



Review

Chronology: Nuruddin Farah

F. Fiona Moolla

- 1945 November 24. Nuruddin Farah born in Baidoa (Italian-occupied area of Somalia).
- 1947 Family moves to Kallafo in the Ogaden (British-occupied; handed over soon afterwards to Ethiopian control). Attends Qur'anic school.
- 1960 Independence gained from Britain and Italy—now Republic of Somalia.
- 1963 Due to war, family moves from the Ogaden to Mogadishu; Farah completes secondary school education.
- 1965 First short story, "Why Dead so Soon?" completed and published in *Somali News*.
- 1966 Attends Panjab University, Chandigarh, India. Studies Literature and Philosophy, funded by an Indian government scholarship.
- 1969 Marries Chitra Muliyl (Indian student). Receives BA degree. Returns to Somalia, where Muhammed Siyad Barre is in power after military coup. Writes the play *A Dagger in Vacuum*—denied licence to produce it.
- 1970 Publishes first novel, *From a Crooked Rib*. Son Koschin is born. Teaches at National University in Somalia and secondary schools.
- 1972 First marriage ends. Somali is codified as written language.
- 1973 Serialization of Somali-language novel *Tallow Waa Talee Ma* in *Somali News* stopped by government censors.
- 1974 Leaves Somalia for next twenty-two years. Wins UNESCO Fellowship and enrolls in University of London, attached to Royal Court Theatre.
- 1975 Postgraduate study continued at University of Essex. Play *The Offering*, written in lieu of thesis, produced at Essex.
- 1976 Novel *A Naked Needle* published. Warned by brother not to return to Somalia after enraging Barre regime by publishing *A Naked Needle*—moves to Italy for next three years.
- 1976–9 Translator and English language teacher in Rome and Milan.
- 1978 *A Spread of Butter* broadcast by BBC African service.
- 1979 Novel *Sweet and Sour Milk* published. Moves to Los Angeles; writes film scripts.
- 1980 *Sweet and Sour Milk* wins English-speaking Union Literary Award.
- 1981 Novel *Sardines* published. Teaches at Bayreuth University, West Germany for six months as Guest Professor. Draft of *Close Sesame* completed. Moves to Jos in Nigeria.
- 1982 *Yussuf and His Brothers* written and produced at Jos, where he is Visiting Reader at the university.
- 1983 Novel *Close Sesame* published; work begun on novel *Maps*.
- 1984 German broadcasting commissions his play *Tartar Delight*. Moves to Gambia; completes *Maps*.
- 1986 *Maps* published. Moves to Khartoum, Sudan, where he teaches at the University. First draft of *Gifts* written there.
- 1989 Moves to Kampala, Uganda.
- 1990 First draft of *Secrets* completed in Berlin; receives German Academic Exchange Service fellowship there. Novel *Gifts* is first published in Swedish in Stockholm. Mother dies in Mogadishu. Meets sociology professor, Amina Mama.
- 1991 Barre flees Somalia. Second draft of *Secrets* completed. Resigns Makerere position and moves to Ethiopia after criticism by Ugandan President. Gives lectures on Somali refugees' plight at Oxford university.

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- Awarded Tucholsky prize in Stockholm for work as a literary exile. Brief reunion with his father.
- 1992 Publishes *Gifts* in English in Zimbabwe. Moves to Kaduna, Nigeria. Marries Amina Mama.
- 1993 Father dies in Mombasa, Kenya, two days before departure for USA. Daughter, Abyan, born. *Gifts* wins Best Novel award in Zimbabwe.
- 1994 Wins Premio Cavour prize for Italian edition of *Close Sesame*. Serves on Neustadt Prize jury, strongly supporting Toni Morrison for the award.
- 1995 Son, Kaahiye, born.
- 1996 After twenty-two years' exile, returns to Somalia.
- 1998 February: selected as fifteenth Neustadt laureate. May: publishes *Secrets*. May: *Gifts* (French edition) wins St. Malo Literary Festival award; named Book of the Month for all French libraries. October: wins Neustadt Prize at Oklahoma University. *World Literature Today* dedicates Autumn issue to Farah and his work.
- 1999 Moves to Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2000 Publishes *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora*.
- 2001 Wins the Italian Premio Mondello prize for best foreign author.
- 2003 Second prize winner of the Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage.
- 2004 Publishes *Links*.
- 2005 Wins the Italian Premio Napoli award for the Italian translation of *Links*.
- 2010 Publishes *Knots*. Winton Chair in the Liberal Arts University of Minnesota. (Till 2012.)
- 2011 Publishes *Crossbones*.
- 2013 Sister working for UNICEF in Kabul, Afghanistan, killed in a bomb blast.
- 2014 Publishes *Hiding in Plain Sight*. Wins South African Lifetime Achievement Award.
- 2017 Awarded Honorary Doctorate by alma mater, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India.
- 2018 Publishes *North of Dawn*.
- 2019 Awarded the third Lee Hochul Literary Prize for Peace at a ceremony in Seoul, South Korea.