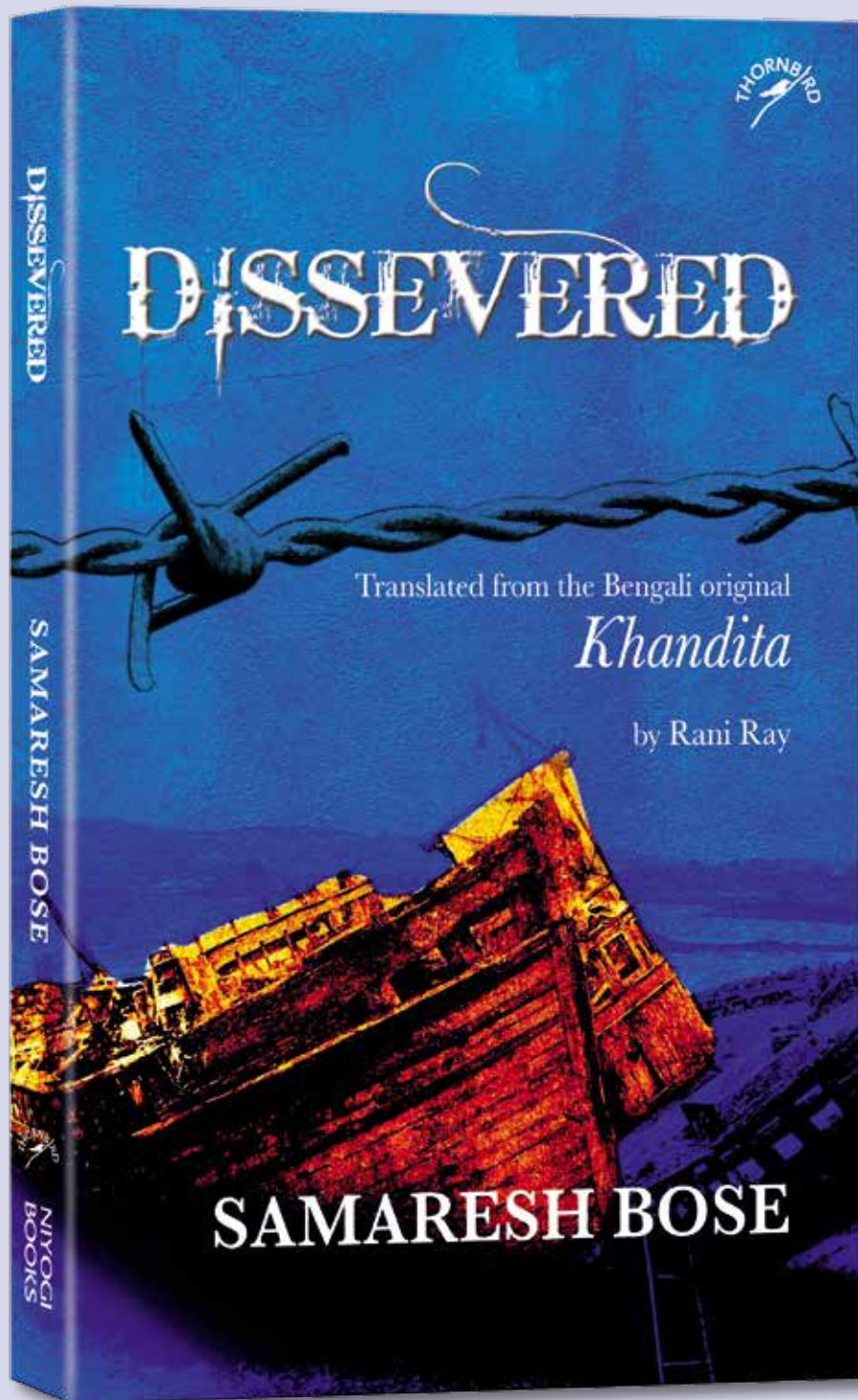


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DISSEVERED

by
Samaresh Bose

Translated from the Bengali original

Khandita by **Rani Ray**

TRANSLATION/FICTION

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Belonging to what one may best describe as representative of the culture of the 'urban popular', the novella *Dissevered* (*Khandita*), published seventy years after independence, incorporates the birth pangs of a newly emergent nation experienced by the so-called 'gully boys', Gora, Biju, and Satu, in a form that presents historical events through the techniques of fiction.

Its added significance to the modern reader is its prescient quality, bringing to the fore dominant questions of nationalism, identity crises, communal disharmony, and citizenship that mark public discourse in the present times. In the portrayal of events and personalities which belong to the twin history of the partition and the birth of a new nation (Bangladesh), and through a language of the gutters that ironically mimics the mores of civic society, the desire for unity of the nation felt by the three disoriented youths is in the realm of the ideal possible. This is metaphorically envisioned in the figure of Gandhi in Noakhali and as embodied in the desire for the nomadic female with amputated arms by Satu, one of the three young men.

This novella perhaps best illustrates Samaresh Bose's genius as a writer, who could translate his experience of historical time in all its multiple complexities without the imposition of any doctrine (despite his leftist leanings). It remains a unique depiction of the conflicting emotions experienced by ordinary folks on the eve of India's independence.



Samaresh Bose, regarded undisputedly as one of the greatest Bengali writers of all times, was born in 1924 in Dhaka and spent his adolescent years in Naihati undergoing varied work experiences, ranging from hawking eggs on the streets to acting as a foreman in the Ichhapore ordnance factory. He wrote his first novel at the age of 21 and soon emerged as a major writer on the Bengali literary scene. His stories have been made into award-winning films. He has been a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award (1980).



Rani Ray has taught English at the University of Delhi, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA, and Institute of English Studies at Lodz (Poland). She has translated many short stories and novels from Bengali to English. She is currently an editor with Tulika Books, Delhi.

Published after seventy years of independence, the novella Dissevered portrays the pains of a newly emergent nation, presenting the historical events through the techniques of fiction. It beautifully depicts the conflicting emotions experienced by the common people on the eve of India's independence.

The significance of the novel lies in that it brings to the fore the pressing questions of nationalism, identity crises, communal harmony, and citizenship that characterizes public discussion in present times.

The novel best illustrates Samaresh Bose's brilliance as an author, whose translation of his experiences in the historical times is without any imposition of a particular doctrine.