

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
Stuart Blackburn, Ph.D.

## AMIT CHAUDRI

**Born** May 15 1962, Calcutta

### Biography

Amit Chaudhuri was born in Calcutta but spent most of his childhood in Bombay. His father was the CEO of a popular brand of biscuits and his mother was an accomplished singer of north Indian classical music. He began his schooling in Bombay, took his first degree from University College, London, and earned a PhD from Oxford for a dissertation on the poetry of D H Lawrence. Beginning with his first novel in 1991, Chaudhuri has had a varied and successful writing career, including short stories, poetry, memoir, literary criticism, essays and non-fiction on a range of topics from architecture to politics. In all these genres, he has contributed substantially to Indian literature, but perhaps his most influential role has been as the editor of an anthology: *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*, published in 2001. As professor of Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia, he has also produced new writers and critics. Following in his mother's footsteps, he is a talented singer of north Indian classical music. Having spent most of his adult life in England, he moved back to Calcutta in the 1990s, partly to look after his aging parents and partly to reconnect with his native culture. His reengagement with Calcutta has taken the form of activism in support of conserving the city's crumbling architecture and of setting up a series of events to create a new public space for literature outside the worlds of commercial publishing and academia. He currently splits his time between his teaching in English and living in Calcutta. His wife is also a writer, of non-fiction. They have one daughter.

### Achievements

His first book, *A Strange and Sublime Address*, won the Betty Trask Prize and the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1992. His second novel, *Afternoon Raag*, won the Encore Award and the Southern Arts Literature Prize in 1994. His third novel, *Freedom Song*, won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 1999. His fourth novel, *A New World*, won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2002. He was awarded the Infosys Prize for Humanities and Literary Studies (India) in 2012.

### Works

#### Novels

*A Strange and Sublime Address*, 1991  
*Afternoon Raag*, 1993,  
*Freedom Song*, 1998  
*A New World*, 2002  
*The Immortals*, 2009.  
*Odysseus Abroad*, 2015  
*Friend of My Youth*, 2017

#### short stories

*Real Time: Stories and a Reminiscence*, 2002

#### poetry

*St. Cyril Road and other Poems*, 2005

#### non-fiction

*D. H. Lawrence and 'difference': postcoloniality and the poetry of the present*, 2003  
*Clearing A Space: Reflections on India, Literature and Culture*, 2008  
*Calcutta: Two Years in the City*, 2013

#### anthologies

*The Picador book of modern Indian literature*, 2001  
*Memory's Gold: Writings on Calcutta*, 2008