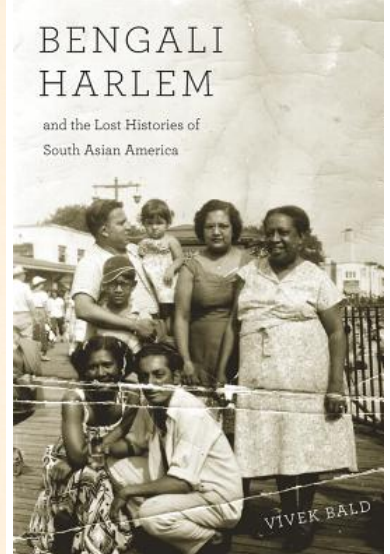
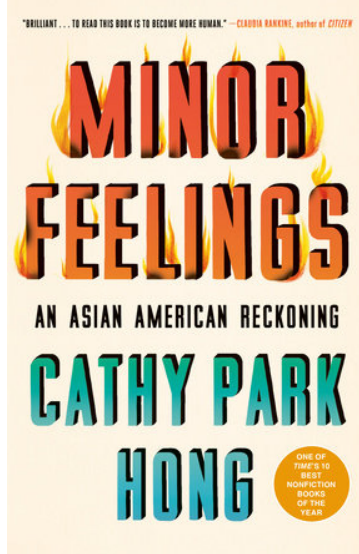
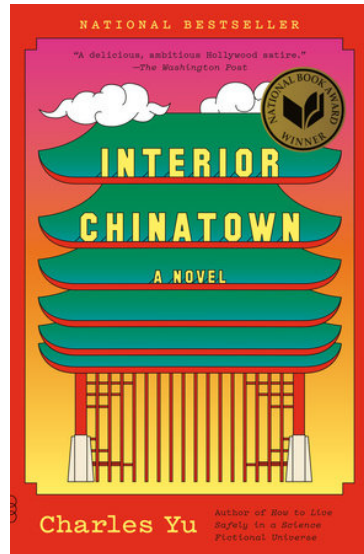


## Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

# Recommended Reading

May 2021



To celebrate Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month, we have compiled a list of books highlighting the stories and histories of Asian and Pacific Islander communities. To represent the diverse range of experiences, this list includes both fiction and nonfiction works, memoirs, biographies, historical accounts, graphic novels, and even poetry. By sharing these important stories, we hope to amplify the voices that represent a vital but underrepresented part of our American history.

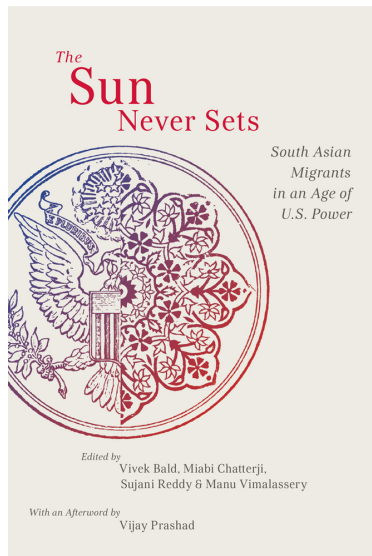
---

## Anthology



### **Go Home!** -- Edited by Rowan Hisayo Buchanan

Asian diasporic writers imagine “home” in the twenty-first century through an array of fiction, memoir, and poetry. Both urgent and meditative, this anthology moves beyond the model-minority myth and showcases the singular intimacies of individuals figuring out what it means to belong. *Go Home!* is published in collaboration with the Asian American Writers' Workshop. Established in 1991, AAWW is a national not-for-profit arts organization devoted to the creating, publishing, developing and disseminating creative writing by Asian Americans through a New York events series and online editorial initiatives.



### **The Sun Never Sets: South Asian Migrants in an Age of U.S. Power** -- Edited by Sujani Reddy, Vivek Bald and Miabi Chatterji

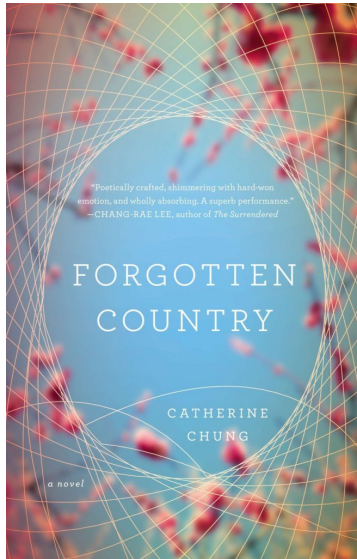
*The Sun Never Sets* collects the work of a generation of scholars who are enacting a shift in the orientation of the field of South Asian American studies. By focusing upon the lives, work, and activism of specific, often unacknowledged, migrant populations, the contributors present a more comprehensive vision of the South Asian presence in the United States.

Tracking the changes in global power that have influenced the paths and experiences of migrants, from expatriate Indian maritime workers at the turn of the century, to Indian nurses during the Cold War, to post-9/11 detainees and deportees caught in the crossfire of the “War on Terror,” these essays reveal how the South Asian diaspora has been shaped by the contours of U.S. imperialism.

Driven by a shared sense of responsibility among the contributing scholars to alter the profile of South Asian migrants in the American public imagination, they address the key issues that impact these migrants in the U.S., on the subcontinent, and in circuits of the transnational economy. Taken together, these essays provide tools with which to understand the contemporary political and economic conjuncture and the place of South Asian migrants within it.

---

## Fiction



### **Forgotten Country** -- Catherine Chung

The night before Janie's sister, Hannah, is born, her grandmother tells her a story: Since the Japanese occupation of Korea, their family has lost a daughter in every generation, and Janie is told to keep Hannah safe. Years later, when Hannah inexplicably cuts all ties and disappears, Janie goes to find her. Thus begins a journey that will force her to confront her family's painful silence, the truth behind her parents' sudden move to America twenty years earlier, and her own conflicted feelings toward Hannah.

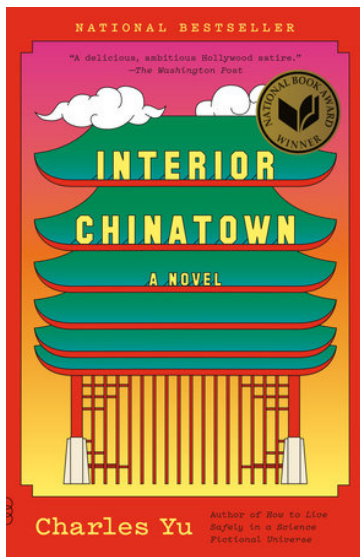
Weaving Korean folklore within a modern narrative of immigration and identity, *Forgotten Country* is a fierce exploration of the inevitability of loss, the conflict between obligation and freedom, and a family struggling to find its way out of silence and back to one another.



### **The Joy Luck Club** -- Amy Tan

Through the stories of *The Joy Luck Club*, we peer into the secret-laden lives of eight Chinese immigrant mothers and their American-born daughters. The daughters reject their mothers' seemingly constant criticism of everything they choose, from husbands to hairdos. They view their mothers' warnings as irrelevant, and their advice as intrusive. The daughters do not know what has inspired their warnings and advice: the hardships their mothers suffered in China before coming to America. Thus, as the mothers see it, their daughters are flailing in their modern American circumstances, unable to use what is "in their bones," the family's inheritance of pain that led to their determined strength for survival, which their mothers try to bequeath them. The mothers, meanwhile, watch with heartache as their daughters' marriages fail,

as they expect less and less and so accept less and less. They recall moments in their past when they were faced with similar circumstances but defied what they believed was bad fate in order to find their true worth.

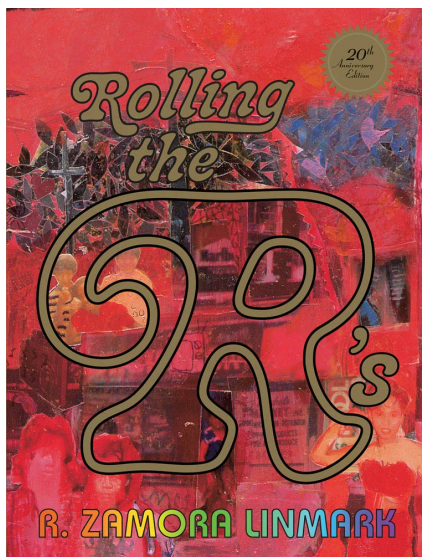


### **Interior Chinatown** -- Charles Yu

Willis Wu doesn't perceive himself as the protagonist in his own life: he's merely Generic Asian Man. Sometimes he gets to be Background Oriental Making a Weird Face or even Disgraced Son, but always he is relegated to a prop. Yet every day, he leaves his tiny room in a Chinatown SRO and enters the Golden Palace restaurant, where *Black and White*, a procedural cop show, is in perpetual production. He's a bit player here, too, but he dreams of being Kung Fu Guy—the most respected role that anyone who looks like him can attain. Or is it?

After stumbling into the spotlight, Willis finds himself launched into a wider world than he's ever known, discovering not only the secret history of Chinatown, but the buried legacy of his own family.

Infinitely inventive and deeply personal, exploring the themes of pop culture, assimilation, and immigration—*Interior Chinatown* is Charles Yu's most moving, daring, and masterful novel yet.

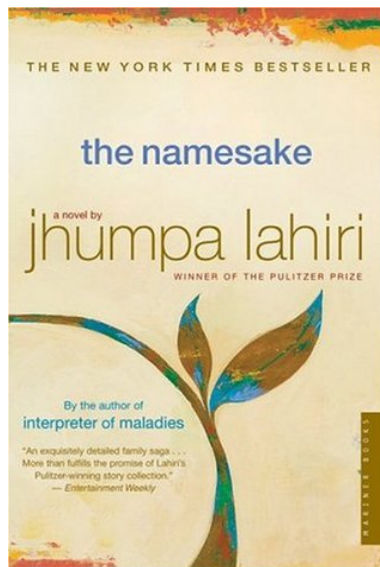


### **Rolling the R's** -- R. Zamora Linmark

Illuminated by pop fantasies, Donna Summer disco tracks and teen passion, the fiercely earnest characters in *Rolling the R's* come to life against a background of burning dreams and neglect in a small 1970s Hawaiian community. In his daring first novel, R. Zamora Linmark treats the music of the Bee Gees and schoolyard bullying as equally formative experiences in the lives of a group of Filipino fourth-graders living in Kalihi, Honolulu, who call themselves the "Farrah Fawcett Fan Club." The characters' stories unfold largely in the documentary detritus of their lives--their poems and prayers, book reports and teacher evaluations--all written in carefully observed, pitch-perfect vernacular. Now back in stock, Linmark's tour-de-force experiments in narrative structure, pidgin and perspective roll

every "are," throwing new light on gay identity and the trauma of cultural assimilation.

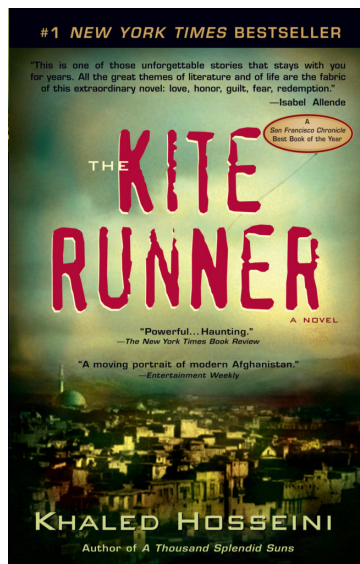




### **The Namesake** -- Jhumpa Lahiri

The Namesake takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta through their fraught transformation into Americans. On the heels of their arranged wedding, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli settle together in Cambridge, Massachusetts. An engineer by training, Ashoke adapts far less warily than his wife, who resists all things American and pines for her family. When their son is born, the task of naming him betrays the vexed results of bringing old ways to the new world. Named for a Russian writer by his Indian parents in memory of a catastrophe years before, Gogol Ganguli knows only that he suffers the burden of his heritage as well as his odd, antic name.

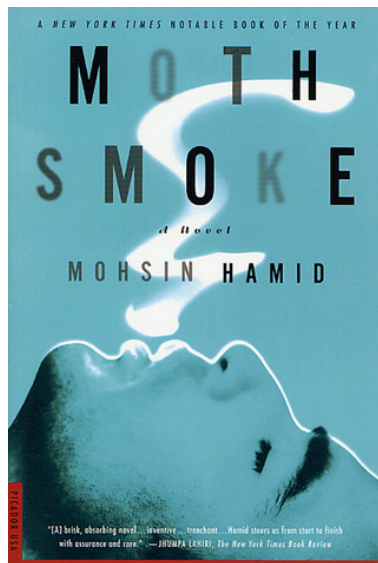
Lahiri brings great empathy to Gogol as he stumbles along the first-generation path, strewn with conflicting loyalties, comic detours, and wrenching love affairs. With penetrating insight, she reveals not only the defining power of the names and expectations bestowed upon us by our parents, but also the means by which we slowly, sometimes painfully, come to define ourselves.



### **The Kite Runner** -- Khaled Hosseini

The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, The Kite Runner is a beautifully crafted novel set in a country that is in the process of being destroyed. It is about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.

A sweeping story of family, love, and friendship told against the devastating backdrop of the history of Afghanistan over the last thirty years, The Kite Runner is an unusual and powerful novel that has become a beloved, one-of-a-kind classic.

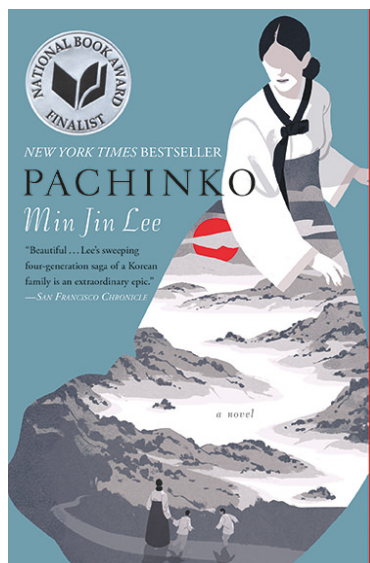


### **Moth Smoke** -- Moshin Hamid

When Daru Shezad is fired from his banking job in Lahore, he begins a decline that plummets the length of this sharply drawn, subversive tale. Before long, he can't pay his bills, and he loses his toehold among Pakistan's cell-phone-toting elite. Daru descends into drugs and dissolution, and, for good measure, he falls in love with the wife of his childhood friend and rival, Ozi—the beautiful, restless Mumtaz.

Desperate to reverse his fortunes, Daru embarks on a career in crime, taking as his partner Murad Badshah, the notorious rickshaw driver, populist, and pirate. When a long-planned heist goes awry, Daru finds himself on trial for a murder he may or may not have committed. The uncertainty of his fate mirrors that of Pakistan itself, hyped on the prospect of becoming a nuclear player even as

corruption drains its political will.

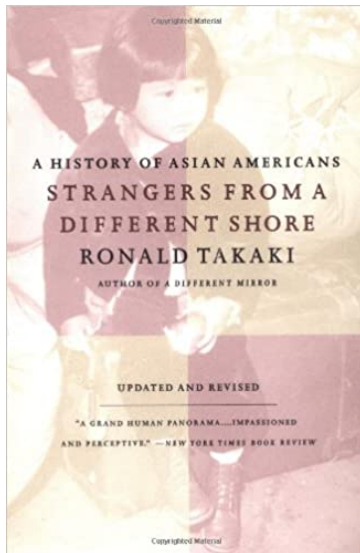


### **Pachinko** -- Min Jin Lee

PACHINKO follows one Korean family through the generations, beginning in early 1900s Korea with Sunja, the prized daughter of a poor yet proud family, whose unplanned pregnancy threatens to shame them all. Deserted by her lover, Sunja is saved when a young tubercular minister offers to marry and bring her to Japan.

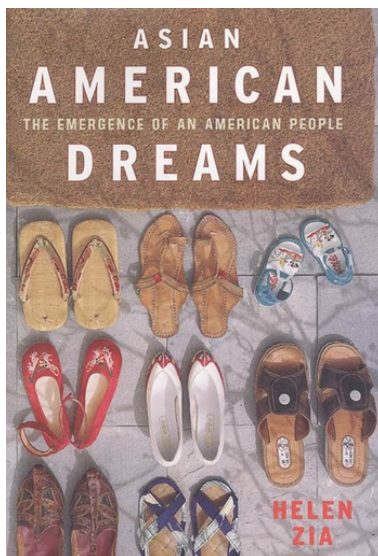
So begins a sweeping saga of an exceptional family in exile from its homeland and caught in the indifferent arc of history. Through desperate struggles and hard-won triumphs, its members are bound together by deep roots as they face enduring questions of faith, family, and identity.

## Nonfiction



### **Strangers from a Distant Shore: a History of Asian Americans --** Ronald Takaki

In an extraordinary blend of narrative history, personal recollection, and oral testimony, the author presents a sweeping history of Asian Americans. He writes of the Chinese who laid tracks for the transcontinental railroad, of plantation laborers in the canefields of Hawaii, of "picture brides" marrying strangers in the hope of becoming part of the American dream. He tells stories of Japanese Americans behind the barbed wire of U.S. internment camps during World War II, Hmong refugees tragically unable to adjust to Wisconsin's alien climate and culture, and Asian American students stigmatized by the stereotype of the "model minority."



### **Asian American Dreams --** Helen Zia

This groundbreaking book is about the transformation of Asian Americans from a few small, disconnected, and largely invisible ethnic groups into a self-identified racial group that is influencing every aspect of American society. It explores the junctures that shocked Asian Americans into motion and shaped a new consciousness, including the murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American, by two white autoworkers who believed he was Japanese; the apartheid-like working conditions of Filipinos in the Alaska canneries; the boycott of Korean American greengrocers in Brooklyn; the Los Angeles riots; and the casting of non-Asians in the Broadway musical Miss Saigon. The book also examines the rampant stereotypes of Asian Americans.

Helen Zia, the daughter of Chinese immigrants, was born in the 1950s when there were only 150,000 Chinese Americans in the entire country, and she writes as a personal witness to the dramatic changes involving Asian Americans.

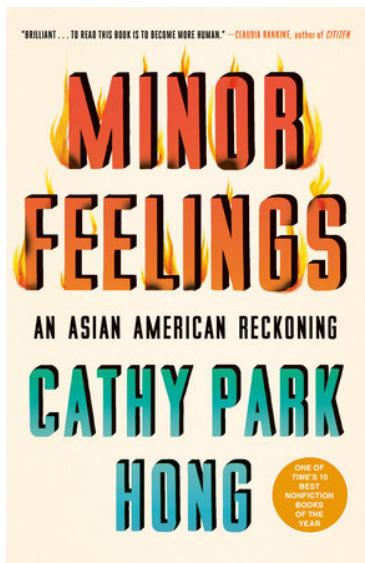


### **The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir -- Thi Bui**

This beautifully illustrated and emotional story is an evocative memoir about the search for a better future and a longing for the past. Exploring the anguish of immigration and the lasting effects that displacement has on a child and her family, Bui documents the story of her family's daring escape after the fall of South Vietnam in the 1970s, and the difficulties they faced building new lives for themselves.

At the heart of Bui's story is a universal struggle: While adjusting to life as a first-time mother, she ultimately discovers what it means to be a parent—the endless sacrifices, the unnoticed gestures, and the depths of unspoken love. Despite how impossible it seems to take on the simultaneous roles of both parent and child, Bui pushes through. With haunting, poetic

writing and breathtaking art, she examines the strength of family, the importance of identity, and the meaning of home.



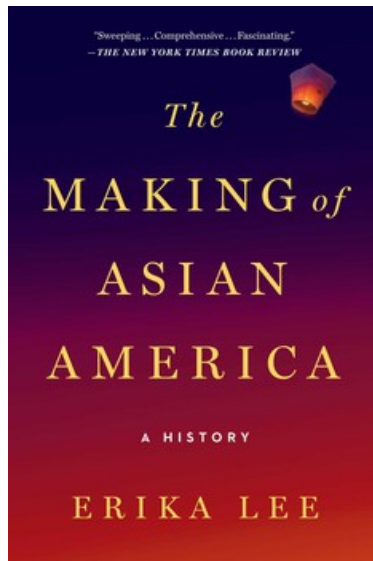
### **Minor Feelings: an Asian American Reckoning -- Cathy Park Hong**

Poet and essayist Cathy Park Hong fearlessly and provocatively blends memoir, cultural criticism, and history to expose fresh truths about racialized consciousness in America. Part memoir and part cultural criticism, this collection is vulnerable, humorous, and provocative—and its relentless and riveting pursuit of vital questions around family and friendship, art and politics, identity and individuality, will change the way you think about our world.

Binding these essays together is Hong's theory of "minor feelings." As the daughter of Korean immigrants, Cathy Park Hong grew up steeped in shame, suspicion, and melancholy. She would later understand that these "minor feelings" occur when American optimism contradicts your own reality—when you believe the lies you're told about your own racial identity. Minor feelings are not

small, they're dissonant—and in their tension Hong finds the key to the questions that haunt her.

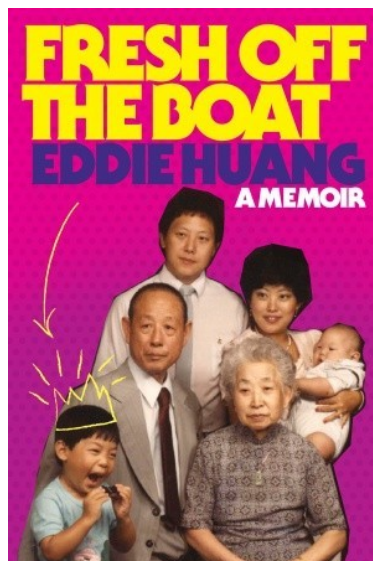




### **The Making of Asian America: A History** -- Erika Lee

In the past fifty years, Asian Americans have helped change the face of America and are now the fastest growing group in the United States. But much of their long history has been forgotten.

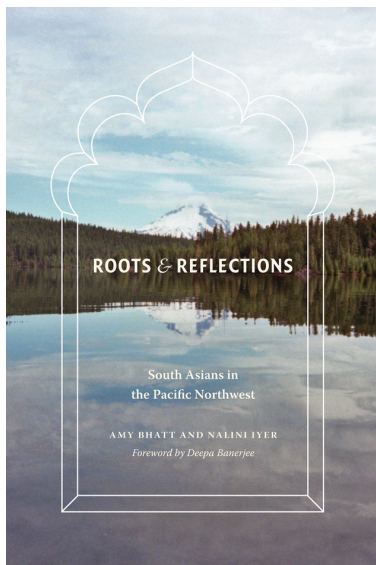
The Making of Asian America shows how generations of Asian immigrants and their American-born descendants have made and remade Asian American life, from sailors who came on the first trans-Pacific ships in the 1500 to the Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II. Over the past fifty years, a new Asian America has emerged out of community activism and the arrival of new immigrants and refugees. But as Lee shows, Asian Americans have continued to struggle as both “despised minorities” and “model minorities,” revealing all the ways that racism has persisted in their lives and in the life of the country.



### **Fresh off the Boat** -- Eddie Huang

Eddie Huang is the thirty-year-old proprietor of Baohaus—the hot East Village hangout where foodies, stoners, and students come to stuff their faces with delicious Taiwanese street food late into the night—and one of the food world’s brightest and most controversial young stars. But before he created the perfect home for himself in a small patch of downtown New York, Eddie wandered the American wilderness looking for a place to call his own.

Funny, raw, and moving, and told in an irrepressibly alive and original voice, Fresh Off the Boat recasts the immigrant’s story for the twenty-first century—it’s a story of food, family, and the forging of a new notion of what it means to be American.

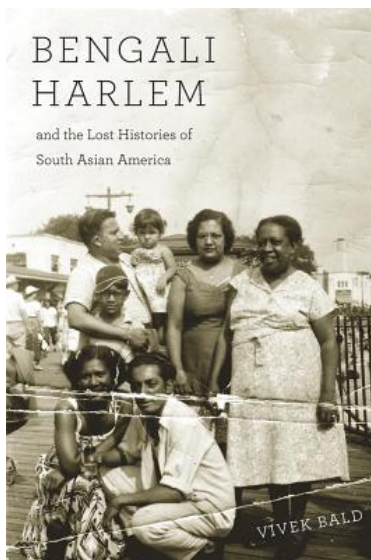


### **Roots & Reflections: South Asians in the Pacific Northwest --**

Amy Bhatt and Nalini Iyer

Immigrants from South Asia first began settling in Washington and Oregon in the nineteenth century, but because of restrictions placed on Asian immigration to the United States in the early twentieth century, the vast majority have come to the region since World War II.

Roots and Reflections uses oral history to show how South Asian immigrant experiences were shaped by the region and how they differed over time and across generations. It includes the stories of immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka who arrived from the end of World War II through the 1980s.



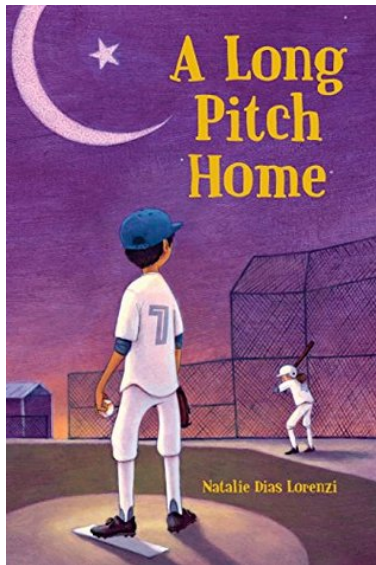
### **Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America**

-- Vivek Bald

In the final years of the nineteenth century, small groups of Muslim peddlers arrived at Ellis Island every summer, bags heavy with embroidered silks from their home villages in Bengal. The American demand for "Oriental goods" took these migrants on a curious path, from New Jersey's beach boardwalks into the heart of the segregated South.

Two decades later, hundreds of Indian Muslim seamen began jumping ship in New York and Baltimore, escaping the engine rooms of British steamers to find less brutal work onshore. As factory owners sought their labor and anti-Asian immigration laws closed in around them, these men built clandestine networks that stretched from the northeastern waterfront across the industrial Midwest.

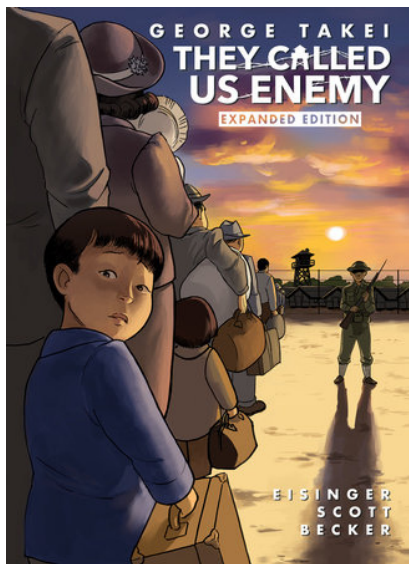
## Kids



### **A Long Pitch Home** -- Natalie Dias Lorenzi

Ten-year-old Bilal liked his life back home in Pakistan. He was a star on his cricket team. But when his father suddenly sends the family to live with their aunt and uncle in America, nothing is familiar. While Bilal tries to keep up with his cousin Jalaal by joining a baseball league and practicing his English, he wonders when his father will join the family in Virginia. Maybe if Bilal can prove himself on the pitcher's mound, his father will make it to see him play. But playing baseball means navigating relationships with the guys, and with Jordan, the only girl on the team—the player no one but Bilal wants to be friends with.

A sensitive and endearing contemporary novel about family, friends, and assimilation.



### **They Called Us Enemy** -- George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott and Harmony Becker

George Takei has captured hearts and minds worldwide with his magnetic performances, sharp wit, and outspoken commitment to equal rights. But long before he braved new frontiers in Star Trek, he woke up as a four-year-old boy to find his own birth country at war with his father's — and their entire family forced from their home into an uncertain future.

In 1942, at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, every person of Japanese descent on the west coast was rounded up and shipped to one of ten “relocation centers,” hundreds or thousands of miles from home, where they would be held for years under armed guard.

*They Called Us Enemy* is Takei's firsthand account of those years behind barbed wire, the terrors and small joys of childhood in the shadow of legalized racism, his mother's hard choices, his father's tested faith in democracy, and the way those experiences planted the seeds for his astonishing future.