Bollywood**: A Play**

by Lonnie Carter

P. O. Box 373
Falls Village, CT 06031

lonniety@comcast.com

copyright 2007

CHARACTERS in order of appearance –

IDA B. O'SHEA, African-American, 35, not counting, author of Young Adult novels

SITA DEVI, Indian, 35, counting, novelist, activist

TIME – September 10, 2001

PLACE - IDA B's apartment, Carl Sandburg Village, Chicago

Both women, at times, speak on invisible, hands-free cellphones.

We do NOT hear the cellphones ring.

IDA B

Duelling -

SITA

- Prologues duelling -

IDA B & SITA

Prologues

IDA

Projects. The Projects. Twenty-five stories high
times twenty-five stories to tell.
Stuffing black people in these cinder blocks, in the city of Chicago
won't burn, no repeat of the Great Chicago Fire
'cause they're cinders already
'cinder' like no Cinderella, nothing but wicked sisters
in these cavernous symbols of what The Man
would have you believe his length is
stuffing black people, making sure that the oldest mammies
are at the very top so when the elevators don't work
and rivers of piss running down the stairwells
that Mama Lucy and Sister MayAnn have to climb that mountain
they have been to the mountain and now their wheelchairs
are rolling through the Valley of Death
stuffing black people in these towers to contain them
no sister with hair long enough to be Rapunzel,
can't let herself down from the twenty-fifth
stuffing black people like anchovies in olives, sardines in cans
Japanese in subways, Sowetans in buses, Jews in cattle cars
twenty-five stories high
stuffing black people like pimientos into the Projects
the blood-red pimiento Projects
very Yin and Yang, that red on our black skin
Projects with names such as the Ida B Wells Projects, the Robert Parker
Projects and my fave of faves, the Cabrini Green Projects, named
after Mother Cabrini, an Italian immigrant come to Chicago who
started shelters, no twenty-five story shelters to be sure Cabrini Green, ten blocks to the south be Marina Towers, a sort of unleaning
Tower of Pisa, chocked with shops and white people and The Loop, the

Sears Tower, onetime tallest building in the world and Michigan
Avenue's magic mile
Cabrini Green, ten blocks to the north be Lincoln Park where elevators do
work and gentrification is the perk of Lincoln Park
named after the Great
Emancipator Proclamator
His Gettysburger Rapp
Held the South to the Union's map
Frederick Douglass Dapper
The first U.S Cabinet Rapper

Now Cabrini Green
Smashed up between
The North and South House
Divided against itself it cannot stand
and the high rises in the middle will fall to the land
'Cause the decades have gone and gone and it's clear that you cannot have a
series of buildings set far apart and twenty-five stories high with
people throwing their Ebony and Jetsam on to the broken asphalt below
and that these caves piled on top of each other have to come down
courtesy of the wrecker's ball and chain
Because the experimentation, the alienation, the denial of alimentation
weren't ever going to work
Come down, Cabrini Greenies
Come down, Robert Parkers
Come down, Ida B. Wells
You got to get down
so we can now be all stuffed into two three story housing, human size not
Babel size keep all that speechifying air up there on the twenty-fifth all
sky where towers used to be.
I'm Ida B. O'Shea, named after the aforesaid Ida B Wells, and you just heard
a little part of my story for free.
And later we'll discuss my fee.

SITA DEVI

'Thug', from the Hindi meaning 'thief', he who strangulates his victim. A rockclimber I picked up at the Chelsea Arts Club last year said as we
climbed each other's sides - On the face of it it's all smooth stone even the
craggy is smooth you have to keep telling yourself it's smooth so it doesn't
cut you so you don't slide so you don't hang on each other's neck so you hang
only on the neck of the smooth rock as you ascend the ladder think of it as
having rungs that you put your feet in the stirrups as the gyno stares up
your vagino and you stare back down her throat as she hangs on your neck and
you climb together up the smooth stone of the dam where the thugs await you
to thrust you back down but you won't stop protesting and climbing the ladder
because two million tribal people have been displaced because of this dam you
must climb sheer stone up its side
two million for the sake of hydroelectricity
for the sake of Hyderabad
What's two mill when we got a bill
Hire some thugs, say a hundred thou, not enough thugging going around these
days, easy to line up, some of them a little out of strangulation practice
but no matter
put them on top of the dam, let all the little Joshuas and Joshuettes march
around down bottom blowing their horns 'til they see the walls ain't coming
tumblerin' down and then they'll climb up pretending it's a ladder hoping for

a climax, which by the by is Greek for ladder, and when

they get to the top they'll find out this ain't no Chelsea Arts Club and those rockclimbers won't be climbing their sides because it's nothing smooth it's all craggy
and I know this but I need to keep saying it to myself or I won't keep doing it because it doesn't come naturally to me even though my mother was an organizer and won the right in court for a Christian woman to inherit the property of her parents something never before allowed in all of India I'd much rather be writing a second novel but I can't seem to get away from the dam and that rockclimber who finally was right but begging the question what do we do when we get to the top, given that we can disarm the thugs, not be strangulated even though they're out of practice, then what? do we tear the dam down, flood the plains, drown those who've refused to be displaced? What What What?
I'm Sita Devi, named after Sita, wife of Rama , the title of their book telling their adventures being "The Ramayana", twenty-five hundred years young and more of that anon, and named after Devi, the principal Hindu goddess, and one Phoolan Devi, the so-called Bandit Queen, and more of her anon, and that's a part of my story without fee, although if you'd like to make a contribution for the two million displaced tribal peoples, I'll dress up in my sari and you can stuff the rupeees in its folds, and if that doesn't sound suggestive, well anon, anon and anon.

IDA B's on her phone

IDA B

Onyx - O - n - y - x
Du Preee
Capital D u Capital P r e e -
E - no, two 'e's
Capital D u Capital P r e - e

IDA B's off her phone.

She's this year's winner

SITA

Onyx DuPree, three 'e's.

IDA

Two.

SITA

Winner of what?

IDA B

The Ida B Wells Project Survivor Award.

SITA

What's that?

IDA B

I'm just now telling you about it

SITA
I thought you told me everything.

IDA B
I do.

SITA
Why haven't I heard of this before?

IDA B
Because I can't tell you everything all at once.

SITA
It's not a very good name.

IDA B
Onyx Dupree? It's her name.

SITA
The Ida B Wells Project Survivor Award.

IDA B
Why?

SITA
It's demeaning.

IDA B
How so?

SITA
It sets her apart.

IDA B
She IS set apart.
She sets herself apart.
Both.

SITA
What's she done?

IDA B
Survive.

SITA
As have others.

IDA
Brilliantly. More so. Most so.
One has to be chosen.

SITA
Why?

IDA B
Because I give, through my foundation, 1.2 this year, 1 last year, 1.4 next year, to maintain, obtain, retain programs.

SITA
Sustain, plantain, taintain -

IDA B
For those who have survived the projects with one each year most distinguished.

SITA
Segregating Little Miss Onyx DuPree, three 'e's, out.

IDA B
What would you have me do? I'm rewarding excellence.

SITA
Fine.

IDA B
Don't say 'fine' to me.
Do you have a foundation?

SITA

I get FROM foundations.

SITA's on her phone.

Yes. Who?
Shah Rukh Roshan.
Yes.
Get him.

SITA is off her phone.

IDA B
Shah what?

SITA
Shah whom.
Shah Rukh Roshan, Indian heartthrob, one of the so-called Mt. Rushmore of Indian actors.

IDA B
For what?

SITA
For whom?
For me.
For - whatever we're calling it.

IDA B
Calling what?

SITA is on her phone.

SITA

Yes.
Tell him - yes. Is he there?
Shah Rukh - yes.
I'll be there.
I know it's not the same as saying I'll be in it, but I will be there.
In a few.

SITA is off her phone.

Pheww!

IDA B

What is it that you're not in, whatever you're calling it?

SITA

The working title is - One's Happy, the Other Isn't.
I've told you, it's based on the novel.

IDA B

Your novel.
One's Sad, the Other isn't.

SITA

This is the upbeat version.

IDA B

For the play - London.

SITA

For the movie - Mumbai.

IDA B

You didn't tell me.

SITA

I thought I did.

IDA B

I thought you told me everything.

SITA

Obviously not.

IDA B

Onyx DuPree is an albino.

SITA

Do tell.

IDA B

I am.

SITA

One's Happy, the Other Isn't -

IDA B

No albinos.

SITA

Is she happy?, with her Ida B Wells Award, or isn't she?

IDA B

I'm taking her to New York, tomorrow, escorted by her sister, Amethyst -

SITA

Amethyst?

IDA B

Amethyst Rashad, her sister's name - black as, well, black AS; then I'm coming Back to Chicago for a ceremony amidst the rubble of her project.

SITA

We're bringing One's Happy, the Other Isn't to New York, then I'm going to Chicago for its opening at the Cultural Center.

IDA B

The Cultural Center used to be the main public library. It's where I learned to read. The main public library now is named the Harold Washington library, named after the late mayor, a large, that is, fat black man, a wonderful fellow-reformer, gay, even jolly at times, engaged to the same woman for something like forty-five years, his beard at all public functions, a chain-smoking gourmand -

SITA

His fiancee?

IDA B

Harold - dropped dead at his desk, now Richie Daley, son of the late, 1968, Grant Park Nazi commando, Democratic National Convention, Abbie Hoffman-Yippie-gassing Hizzoner Richard J. Daley, never get a person of color, gay or nay, back at that city hall, doomed from the beginning, at Harold's swearing-in, his driver locked his official car with the keys in the ignition. driver, black of course, pounding the window, new Mayor Harold approaching, a pork-bellied white seargeant comes by with a wire coathanger, slides it down the window, unlocks the door and walks away unthanked.

SITA

Doomed from the outset.

IDA B

Doomed.
Now Jesse Jackson's son has become the King of Beers with the Budweiser distributorship and Jesse's love-child wiles away her two years in Los Angeles.
Now if only Oprah could admit on her program that she's gay she really would take over the world, having by latest count, only forty-three percent of the global vote.

SITA
The percentage that gave you Clinton for eight years.

IDA B
The first and only black president.

SITA
The blip-on-the-radar President between Bushies.

IDA B's on her phone.

Yes.
What about the tickets?
They're travelling together.
Onyx, Amethyst -
Sapphire?
No Sapphire.
Two - Onyx, Amethyst.
No Ruby, Emerald, Jade

IDA B's off her phone.

Jesus -

` SITA's on her phone.

SITA
Yes -
The Indian population of Chicago has doubled since 1990 and quadrupled in New York.
Shah Rukh Roshan is known to them all.
George Clooney is the Shah Rukh of the States

SITA's off her phone.

Publicists.

IDA B
He'll be glad to hear it.

SITA
Who?

IDA B
George.

SITA
Indians don't live in the Projects.

IDA B
And thus will never win the Ida B. Wells Project Survivor Award.

SITA
We scale heights of a different nature.

IDA B

I'm sure you do. Seventy minutes?

SITA
Thereabouts. Between calls. Plane to catch.

IDA B
Let's turn the phones off.

SITA
No.
A lot to accomplish. Wasting seconds.

IDA B
Does it have to be breakneck?

SITA
No, it'll be at our own pace, but knowing that this time it'll be different.

IDA B
After duelling monologues, crossing our swords. Phoolan Devi, the Bandit Queen of India about whom a movie of that name was made which you detested -

SITA
Because it made her weepy, and if she had been weepy all the time, she would have accomplished nothing.
You're Ida B. Wells, suffragist, anti-lynching lecturer and in fact Rosa Parks before Rosa Parks

IDA B
We're showing each other how we got to be who we are, invoking our namesakes, in the clearest possible way.

SITA
It is our way, mutually devised -

IDA B
And you're not at all concerned -

SITA
Say it.

IDA B
An artificiality -

SITA
We each have our agenda, and within the boundaries of the items, there is room for spontaneity, and it's very definitely thinking WITHIN the box. All this thinking OUTSIDE the box is missing the point. All this talk of being 'proactive', whatever the bloody hell that means, the corporate 'heads-up' boozwhah - like - DUH - very active?, active before active, ur-active - a friend, fifty-five, she likes to say she's hit the speed limit, was having a thing with a man sixty-five. She had high hopes.

IDA B (singing)
She had hi - i - i - hopes

She had hi - i - i - hopes

SITA
And he says to her, "We'll be with each other forever."

IDA B (singing)
High apple pie in the sky - i - i hopes.

SITA
The next day they're having a furious knockabout and he says 'It's over', and she says, 'But you said to me we'd be with each other forever' and he says -

SITA simul IDA B
But I didn't mean it proactively!

SITA
I told you -

IDA B
Kinda sorta maybe - like - which - who - why - where - WHATEVER!

SITA
Like a sixty-five year old fucker is talking this rot. Everything we need is within the box. It's how we arrange the atoms within
that gives any artificiality its naturalness, in fact, its true artifice -
the making of art, if you will.

IDA B
I will, and you made 'The Farts'.

SITA
Excuse me?

IDA B
The Farts and Seizure section of the New Grey, now colorized, New Jerk Times.

SITA
Really? And they have me expatiating on what burning issue?

IDA B
O, it's just a puff piece on Asians in the arts.

SITA
O, please, they didn't use that some old tired quote - scratch it, they couldn't find me.

IDA B
They couldn't find you?

SITA
I was in the Valley, I got one of those third degree isolation messages - screw the Farts
alright - here are ten tasks - we'll get to as many as we can - one for each of the major Upanishads.

IDA B

But you're not Hindu.

SITA
In the sense that I am an Indian person, in the broadest sense, that's all the word means.

IDA B
All?

SITA
That's what the word means.

IDA B
So a Muslim Indian is a Hindu.

SITA
What complicates this is that all Muslims think that all people are Muslims, either practicing, if that's the word -

IDA B
Why not?

SITA
Or practitioners-in-waiting. Infidels-in-waiting to be fidels, Arabic Castros, but he trims his beard and definitely doesn't pray five times a day.

IDA B
Hey, what do Muslim fundamentalists - now there's a word that needs Parsing. Depending on what the definition of the word 'is' is.

SITA
Castro and baseball; Castro and boxing.

SITA
Fidel had a beautiful teenage mistress -

IDA B
Saw the replay of Muhammed Ali's fight with Sonny Liston in Lewiston, Maine, not that that fight was fixed, the drunken hunter singing the National Anthem forgot the words, yon Cassius Clay with the lean and hungry look that eve was no Man of Peace.

SITA
You're a prizefight fan, the Sweet Science?

IDA B
What's your spectator sport-of-choice? The Afghanis roar up and down a sort of unmarked polo field trying to ram the head of a decapitated ram across a goal of rusty spikes. It's Harry Potter meets Ichabod Crane in burnoose, caftan and diaper brain.

SITA
I'm fond of basketball - Magic Johnson soon to have his ten year anniversary of his HIV announcement, admitting twenty thousand sexual encounters with women, keeping no count of the boytoys.

IDA B
That was Wilt the Stilt. Magic only got to about ten grand.

SITA
Do the arithmetic. Twenty thousand divided by three hundred and sixty-five -

IDA B
About sixty.

SITA
So, for sixty years, every day of the year, he has a different chippie.

.

IDA B O'SHEA
If you're a jackass for the entire day and suddenly for the last four seconds before we pass out, before I've given you a bodyrub and you've complained that I haven't gotten the toes right, before which you've jumped up and down in your jumping up and down way, trying hard not to say manic-depressive way, you're suddenly nice, am I supposed to accept you as a nice person.

IDA B
We've got to talk. Jump right in. I've got to know your reasons for not being with me right now.

SITA
Later. Or next time. We have other matters.

IDA B
I want to know your reasons.

SITA
You know my reasons.

IDA B
I want to know them organically.

SITA
You mean like a fruit?

IDA B
Like a bloody vegetable.

SITA
We'll touch upon it as I'm leaving. Reserve the final five.

IDA B
My hands are cracking already. The summer's barely ended and it's time to break out the lotion again.

SITA laughs.

Why are you laughing?

SITA
Because you say 'Black don't crack.'

IDA B
It doesn't.

SITA
I'll be white black
I'll put it in my black pocket.

IDA B
What are you -

SITA
I'm doing you.

IDA B
Dick –

SITA
What did you call me?

IDA B
I didn’t call you anything.

Dick. I wrote Dick.

I wrote Dick.

SITA
The one who kept pecking away at your 'bosoms', as he called them?

IDA B
And I wrote Thea.

SITA
What's it in "A Clockwork Orange"? 'Bezoomny groodies'. Burgess is playing with the Russian sounds like 'Bolshoi spaseeba', like the ballet - big - it just means 'big'.

IDA B
In fact, I'm trying to complain and you're talking novels. I write Dick I wrote Thea, I wanted to know if they were alright.
So what if one's my ex-husband, one my ex-, I wrote them both not to check on them, but just to find out if they're O.K. Tell me if it's me -

SITA
It - is - you.

IDA B
Come on, I'm serious.

SITA

So - am - I.
I'm getting right black to you.

IDA B

I wanted to know if they're alright.
I've never stopped loving anyone I've ever been with.

SITA

That's your problem.
When the Russkies say 'Bolshoi' they mean the best ballet. When the Amurricans say 'big', they mean some dumb movie or their toy missiles.

SHE pronounces it 'miss-aisle'.

IDA B

Is it so , what? Pushy, intrusive - Dick, Thea -

SITA

Have they become a couple?

IDA B

Couple? She's a stone dike and he, he just married a Jew.

SITA

Why's that pertinent?

IDA B

Because after me, me who was only liked, that is the only thing his parents liked about me was that I WASN'T a Jew, he said he'd only be with white Gentile Central Euro-trash.

SITA

Ah, the Euro-trash, one could take it out to the alley every night for late pickup.

IDA B

Czechs like his family of lost and last royalty. Do you know that even after the divorce I retain the title 'Baroness'?

SITA

Definitely the steamiest shite on the pavement.

IDA B

'Sriyoo na jeden kopu'.

SITA

They all shit in the same hole.

IDA B

Said our Slovak maid.

SITA

Whose groodies beguiled you until Dickie poo found you in the woodshed and thus the divorce.

IDA B
Love is never having to take off your sari.

SITA
I'm not.

IDA B
It's from a novel, sort of.

SITA
It's sort of from a novel, which was sort of a novel.

IDA B
You know, you can't attack me this way.

SITA
What way? I'm trying to understand the way you think.
Alright, you write Dickie poo and this lipstick lesbo -

IDA B
That's not who she is.

SITA
With whom you've supped at the Sapphic table -

IDA B
I never really liked it.

SITA
With me or with her?

IDA B
With her, with her, don't twist this, I write them both, separately, I'm reaching out to them and I admit I said to them remarkably similar things because I just wanted to know if they were alright.

SITA
Why wouldn't they be?

IDA B
As the world turns, they were both on that island,
the one with the recent tornado, actually not so recent, so it was odd that I was checking in with them now, I mean we should check in/on people immediately after a disaster, quite by accident they were both there, quite by accident did I find this out, so I reached out to each, to them both because I hadn't heard and because when someone's so strongly in your life and then not, you still care, don't you?

SITA
Did you hear from them?

IDA B
Don't you?

SITA

Did you?

IDA B

Yes, briefly, after a bit, not immediately, and they were separately fine and then I wrote them back -

SITA

So you wrote them twice.

IDA B

Well -

SITA

Jesus -

IDA B

What 'Jesus'? I was concerned. What's so -

SITA

Two ex's you ostensibly have nothing to do with -

IDA B

What 'ostensibly'?

SITA

And you're tracking them down and they allow themselves to be tracked.

IDA B

I'm not a bloody bloodhound. You're making me sound crazy.

SITA

And then you track them down again.

IDA B

I wrote them in a spirit of - they wrote back in this cool manner, as if they had cooperated on the language. Don't you think that that's odd?

SITA

That they really don't want to have anything to do with you?

IDA B

But we were in each others' lives, am I such a bad person, did I hurt them so badly that nothing -

SITA

Give it up, Give it Black!

IDA B

This invitation came for you.

SITA

O, that thing.

IDA B

What 'thing'.

SITA

Guggenheim reunion.

IDA B

Do you want me to come with you to this 'thing', this Guggie 'thing' the weekend before Thanksgiving which we have to plan anyway?

SITA

I don't care.

IDA B

Oh.

SITA

I don't mean it that way.

IDA B

What way?

SITA

As if I were being dismissive.

IDA B

You know, I know I'm at that level of the novels about never having to take off your sari. I haven't read all of Anthony Powell six times.

SITA

Burgess, Anthony Burgess, and nor have I.

IDA B

"Barchester Towers" was written by a whore named Trollope, I mean that's as far as I got.

SITA

Don't do the dumbdown-chic on me.

IDA B

I can't converse on that level.

SITA

Converse on whatever bloody level you like.

IDA B

I wear 'Converse' black sneakers with the no support, ya dig, but I don't 'conVERSE'.

SITA

'Converse' comes directly from the -

IDA B & SITA

Latin

SITA
It means that there is something between you and it and me and it.

IDA B
I thought that was 'interesting' and great.

SITA
Good, you usually say 'inn-arresting'.

IDA B
What?

SITA
You usually say 'INN-ARRESTING'.

IDA B
Don't condescend.

SITA
One of my more engaging qualities.

IDA B
Now 'engaging' -

SITA
Stick with 'converse'.

IDA B
And it'll stick you.
I'm just a musical theater chick.
I'm not a lexikaka -
kagrapher

SITA
O, please. Where's the Samuel Johnson I gave you?

IDA B
O, just detonate another 'A' bomb.

SITA
Excuse me?

IDA B
Why didn't you touch me that last time?

SITA
I can't just go at it.

IDA B
Afraid of dying of moral turpitude?
We'll both die of that before we die from no Indian bomb.
I'll give you that.
Touch - touch - like the ceiling of the Sistine fucking Chapel!

SITA
That God doesn't touch.

IDA B
'That' God? Well 'that' God reaches out and down and 'that' Adam reaches out and up. Arriba Arriba!

SITA
What's the matter, your Valium wear off?

IDA B
I want wine.

SITA
If you're going to start throwing it down -

IDA B
Pools of it -

SITA
If you wind up blasted -

IDA B
With ecstasy, I'm on the wagon, for Christ's sake and what gives you the right to use the Lord's name in vain? I, I have the right, you do not.

SITA
Correct. I am neither Hindu nor Muslim and only temperamentally Buddhist. I am a secularist, as are you. Just in case you were wondering.

IDA B
I always find it odd when people just announce who and what they are.

SITA
You do it every second.

IDA B
I do not.
How so?

SITA
All these pictures of yourself everywhere.
Ida B at three
Ida B at five with prize cat

IDA B
Everard.

SITA
Indeed.

IDA B
Veddy British. I would have thought you would have approved.

SITA
You would have thought.

Ida B with dog.

IDA B

Henry.

SITA

Ida B with Dickie poo.

IDA B

Richard.

SITA

Ida B with Thea, looking like a dragged-out version of Martina Navratilova.

IDA B

Martina in drag - we met her and she said Thea smelled of tobacco, right to her face.

SITA

Thea's tobacco face, having just dragged, was no doubt in her tobacco-less face.
Smoking again?

IDA B

I want to know your reasons.

SITA

Inorganically?
I may need a puja.

IDA B

Fill me in.

SITA

A ceremony of anointment to drive away or bring forth - the rain, the sun, a man, a woman.
Phoolan Devi.

IDA B

O.K, Phoolan, take it away.

SITA

Phoolan Devi is a lower caste woman.
She was repeatedly raped by men of all castes while still a child. At 16, having somehow survived, although this is the story of many lower caste women, survival that is, she joined a band of brigands, bandits from lower and not so lower castes. She quickly became the lover,
of one of the bandits, also a lower caste man. He became, through sheer force of will, the head of this gang and together he and Phoolan went on this rampage. They went to her village where she had been repeatedly raped and lined up the 20 or so men who had stuck it to her and she and he, and she especially, murdered them, all of them, in front of their relatives, many of whom had cheered them on when they had raped her. Then proceded a series of explosions, robberies, murders of upper caste men, destruction of buildings and social clubs and mens' clubs and elitist havens and Phoolan and her consort became so very popular in the Indian countryside and also in the

press. The other members of the gang became jealous that a lower caste man had become head of their gang and conspired and then killed him, leaving Phoolan disenfranchised from her own bandit gang. But in the meantime she had developed a following among lower caste people as a champion of their fate and she decided to run for office, for Parliament, which is, if you've ever seen an Americana election, one of complete chaos. Talk about the Bush-Gore fiasco and the hanging chads and preggers in Florida, that stuff and that ballot stuffing, electronic or other wise is nothing. Well, lo and behold, Phoolan wins her seat and is ensconced in Parilament with the Hindus and the Buddhists and the Muslims and the brahmins and all the others you in the West know so nothing about. And then she's there for ten years and she becomes the champion, of the lower castes and even those above
and she moves into an upper middle class suburb and one day she walks out of her house and she gets blown away by a "radical student" who can't stand the fact that a woman and a lower caste one at that has become a Parliamentarian and of course he wants to rape her corpse.
Hoping not to destroy completely whaever illusion might have been created,
Please accept me as Phoolan Devi.

IDA B

So what did she do as a Parliamentarian for ten years did she champion the rights of the poor yes did she sit on the verandas of the rich and powerful yes did she sip alcohol and put her feet up at exclusive clubs heretofore reserved for men as the sun set and as the host remarked how pleasant it was to view all of this as the huge rat scurried behind yes and did she trade and trade for the scraps of meal and grain for her people in the remotest villages and what did she give over you heard me what did she give over and what had she been giving over her life over and did she give over when the man on the veranda gave over his demeanor that is he decided to notice that he had allowed her to put her feet up allowed her was his decision because after all she was a murderer and a lower caste outlaw allowed her to talk to him in a way he would not have allowed had she not been a lower caste and a murderer because he wanted her for her legend but for nothing else and so he restrained himself on the verandah which he was not used to used to the rats scurrying used to the verandah but not used to restraining himself and she got what she wanted.

SITA

"And it was the morning after we blew up the train we took no care to see if anyone was on or off lower or upper bunks or castes and this was the train delivering something governmental something of or to or from or by some council, something terribly important to the smooth running of the so-called largest democracy in the world and we wanted to stop it in its tracks so to speak because we had not ever taken the courses in political science which I would later take and we knew we readerlesswriterless brigands that we had to make a statement and we moved on to torching upper caste villas incendiary Robin Hoods we dared by night as we fucked by day or we fucked by night and we dared by day and we rammed through my village and we brought the villagers forth and we demanded the two who had raped me and the two who had raped me were not surrendered and we I yes I took the twenty young men of the village the strongest handsomest bravest until now down to the river and the other villagers heard the roar of gunfire and the shrieks of the twenty and we moved on and blew up two police stations and we dared and fucked both by day and night."

IDA B

Next time I want you to tell the story , painfully slowly, about doing the twenty painfully slowly.

SITA

I shall.
So your Ida B Wells was the original Rosa Parks, Rosa before Rosa, sub rosa. Ida B. Wells, if you please.

IDA B

"A Darky Damsel Obtains a Verdict for Damages Against the Chesapeake Ohio Railroad: What it cost to put a Colored Teacher in a Smoking and Carriage for $500."

IDA B plays IDA B. WELLS
SITA plays the Conductor.

IDA B

Nice and comfy in the Ladies' Coach.

SITA

Have to ask you to move, Ma'am.

IDA B

Aren't you sweet, calling me 'Ma'am.

SITA

Askin' you to move, Ma'am.

IDA B

Don't know how I ain't sittin' here all the time, but Ida B be a teacher so she better not say 'ain't'.

SITA

Ain't gonna ask you again, Ma'am.

IDA B

Now you, my good man, come from a lower station, you from the lowest of the four classes or castes, as we like to call 'em south of the line named after the Messrs Mason and Dixon, you got the Brahmins, that's the preachers, and the rulers, that's the plantation owners, and the merchants, the small entrepreneurs, that's not you yet and then there's you, my good lowest caste, you are grateful I know to Vishnu, the preserver, that you are not outcast, you, sir, are not untouchable, you are within the caste system, you are just at its lowest rung, and I sure do like the Ladies' Coach.

SITA

You will repair to the Smokers' Car just ahead, Madame, or the plantation owners' darkies, the biggest, funkiest-butted bucks from the deepest mud of the Missippissi, and that's M-i-s-s-i-p-p-i-s-s-i in your eye, will deliver your Ethiope booty, cheeks a-burnin', to the platform of the next station, if you're lucky enough not to be cast out from all four castes of this Ladies' Car reserved for the likes of the Daughters of the Alabaster Magnolias.

IDA B

Bring on de bloods, cracker, you saltless saltine, you peanutshell dick, you pop-up cop, you security stooge and I'll sue you and the Chesapeake for every

Confederate dollar spent on every whore on Beale Street.

SITA
You do just that and the justice system'll twist your tits so tight you won't never need no Big Mammyogram.

IDA B
Well, I just did take your bony bone-white ass to court and guess what?, Rebel Yeller, I got awarded $500 in damages, so dust up that seat in the Ladies' Car 'cause I comin' back.

SITA
Then you'd be interested to know that the Tennessee Supreme Court just overturned that award and says you got to sit with the Smokers 'cause that's First Class for the Namibian Jemmimas and their Zulu Bens.

IDA B
"I have firmly believed all along that the law was on our side and would, when we appeal it, give us justice. I feel shorn of that belief and utterly discouraged, and just now, if it were possible, I would gather up my race in my arms and fly away with them. O God, is there no redress, no peace, no justice in this land for us?"

SITA is again herself.

SITA
Colored justice. For black and brown. For you and me.

IDA B again herself.

IDA B
1884.

SITA
2001.

IDA B
I was six, eight, ten.
We'd leave Chicago before dawn and Bill would drive and he'd never stop and we had to hold it because we couldn't stop until dark because we wanted to get there we so wanted to get there before the time was up. And when we'd stop overnight why we would have to why would we have to, my grandmother who could pass went in and rented the room and we'd all sneak out of the car and into the room and in the morning my grandmother who could pass would pay the bill and we would all have sneaked back into Bill's Buick and we'd head off and we'd get there there being Martha's Vineyard in our little pastel house in our little Negro community like the lace curtain Irish I thought our name being O'Shea and last St. Patrick's day before the day I called a week or so and made a reservation for 17 at this Oirish dive around the corner and I said my name was O'Shea and they said, yes, Ma'am we'll put some tables together and then all seventeen of us Blappeople piled into O'Rourke's or Hoolihan's or McGillicuddy's and I showed them my i.d. with O'Shea and they had to let us in and they looked at us and we looked at everything and everyone and we had the grandest time.

SITA

We left India when I was three. We went to London. My mother cried for years. My father said we couldn't go back. Last year he went back. He has a hardware company.

IDA B

Not software?

SITA

I refuse to acknowledge the difference. I'm a Vedic Luddite.

IDA B

What does that mean?

SITA

You know what a -

IDA B

Juddite - the Judds, country and Western, mother and daughter, momma got sick, bad sick, saw them in Vegas, before we knew she was sick, backstage, I was seeing a woman who worked backstage at Caesar's, late '80's, she the first woman stagehand, crawling over the grids, wires hanging down, dangerous as all get out being the Little Miss Jackie Robinson of the Techie Union. Mama Judd, bouncing about ginghamly, petite, pretty hillbilly, truckdriver daughter belting, quite a pair.

SITA

The Luddites. Ned Ludd - 1779, half-witted Leicestershire workman who destroyed stocking frames, a member of early Nineteenth Century English workmen engaged in attempting to prevent the use of laboursaving machines by destroying them.

IDA B

I met the Judds backstage. They were destroying machinery. Daughter Judd did a onceover on yours-so-truly, stopping at my o so Vedically-knowing booty.

SITA

In London we lived with others like us, we went to school, the various siblings, 'Dirty Pakis' shouted at us, we weren't Pakis, that is, from Pakistan, home of the Paki, literally, so how Paki has become a slur -

IDA B

The footballers.

SITA

Yes, the bloody hooligans - just the slobbest of the Slobbos, Slobbodan Miloshitkevitch, and his cohorts Ratko, giving 'rat' a bad name, now he's indicted by the War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague, he would have fit right in in our part of London.

IDA B

I thought you loved London.

SITA

I do.

IDA B

Do you have someone there?

SITA

I don't like this direction.

IDA B

Did you know that the Spanish word 'direccion' means
'address'?

SITA

No, I did not.

IDA B

So if someone, una senorita, with flashing 'ojos', asks for your 'direccion',
she wants to know where you live.

SITA

Really?

IDA B

I want to know 'su direccion', por favor.
I - want - to - know - where - you - live.

SITA

Ida -

IDA B

And why it is that -

IDA B & SITA

You - don't - live - here. I - don't - live - here.

SITA

Live with me in London.

IDA B

I don't like London.

SITA

You don't like London? What's that got to do with it, besides the
impossibility of not liking London, if you want to live with me, I can see
not liking New York -

IDA B

Live with me in Chicago – or New York.

SITA

I don't like New York.

IDA B

You don't like New York? What's that got to do with it, besides the
impossibility of not liking New York, if you want to live with me, I can see
not liking London, so I'll move to London.

SITA

You hate London.

IDA B
It's impossible to have even a minor quibble about London. Now, New York, on the other hand -

SITA
Ida B -

IDA B
Sita -

SITA
Look -

IDA B
Stop - listen - look - no, I got the order wrong - listen - stop - look

SITA
Ida B!

IDA B
I've stopped. I'm looking both ways and then back the first way, left, right, left, or in London, right, left, right, now I'm stepping off the curb in Trafalgar Square and SPLAT!, 'a la derecha, a la izquierda, a la derecha' and I'm gored by John Bull, pulling out his horn, thrusting me over his shoulders, releasing me from the cleaving of his horn, as I go hurtling through the air, all the way to North London 'y su direccion'.
And so it's settled.
We'll live in North London with nary the English and we'll foment and ferment. We'll drink some wine and plot the revolution.
Are there Asians?

SITA
You weren't listening.

IDA B
I mean, like real Asians - Japanese, Chinese, Korean.
I mean, you're not really Asian, are you?

SITA
'Asian', if you needed further evidence, is a misnomer. I am Indian, some say that's not accurate - Kerali - but that's another discussion.

IDA B
Well, we'll have so many.
So we'll live in a building, how many stories?

SITA
Every building has many stories.

IDA B
Eight million stories in the naked city - ever see the series? - we're too young for the original - George C. Scott - did you see him in 'The Hustler'?

with Newman? Are those movies you've seen? People hitting thirty right now have seen 'The Color of Money', and it is what it is, then suddenly if they're lucky, they see 'The Hustler' and it blows them far far away. The scene in the bar in the morning -

SITA

You've told me.

IDA B

Indulge me.

SITA

Just this once.

IDA B

Thank you.

SITA

Indeed, I like the story.

IDA B

You tell it.

SITA

It's yours.

IDA B

It's Piper Laurie's.

SITA

Paul Newman - Fast Eddie Felsen, in a bar -

IDA B

Go back.

SITA

In a bus terminal diner, sees Piper Laurie sitting alone. He asks if he can sit, he's exhausted and randy simultaneously and she assents, he offers to buy her coffee, comes on to her, few words, awkward, but he's so weary he falls asleep, she pays for his coffee, he wakes, is told she paid, wanders into a saloon, about eight a.m., she's there in a booth, he sits down, she's drinking, he orders from the bartender, it's Jake LaMotta, a real-life boxer, again he comes on, she assents, she gets up from her side of the booth, as does he, she almost stumbles, he takes her arm, she says' "It's O.K., I'm not drunk, I'm just lame" and he lets her walk ahead and he sees, as do we, she is indeed. Lame.

IDA B

You've left out some details. The name of his bourbon.

SITA

J.T.S. Brown.

IDA B

Important. It shall recur.

SITA
As will her lameness - before she slits her wrists.

IDA B
Scrawling 'Pervert' in lipstick letters on the mirror in the hotel bathroom in Louisville, Kentucky during Derby Week just after she's succumbed to George C. Scott as Newman's off in his own pool. She read books; he did not - Newman, Scottt did not, not Jackie Gleason as Minnesota Fats, didn't read a book. They all wrote the book on exactly what they did - I found this poem - in a book - which I shall now read to you

SITA
I want to hear it, Piper.

IDA B
If I were lame, I wouldn't have to -
You never loved me, and yet to save me
One unforgettable night you gave me
Such chill embraces as the snow-covered heights
Receive from clouds, in northern auroral lights
Such keen communion as the frozen mere
Has with immaculate moonlight, cold and clear
And all desire
Like failing fire
Died slowly, faded surely, and sank to rest
Against the delicate chillness of your breast
That's an Indian love poem.

SITA
I know it.

IDA B
From a book you gave me.

SITA
I know it.

IDA B
You didn't have this poem marked, but I know you know it.

SITA
For the third time -

IDA B
Would you let me?

SITA
"Sink to rest?"

IDA B
"Against the delicate - "

SITA
Now they want me in it.

IDA B

It?

SITA
It's a short shooting schedule, even by Bollywood standards -

IDA B
Shooting? I thought it was a play you were working on.

SITA
The play, London; the movie, Mumbai.

IDA B
You didn't tell me about the movie.

SITA
Yes, I did. Maybe I didn't. What difference does it make?

IDA B
We tell each other everything.

SITA
Obviously, we don't.

IDA B
I tell you -

SITA
No, you don't.

IDA B
It's the work of lovers.
No subject is ever exhausted unless it's exhausted twenty times over - between lovers, or something like that. Jane Austen. See, I know my novelists. Jane said she never had a scene in any of her work with only two men because she hadn't the vaguest idea what two men alone would say to each other. Edward Albee, on the other hand, at least when he came to "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf", does not have a scene between Martha and Honey, he has them between George and Martha, George and Nick, Nick and Martha, George and Honey, but not between Martha and Honey because he hadn't at that time the vaguest idea what two women alone would say to each other and don't tell me I don't have ideas.

SITA
I never said you don't have ideas.

IDA B
You treat me like an idiot.

SITA
I don't treat you like an idiot, but I've heard that Jane Austen line and the Edward Albee line a dozen times -

IDA B
That's the point, until exhaustion and beyond and each time I refine it.

SITA

It's like sugar, it should not be refined and yes you had a point about a thousand years back when George and Martha weren't so bloody ancient.

IDA B
Why does everyone get assassinated in India?

SITA
You mean like famous Indians, John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King?

IDA B
The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. to you. No, like famous Americans named Gandhi, Gandhi and Gandhi.
The academic on the plane -

SITA
You've told me this before.

IDA B
Sorry. Thought I was telling Jane.
He said it's not going to be the Palestinians and the Israelis in their little sun-baked corner of the world but the Pakistanis and the Indians beating each others' atoms, splitting the hairs of the Sikhs, pulverizing the Muslims in Kashmir -

SITA
Stop! It's my part of the world and I know what's going to happen, what could happen there at any moment - tell me something I don't know!

IDA B
I didn't know you were going to be in your movie.

SITA
I'm not. There's no time.
I'm going to Boston, late dinner with some Public Fund people, grant for the Foundation, fly out tomorrow.

IDA B
I have jury duty starting tomorrow and at the same time I’m going to the airport with Onyx.

SITA
In two places at the same time, hey?

IDA B
Two or perhaps three.
Where's your money coming from these days, besides the Public Fund and what's that a front for? The old man still forking over?

SITA
I beg your pardon?

IDA B
You can have mine, you know. It'd be one of the perks?

SITA

Are you doing that well?

IDA B

Lots of languages - all the books have been translated many times over and the money, really, just keeps pouring in. There's something odd, in that all these languages you parade, which I don't know, except my smidgeon pidgeon Espagnol, are the ones my books are now in, while your novel - of course, while I write for pre- and barely teens, while you -

SITA

I'm not writing another, you know that.

IDA B

While I -

SITA

You have a formula. You do apprentice bodice-rippers disguised as historical novels with thirteen year old heroines, starting what, with the founding of Jamestown and moving forward, decade by decade, up to the Civil War now, are you?

IDA B

There is a message, a moral, an uplifter, so to speak -

SITA

Of the about-to-be bodice, so to say.

IDA B

Well, you have one -

SITA

A bodice?

IDA B

Rip mine.

SITA

You have many -

IDA B

E pluribus One'em.

SITA

You don't say.

IDA B

I do say, and I say, all this 'manyness' could be yours.

SITA

I hear the ring of the New Testament Satan taking the Christ-Man to the top of the mountain, spreading out the wealth of nations before him, where all Jesus wants is a return to the desert and some fresh-baked stones.

IDA B
All the money he needed came from the desert and I am only slightly Beelzebub.

SITA
Is that like being a little pregnant?

IDA B
I am capable of bearing a child, but I wouldn't raise her alone.

SITA
You can't even take care of yourself, how could you take care of a child?

IDA B
I wouldn't raise her alone.

SITA
I have mine, thank you.

IDA B
Where is little Bhopal these days?

SITA
GOpal. He was just nine last week and in London.

IDA B
With Grammy.

SITA
He's just about to be nine.

IDA B
So you didn't miss his birthday.

SITA
No.

IDA B
Yet. Sure?

SITA
Money comes into the Foundation from various foundations.

IDA B
And it's all being funnelled into stopping the dam? Instead of sticking your finger in the dike, you're the dike sticking your finger or is that little Bhopal and what is the name of your foundation, girdles, stays, garters?

SITA
It's an immediate windfall. Some mad Javanese.

IDA B
And his maddest yen.

SITA
JAVanese, not JAPanese.

My mother felt the Marxism in Kerala; I felt it in the north of London and do we think that the IRA will really de-commission?

IDA B

Ah, Gerry Adams, one could swing over for a bit of a Guinness toke-'n-poke. Or we could do our own black-'n-tan, Sita dearest?

SITA

Black 'n brown, Ida.

IDA B

Dearest.

SITA

This happened last time. Not again. We're not to neglect the Upanishads.

IDA B

Neglect the Upanishads and the Upanishads will neglect you.

SITA

"Of a certainty the woman who can see all creatures in herself, herself in all creatures, knows no sorrow.
That is perfect.
This is perfect.
Perfect comes from perfect.
Take perfect from perfect, the remainder is perfect."

IDA B

Perfettamente, chiaro-obscuro. Perfectly clear.
I never said all the things I said. You can look it up.
Look at this - Rush Limbaugh is going deaf?
Now he'll be deaf AND dumb, deaf a dumb dumb
Pretty soon we won't hear a thing about him
Pretty soon HE won't hear a thing about him
May the good Lord on High strike me down dead
In my rush to Rush judgment - here's O.J.
Me only blapperson who think he did it
Just me and Johnny COCH-RAN of the Walk,
'Though I should say 'Talk', John C in the know
Wherever those bloody gloves go Fuhrman
Will follow
Sexy Fuhrman
Do his badge
Turrettsly sputtering the 'N' word

You're a wigwam you're a teepee
You're a wigwam you're a teepee
Not to fear -

SITA & IDA B (simul)

You're too tents!

IDA BEE

Da Bull going to swipe yore bum

as duh Bear pats his rumtumtum
There's going to be poetry in your movie?

SITA
Of course. You sound sceptical.

IDA B
I've seen these, you've taken me to them, they're all spectacle, and talk about sentimentality!

SITA
Yes, and that's unavoidable, but there will be an overlay of Hindi verse, I've been assured and they know not to cross me.

IDA B
They're the bloody Sikhs -

SITA
Not Sikhs.

IDA B
Or the Sunnis or the Shi'as -
which are the assassins?

SITA
The Shiites. Or at least a sect of which which includes the 'assassins'.

IDA B
From the word for he who smokes hashish before going off on a bloody rampage, see, I remember what you teach me.

SITA
There'll be an overlay of poetry.
This is from Kedarnath Singh -
"Yes, I am sad; but why
Are you sad, child? What makes you cling
Now like a frightened butterfly
Silent and hushed against my sunless shoulders?
I have done nothing
But give you a name, a small, soft name
Befitting what you are this moment -"

IDA B
And what is she this moment?

SITA
Sunlight.

IDA B
You mean like a left-over-hippie name?

SITA
No, like a Hindi poetry name.
Forget it.
The poetry of your soul extends to The West Wing which ought to be torpedoed along with the ark.

IDA B
Because I'm not turning cartwheels over every line of Wallah SinghSingh or Rhadamandrath SongSong doesn't mean -

SITA
Means -

IDA
That you must come for Thanksgiving.
This will be the second annual.

SITA
It's months away. Don't count on me. I said I'd go to Kashmir.

IDA B
They have Thanksgiving in Kashmir?

SITA
A Women's Mission. Relief for women who've escaped Kabul.

IDA B
You said you'd be here for Thanksgiving. We're having fried oysters, unagi, Tokay Aszu, Bull's Blood -

SITA
I'll be in Kashmir.

IDA B
I want you here.
Not Kashmir
I want you pampering me
Kash- schmearing me
changing my diaper, putting a diaper on my head
swabbing me with that mild disinfectant, then drying me -

SITA
Stop.

IDA B
Making me eat more, making me eat everything, kreplach, white fish, being the HindJew of my dreams.

SITA
I'm cutting off all my hair. I don't want to be thought of as this pretty woman who writes novels.

IDA B
Novel. Everyone will see your rather large ears, the only unfortunate part about you. Let me see if you're still having your wax problem. It really prevents your hearing as you should.

SITA

I won't be here.

IDA B
Alright, I'll find some other, from Sri Lanka, a Tamil rebel, or a Balinese tap dancer, a Filipina chacha contest winner, a Shanghai China Doll, a Korean Seoul sister - I'm prepared to do all of Asia.

SITA
You have a very good start.

IDA B
You are simply not going to Kashmir for Thanksgiving.

SITA
I simply am.

IDA B
They'll make you wear a chador.

SITA
I have one.

IDA B
You've told me.

SITA
How it makes me feel -

IDA B
You've told me.

SITA
The chador makes me feel as if I'm an astronaut walking the moon the only spot that little box across the eyes I can see from
The chador makes me feel as if I'm tiptoeing through cold water with crabs snapping at my ankles and I need to go faster but I can't
The chador makes me feel that I'm unable to turn my neck without the burning of the collar and the roughness across my lips
The chador makes me feel that I'm unable to sway and twist and slink and stretch and slide and skip and lift this anvil off my shoulders
The chador makes me feel as if
The chador makes me feel that
The chador
The chador
I am accustomed to its smell

IDA B
I thought you said you disposed of it.

SITA
That would have been irreligious. I folded it carefully, like your flag, put it at the bottom of a trunk with stickers from Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta, Lahore, Islamabad, Hyderabad, Madras, Kandahar and left it there for these five years - until the day before yesterday.

IDA B

And you brought it with you.

SITA

Yes.

IDA B

Well?

SITA

Would you like to see it? See it on me? See it on you?

IDA B

Would you like to see me in my Klan robe?

SITA

Do we have enough of a runway? Been practicing your walk? All in the pelvis.

IDA B

ArmaniKlanClad, Versace chadors, Yves Saint-Laurent burkhas down to Manolo Blahniks covering blood orange toes.
We can model them all on Thanksgiving.
And it will make you feel liberated. Isn't that the Islamic chic, or is it sheik, malarkey?
You put this bloody wet blanket, stinking of the rat piss in the caves, caverns, tunnels their warriors live in when attacked by the British, the Russians and beyond, scurrying past each other, sinking their toes in shite, squishing barf as their terror their screaming their advocacy drives them to and fro,
how do they see each other in the blackness!
and each burpa burka barfa now baptized in the fire of their acid lungs, because they smoke all the time, rolled yak dung - no - the finest Turkish, Egyptian, Balkan Sobranies
You put this bloody wet blanket over your tired poor waiting to be huddled masses yearning to be free and this is your uniform, your stars your stripes forever

SITA

It is the burka the uniform of bright blue and pale and yellow and black and white and we walk across the land alongside the craters that the earthquake has left one hundred feet across and fifty feet deep and some foreigners are crying across the divide and we can't understand them they are foreign journalists and we chant in solidarity with our menfolk and the wind blows our garments and makes us all tingle and we don't know where we're going.

Thanksgiving means nothing to me
I'm not a bloody Pilgrim
I don't care about maize or creamed corn
or Baptist chutney or whatever gruel you insist on serving

IDA B

Southern Baptist chutney, for generations, if you must know,
From the Missippissi O'Sheas.

SITA

Listen, there's something you have to hear
I can't be me if I'm with you
I can't be you if I'm with me
By which I mean I can't
You'll just have to stop
move out
get a rental
It's not your fault
It's not

IDA B

A rental? Where do you think you are? Is this another pit stop for you?
Do you8 know this is my place, not yours?

SITA

I have pit stops all over the globe.

SITA's phone.

Yes
Put him on
Shah Rukh Roshan

IDA's phone.

IDA

Yes
Amethyst

SITA

You know
suddenly
Where were we?

IDA

You know
suddenly
Where were we?

SITA

I can short-circuit this.

IDA

JYou can short-circuit this if you want – I don't mean that with attitude – just go ahead, go ahead and short-circuit this –
Does what just was said knock out, short-circuit, the five minues?

SITA

The five minutes?

IDA B
The five before –

SITA
Before what?

IDA B
You race out the door?

SITA
You race out the door? We're both racing.
O, I forgot, you have jury duty.

IDA B
I just won't show. I've mastered the arft of being in two places in two places at once, but three, at present, is beyond me.

SITA
That's sort of clever, but what's the third place you're asked to be?

IDA
In your heart.

SITA
Excuse me?

IDA
One – Jury Duty
Two – On the plane with Onyx
Three – In your 'corazon'.

SITA
I don't think you understand.

IDA
That makes two of us.
Now, can we just get back to The Upanishads?

SITA
'May' we.

IDA B
Is that a question?

SITA
A statement and a correction.

IDA
What’s with Shah Rukh Clooney?

SITA
The same with Onyx DuTHREE.

IDA
No, they’re not both No-Shows.

SITA
I’m afraid so.

IDA
Don’t be afraid.
The Upanishads?

SITA
The Upanishads?

IDA
Pardon me, that’s not a question
That’s a statement and a correction.

SITA
The fourth Upanishad - Questions.

IDA B
Prashna-Upanishad. Who in our body wakes, sleeps, dreams, enjoys?

SITA
'The dreaming mind enjoys its greatness. What it has seen, it sees again;
what it has heard, it hears again; what it enjoyed in different countries and
climates it enjoys again. Whatever is seen, unseen, heard, unheard, enjoyed,
unenjoyed, real, unreal, here and there, it knows; it knows everything.'

IDA B
He called me today, my stepfather. He's in town to take his daughter back to
school. She's a freshman in the School of the Arts. He said he had found
some things of my mother's his wife's. He had called from Hawaii last week,
saying he was arriving. I never returned the call.
I may see him before he leaves, I don't know. He was
there for my mother, as she lay dying, and he protected me when I
spent my year in bed when I had my very own Guillan-Barre, and I lay there in hospital,
unable to move anything but my upper lip, and he was there and I thought how

he would just hand my mother money and she and I would shop with these large bills and pile up large bills on top, and we were free to roam all the 57th Street stores with their wide aisles and winding staircases and escalators and Mother and I would share everything, and his money made us, made us feel free amid the chandeliers and the polished glass everywhere and the warm damp cloth across my forehead and I wanting to see my
mother, seen, unseen, heard, unheard, enjoyed, unenjoyed, real, unreal, here and there, my dreaming mind enjoying its greatness.

SITA
When you lay there, unable to move, save your upper lip -

IDA B
I was anticipating your touch.

SITA
That's not where I'm going.

IDA B
Whither goest thou over the land and hast thou seen my servant Job?

What of this in the Fourth - 'The round of day and night is the Creator; day, life, night matter. Those that couple with a woman by day, waste life; those that couple by night, preserve it.'

SITA
You should always continue. 'Those who obey God as Creator, get all that life and matter can give. Those who practice austerity, continence, veracity go beyond these into heaven.'

IDA B
'They that are neither crooked, nor hypocritical, nor lying, go beyond into pure Heaven.'
And did I say that Thanksgiving will be pure Heaven?

You can't just stop writing, of course you have the genius, and you're probably already hard at it. I can't stop, even if I wanted to, which I don't.

SITA
You're not a public figure.

IDA B
You are. You're practically Rushdie. All you need is for the Ayatollah to issue a fatwa and the jihad against you commences and your second novel is bought before it's written.

SITA
The Ayatollah is dead and the concept of 'jihad' is misunderstood and the second, as of now, unwritten novel, has been bought.

IDA B
'Jihad' meaning struggle of any sort, personal struggle to attain excellence-what's the idea for your second novel?

SITA

An Anglo-Irish woman, Talaya Dodgson, late fifties, an historian, a movie critic, a journalist of all sorts, is attending the International Conference of Women in 1995 in Huai Rou, China fifty or so kilometers outside Beijing. She's to deliver a paper on the repression during the Cultural Revolution 1966-76 in Chairman Mao's Middle Country, Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia and the year zero, Ceausecsu and his Madame in Romania, Miloshitkevitch and his madame in Serbia - and she has these theories that every regime is not only anti-women, despite the various Madames But a curious thing happens to Talaya on her way to the Forum.

IDA B

She gets religion.

SITA

Or at least religiosity. She delivers the paper as expected and then turns the whole thing on its ear and declares she's ready to give witness, the first meaning of the word, 'martyr', for the cause of male superiority. She's throwing down her education, abjuring all learning, will suck the toes of bushy-bearded clerics, use the filthiest turbans for unsanitary purposes and therein lies enlightenment.

IDA B

After all, didn't Gloria Steinem, after a lifetime of MS'ing, go little-girl gaga over that billionaire dick?

SITA

Precisely.
And the reader will know that Talaya has just had a conversation with the Paris Bureau Chief of the New York Times, with whom she's having an affair, and she says he has to leave his wife and children and she'll leave her husband and son and that they must be with each other as he's often insisted, he's told her that over and over and now he says -

IDA B & SITA

- I didn't mean it PROACTIVELY!

IDA B

Is there something about you, Sita, Mamacita, mi querida -
Is there something about you, Sita Devi, that wants to declare what Talaya declares?

SITA reads from the Upanishads.

SITA

"Two birds, bound one to another in friendship, have made their homes on the same tree.'

IDA B

On the Kilburn High Road. In North London.

SITA

"One stares about her, one pecks at the sweet fruit.
The personal self, weary of pecking here and there, sinks into dejection; but when she understands through meditation that the other - the impersonal Self

- is indeed Spirit, dejection disappears."

IDA B reads from the same account.

IDA B
"When the sage meets Spirit, phallus and what it enters, good and evil disappear, they are one."

SITA reads.

SITA
"We bow down to you, Great Sage!
Bow down to you, Great Sages!"

IDA B
Phallus and what it enters
Doesn't that just take the bloody cake
Do you remember good and evil disappearing?
Do you remember - of course, it's been a while -
since you've been with a man.

SITA
Really?

IDA B
Tell me the truth without my prying it out
of you.

SITA
Prying him out of me, more to the point.
Like dogs stuck.
Make it as difficult for yourself as you possibly can.
As difficult as it was for us to part

IDA B
It's always difficult for us to part.

SITA
We weren't stuck.

IDA B
Three months ago it was difficult for us to part but we didn't need to be pried. I take your point.

SITA
It was difficulty of a different sort. You refused to touch me at all.

IDA B
I refused to touch you!

SITA
It was last week.

IDA B
Middle Eastern.

SITA

An arms dealer.

IDA B
With breath to singe a rhinocerous hide.

SITA
None in the desert. A snake will do, a camel.

IDA B
One hump or two?

SITA
There was barely time for one.
The world is going to hell in a handbasket - what does that expression mean -
and it's all because of men and we are sparring over whether and when and how.

IDA B
We haven't gotten to the 'how'.

SITA
Well, the 'prying' should indicate something -

IDA B
It doesn't indicate anything, only stuckedness.

SITA
The Chinese have two written characters, one for open, as in turn on, and the other for close, as in turn off.

IDA B
Pry, unpry.
We turn each other on, we turn each other off.

SITA
When I pry, you unpry.

IDA B
We've had a President who cannot conjugate the word ‘is’

We now have a President who defines the word 'Yale' without the 'Y'
As Kennebunkport saw your old man catamaran and sail
You slurped the brew from Skull and Bones and drank your way through Yale
Senior had his thousand points of light no new taxes without fail
You couldn't even read your own lips through a thousand pints of ale

And don't you find coupling with an arms dealer - you, pacifist extraordinaire, from the spiritual loins of Mahatma G, well, slightly treacherous, if not treasonous?

SITA
The French actress, Arletty, Film Femme Fatale, in Marcel Carne's "Children of Paradise" had an affair with a German major while the Nazis occupied Paris. After the war, she was brought up on charges of collaborating with the enemy, treachery, treason, the whole kit. She announced, "My heart belongs to France, but my ass belongs to the world."

IDA B
Leni Riefensthal is still a great photographer.

SITA
Albert Speer an innovative architect.

IDA B
Alright, we could do Nazis We've Known -

SITA
Fascists We've Fucked -

IDA B
It still would not obscure the fact that when you claim to be organizing for tribal peoples in dam-ravaged southern India you're schtupping and getting pried and losing all pride with Mullah Abdullah!

SITA
I was getting money from him, huge chunks, cash amounts, I was appealing to his sanity and my vanity or perhaps I mean the other way 'round.

IDA B
I think you're making this up.

SITA
'Isn't it pretty to think so.'

IDA B
You said that as if it's a quote.

SITA
Everything's a quote, every syllable has already been written and yes, it's the last line of "The Sun Also Rises".

IDA B
"Robert Cone was once middleweight champion of Princeton."

SITA
That's the first line!.

IDA B
No bloody fooling, Indian princess.
Now that we've covered that book, cover to cover -

SITA
One matter we have yet to slam in -

IDA B
I don't even get to bask in this?

SITA
- an Indian love poem -

IDA B
I love Indian love poems.

SITA
Shutup.
Undertitles if we must

IDA B
Very CNN.

SITA
The final scene of the movie. This is the dying warrior, Sunni Muslim, he's been mortally wounded by a Shiite, but says he's on the mend.

IDA B
Will this end with the chillness of your breast?

SITA
It'll end with you.

IDA B
Please.

SITA
"I hate this city, seated on the plain
The clang and clamor of the hot bazaar
Knowing amid the pauses of my pain
This month the almonds bloom in Kandahar

"People are kind to me, one more than kind
Her lashes lie like fans upon her cheek
But kindness is a burden on my mind
And it is weariness to hear her speak

"For though that Kaffir's bullet holds me here
My thoughts are ever free, and wander far
To where the lilac hills rise soft and clear
Beyond the almond groves of Kandahar."

IDA B
Kaffir - Arabic for infidel
Infidel - Latin for one without faith
Kaffir - the term for South African mineshares
Kaffir - a native of Kafiristan, 1854
Kaffir - the 'N' word

SITA
"Wait, cursed Kaffir, wait 'til I come forth
To kill, before the almond trees are green
To raze thy very memory from the north
So that thou art not, and thou hast not been!"

IDA B
Screw Kashmir
Be here for Thanksgiving

SITA

Time's up.

IDA B

Miss the plane
Screw Kashmir
I'll call the court and plead that I'm a woman
and am not fit because of my gender to serve on a jury.
You are here tonight
You are here the fourth Thursday in November.

SITA

I - am - not.
"Thy gentle love will not disturb a mind
That loves and hates beneath a fiercer star
Also, thou know'st, my heart is left behind
Among the almond trees of Kandahar."

IDA B

I am the bloody almond trees.

SITA

Like Dickie and Thea poo, they don't want you in their lives for whatever reason - good or bad.
Let them go
Let it go
They don't want you

IDA B

Let me go

SITA

Let me go

IDA B

We don't just bump into each other's lives -

SITA

Yes, we do.

IDA B

Like bumper cars at an amusement park
Atoms in a bomb called the Sub-continent

SITA

Yes, we do, and we bump out

IDA B

Bhopal

SITA

GOpal

IDA B

Not your son - Bhopal - the disaster, the catastrophe, the calamity, the tragedy, Armageddon.

SITA
And they'll always be.

IDA B
And we'll always be.
How many Upanishads did we get to?
That is, from the original Sanskrit,
'Sitting at the feet of the master'
'Como se dice en Espagnol, a sus pies'

SITA
What was your question?

IDA B
Your Espagnol is 'muy poquito'.
How many Upanishads did we get to?
And will we get to the Koran?

SITA
We get to the Koran.

IDA B
Speak to me of the Ramayana
Sita, wife of Rama
Namesake of Devi, Bandit Goddess

SITA
I speak to you of renunciation
Ida B, namesake of Wells
Namer of the Projects that will come down

IDA B
Namer of the Projects

SITA
Namer of the Dams

IDA B
Namer of the Dams

SITA
Namer of the Projects

IDA B & SITA
- that will come down

IDA B & SITA
A one and a two
And we all know what to do

IDA B
We began with duelling prologues

SITA
We close with duelling epilogues

IDA B

You see me on the street as we're passin'
I'm not so awful, though Black, after all
At least I'm not no A-Rab assassin
We're in this together - at least for the Fall
So white makes right when joined with New Negroes
We're banded together against all the Wogs
Your Muslim your Persian and all Hindu Ho's
For their very last meal we'll make 'em suck hogs
Whoever be puttin a diaper on his head
Sure Allah is great
We kiss the Koran
Put it down gently
And shoot 'em all dead
We opposites attract
We'll bomb Ramadan up to the Pork Age
And any brown skin who calls Buddha 'Sage'
Because this here's the time for white and black
Is that what you think?
You got another think comin'
I'm going to put this IOU in my black pocket
'Cause I comin' right black achoo
You may think you're dividing to conquer
But half the sisters these days are named
Tamu el-Islam or Rahman Imani
And that no Eyetalian for clothes from Milan
All those Arundhatis and Tanyas and Yannis
Are calling the shots - down to a man
So this is just one convenience marriage
As soon as the threat has run its course
And it's clear that Black Beauty's , well, still a horse
You'll want her front where she belong pulling your carriage
Whitey'll hand me the papers and file for divorce
There's something, let me tell you, so please listen up
It's not us versus them, runneth over no cup
You got your color, she hers, me mine, ya dig?
No matter what you eatin', no cow or no pig
Lions and lambs eat couscous and curry
Let's live and let live, eat drink and be gay
All aboard the new Orient Express, got to hurry
The almond trees blooming in Kandahar
Will show us
Will show us
Will show us the way

SITA

An Ode for an Afghani Mother, Who, upon Arriving at the Name Registration Office to Change her Sixteen Year Old Son's Name, with his Permission, from Mohammed to Smith, Finds the Office Destroyed

To pulverize the terror still at hand
Annihilate the turban and the beard
To strafe and re-strafe every grain of sand
Destroy the camel driver he so feared
The stated goal that "we will end these states"
Who harbor thugs, boxcutter slasher fiends led by bushy-bearded clerics

Who wage 'jihad' and spew so many hates with their 'fatwas', their hysterics
'Wanted: Dead or Alive', not folks but hell-hounds legion
We'll never do another thing 'til we smite them in their region
One fleeing mom of six in Kabul said
"Afghanis aren't your enemies, we're dead
Already, don't you see our women bashed
By men too whipped to know they're being lashed
I've never had a right to lose or choose
I'm simple, women like me ever use
Whatever paltry nothing we can find
We tend our caves, our huts, our tents, our goat
Our mountains, deserts, unforgiving, blind
Our throats so parched we've never seen a boat
Restraining evil's rage must be your goal
Not setting fires anew in this hell-hole
You can't bomb us back to the first Stone Age
We've never left that pre-Historic page
Uzbeki, Turki, Paki, Kurdi, Tajeki and every other 'Stan'
These are our homelands, we live how we can"
So volunteer across America
Buy and fly our flags at record rate
For what?, it leads us to Hysterica
And deaths of Sikhs we drive by shoot and hate
Is this what we Americans now mean
To smear the filth of others makes us clean
Reshines our honor, raises towers new
We're still the many; they are still the few
Towers are Babel speechifying air
We need to sound the All Clear, with a death-defying stare
Why not re-build with eyes of human size
in this great land of the free
Why not NOT bomb and win the human prize
in this great land of the free

IDA B & SITA

The almond trees blooming
Will show us
Will show us
Will show us the way

IDA's phone. SITA's phone.

IDA	SITA
Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes
Onyx	Shah
Yes	Yes

That's all She/They wrote.

PAGE

PAGE 2