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No God in Sight

By Tyrewala, Altaf

Anchor Canada, 2007. Paperback. Book Condition: New.
 Anchor Canada 2007 New/ Pink and grey pictorial wraps. From
 At once clever and superficial, Tyrewala's debut novel presents
 50 collaborative narratives set in Mumbai. Most of the stories
 are brief first-person accounts of makeshift perseverance
 against India's postcolonial problems: Hindu hostility toward
 Muslim minorities, mass poverty, pollution, corruption and the
 uneasy accommodation of global capitalism. But while many
 people Tyrewala channels—including an abortionist's father,
 an impotent adolescent and an unwitting polygamist—are
 immediately interesting, few are effectively realized, as
 Tyrewala's hero is the city itself, and he constructs this pulsing
 protagonist with interconnected vignettes featuring its citizens.
 For instance, an episode from the perspective of a woman
 seeking police help leads into another from the perspective of
 the petitioned officer, which leads to another from the
 perspective of a jaded journalist. The underlying concept is
 reminiscent of David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, but Tyrewala
 fumbles the delivery: he successfully pits the specter of old-
 money Mumbai against the new poor, but fails to vary his
 austere prose style from character to character ("I am an
 abortionist"; "Today is my sixteenth birthday"; "I want to
 become a lawyer"). The result is a laudable debut, but some...



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