



The Suragi Tree

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Sudhakar Rao spends hours reading under a suragi tree in his father's home in a small Karnataka village where his uncle is head of the Nanmpally Matha, sacred to Madhawa brahmins. As he grows, he moves away from this idyllic setting to the complexities of life in the small town of Udupi, and then to the whirl of Mumbai. His huge family network strains and breaks as parents die and friends vanish. At the behest of his younger doctor brother who needs the space the suragi tree is cut down, though villagers fear that the spirit guarding the yakshi living in it will have her revenge. Sudhakar Rao becomes a professor of English literature, but memories of his Sanskrit stories and philosophy travel with him even as he travels far from home. His relationships with women, his growing sadness, his not going back to visit the dying uncle who had given him so much love, leave him desolate. Offering a mental life rooted deep in Indian sources, and at the same time fashioned by the literature of the west, *The Suragi Tree*, this first novel takes the reader through six decades as it traces a path leading from a village in rural Karnataka, through a small town, to the city of what was then Bombay, and then back again to where it all began.