

Bio

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning and bestselling author, poet, activist and teacher of writing. Her work has been published in over 50 magazines, including the *Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Yorker*, and her writing has been included in over 50 anthologies, including *The Best American Short Stories*, *the O. Henry Prize Stories* and *the Pushcart Prize Anthology*. Her books have been translated into 29 languages, and many have been used for campus-wide and city-wide reads. Several of her works have been made into films and plays.

Born in Kolkata, India, she came to the United States for her graduate studies, receiving a Master's degree in English from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley.

To earn money for her education, she held many odd jobs, including babysitting, selling merchandise in an Indian boutique, slicing bread in a bakery, and washing instruments in a science lab. At Berkeley, she lived in the International House and worked in the dining hall. She has spent most of her adult life in Northern California, which she often writes about. She currently lives in Houston, Texas, which has begun to appear in her writing. She and her husband have two sons.

Divakaruni teaches in the nationally ranked Creative Writing program at the University of Houston, where she is the Betty and Gene McDavid Professor of Creative Writing. She serves on the Advisory board of Maitri in the San Francisco Bay Area and Daya in Houston. Both are organizations that help South Asian or South Asian American women in abusive or domestic violence situations. She served on the board of Pratham, an organization that helps educate underprivileged children in India, for many years and is currently on their emeritus board.

Divakaruni has won a number of awards, including the American Book Award.

Two of her books, *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart*, have been made into movies by filmmakers Gurinder Chadha and Paul Berges (an English film) and Suhasini Mani Ratnam (a Tamil TV serial) respectively. A short story, "The Word Love," from her collection *Arranged Marriage*, was made into a bilingual short film in Bengali and English, titled *Ammar Ma*. All the films have won awards. Several of her novels are currently under option at Hollywood and Bollywood.

Source: www.chitradivakaruni.com