

**Indo-Anglian Poetry**

**or**

**Indo-English Poetry**

**Dr. Rupal Patel**

# *Definition:*

- Refers to the body of poetry by poets in India who write in the English language

# *Definition:*

- Whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India

## *Definition: (Contd.)*

- Also refers to the poetry of members of the Indian Diaspora - Sujata Bhatt and Vikram Seth, who were born in India

# Indian Literature in English (IEL)

- It comes under the broad category of the postcolonial literature

# Indian Literature in English (IEL)

- IEL has recent history; It's about one & half centuries old

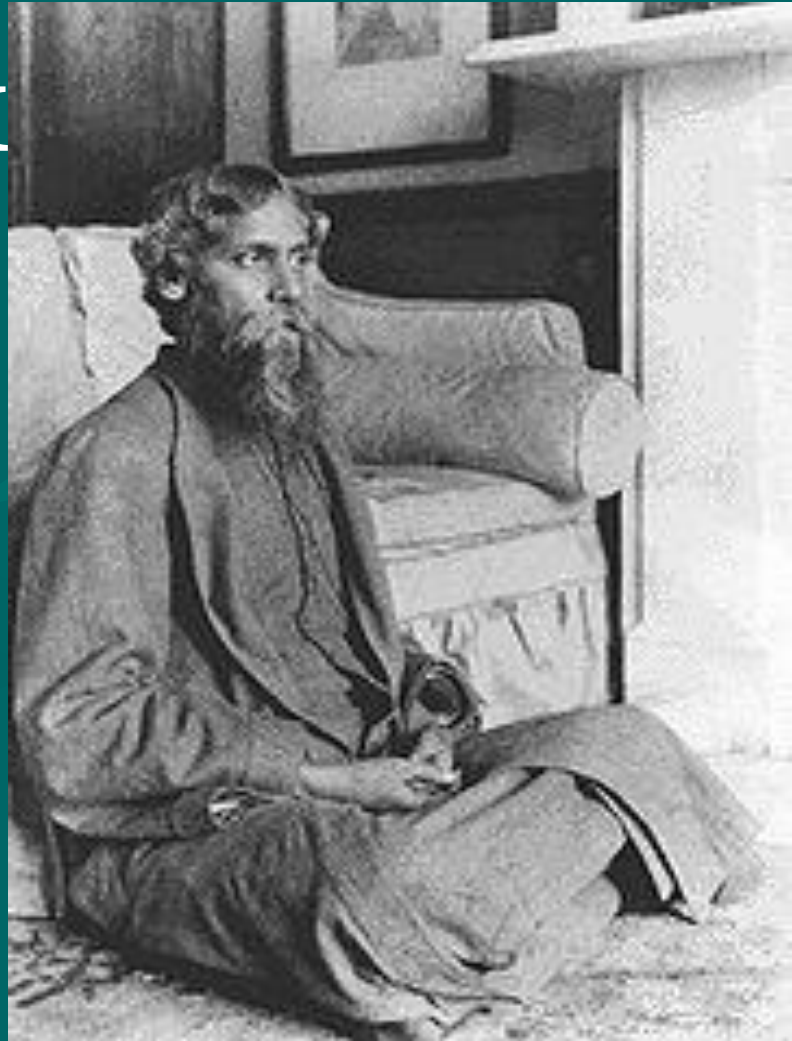
- First book written by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled *Travels of Dean Mahomet*; published in 1793 in England.

- Influenced by the Western art form of the novel.



- Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is Indian in terms of its storytelling qualities.

**Rabindranath Tagore**  
wrote in Bengali  
and English &  
translated his  
Works into  
English



# • Other notable

## Poets :

- Henry Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Joseph Furtado, Armando Menezes, Toru Dutt, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Sri

# • Modern Indian Poetry in English

- Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes, A. K. Ramanujan, Kamala Das, Keki Daruwala, Gieve Patel, Jayanta Mahapatra, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, Eunice De Souza, P. Lal

# *Poets of Indian Diaspora*

- A generation of exiles include:
- Vikram Seth, Sujata Bhatt, Agha Shahid Ali, Preeti Sengupta and Many Others

# Rabindranath Tagore

- A poet,  
novelist,  
musician, and  
playwright

# Rabindranath Tagore

- His poetic masterpiece *Gitanjali* won the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature

# Rabindranath Tagore

- It is "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse"



Tagore's style  
ranges from  
classical  
formalism to the  
comic, visionary,  
and ecstatic

- Established by  
15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>  
century  
Vaishnava  
poets.

- Awed by the mysticism of the Vyasa, the Bhakti-Sufi mystic Kabir, and Baul ballads

- Best-known collection, *Gitanjali* won him his Nobel Prize

Michael Madhusudan Dutt

- Bengali  
poet and  
dramatist

# Michael Madhusudan Dutt

- His *Meghnadh Badh Kabhya* is a tragic epic. It consists of nine cantos

# Michael Madhusudan Dutt

- In terms of style and content it is quite exceptional

# Michael Madhusudan Dutt





# His Major Works Are:

- *Tilottama*
- *Meghnad Vadh Kabya*
- *Ratnavali*
- *Razia, the sultana of Inde*
- *The Captive Lady*
- *Visions of the Past*

Toru Dutt (1856 – 1877)

- Wrote in  
English  
and French

## Toru Dutt (1856 – 1877)

- Made permanent mark even after her premature death at the age of 21

# Taru Dutt



- *A Sheaf  
Gleaned in  
French Fields*  
French poems  
into English

- *Ancient Ballads  
and Legends of  
Hindustan*

collection of  
poems

- Also wrote two novels which were published posthumously

# *Swarnajyoti* *Alankar*

- The Nightingale of India (Bharatiya Kokila)
- Child prodigy, freedom fighter, and poet



# Shankaradevi : A Legend



*Chandraghata*  
*Narayan*

- The first Indian woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress

*Janogya  
Naidu*

- First woman to become the Governor of Uttar Pradesh.

# Her Collections of Poetry:

- *The Golden Threshold*
- *The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death & the Spring*
- *The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death and the Spring*
- *The Sceptred Flute: Songs of India*
- *The Feather of the Dawn*
- *The Gift of India*

# *Sri Aurobindo*

## *Ghose*



- A poet-seer who achieved the highest realisations and endeavoured to share that experience with the rest of humankind

*Sri Aurobindo*

*Ghose*

- Indian nationalist,  
poet, philosopher  
and Spiritual  
Guru

*The Suburban*

*Phase*

- His poetry transcends the page to become mantra, an invocation to the transcendental consciousness

*His main works :*

- *The Life Divine,*
- *The Synthesis of  
Yoga,*
- *Essays on the Gita*
- *Savitri*



# *Savitri*, the biggest Epic in English

- An epic work of poetry that he worked on for over 20 years.

*Savitri, the biggest Epic*  
*in English*

- It is bigger  
than Milton's  
*Paradise Lost*

# Modern Indo-English Poets

**Nissim Ezekiel**



# Nissim Ezekiel

- Born of Jewish parents in Bene-Israel

# Nissim Ezekiel

- Schooled in Bombay
- Studied at Khalsa College in Bombay and Birbeck College in London

# Nissim Ezekiel

- Influenced by M N Roy, he joined Radical Democratic Party

# Nissim Ezekiel

- Interested in theatre, art, cinema, psychology and philosophy.

*As he recalls in  
'Background  
Casually':*

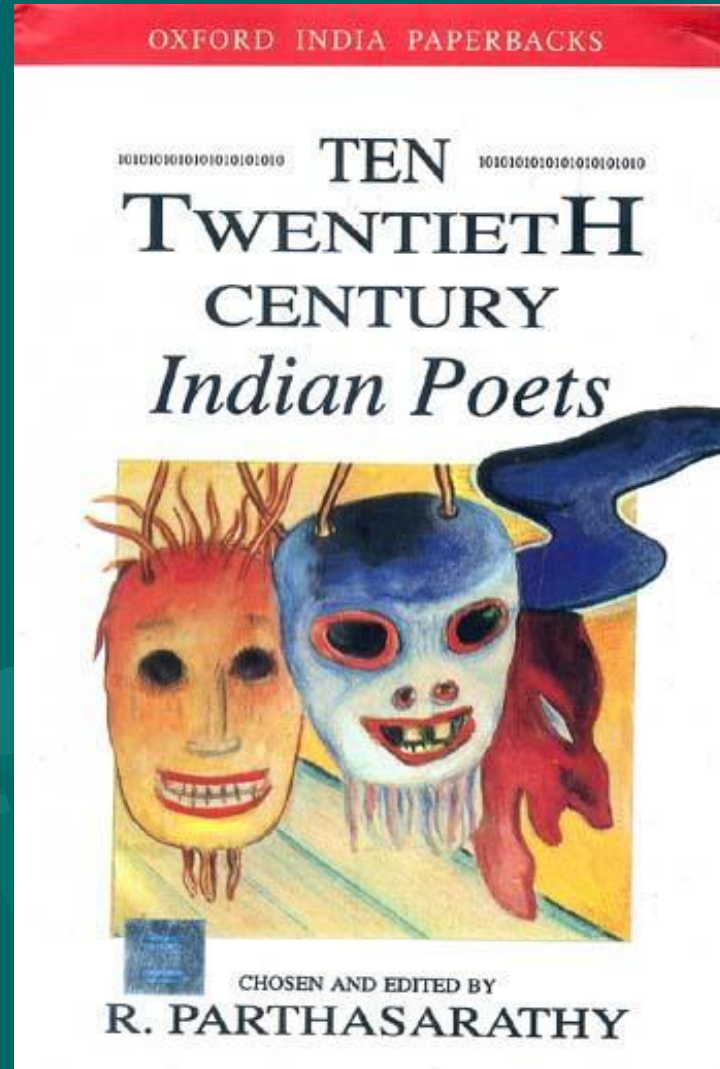
*"Philosophy, Poverty and  
Poetry, three  
companions shared my  
basement room"*



• His books of Poems are:

1. *A Time to Change,*
2. *Sixty Poems,*
3. *The Third,*
4. *The Unfinished Man,*
5. *The Exact Name,*
6. *Hymns in Darkness and*
7. *Later Day Psalms*

# R. Parthasarathi's *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets* (OUP, 1976 )



Dominic Francis Moraes  
known as Dom Moraes

- Born in Bombay,  
son of *Times of  
India*' former  
Editor Frank  
Moraes

# Dom Moraes

- Studied for 8 years in Britain at Oxford University
- Published nearly 30 books

# Dom Moraes



1. *A Beginning*, his first book of poems, (winner of the Hawthornden Prize)
2. *John Nobody*,
3. *Beldam & Others*,
4. *Absences*, and,
5. *Collected Poems: 1957-1987*

# A K Ramanujan



# A K Ramanujan

- A scholar of Indian literature
- Wrote in both English and Kannada



# A K Ramanujan

- A philologist,  
folklorist,  
translator, poet  
and playwright

# His Poetry Anthologies

1. *The Interior Landscape: Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology*
2. *Speaking of Siva*
3. *Hymns for the Drowning*
4. *Poems of Love and War*
5. *The Striders*
6. *Selected Poems* (OUP, 1976)
7. *Second Sight*

# *Keki Daruwalla*



# Collections of Poems:

1. *Under Orion,*
2. *Apparition in April,*
3. *Crossing of Rivers,*
4. *Winter Poems,*
5. *The Keeper of The Dead,*
6. *Landscapes*

- He was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award for *The Keeper of The Dead*.

- A range of experience generally outside the ambit of poets
- His poetry displays his experiences as a police officer

- Portrays  
vividly and  
minutely  
Indian  
socio-political

- **Exposes the evils of communal tensions, riots, exploitation, greed, criminalization of politics, dowry etc.**



**In his poetry we find:  
World of riot and curfew,  
Sirens, Warrants, Men  
nabbed at night, Lathi  
blows on cowering bodies,  
Soda bottles and acid bulbs  
waiting on the roof tops,  
Press communiques**

# Kamala Das or Kamala Suraiyya or Madhavikutty



# Kamala Das

Born:1934 – Died:2009

- Wrote in English and Malayalam
- Famous for her short stories, poems and her autobiography, *My Story*
- On 31 May 2009, aged 75, she died at a hospital in Pune.

**She openly and  
honestly discussed  
and wrote about the  
sexual desires of  
Indian women, which  
made her an  
iconoclast of her  
generation.**

- Her love of poetry began at an early age
- Was influenced by her great uncle, who was a prominent writer
- Her husband supported her decision to support the family's income

- She wrote during night when everybody slept. She said: "*There was only the kitchen table where I would cut vegetables, and after all the plates and things were cleared, I would sit there and start typing*"

- Das was also a syndicated columnist
- Writings on women's issues and child care to politics, were popular
- In poetry, she wrote chiefly of love, its betrayal, and the consequent anguish

- Abandoned the certainties offered by an archaic, and somewhat sterile, aestheticism for an independence of mind and body at a time when Indian women poets were still expected to write about fantasies of eternal, bloodless, unrequited love



# Kamala Das (Works)

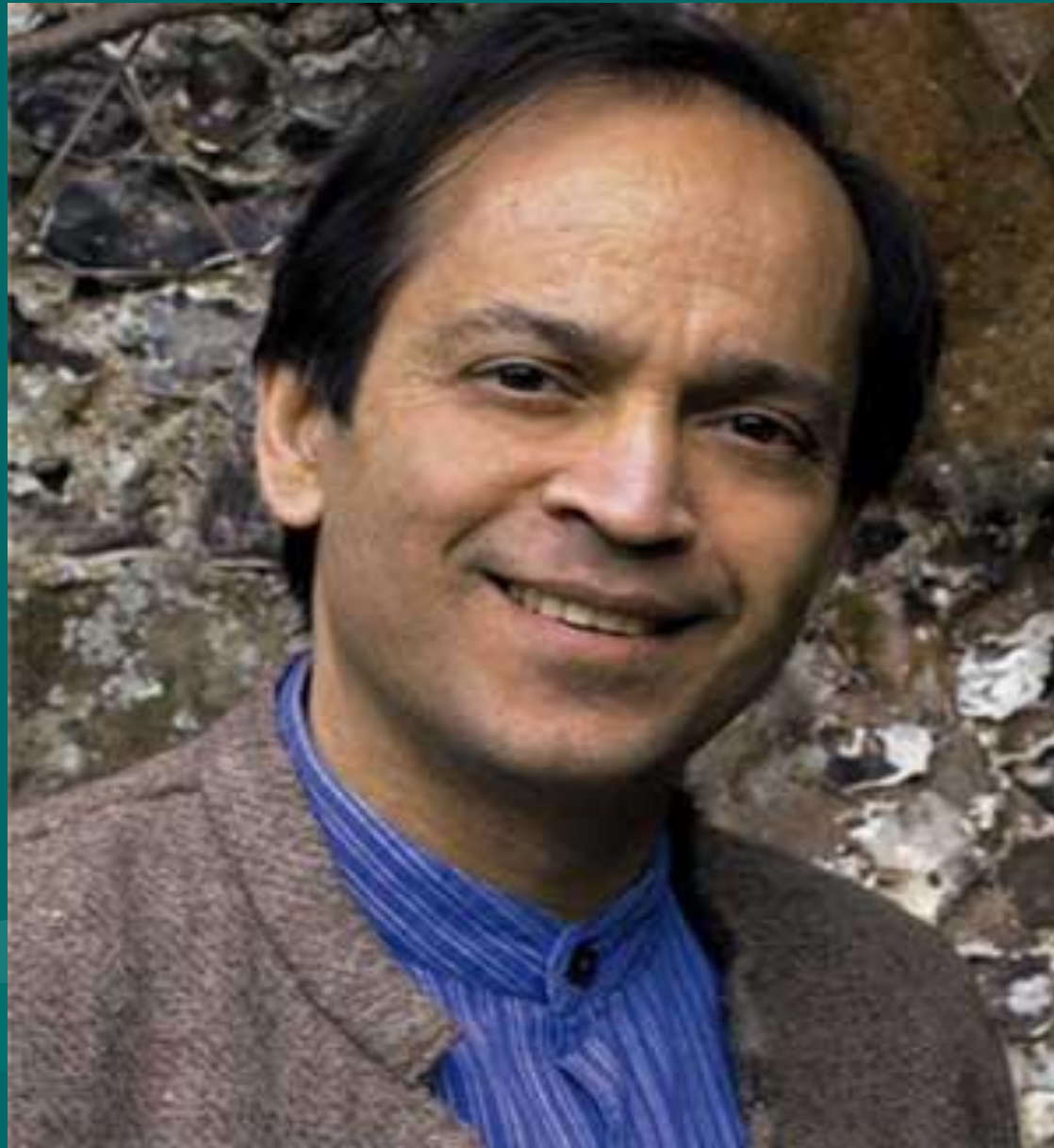
- The Sirens (Asian Poetry Prize winner)
- Summer in Calcutta (Kent's Award winner)
- The Descendants
- The Old Playhouse & Other Poems

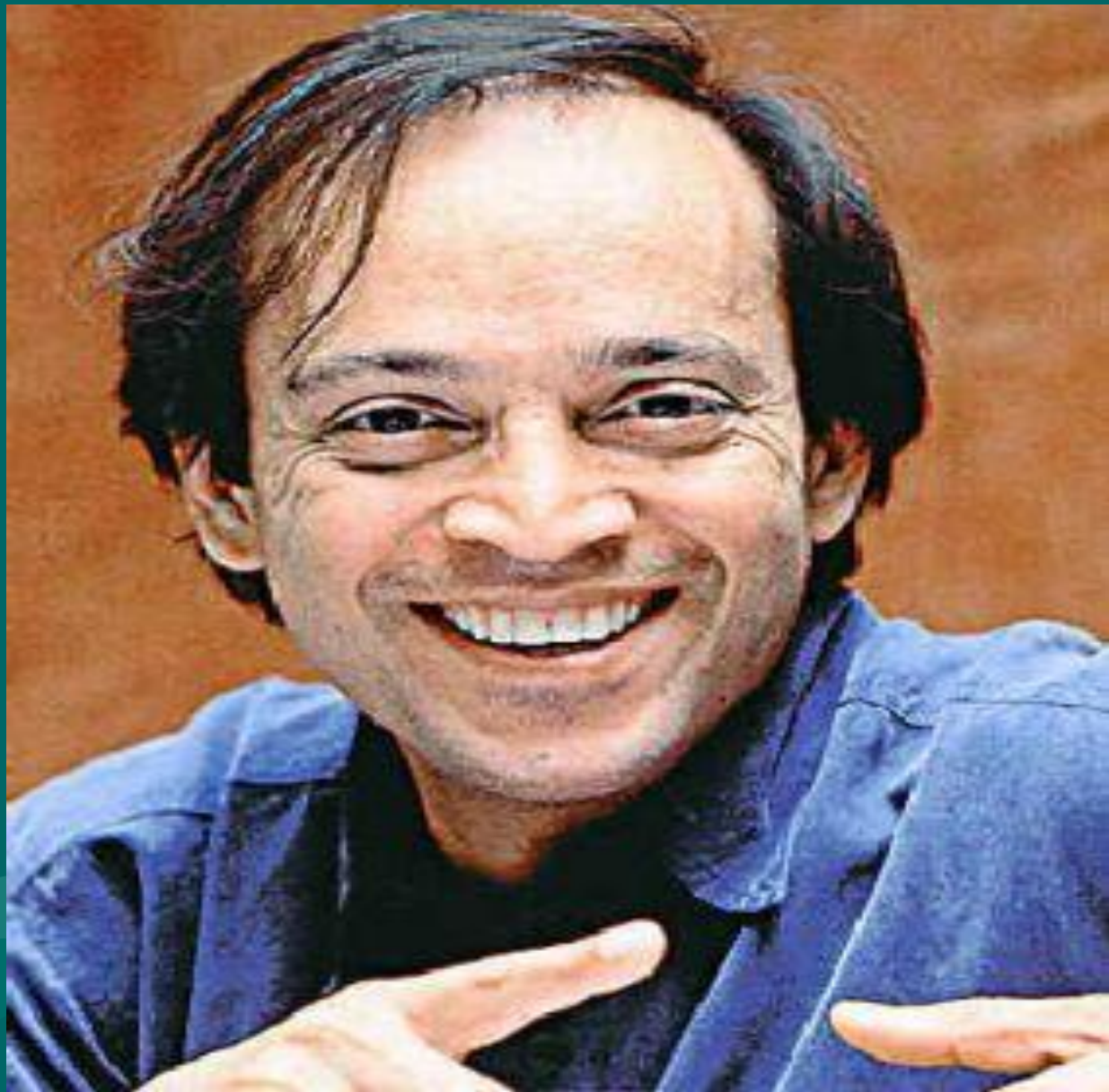
## Kamala Das (Works) (contd.)

- **My Story  
(Autobiography)**
- **The Anamalai Poems**
- **Only the Soul Knows  
How to Sing**
- **Yaa Allah**

# Vikram Seth

- A very popular writer in the USA
- His verse novels are studied at under-graduate and post-graduate departments of India and the US.





- A versatile writer
- Novels, poetry, libretto, travel writing, children's literature, biography and memoir

- **Studied Philosophy,  
Politics and  
Economics at Oxford  
and Stanford  
Universities in the  
UK and the USA**



# MULTI-LANGUAGE WRITING

- A polyglot, he has studied, read and written in several languages, including Welsh, German, French, Mandarin, English, Urdu, German, and Hindi



# MAJOR THEMES

- Gay or bisexual thematic concerns and characters
- Love poems addressed to both male and female objects
- Says: “The 'I' in my poems is almost always me”

# A GREAT & RARE EARNING FOR POETRY!

- For his *A Suitable Boy* he was given £250,000, for *An Equal Music* £500,000 and for *Two Lives* £1.4 million by his Publishers

## Vikram Seth (Works: Poetry)

- *Mappings*
- *The Humble Administrator's Garden*
- *All You Who Sleep Tonight*
- *Beastly Tales*
- *Three Chinese Poets*

# Sujata Bhatt

- A native speaker of Gujarati
- Most prominent is "Search for My Tongue", which is compulsory study for many fourteen to sixteen-year-olds in the United Kingdom.



- Born in Ahmedabad, brought up in Pune until 1968
- emigrated to the United States
- An MFA
- Was writer-in-residence
- Visiting fellow at Dickinson College, Pennsylvania

- Currently works as a freelance writer and has translated Gujarati poetry into English for the *Penguin Anthology of Contemporary Indian Women Poets*

# Themes:

- Love and violence
- Explores issues such as racism and the interaction between Asian, European, and North American culture
- The subject matter of her poetry has ranged from political strife to eroticism



## Poetic Works:

- *Pure Lizard*
- *The Colour of Solitude*
- *Augatora*
- *Point No Point*
- *The Stinking Rose*
- *Monkey Shadows*
- *Bruzinem*

# AWARDS

- Commonwealth poetry prize  
(Asia) *Brunizem* (Twice)
- Alice Hunt Bartlett Award  
*Brunizem*
- Poetry Book Society  
Recommendation *Monkey  
Shadows*
- Cholmondeley Award
- Poetry Book Society  
Recommendation *Aguatora*

The background is a solid teal color. In the center, there is a faint, stylized illustration of two hands shaking, rendered in a lighter shade of teal. Overlaid on this background is the text "THE END" in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters have a slight gradient and a thin black outline.

**THE END**