

Minal Hajratwala

Speaker's Brief

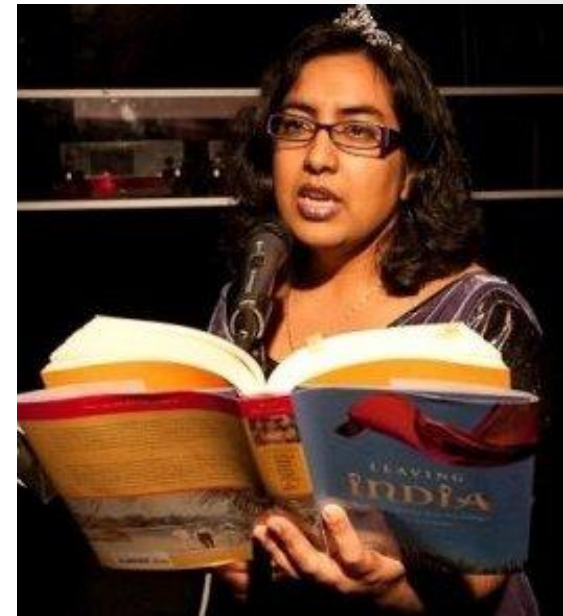
Minal Hajratwala is the author of *Leaving India: My Family's Journey From Five Villages to Five Continents* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009).

“incomparable” —Alice Walker

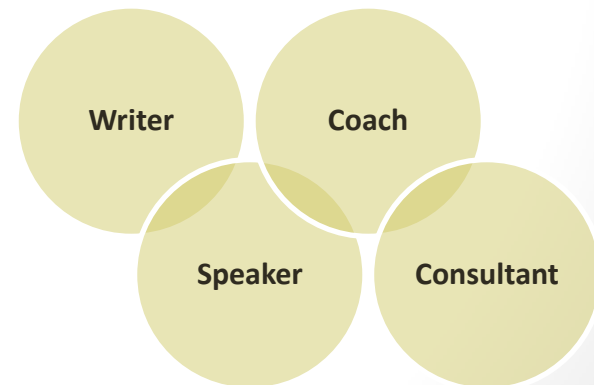
“searingly honest” — the Washington Post

Winner of:

- Pen USA Award
- Asian American Writers Workshop Award
- Lambda Literary Award
- California Book Award

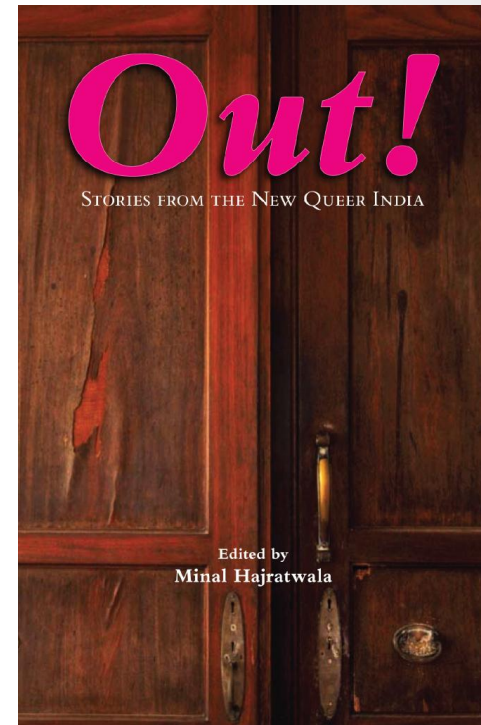


Photograph by Preston Merchant



Award-winning writer and editor

- Her anthology *Out! Stories of the New Queer India*, launched in 2013 from Queer Ink Publishing, is breaking new ground with 30 contemporary stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Indians.
- Her creative work has received recognition and support from the Sundance Institute, the Jon Sims Center for the Arts, the SerpentSource Foundation, and the Hedgebrook writing retreat for women, where she has served on the Alumnae Leadership Council. She is a graduate of Stanford University and was a fellow in the National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia University.



Testimonials and evaluations

“Listening to her, the entire auditorium was **spellbound**.”

– Faculty member, Saint Mary’s College of California

“Minal's visit was a tremendous success, the most **impressive** of several guest speakers visiting the seminar.”

– Faculty member, University of Rhode Island

“**Wonderful** presentation style. Tons of **useful** info!”

– Participant, Blueprint Your Book Writing Workshop

“The workshop was **amazing**. It went way beyond what I thought we could do in 1 weekend.”

– Participant, Kearny Street Workshop

“Minal is a **gifted** teacher and facilitator. Great energy, safe space for sharing. I learned that my creative well is bottomless!”

Participant, Free Your Words Writing Workshop

A Dynamic, Versatile Presenter

- Ms. Hajratwala is passionate about sharing her experience, knowledge, and the magic of writing through readings, talks, and creativity workshops. Whether in a corporate, academic, or community setting, her visits have been called "**spellbinding**" and "**deeply engaging**."
- In addition to an international book tour, one-woman show, and numerous radio and print interviews, she has spoken widely at universities including Stanford, Columbia, NYU, New College, University of Rhode Island, St. Mary's College, University of Hawaii-Manoa, San Francisco State, and UC-Berkeley. She has been a featured speaker at literature festivals throughout India and at the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco.
- She has enjoyed teaching and speaking at community-based venues such as the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Voices of New America workshop for writers of color, AWP Conference, Asian American Writer's Workshop, Kearny Street Workshop, Desh Pardesh, South Asian Journalists Association, South Asian Women's Creative Collective, Asian American Journalists Association, and DesiLit's Kriti Festival.

Spectrum of Options

- Ms. Hajratwala's presentation style is **versatile** and can be adapted to a venue's needs.
- All events are **culturally competent** and appropriate to audiences that are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, migration status, ability, and religion.
- Activities can be tailored to special events such as Diversity Week, Herstory Month, Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Week, Pride, etc.
- Organizers can choose from the options below, or suggest a new topic.

Spectrum of Options

Talks, readings, and visits

- **30-90 minutes**
- Artist's Talk: Being and Becoming a Writer
- Emerging Markets: How to Reach India and Indo-America (corporations, NGOs)
- Dialogue with *Leaving India* readers; book signing (classroom visit, book club, etc.)
- **20-60 minutes**
- Intimate History: Reweaving Diaspora Narratives
- From Silence to Speakout: Women, Power, and Transnational Storytelling
- *Leaving India* book reading, q&a, book signing; optional multimedia slideshow
- **5-20 minutes**
- Featured reading as part of a group performance, open mic, salon, banquet, etc.

Panel/roundtable presentations

- Ms. Hajratwala speaks regularly on panels nationwide; recent topics have included Trends and Tensions in Diaspora Writing, The Impact of India's Section 377 Ruling, Building the Buzz for Our Work As Artists, Hip Hop and South Asian America, Queer Asian Spiritualities, and more.

Other subject areas include:

- Migration, immigration, diaspora
- Writing, publishing, media access
- Queer issues & movements
- Gender issues, feminism
- U.S. racial politics, Asian American issues
- Creativity and storytelling

Spectrum of Options

Workshops

- **Free Your Words**, 2 to 3 hours – A fun, fast-paced writing workshop suitable for beginners or experienced writers looking to refresh their creative energy and meet a new writing community.
- **Writing from the Chakras**, Half day – Introduction to a unique body-based writing system that leads to fast, energized, powerful, breakthrough writing. Writers will tap into the seven levels of human experience that make up rich, versatile writing. Suitable for all levels.
- **Lost and Found**, 2 half days (consecutive days, or morning + afternoon) – A two-part writing intensive to help generate new work, break through blocks, and excavate new depths of emotion, power, and voice. Part 1 enters deeply into the experience of being and getting “lost”; Part 2 explores found objects, invented memories, and unknown truths. Suitable for all levels, including writers with ongoing projects.
- **Blueprint Your Book**, 1 or 2 days – A crash course in structure to help writers transform ideas and rough drafts into a cohesive, compelling manuscript. This is a structure intensive is for experienced writers beginning or partway through book-length projects. We demystify the fundamentals underlying the story — time, place, plot, character arcs, and theme. Writers emerge with an organic form and a personalized action plan of clear next steps for manuscript development.

Contact

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