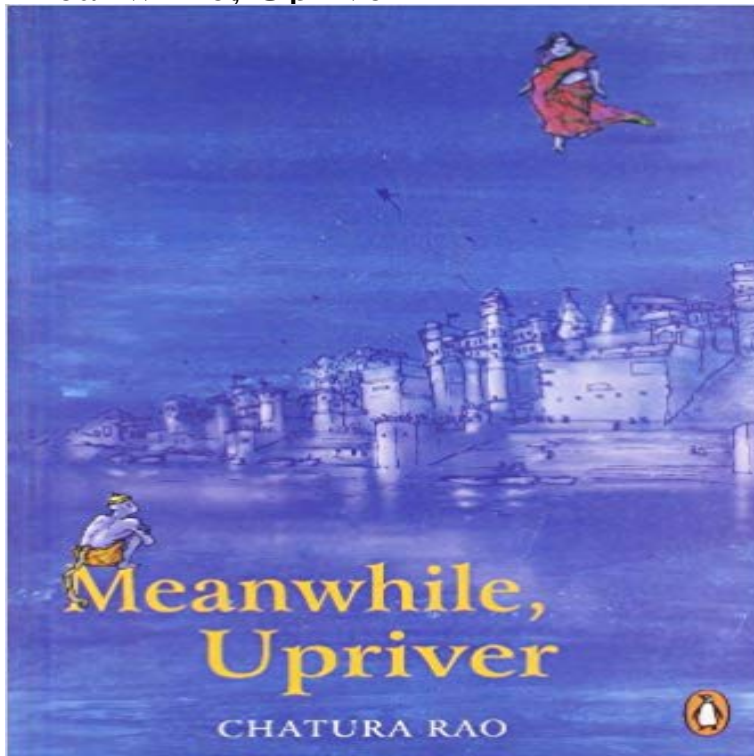


Meanwhile, Upriver



Yamini-di helped me to begin writing she too is writing her story some rivers flow into each other even before they reach the sea, she says at times they cross paths underground lets trace the points where our lives met in the by lanes and ghats of kashi, or banaras, yaminis and shivas stories unfold fat, sharp-tongued yamini is thirty-eight and unmarried by day she teaches maths in school at night she leaves her obese self behind and takes to the skies, light as a bird in her dreams, dancing in the air above the ghats with the love of her life the ghat is also where shiva, now eleven years old, was found abandoned by his adoptive father, the charismatic and ambitious sadhu bhyom baba growing up in babas ashram near dashaswamedh ghat, shiva eavesdrops on the conversations of sadhus as they pass through the ashram, and hopes to someday find his mother among the women thronging the ghats one day, yamini meets duncan, a researcher, who unlocks the romantic in her and suddenly she feels like the person from her dreams, light and loved in another part of the city, shiva is chosen to enact the role of chhota hanuman in the ramnagar ramlila there he befriends the shy, quiet shantanu, who plays the part of janaki, rams wife against the backdrop of the lila, where political battle lines have been drawn by the citys rival ashram factions, the final horrific truth about shivas life is revealed, and his story merges with yaminis meanwhile, upriver is about two outsiders struggling to find the courage to swim upriver, till an unforeseen connection brings them together resonating with the sights and sounds of an ancient place in the heart of modern india, this remarkable debut novel tells a story that is at once poignant and captivating

