



Zulfikar Ahmed Ghose

March 13, 1935 - June 30, 2022

My uncle Zulfikar Ghose, who has died aged 87, earned his living as a poet, teacher, novelist and literary critic in Britain during the 1950s and 60s before spending much of the rest of his life as a creative writing lecturer at an American university.

Zulf was born in India in Sialkot (now in Pakistan), the third of four children; he had three sisters, Virginia, Lily and Zahida. His father, Khwaja Mohammed Ghosh, was a businessman and his mother, Selima (nee Virk), a homemaker. The family moved to Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1942 before leaving India in 1952.

Having changed their name to Ghose, the family settled in London, where his father opened a boutique, Maharani, on Regent Street, and Zulf attended Sloane school in Chelsea, captaining the cricket team.

In 1955 he went to Keele University to study English and philosophy, becoming editor of the university's literary magazine and of a national anthology of poetry by undergraduates called Universities' Poetry.

After graduating he returned to London, where he struck up friendships with the experimental novelist, poet and literary critic BS Johnson, as well as the poet Anthony Smith. Part of The Group, an informal alliance of poets who met in London in the 50s and 60s, Zulf became a British citizen in 1961, often giving poetry readings on the BBC. His talent was recognised by the Eric Gregory awards in 1963, the year he began teaching English at Ealing Mead county school in west London.

He also worked as a freelance sports journalist for the Observer, covering cricket and hockey, including England's 1961-62 Test cricket tour to India, Pakistan and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and wrote book reviews for publications including the Guardian, Spectator, Times Literary Supplement and Western Daily Press.

He had his first collection of poems, *The Loss of India*, published in 1964, and an

autobiography, *Confessions of a Native-Alien*, followed in 1965. His first novel, *The Contradictions*, came in 1966, the year a collection of short stories with Johnson, *Statement Against Corpses*, also appeared. By the time of his death he had written a dozen novels, half a dozen nonfiction books and seven collections of poetry.

In 1969 Zulf and his wife, the Brazilian artist Helena de la Fontaine, whom he married in 1964, moved to the US when he accepted a 12-month contract to teach creative writing at the University of Texas at Austin. Once the contract was up, he continued to lecture there for the following 38 years, becoming a US citizen (while retaining his British passport) and retiring as a professor emeritus in 2007. In 2016 he received the lifetime achievement award at the first International Conference of Pakistani Writing in English at Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore.

At home Zulf was an exceptional cook and loved to cater for friends and family. He also enjoyed opera, driving sports cars, sampling fine wine, drinking whisky and smoking cigars.

He is survived by Helena and Zahida.