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Author based in	Hong Kong
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Lockdown Lovers

Michael O'Sullivan

Keyline

A tale of surviving the pandemic and even finding love from across two continents.

Description

Lockdown Lovers is a five-part love story set in lockdown conditions in two regions, Asia and Europe.

In Part I, set in Hong Kong and China, forty-something academic John Ryan goes to the local 24/7 McDonalds every day to record events around him. We also get regular updates and reflections on the time of lockdown from Phoebe Ho, Kwok-ying and a pangolin. Phoebe is a twenty-something Hong Kong activist and recently elected local councilor, Kwok-ying is a government health official, and the pangolin is one of the mammals reported as being at the root of the virus.

In Part II, John, Phoebe and Kwok-ying have all had to go into quarantine as they have picked up the virus. John and Phoebe grow closer in unique lockdown conditions. Part II ends on the night before their passionate encounter in Phoebe's quarantine quarters.

Part III is set in lockdown conditions in Ireland, Europe. John's parents are in the vulnerable category and have been ordered to stay in their homes. John tells no one but his parents that he has returned. He delivers groceries and medicine to his parents' porch but the pain is too much when he sees them staring at him from twenty feet away behind the porch door.

In Part IV, John has come back to Hong Kong from Ireland and is living on his own. Phoebe is caught up in events taking place in Hong Kong. Kwok-ying still sends in his witty comments about the Government.

Part V takes place in Hong Kong and China two years after the first outbreak. Each character has moved on, and the pangolin is flourishing.

In this pandemic-ridden world, this novel reminds us how human contact will never cease to be mankind's saving grace through the darkest times.

Sales Points

- It is about lockdown, an unprecedented global experience. It does not happen often and hence stories during a lockdown are rare and unique.
- It is a love story set in lockdown in Asia and Europe, with very familiar Asian themes.
- Having gone through a lockdown, readers will be able to connect with many the situations and feelings that the characters go through.

Author Bio

Michael O'Sullivan is a writer and academic based in Hong Kong. He has published 12 books on literature, philosophy and education. His most recent book Cloneliness was published by Bloomsbury in 2019. His poetry and essays appear in Times Higher Education, Voice and Verse, Asian Cha and PEN Hong's Kong's recent Hong Kong 20/20.



Germany and the Netherlands as a visiting professor and has received fellowships from several universities in the United States, Japan and the Netherlands . He was previously a Guest Professor under the Fulbright-Hays program (1977) and taught at North Carolina State University, Raleigh , USA (1977-1978); lecturer in the Department of Malay Literature; Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, UKM; Director of the Institute of Language, Culture Malay Literature. Then became Professor of Literature at the age of 36 (1978). Muhammad is an "Asian Scholar in Residence" at the University of Michigan. In 1992-1993, he was elected Fullbright Visiting Reseacher, at the University of California, Berkeley; bears the Chair of Malay Studies at the University of Leiden, Netherlands (1993-1994). In June 1996, he participated in the National Association (Moscow) seminar on "National Construction and the Literature / Cultural Development in Southeast Asia", in which he presented the paper "Audience on the Staircase". The effects of a visit to Moscow, including the performance of "The Queen of Spades" directed by Peter Fomenko, in the theater of E. Vakhtangov, are reflected in some of his poems.



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Author based in	Singapore
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The Dogs

O Thiam Chin

Keyline

Haunted by a childhood tragedy, a man looks back on his past and rediscovers a new meaning to his life.

Description

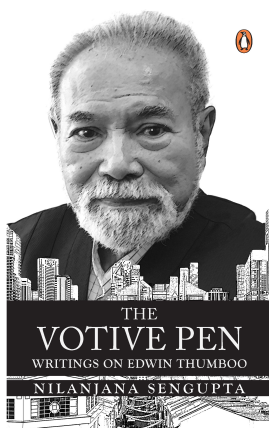
In *The Dogs*, Guan, a middle-aged man, decides to move back into the flat that had once belonged to his late father, who had died in it a few months back. He sells off his old flat and, in the process, estranges himself from his own son, who is at a loss over his father's sudden decision. While trying to settle in and to make sense of the new surroundings, Guan slowly gets to know the residents of the block and becomes acquainted with a neighbour, an old lonely man who dresses in his dead wife's clothes. As Guan explores and discovers more of the estate he lives in, through his long walks, he starts to have flashbacks about his past, vividly remembering his childhood in a kampong in Singapore in the 1950s, and his close friendship with Heng Chong, a schoolmate. He recalls the pranks and games they played, the mischief they got into—prowling the Sembawang Hills estate and setting the dogs free from the big houses in that estate—and the secrets they shared, one of which was the mysterious death of Heng Chong's baby sister who died during birth, something which set the boys on a quest to find the truth behind it. As they delved more and more into their investigations, the friendship between them was slowly tested, gradually revealing the cracks that began to tear them apart. The arrival of a stray dog in their kampong, one that the boys adopted as their own, soon proved to be the catalyst that sparked off a chain of events that led to the dissolution of their friendship, and the unforeseen death of a loved one that cast a long, indelible shadow over Guan's life subsequently. As Guan looks back into the past to find the answers to the mystery that surrounded this tragic death, he also comes to a clearer understanding of his present predication and learns to cope with his own personal losses and find ways to redeem himself from his past acts. In the act of negotiating his past and his pain, Guan finds new hopes in his solitude, and a new life he's slowly building with hard-won resilience, fortitude and purpose.

Sales Points

- The novel covers themes that resonate strongly Asian readers -- family ties, fatherhood and the debt of truth and lies.
- The novel goes further to explore the complications that can arise out of one man's desire to find purpose and meaning even in his twilight years, and the deep, prevailing sense of loneliness and being out of touch with the world at large, even though one could be surrounded by other people and distractions of all sorts. In an aging society, this condition is very real.
- Weaved masterfully in this novel, is a painful ongoing struggle to deal with one's traumatic past and to find a way to the truth at all costs.

Author Bio

O Thiam Chin's short stories have appeared in literary anthologies, such as *Best New Singaporean Short Stories Volumes 1, 2 and 3*, *A Rainbow Feast: New Asian Short Stories*, *ONE – The Anthology: Short Stories from Singapore's Best Authors*, and *Malaysian Tales: Retold & Remixed*, as well as in *Manoa*, *World Literature Today*, *The International Literary Quarterly*, *Asia Literary Review*, *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Kyoto Journal*, *The Jakarta Post*, *The New Straits Times*, *Asiatic and Esquire* (Singapore). Thrice longlisted for the Frank O' Connor Short Story Award, he is the author of *Free-Falling Man* (2006), *Never Been Better* (2009), *Under The Sun* (2010), *The Rest Of Your Life And Everything That Comes With It* (2011), *Love, Or Something Like Love* (2013), shortlisted for the 2014 Singapore Literature Prize, and *Signs of Life*, which was published in 2019. His debut novel, *Now That It's Over*, won the inaugural Epigram Books Fiction Prize (EBFP) in 2015 and also the Best Fiction title at the 2017 Singapore Book Awards, and his second novel, *Fox Fire Girl*, was shortlisted for the EBFP in 2016. He was an honorary fellow of the Iowa International Writing Program in 2010, and a recipient of the National Arts Council's Young Artist Award in 2012.



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Author based in **Singapore**

The Votive Pen

Nilanjana Sengupta

Keyline

A riveting look at the fiercely original, intellectually brilliant mind of Singapore's unofficial Poet-Laureate, Edwin Thumboo whose poetry is key to understanding the emotional hinterland of the city-state.

Description

A rivetting look at the fiercely original, intellectually brilliant mind of Singapore's unofficial Poet-Laureate, Edwin Thumboo. Born of Tamil and Teochew parents, he embraced the Protestant faith late in his life. He has a self-confessed fetish for Yeats and Pound and yet completed his doctoral thesis on post-colonial African poetry. He taught himself the Ramayana and I-Ching but found traces of the Odysseus in the shadows of the Merlion. He is brusquely vocal about poetry with a purpose and yet appears a hopeless romantic in his poems about his wife. What happens when a mind which is such a melting pot of brilliant ideas and contrary emotions tries to unscramble the identity of a country like Singapore which is complex, multiracial, has known a fierce economic growth that has often elbowed aside everything else? *The Votive Pen* sets out to see Edwin Thumboo's poetry – steadily and see it whole – without the intervening static of earlier critical writing and with an intense alertness to the text.

Sales Points

- *The Votive Pen* goes where no biography has gone, into the deepest recesses of an intellectually creative mind in an attempt to delicately peel off the layers and decipher its workings.
- The book would be a key to understanding why it is imperative to maintain the multiracial balance of Singapore and simultaneously, help it achieve a singular identity which is based on its inherent multiplicity. The book not only looks at the 'whys' but also some of the 'hows'.
- Internationally the book in exploring one of the most brilliant minds of the nation would showcase Singapore's creative potential, which yet remains a fledgling area of research.
- Edwin Thumboo's poetry is infallible in understanding the internal life of the city of Singapore. In joining the dots between the city and the poetic psyche, *The Votive Pen* helps in better understanding the emotional hinterland of the various stages of development that the city has known. It also explains some of the rationale in decisions taken by the city administration.

Author Bio

Nilanjana Sengupta is a notable author of Singapore who has built a reputation in writing books which travel to uncharted territories. In *A Gentleman's Word* she chronicled the legacy of a forgotten war hero, Subhas Chandra Bose across Southeast Asia. In, *The Female Voice of Myanmar*, she wrote of the latent masculine bias of Burmese culture and women voices which have managed to cut through the clutter. A Biography of M Bala Subramanion was a nuanced look at the Tamils of Singapore who though the majority Indian community, struggle with vulnerabilities of their own. Sengupta, a research scholar at NUS and ISEAS-Yosuf Ishaak Institute, has been critically acclaimed, widely read and her books have been translated and included in the university course.