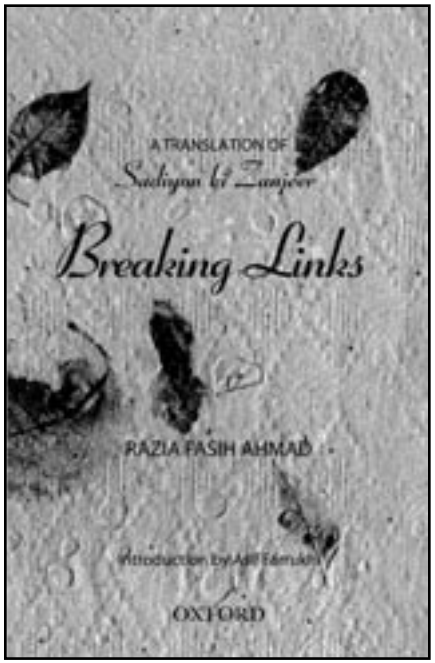
Breaking Links

A Translation of *Sadiyon ki Zanjeer*

Razia Fasih Ahmad



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A compelling tale of love gone awry through a grievous sense of 'honour' reaching out across generations, this is a novel about the unhappy state of Pakistan in and around 1971.

Razia Fasih Ahmad's most ambitious work, this English translation of the Urdu novel entitled *Sadiyon Ki Zanjeer* was a considerable time in the making, and resulted from her conscious decision to write about the historical reality of the major crisis that the country had faced. She researched the novel's background meticulously and spoke personally with eyewitnesses in Pakistan as well as Bangladesh.

The story is set in a time when the two unequal and distant 'wings' of the relatively young nation-state, as they were euphemistically termed, had been slowly but steadily drifting away from each other, to finally break apart with a vengeance and untold violence.

This breaking apart is at the centre of this novel, and the story is built around the looming crisis and the final hour of disintegration and dissolution.

Like most Urdu fiction-writers, **Razia Fasih Ahmad** began her literary career with short fiction. She shot into prominence with her novel *Aabla Pa* which won the Adamji prize for Literature in 1964–65. Recently reprinted and adapted for television, this remains her best-known work although she moved on to write an armload of books—novels, long and short stories, travelogues, plays, humourous pieces and even some poetry. She also won the Writer's Guild Prize for Best Short Story for 'Aankh ka Kanta'.

Razia Fasih Ahmad migrated to the United States in the 1980s and has used this experience as subject matter in some of her recent writing. Her latest work is *Zakhm-e-Tanhai*, a novel based on the Bronte family, with whom she has felt an affinity of sorts.

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