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# Passport Photos

*Amitava Kumar*

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**Passport Photos** Amitava Kumar
*Passport Photos,* a self-conscious act of artistic and intellectual forgery, is a report on the immigrant condition. A multigenre book combining theory, poetry, cultural criticism, and photography, it explores the complexities of the immigration experience, intervening in the impersonal language of the state. *Passport Photos* joins books by writers like Edward Said and Trinh T. Minh-ha in the search for a new poetics and politics of diaspora.

Organized as a passport, *Passport Photos* is a unique work, taking as its object of analysis and engagement the lived experience of post-coloniality--especially in the United States and India. The book is a collage, moving back and forth between places, historical moments, voices, and levels of analysis. Seeking to link cultural, political, and aesthetic critiques, it weaves together issues as diverse as Indian fiction written in English, signs put up by the border patrol at the U.S.-Tijuana border, ethnic restaurants in New York City, the history of Indian indenture in Trinidad, Native Americans at the Superbowl, and much more.

The borders this book crosses again and again are those where critical theory meets popular journalism, and where political poetry encounters the work of documentary photography. The argument for such border crossings lies in the reality of people's lives. This thought-provoking book explores that reality, as it brings postcolonial theory to a personal level and investigates global influences on local lives of immigrants.

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