



## ***parmesh's viewfinder*** SUMMER READING HIT YA MYTH?

I loved the rawness of (Ghalib's) first book *Ode to Lata* when I first read it in 2002. In it, Ali, a young gay Muslim man in Los Angeles, sought love in all the wrong places while he came to terms with his own complicated family history and geography. The songs of Lata Mangeshkar constantly play at the back of Ali's head as the soundtrack to his life, just as they're always playing in Ghalib's Santa Monica pad whenever I've visited him, and the book was very closely inspired by his own life. *The Exiles* is his second novel and it's released in India this month through Harper Collins. It's a love triangle in which a Hindu woman discovers that her husband of 20 years, who she followed to America and has a grown son with, is now having an affair with a man, who happens to be a young Muslim illegal immigrant. Naturally, worlds clash and lives are destroyed. Ghalib told me that he wrote this book because he wanted to expose the catastrophes people create when they lie to themselves as well as the people they love. It's pretty sad that women being married to gay men and then feeling undesired and unloved is as universal a theme as the resultant destructive infidelity, even in 2011. Ghalib peppers his story with full-on drama and the book describes both the city of LA and the lives of its desi immigrants extremely evocatively.

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*"The Exiles" by Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla (HarperCollins, India) will be released as "The Two Krishnas" (Magnus Books, USA) in September 2011.*