

On Tessa Ransford:-

Like all my fellow poets, we feel the loss of Tessa Ransford deeply. Her commitment to creating a special space for poetry and giving it a central position in Scotland in the founding and establishment of the Scottish Poetry Library and her dedication to poetry publishing in pamphlets, mean that she will continue to be amongst us.

But as an Indian, I will always remember her 'Indian Self' which she carried with her throughout her life. She never forgot that she had been born in Bombay (as it was then) in India and spoke Urdu as a child, a language she stayed in touch with when she went to live as a young missionary's wife in Pakistan.

When we first met, she told me at a public gathering that at one point in her life, when she was despondent, reading Rabindranath Tagore's 'Gitanjali' had restored her and given her strength. She told me about her Indian Ayah with deep affection. India was always with Tessa as she carried her second country, the country of her birth within her, with pride and affection.

Multiculturalism was intrinsic to Tessa. She did not have to cultivate it. This is what enabled her to welcome not just Indian poets, but poets who have been forced to flee conflict zones and seek a poet's haven in Scotland and continue to express themselves.

It was a pleasure to have a joint book launch with

Tessa which our publisher, Gavin MacDougall at Luath Press organised, in which we both travelled between Scotland and India with ease. Tessa's heart, in those poems, was back in the hot, dusty streets of Indian cities, just as Kipling's heart travelled back to his beloved Lahore, long after he had left India.

Alan Riach and I are truly grateful to Tessa for granting us her permission to publish her 'Indian poems' in an anthology we are co-editing which celebrates Scottish South Asian Poetry. Tessa's contribution will make it a meaningful project, for as a fine poet, her 'Scottish-Indian voice' will remain distinctive and resonate for all of us.

Prof Bashabi Fraser MA, PhD  
Professor of English and Creative Writing  
Director, Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies (ScoTs)  
Edinburgh Napier University  
ICCR International Senior Research Fellow  
(former Royal Literary Fund Fellow)