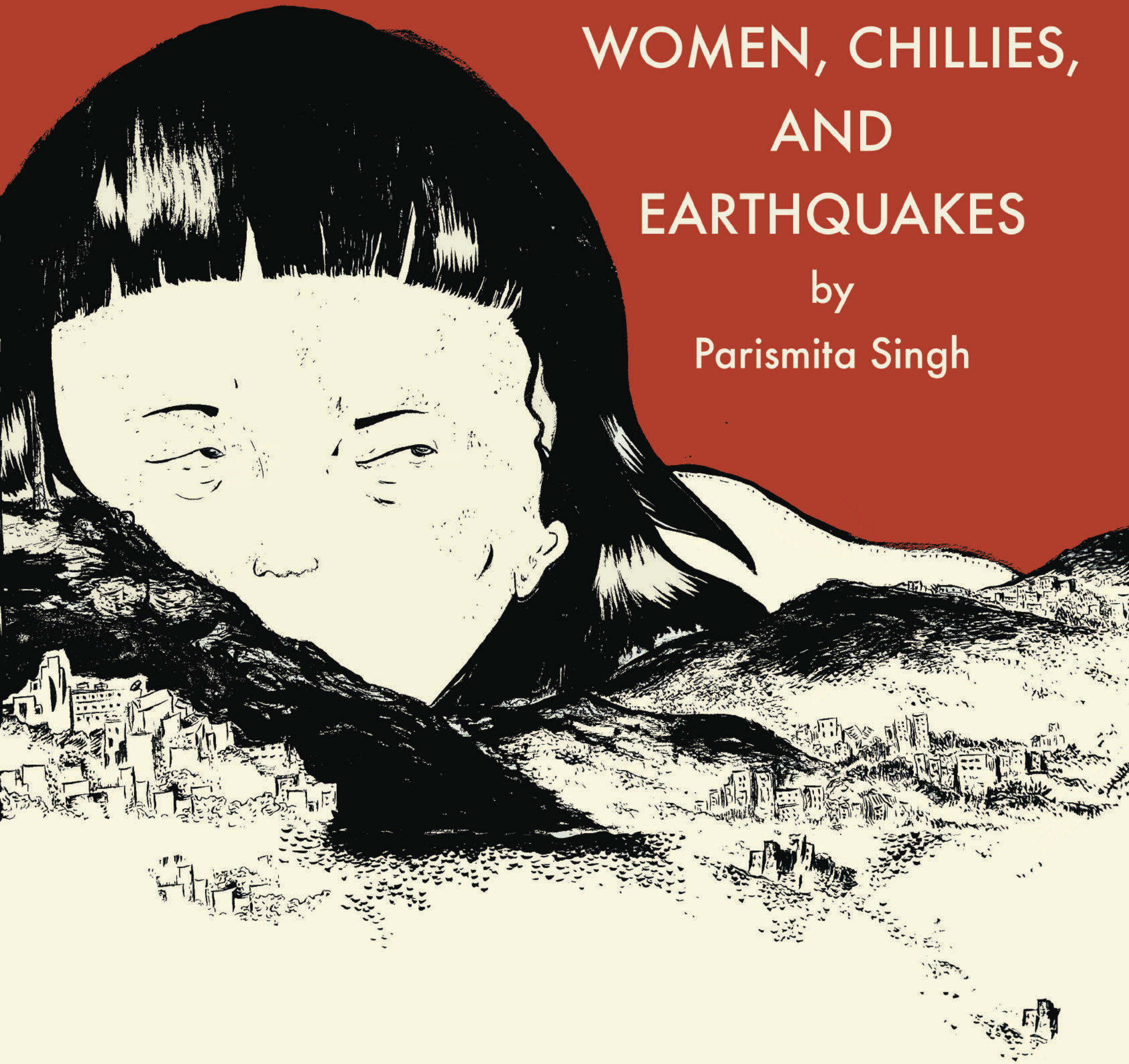


WOMEN, CHILLIES,
AND
EARTHQUAKES

by
Parismita Singh



I DREAM OF HER AGAIN.
A LARGE WOMAN FROM BEFORE TIME
HOLDING UP THE EARTH.
SHE IS FROM A MYTH,
AN OLD STORY.
I CANNOT RECALL WHERE I READ IT.
BUT SHE IS HERE IN MY DREAM.

AND NOW,
SOMETHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN.
THIS WOMAN WILL CROSS A LINE,
COMMIT SOME TRANSGRESSION,
AS THESE WOMEN OF MYTH ALWAYS DO.



WHAT IS IT?

WHAT WILL I DO?

I DON'T KNOW.

HOW DO YOU TRAIN
A WOMAN
TO HOLD UP THE WORLD?
IT BEGINS EARLY.

PURITY
OBEDIENCE

SELFLESS

PRONE TO
SACRIFICE AND
DEVOTION.

CULTURE

THE CAREGIVER

DO NOT LAUGH TOO LOUD.
DO NOT JUMP TOO HIGH.

AAAAGGHHH! MY HEAD ACHES.



THE SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS GIVE US
INSTITUTIONALISED SEXISM.
TELEVISION EXPERTS GIVE US
ANALYSIS.

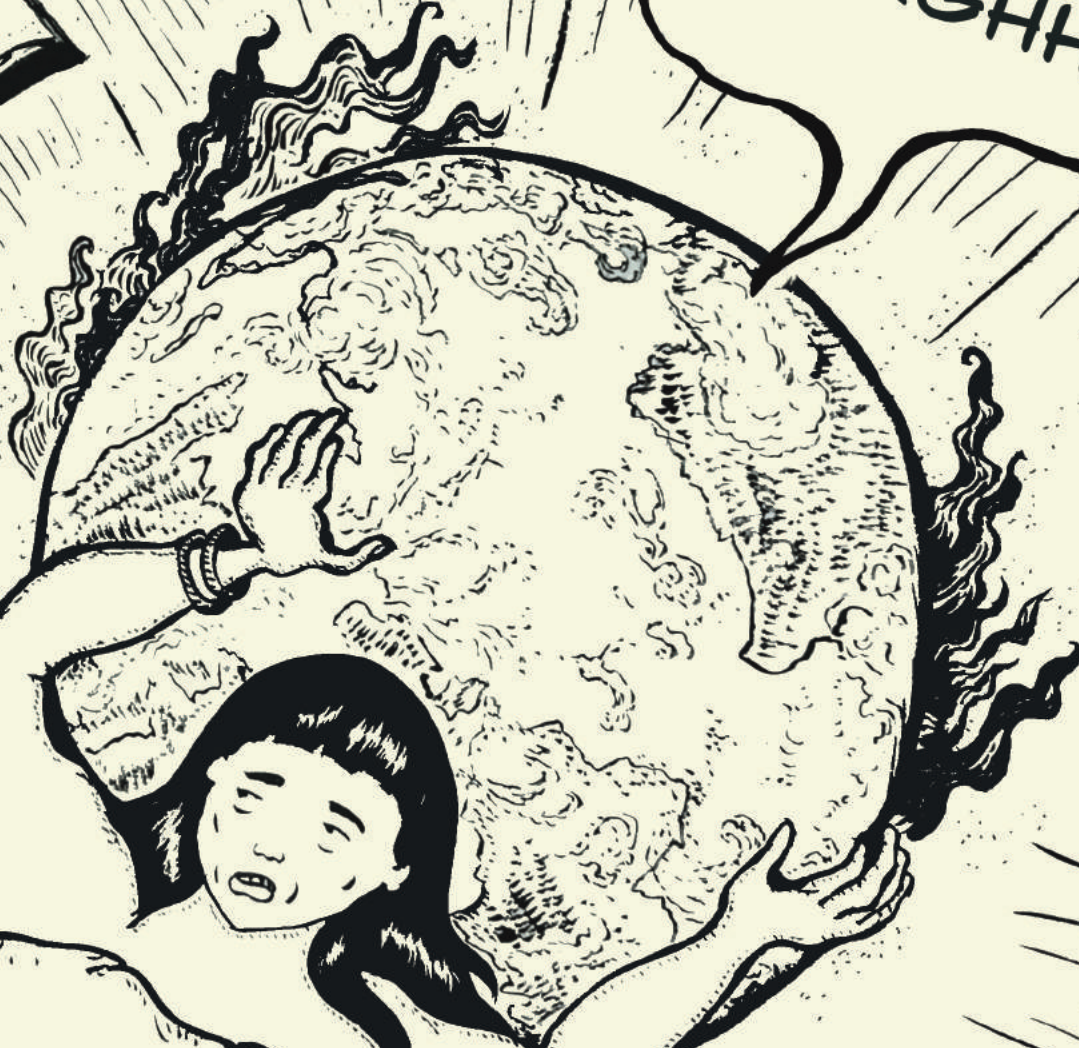
THE WOMAN HOLDING THE EARTH
GETS A HEADACHE.

FATHER IS THE
HEAD OF THE
FAMILY.

MOTHER COOKS AND
CARES FOR US.



AARGHH!



DON'T LISTEN.
KEEP GOING.



WOMEN AND CHILDREN
DO NOT HAVE IDEOLOGY.
HOW CAN THEY BE
POLITICAL?



THEN ONE DAY SHE HEARS LAUGHTER AND TEARS,
WOMEN STOPPING FOR REST ON THEIR WAY HOME
FROM WORK.



WHAT IS THIS?
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?



HA HA
HA

HA HA
HA HA HA



AND JUST LIKE THAT,
SHE STOPS HER ROTATING.
MOVES HER HEAD, MOVES HER HAND.
THE EARTH SHAKES AND CHURNS.
BUT SHE CANNOT STOP.

THE YEARNING IS TOO STRONG.
THE LAUGHTER AND TEARS,
SHE MUST HAVE IT.

SHE WANTS TO HAVE A CHILLI.

THIS IS HOW EARTHQUAKES CAME TO BE
THE STORY GOES.
WITH HER EVERY MOVEMENT,
THE EARTH SHOOK,
FISH ROSE INTO THE SKY
AND HILLS RUMBLED.



AND WHEN THINGS
SETTLED BACK,

IT WAS A NEW WORLD.

