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The Virgin Fish of Babughat (Babughatter Kumari Mach)

By Lokenath Bhattacharya; Translated from Bengali By Meenakshi Mukherjee

Oxford University Press, New Delhi, India, 2003. Paperback. Book Condition: New. First Edition. The Virgin Fish of Babughat is written in the form of a diary kept by an inmate of a very unusual prison. Filling up blank sheets of paper is part of his punishment, and his desperate attempt to hold on to a language that is slipping away from him gives these pages a strange intensity and vividness. The novel is as much a political allegory as a parable of a world about to be taken over by consumerist culture. The prison camp tries to turn men and women into mindless carnal creatures devoid of individual identity and human values. The title of the novel is a reminder of the reduction of female flesh to the level of a commodity the tastiest fish are those that have not spawned, and so are the women who have never been pregnant. Yet it is not a dystopic novel, because, in a low key manner, it also celebrates the ultimate indestructibility of love and the desire for freedom. Written three years before the Emergency was declared in India, The Virgin Fish of Babughat anticipates the chilling possibilities of power without accountability,...



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