

Elly Niland

SELECTED POEMS

WINNER OF THE GUYANA PRIZE FOR LITERATURE, 2006.

Niland was born in her grandmother's house on the Corentyne coast of Guyana in 1954 and moved to the UK in 1967. Since 1971 she has lived in Kingston, Surrey with her husband and children, where she continues to work as a teacher of English in a local school. However, unlike many of the poets who emerged from Guyana in the latter part of the twentieth century, Niland did not begin writing poetry until well in her forties, which makes her achievements as a poet all the more remarkable.

The selection of poems which are included in this new volume have been taken from each of her three collections to date, and are designed to illustrate the many facets of Niland's skill as a poet, together with her key thematic preoccupations. Her literary influences are diverse, as is her style which is in turn delicate or robust, sardonic or compassionate, but always humane and filled with an irrepressible spirit. In addition, there are clear traces of what she so aptly terms "that amalgam of influence", a Guyanese childhood; her adult life in Britain; and the creolised Indian culture of the Caribbean. As a result, she writes as fluently in Creole as she does in Standard English, freely switching between the two and clearly relishing the linguistic dexterity that springs from her Indo-Caribbean heritage.

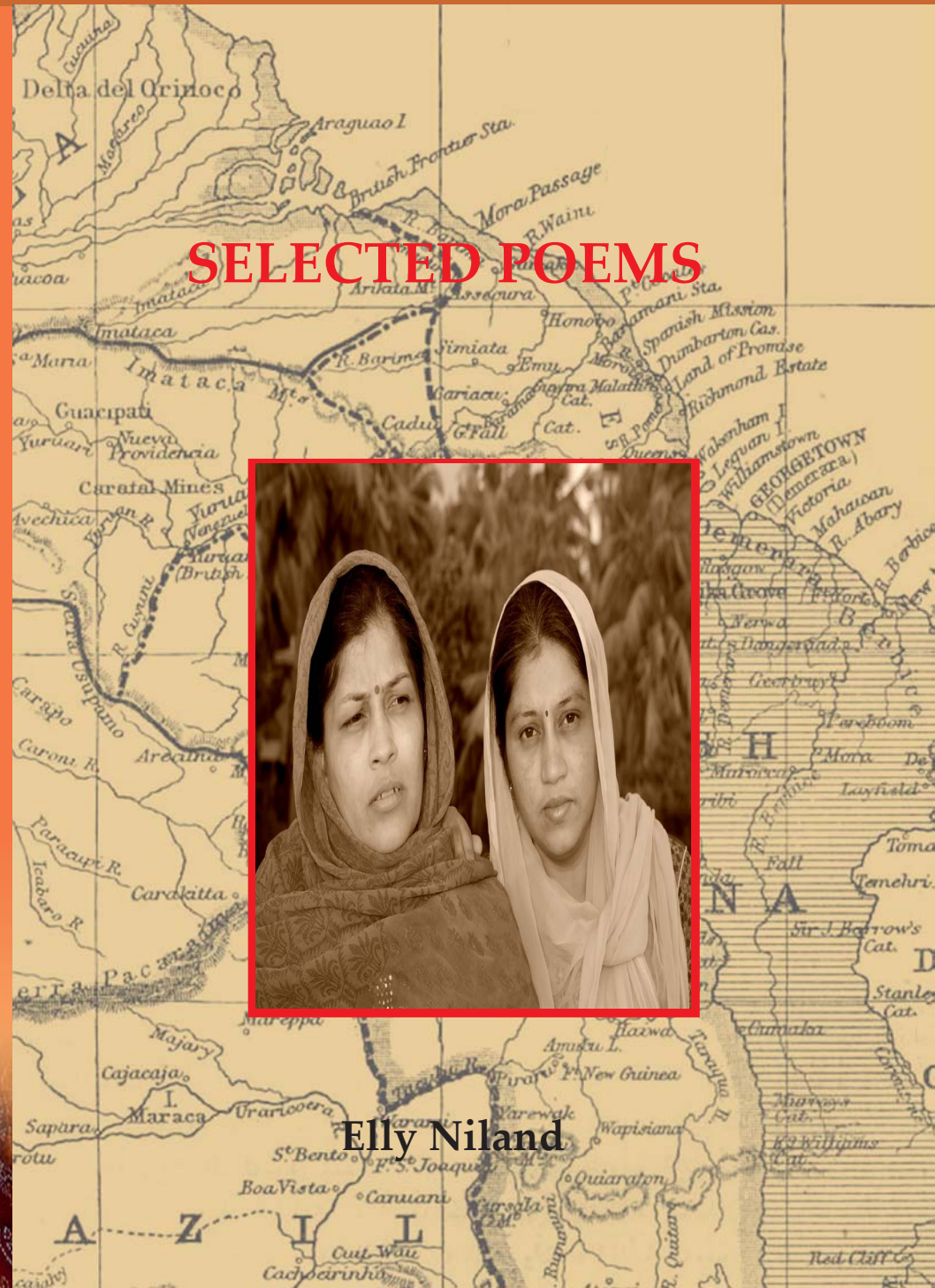
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