

Biography

WILLIAM RADICE was born in 1951 in London. He has pursued a double career as a poet and as a scholar and translator of Bengali, and has written or edited more than thirty books. His volumes of verse include *Strivings* (1980) and *Louring Skies* (1985) for Anvil Press, *The Retreat* (1994) for the University Press Ltd. in Dhaka, and *Green, Red, Gold: A Novel in 101 Sonnets* (2003) for Flambard Press. His translations include *Selected Poems* and *Selected Short Stories* of Tagore for Penguin Books, both of which have been reprinted many times. In 1994 his *Teach Yourself Bengali* was published by Hodder Headline, and came out in a new and revised edition in 2007. He also translates from German, and his publications in India include a translation of Martin Kämpchen's *The Honey-Seller and Other Stories* (Rupa, 1995). He has given numerous lectures and poetry readings in Britain, India, Bangladesh, North America, Germany and many countries in Europe, and his prizes and honours include the Ananda Puraskar (1986), an honorary D.Litt from Assam University (2007), an Honorary Fellowship at the Bangla Academy in Dhaka (2007) and the title 'Rabindra Tattwacharya' from the Tagore Research Institute in Kolkata (2009). The fortnightly 'Letters from England' he wrote for the *Statesman* between 1998 and 2002 reappeared as *A Hundred Letters from England* (Indialog, 2003) and for several years he was a regular contributor to BBC Radio 2's early morning 'Pause for Thought'.



William Radice gained a D.Phil in Bengali Literature at Oxford in 1987 for a thesis on Michael Madhusudan Dutt, and in 1988 became a lecturer in Bengali language and literature at SOAS, University of London. From 1999 to 2002 he was Head of the Departments of South and South East Asia. In 2005 he went part-time at SOAS, to allow more time for writing. His main work at SOAS now is the supervision of Ph.D students, and the teaching of the course, 'Modern Bengal: the evolution of Bengali society and culture from 1690 to the present-day'. With the help of two lecturers in Bengali, Dr Hanne-Ruth Thompson and Mr Abul Khondoker, he has recently introduced a new B.A. degree in Bengali and another subject.

His literary activities in recent years have extended to writing opera libretti for the composers Param Vir and Bernard Hughes. Current projects include an opera based on the Persian poem 'Conference of the Birds' for the Malaysian composer Johan Othman, and an opera on the stories for Saki for Bernard Hughes.

He has recently completed a major new book of poems, *The Infinite Orchestra*, the last part of which was published in June 2008 by Hirundo Press in Hamburg as *the dancing mouse/die tanzende maus*.

Forthcoming books include a fully introduced and annotated translation of Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Meghnadbadh kabya* for Penguin India (2010). Other contracts with Penguin India aimed at the 150th anniversary of Tagore's birth in 2011 include a new edition of *Particles, Jottings, Sparks: The Collected Brief Poems* (HarperCollins, Delhi, 2000; Angel Books, London, 2001), and a new translation of Tagore's *Gitanjali*. There will also be a paperback edition of *Myths and Legends of India* (The Folio Society, London, 2001; Penguin India, 2002).

He is married with two daughters and one grandson, and his main home is in Northumberland.