

LBRIS

We know
books

Tippoo Sultan's Incredible
White-Man-Eating Tiger
Toy-Machine!!!

DALJIT NAGRA



faber and faber

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The Balcony Song of Raju & Jaswinder

RAJU

. . . won't you come downstairs I'm caught in the rain
and I'll stay here all day with my box of matyai
though your mum might be shocked by this shoe-caste boy
who squats in her oak by her bright golden gates.

JASWINDER

Go away dirty boy, yoo is bad bad lover
we danced in di car to Bally Sagoo
on di way from Henley to Sutton Hoo
and I luv it up di flumes ov di Alton Tower!

Vut a summer it was when yoo teach me to kiss
or to walk wid yor hand and not blush in public,
den I hear how yoo bin through di ladies
like a rickshaw round New Delhi!

RAJU

Well it's true I went round the block with Bulwinder
I went with Kuswinder
I went with Subwinder
I even went to the mela with Ramwinder!

But their skirts were too short
and they loved their alcopops
they all chewed gum
and they swore too much
so none of these girls made me feel right inside.

Then one day standing out of the temple
 the one to turn me fundamental
 her hair was beehive'd
 in a honey-coloured sari
 it doesn't take much to realise
 it was you Jaswinder – you're my Bollywood hotty!
 Even though you're the star of the landowner caste
 only you take me back to my past.

JASWINDER

Yoo is cute, such a cute, such a cute cute lad
 but yoo act wid no bezti. And here in di West
 can we be all one caste? If I speak to my dad
 he may fast get me feathered in di uncle's nest
 in Baluchistan or in Pakistan
 in Hindustan or in No-Woman-Staan!?

RAJU

I regret my name was the cause of sharam
 my honour is lost, I'm as foul as a harem,
 a moral for randy young bloods
 who go hot off the press when their fun is undone.

I regret getting stuck in the thickets with Mukjit
 getting locked in the wicket with Jamjit
 running up burns on the benches with Scarjit
 being stung pulling thorns out of Bungjit.

So no more Puldeep or Sagdeep or Bagdeep
 and no more Lukveer and no more Hotveer
 only one name is true and it's my Jaswinder!

Vut a summer it was in di heights
ov di moors and di Scafell Pike
and we rolled through di flowers
and we hugged in di bowers.

Vut a summer it was when at night off di road
we would sleep wid di cows in a field
or we played wid di lambs and di goats
and di farmers said *ai!* we could milk deir sheep.

Den one night it appear dat di lion ov yor Leo
he was pouncing his stars at di wings of my Virgo,
on di ground in a queue were di black-bright eyes
ov di cows and di goats and di sheep and di lambs,
den we saw we were caught in a tight crop-circle,
di snort ov a pig only stop when we huff off di land!

RAJU

Oh Jaswinder, even though you're the star
of the landowner caste
only you take me back to my past.
I must live with that morning in Hampton Court
when you led me by the hand to the heart
of the maze and you sat us on the floor
and you picked up a leaf and you said we'd gone too far
and we stayed in the deep trying to murder our names
and I'll wait for you there in the heart of the maze.