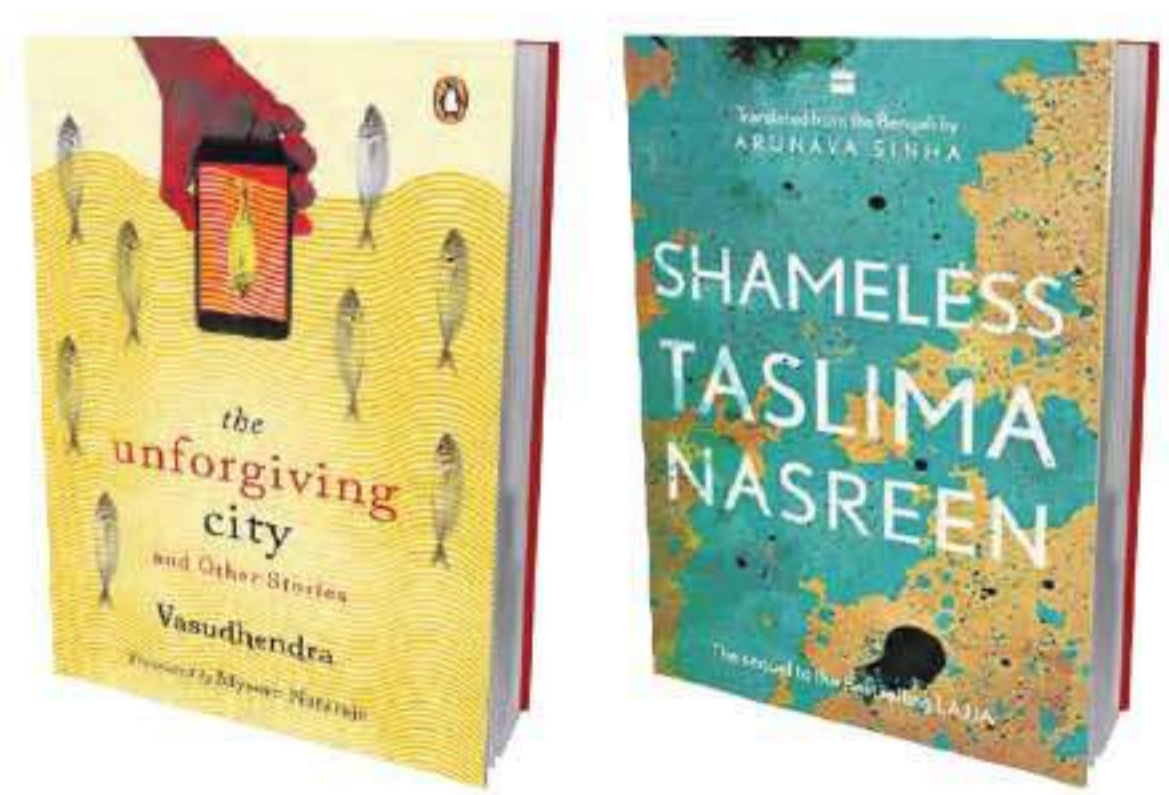




# ON THE SAME PAGE



On the occasion of the International Translation Day, a few from the literary circles hint that it is time we reassess the phrase 'lost in translation'

**DYUTI ROY**

**A**SK a translator why they chose their profession, and most of them will cite reasons like their love for languages and the ability to bring the world together as one. A few might even fondly describe their work as a puzzle — a continuous search for the right word that, once found, connects everything perfectly. This arduous act of love is what the United Nations celebrates yearly as International Translation Day on September 30. Not only is it a day to honour translation as a profession, it also brings awareness about the myriad languages that bind us together as a society.

**AN ARDUOUS LABOUR**

Even though translation means 'carried into a new language', it is more than just that from a lit-

érateur's point of view. Explaining this thought process, Dr. Ira Raja, a Delhi University professor, says, "The act of writing your dreams is also translation. It is a paradox where you translate while you recognise. The concept is not to fetishise the idea of authenticity, but to produce a work where the original has left its traces." Therefore, a translator is like an artist who takes the essence of the original story only to reimagine a tale into existence. However, to the outside world, these translators garner not just praise but, to a great extent, criticism. Even after all these years, the infamous phrase 'lost in translation' crops up quite frequently in conversations almost as if to question whether the essence of the original text is ever retained when translated. "When visiting Varanasi, we take a bottle of water from the river Tungabhadra and

pour it in the river Ganga and when coming back we take a bottle of water from the Ganga to pour into the Tungabhadra. Since both places represent Lord Shiva, we do this so that the Ganga can taste the sweet water of the Tungabhadra and its holiness can be transferred into the Tungabhadra," says Vasudhendra, author of *The Unforgiving City and Other Stories*, translated by Mysore Nataraja and published by Penguin India. A native of Hampi, Karnataka, he believes that this transference of the two rivers' waters perfectly resonate the intricate art of translating a literary work. For translated works, words are transferred such that it makes the two texts unique and one with each other at the same time.

**DEBUNKING THE MYTH**

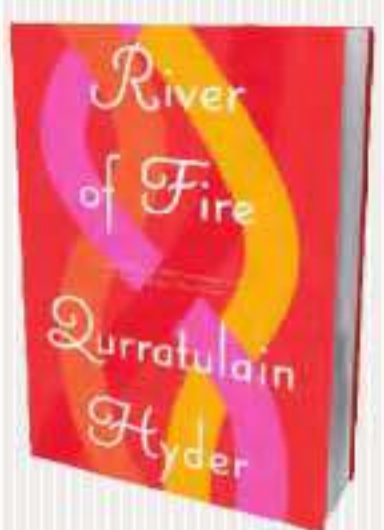
If you think about it, it is very easy to identify a bad translation.

It is akin to cutting an object with a scissor while drunk; it's a book completely misinterpreted. To be able to successfully, and with conviction, bring someone else's words, emotions as well as the soul of an entire language out into the world is no small feat.

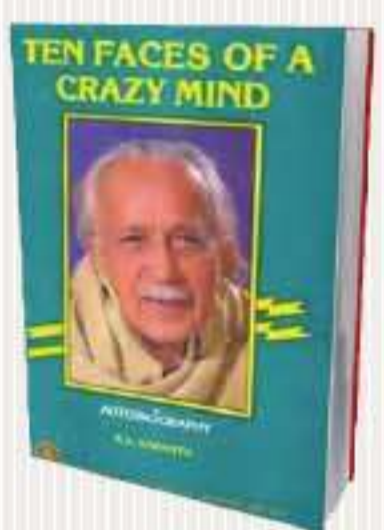
Recognised translator Arunava Sinha, who has also translated *Shameless* by Taslima Nasreen published by HarperCollins India, says, "The truth is that a text is many things, offering a different possibility to every reader, rich with the scope for interpretation. Nor can it be reduced to an essence, to a single quality."

It is therefore time to lose the phrase 'lost in translation'. "A translation is another version of the same text. Nothing is lost or gained, it is a rendition," Sinha concludes, encompassing the zeal the translators of the world exhume in bringing society one step closer, one book at a time.

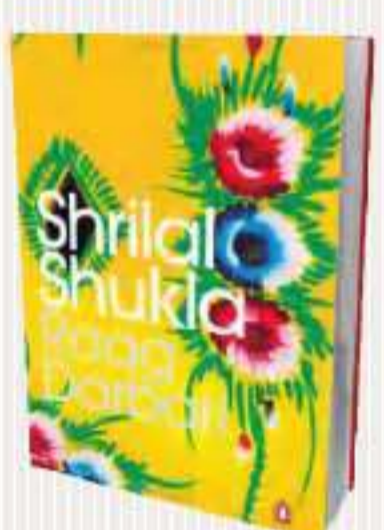
**MUST-READ TRANSLATED WORKS**



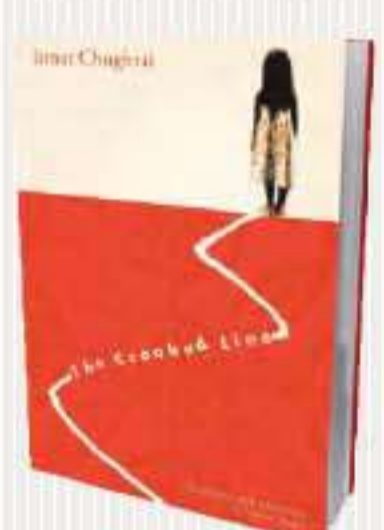
RIVER OF FIRE



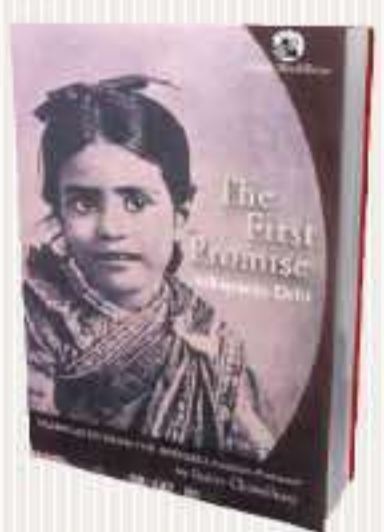
TEN FACES OF A CRAZY MIND



RAAG DARBARI



THE CROOKED LINE




THE FIRST PROMISE





The act of writing your dreams is also translation. It is a paradox where you translate while you recognise. The concept is not to fetishise the idea of authenticity, but to produce an original work.

DR IRA RAJA, Professor, Delhi University



[Comparing translation with the transference of the water from rivers] We do this so that the Ganga can taste the sweet water of the Tungabhadra; its holiness can be transferred into the latter.

VASUDHENDRA, author



The truth is that a text is many things, offering a different possibility to every reader, rich with the scope for interpretation. Nor can it be reduced to an essence, to a single quality.

ARUNAVA SINHA, translator