

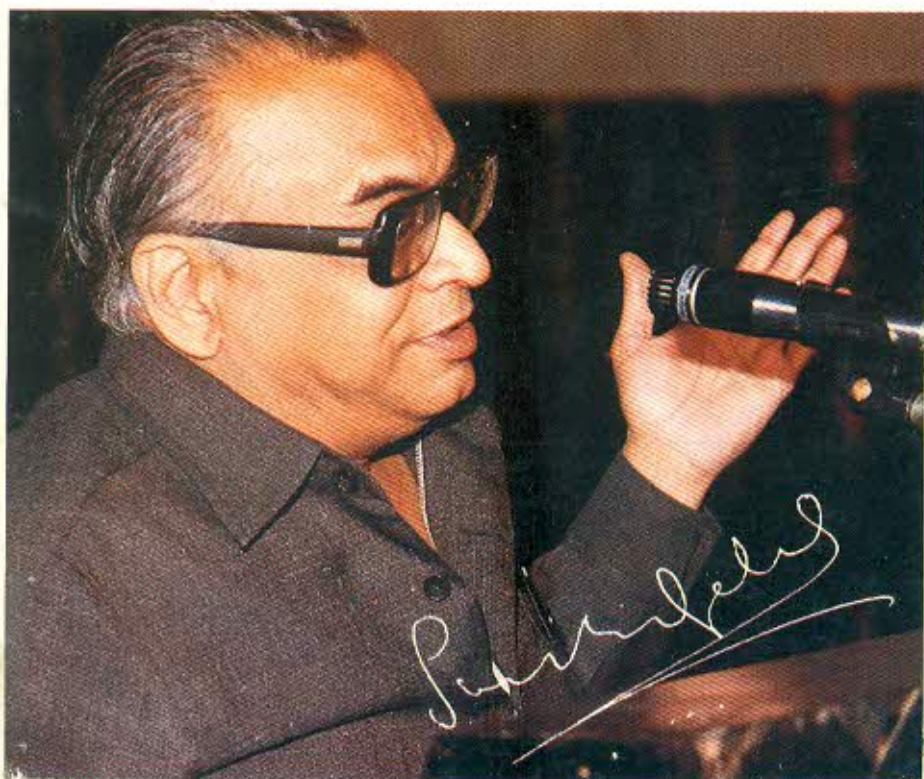
15 January, 1991



Sahitya Akademi

# meet the author

Suresh Dalal



## ***The Unknown Pilgrim***

*I am a pilgrim  
Totally unknown  
From where I come  
And where I go  
I am not sure  
And I will not know.*

*The miles  
& miles of centuries  
And I do not know  
what is my purpose;  
The day rises  
Like a question mark  
And the night falls in my eyes.*

*Only one desire  
One madness  
That how can I fathom myself?  
With my horoscope  
I am searching my destiny.*

*Between the blades of grass  
And the rays of the sun  
The wind plays.  
On this stage  
Is my existence  
A one man show?*

— Suresh Dalal

**A**ny description of Suresh Dalal must begin with his deep love for poetry. In one of his poems Dalal has said "Tomorrow is a synonym of God"; with some poetic liberty, one might say that Suresh Dalal is a synonym for love of poetry, a love which is reflected in everything which he does.

Dalal's canvas is broad; his deep understanding and patient study of poetry in other languages both Eastern and Western, coupled with a broad vision and a profound understanding of the human condition, has enriched his observations and writings. This has made his poetry spontaneous and truthful.

Dalal wears many hats: Poet, Editor, Essayist, Translator, Anthologist, Columnist, Critic, Publisher and organizer of Kavi Sammelans, he is also a committed scholar and teacher.

Suresh Dalal began to write poetry when he was a student in college. Among his teachers were eminent scholars such as Mansukhlal Jhaveri and Gauriprasad Jhala from whom he learnt Gujarati and Sanskrit literature. The Anthology of love poems *Laherki* which he edited came out in 1953 when he was 20. It was published to mark the wedding of his elder brother Arvind. Subsequently between 1954 and 1957 he published four more anthologies of poems.

He joined K.C. College as a part time lecturer in 1956 and eight years later, he became the Professor and head of the Department of Gujarati in K.J. Somaiya College. Suresh Dalal's first collection of his own poetry *Ekant* (Solitude) appeared in 1966 and in 1971 he brought out *Tarikh-nun Ghar* (Home of the Calendar). Both these volumes received Awards from the Gujarat Government and the poems in



With Dr. Madhuri Shah





With wife Sushila & daughters Niyati and Matti.

them deal with such subjects as nature, love, loneliness, faith and suffering. In 1973 appeared *Astitva* (Existence) his third volume of poems which became a trend-setter in Gujarati literature. It comprises of eight long prose poems on urban life. In these poems he projects the city as a modern jungle which inevitably corrupts the imagination and culture. His latest work *Layna Pravasman* (Journey with Rhythm) appeared in mid 1990.

Suresh Dalal also writes for children and has published 16 volumes of children's verse and stories. In his children's books



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Suresh Dalal also writes for children and has published 16 volumes of children's verse and stories. In his children's books he excels in re-shaping the world to match the perceptions of the child; he has no sermons to offer, just a story in a style and in the

Recipient of several awards, he received an award for his contribution as a best teacher from Government of Maharashtra in 1980-81 and the Ranjitram Gold Medal for Creative Writing in 1983.

Widely travelled, he visited the USA in 1978, 1981, 1983 and U.K. in 1981 and 1988 to interview American and British poets.

At present he is the Director of the Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research and Professor and Head of the Gujarati Department, S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay. Over the last 5 years this Department has come out with almost 40 new publications, which include poetry, research, theatre, criticism.

When once asked how so many activities could leave him with any time for creative writing, he gives a pat reply: "I have stuffed four lives of work into this one. I am constantly working, reading, moving, organizing and I don't think my creativity has suffered".

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Suresh Dalal's is a 'blithe spirit' which moves with unique freedom and ease in all corridors of Gujarati literature. He leaves an unmistakable mark of his style in whatever he puts to pen and sets norm to reckon with. His versatility and creativity have opened up

## A Select Bibliography

### Poems (23 Vols. of poems)

- EKANT Bombay: Swati Prakashan, 1966 124p. 20.5 cm.  
ASTITVA Ahmedabad: Vora & Co, 1973 20 + 48p. 24.5 cm.  
HASTAKSHAR Ahmedabad: Vora & Co, 1977 32p. 18.5 cm.  
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### Children's Verse (15 Books)

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### Children's Stories (14 Books)

- HATHIBHAI DANTWALA Bombay: Navbharat Sahitya Mandir, 1985 36p. 24.5 cm.

### Short Stories

- PIN CUSHION Bombay: Chimanlal Literary Trust, 1978 12 + 68p. 16 cm.

### Essays (11 Books)

- MARI BARIATHI - 1 Ahmedabad: Vora & Co., 1975 118p. 18.5 cm.  
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### Criticism (13 Books)

- APEKSHA Bombay: Swati Prakashan, 1958 240p. 18.5 cm.  
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### Poetry Appreciation (4 Books)

- KAVYASAMVAD Bombay: Image Publications, 1989 24 + 344p. 21.5 cm.

### Interviews (3 Books)

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With Utpal Bhayani & Michael Hamburger



Translations (13 Books of translations of poems, poetics, aesthetics, short-stories, novels, etc.)

MATINI MAMTA — BORDEN DIL  
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KESHAVSUT New Delhi: Sahitya  
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Edited (45 Books of poems,  
prose, essays, stories etc.)

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KAVINO SHABDA Bombay:  
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1968, 366p. 21.5 cm.

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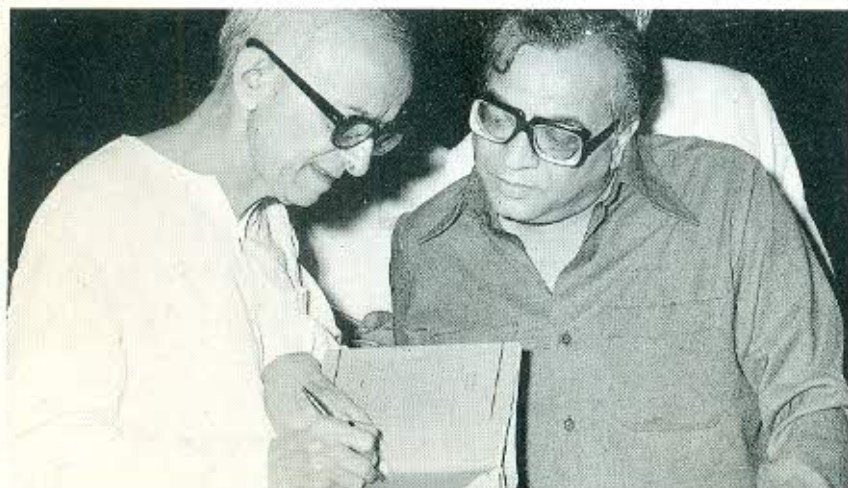
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#### Books on Suresh Dalal

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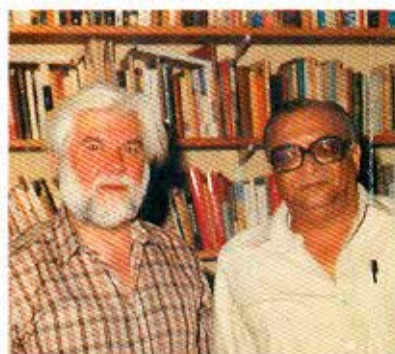
KAVYASETU (A book of  
appreciation of poems of  
Dr. Suresh Dalal by different  
personalities, edited by Dr. Jaya  
Mehta & Dr. Jashwanti Dave)  
Bombay: S.N.D.T. Women's  
University, 1989 20 + 384p.  
21.5 cm.



With Dr. Umashankar Joshi

## A Chronology

- 1932 11 October: Born Thane, Maharashtra
- 1955 M.A. (Gujarati), University of Bombay
- 1956 Professor (Part Time), K.C. Arts & Science college, Bombay
- 1960 Married Sushila Ranchhod das Gandhi Professor (Part Time) H.R. College of Commerce, Bombay
- 1963 Educational column's 'Vidyavikas' in Janmabhoomi, Gujarati Daily, Bombay
- 1964 Professor & Head of the Department of Gujarati, K.J. Somaiya College, Bombay
- 1967 Editor: *Kavita*, Bi-monthly of poetry and criticism, Janmabhoomi Group, Bombay
- 1969 Ph.D. (Gujarati), University of Bombay
- 1973 Professor & Head of the Department of Gujarati, S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay  
Text Book editor, Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, 1974, 1975, 1976 and Convener 1983, 1984
- 1978 Member, Panel of Advisors for Central Board of Film Censors, Bombay 1978 - 1981  
Visited: U.S.A. Poetry Readings, Library of Congress recorded the translations of poems for archives
- 1981 Director, Department of Post Graduate Studies & research, S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay  
The Best Teacher's Award — Government of Maharashtra  
Visited U.K. & U.S.A. to interview British & American poets
- 1982 Appointed National Lecturer for 1982-83 by UGC, New Delhi  
Member, Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation, Calcutta
- 1983 Nominated by UGC and USEFI under Indo-American Fellowship Programme as a Visiting Scholar at:  
1) University of Virginia Charlottesville  
2) Columbia University, New York  
Research Project: Comparative study of the poetry of Walt Whitman and Allen Ginsburg
- 1986 Member, University Grants Commission, New Delhi  
Chairman, University Level Text Book Review Committee, New Delhi  
Recipient of Ranjitram Gold Medal 1983 for Creative Writing
- 1987 Vice-Chairman, Gujarat Sahitya Akademi, Ahmedabad  
Convener, Indian Oriental and African Language & Literature, New Delhi  
Acting Vice-Chancellor, S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay on Various occasions
- 1988 Convener, Sahitya Akademi's Advisory Board for Gujarati, New Delhi
- 1989 Visited U.K. to interview British Poets  
Visited Czechoslovakia, U.K. and U.S.A. for poetry recitation and talks on literature
- 1990 Visited U.S.A. for poetry recitation and talks on literature



With Jon Silkin, British Poet