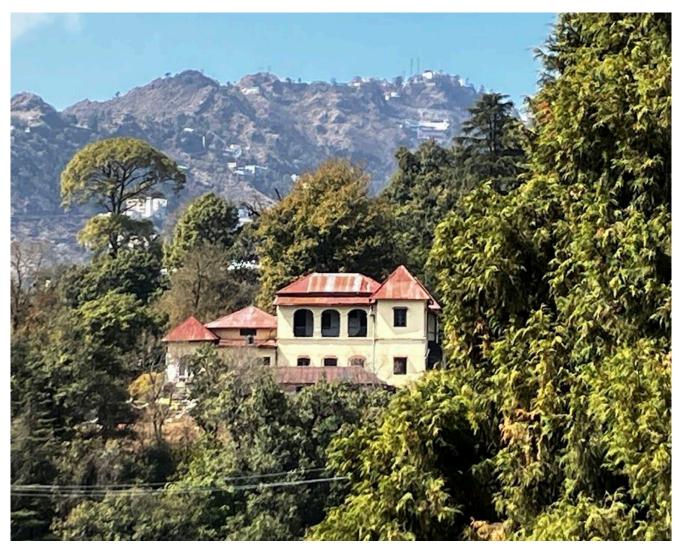
"Kilmoras and Hisalus" & other poems from Mussoorie by Rachna Joshi

Reading at IHC
From my new book
The poem 'Kilmoras and Hisalus',
About my childhood
In Fernlodge Barlowgunj,
And the denizens
Of that village.

By Rachna Joshi

Kilmoras and Hisalus



Sikandar Hall, Mussoorie
Eating kilmoras and hisalus

On the way to Naala Pani Past the Old Brewery And Sikandar Hall.

Fern Lodge perched atop a hillside With peach and plum trees Trailing along a slope.

Below, the cowshed Where the gwala comes to milk the cows And to keep encroachers at bay Who are creeping up the hillside.

Barlowgunj Market
With Chaman Lala's shop

And the schoolchildren From St. George's Coming for tuck.

Chachi and Buaji in the kitchen On stilts
Churning out pots of soup.

The old piano in the drawing room Which children liked to play. Patties and pastries in the evening. Granpa's green fingers in the nursery Where there were fuschias and begonias As well as a beehive. Hydrangeas in the gardens

Rhododendron Squash

Mountains are a special place
Where the mind soars
Above the mundane
and how creativity flowers
among the cedars and rhododendrons.

Granma making rhododendron squash. Her deft fingers cutting the flowers And cooking them In sugar syrup.

This is how I would Like to remember My childhood In Fern Lodge Barlowgunj. Mussoorie Modern School



Mussoorie Modern School

I remember
The pipes used to freeze
In winter in Chaman Estate.
In the hostel dorms
The matron used to change our clothes.

I remember the Tibetan teacher Putting butter and salt In her tea In the mess. Thal jus mukh, kator jus aankh.

Mr. Viegas, the Principal, With his wife Shirley and daughter Candy In a cottage by the side. Framed by flowering beds.

Driving to Dehradoon

Driving to Dehradoon
Passing Duckchick
And Chital at Khatauli.
Seeing the travelers and itinerants.

Having pakoras and chai, With the canal nearby And the bridge.

Attending the Doon readings At Hotel Aketa in Rajpur. With Mountain Echoes, Penguin And Doon Library.

Shekhar Pathak, Ruskin Bond And Anjali Nauriyal, Poetry of the hills.

The stately Rajpur Road With Daalanwaala and Welham Girl's High School. Astley Hall and Ellora's.

The Tibetan monastery
At the end of the road
Near Sahastradhara.

Getting caught in traffic jams While returning on Easter From Dehradoon.

Seemadwar

Walking to Seemadwar After eating khichri And passing Jagdamba's shop At Indiranagar.

Mrs. Chaturvedi's house And HARC.

Shukla Marriage Bureau And Anurag Paudhshala.

Sun Chasers
Where Sumitaji
Is having a conversation
With the owner.
A budding romance.

Ganga Aarati



Ganga Aarati At Haridwar With diyas floated

On the Ganges, And the waving of lamps. Chanting and singing.

RACHNA JOSHI

Rachna Joshi is a poet and reviewer who has lived in India and North America. She has written five collections of poems: Configurations (Rupa & Co., 1993); Crossing the Vaitarani (Writer's Workshop, 2008); Travel Tapestry (Yatra Books, 2013); Monsoon and Other Poems (Tethys, 2020); and Unraveling (Authors Press, 2024) She has a master's in Creative Writing from Syracuse University in upstate New York, and has been widely published in magazines and anthologies in India and abroad. She worked as Senior Assistant Editor at the India International Centre, Delhi, for 28 years and lives in Noida, U. P.