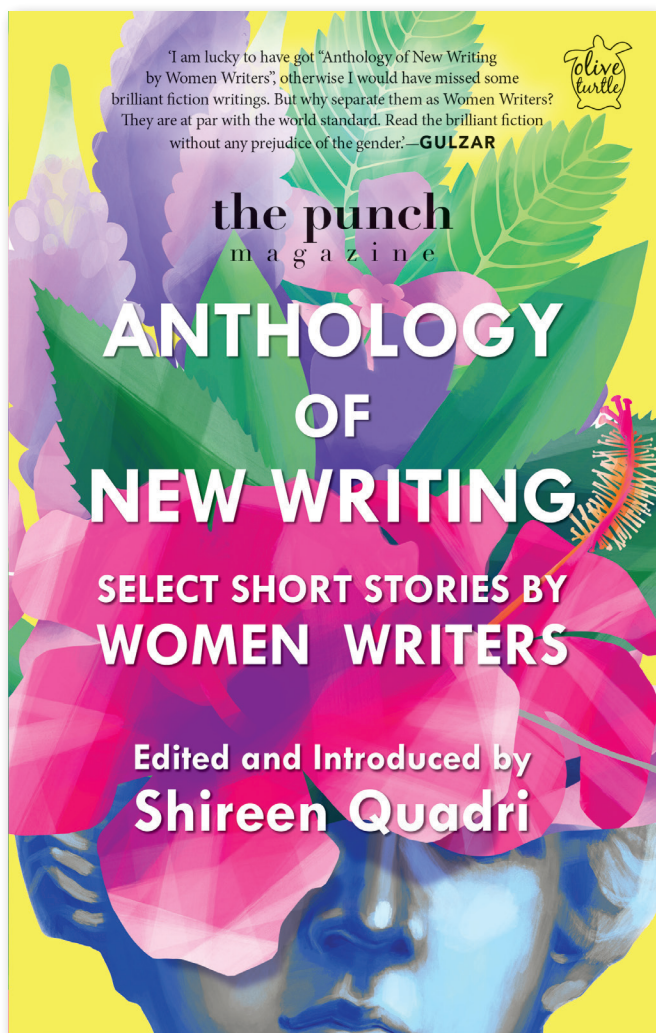


'I am lucky to have got "Anthology of New Writing by Women Writers", otherwise I would have missed some brilliant fiction writings. But why separate them as Women Writers? They are at par with the world standard. Read the brilliant fiction without any prejudice of the gender.'—Gulzar

Written by women author's from around the world, the short stories are steeped in the cultural moorings of the places they are set in—from Kashmir to Kerala, and from Washington and London to Rome.



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The Punch Magazine *Anthology of New Writing* Shireen Quadri

Exquisite stories by Women Writers that speak of our times—the way we live, the way we love.

What are the defining elements of short fiction by contemporary women writers? How do they navigate the world around them to create literature?

These questions gave shape to the idea of The Punch Magazine's inaugural anthology, comprising 18 short stories, selected from the pool of submissions by women writers in India and around the world, that showcase just how culture, besides the past, informs and illuminates literature.

The stories featured in this anthology reflect a certain kind of sensibility and sensitivity. It takes us along the pathways these writers forge to create art out of the rhythms and ruptures of life, dwelling on their characters' experiences and memories of a thousand pleasures and pains suspended in the continuum of time. Steeped in the cultural moorings of the places they are set in—from Kashmir to Kerala, and from Washington and London to Rome—these stories portray the concerns and preoccupations of individuals both within and outside the precincts of home. They speak of our times—the way we live, the way we love.

Shireen Quadri is the founder and publisher of *The Punch Magazine*. She is a writer, a literature and ideas programmer, and the director of Punch Art & Cultural Foundation, which endeavours to chronicle the proliferation of arts, literature and culture in India and around the world. She has been formerly associated with several publishing houses as a marketing and communications professional. Occasionally, she reviews books for Scroll.in and others. She loves to read, travel and watch movies. On Twitter and Instagram, her handle is @shireenquadri. You can reach her at shireenquadri@thepunchmagazine.com



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Extract from the book

A remarkable aspect of the short fiction published by The Punch Magazine since its inception has been its range and depth. Along with some fine works of poetry, in the past four years, we have also published an eclectic range of short stories by writers around the globe. Since we invite submissions from short-story writers cutting across genres, we tend to receive entries that traverse diverse grounds. When we had conceived the anthology, our idea was to showcase a selection of the best works of short fiction by both male and female writers across continents, in line with the core ethos of the magazine that publishes writers from all over the world. However, once we were making the selection, we discovered that most of the stories had been submitted by women—mostly from India, but also from the US, the UK, Europe and North America. The stories by women had a distinct poise and panache.

They reflected a certain kind of sensibility and sensitivity. Thematically, too, they were bound together by a unifying thread that weaved the concerns and preoccupations of individuals both within and outside the precincts of home. They spoke to our times, rampant with disparity and divisions—the way we live, the way we love. Circling around the ties that bind us and the relationships we build, they betrayed a deep understanding of the form and its numerous and wondrous possibilities. They also had a strong emotional core and a unique moral fibre.

In the stories by women, to borrow a phrase by Eudora Welty, ‘less was resolved, more was suggested.’ It was then that it occurred to us that the anthology had essentially shaped itself into a compendium of new writing by 18 contemporary women. Since we didn’t have a theme, as that often entails restricting the writer to a set course, the entries we received hum with the cadences of different cultures and traditions, and unravel in the metaphysical or psychological realms. The stories in this anthology are deeply steeped in the cultural moorings of the places they are set in, often laced with the writers’ lived experiences.

They thrum and throb to the rhythm of the daily life of their protagonists—their inner struggles, existential angst and anxieties. They reflect on the universal human emotions and conditions.