



## Book Review

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"But what about those who step upon, smear, enter, take away our spaces?" writes Anita Nahal in her newest volume of free form poetry, [What's Wrong With Us Kali Women?](#). Paying homage to the Indian goddess Kali—the destroyer of evil and bearer of dark skin—a sign of powerlessness in the caste-based Indian society (and American society), Nahal explores the theme of women's agency in a patriarchal society.

A woman is deemed acceptable in the patriarchy only if it approves, endorses and sponsors her; this limits social respectability and independence to predominantly middle and upper class, married women, who are often raising the next generation for the nation. However, what about the equally valuable, powerful, goddess-like women who fall outside this narrow band—the unmarried women, single mothers and non-binary women who all embody virtue, talent and respectability? Nahal explores themes that arise for these women including injustice, disrepute from society, economic struggles, and above all the light at the end of the tunnel: survival, triumph and victory.

A work of art that celebrates life, purity and endurance despite the unfairness for women who reside outside of the patriarchal society's narrow definition of what is traditionally acceptable, [What's Wrong With Us Kali Women?](#) answers its own title in its life-affirming message. Nothing, it turns out, is wrong with Kali and her daughters, as Nahal discovers through expressively writing about this question.