

# Postcard from Kashmir

Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001)

INDO- AMERICAN KASHMIRI POET

DIASPORIC WRITER – SELF IMPOSED EXILE (NOSTALGIA,  
MEMORY, ALIENATION, OUTSIDER)

## **POETRY COLLECTIONS**

THE HALF INCH HIMALAYAS

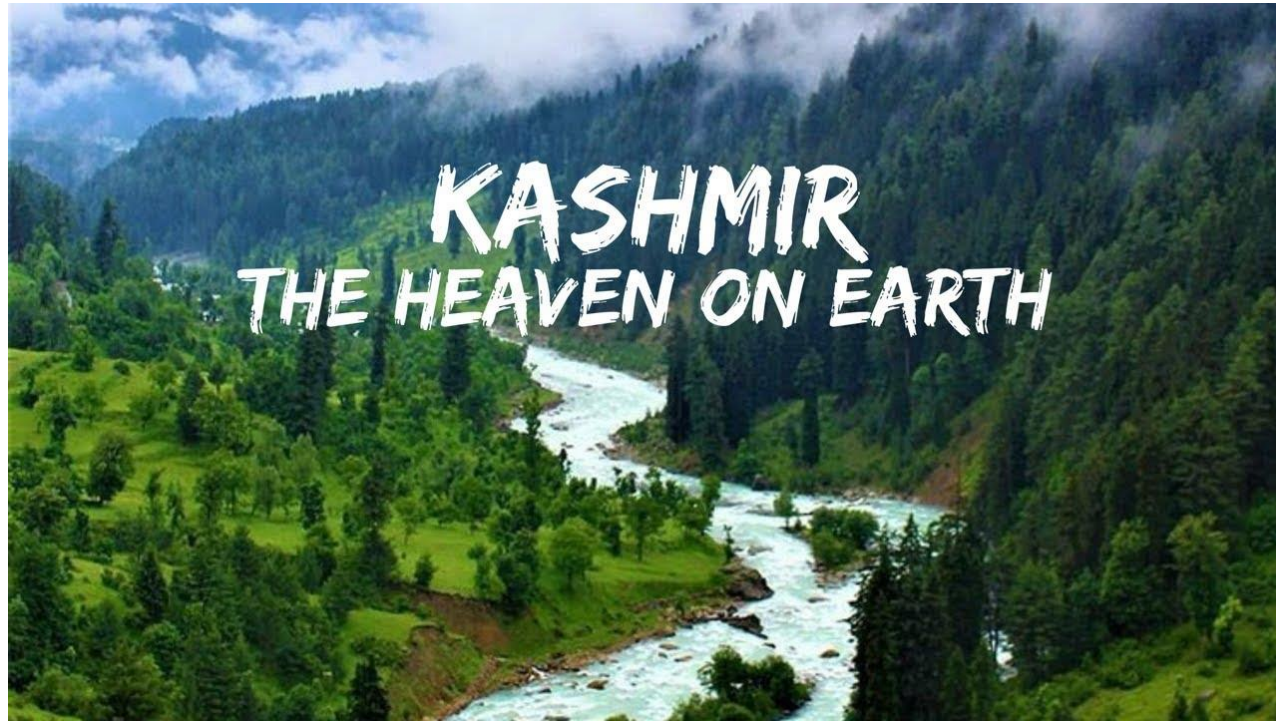
THE NOSTALGIC MAN OF AMERICA

A WALK THROUGH THE YELLOW PAGES

# Kashmir- paradise on earth

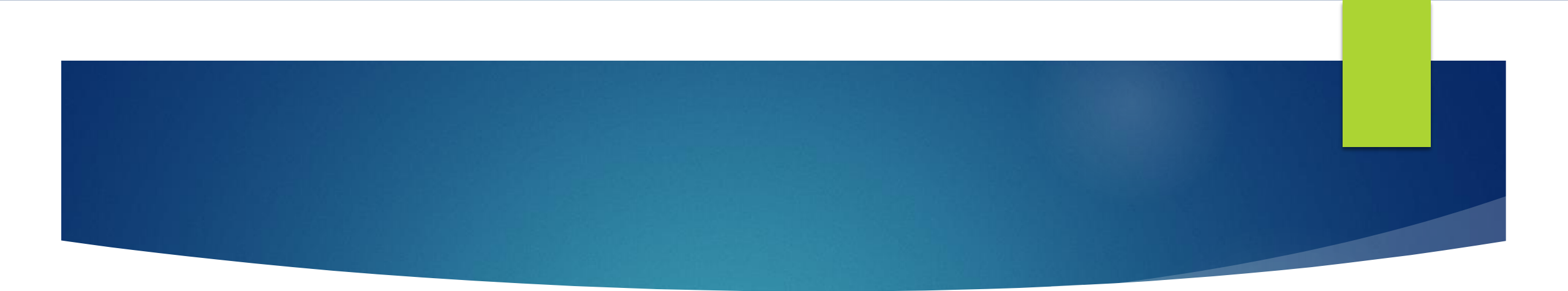


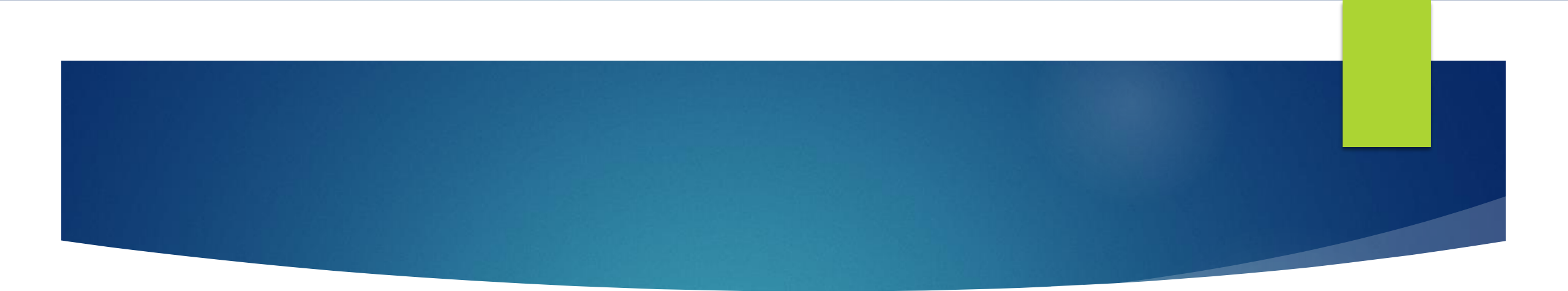
Immortalised his homeland -

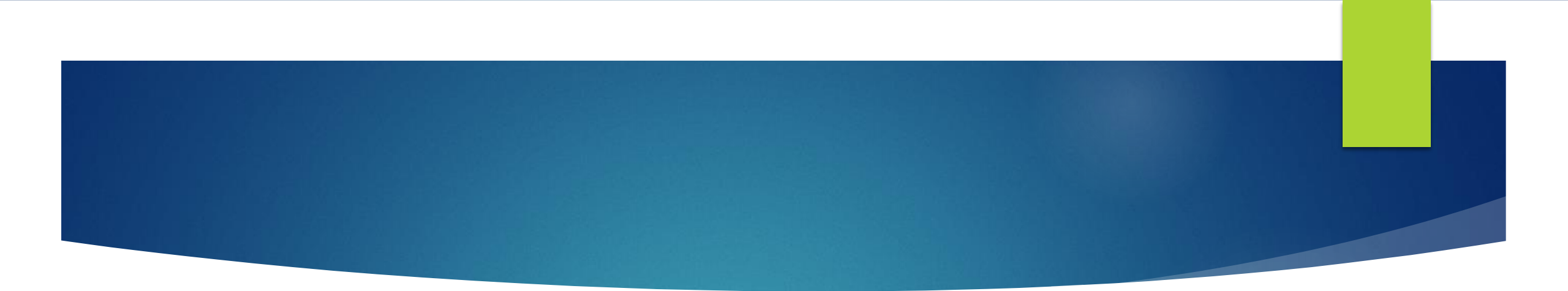


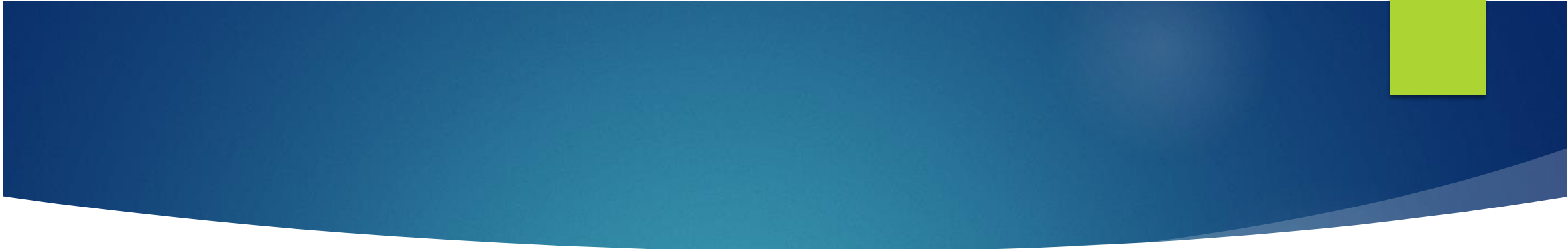
# Kashmir- battleground, a land of conflict

- ▶ Hari Singh
- ▶ Muslims – majority
- ▶ 1947 October-territorial conflict
- ▶ 1965,1971, 1999 (Kargil)

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- ▶ Postcard from Kashmir
  - ▶ Kashmir shrinks into my mailbox,  
my home a neat four by six inches.  
I always loved neatness. Now I hold  
the half-inch Himalayas in my hand.  
This is home. And this the closest  
I'll ever be to home. When I return,  
the colors won't be so brilliant,  
the Jhelum's waters so clean,  
so ultramarine. My love  
so overexposed.  
And my memory will be a little  
out of focus, in it  
a giant negative, black  
and white, still undeveloped.

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- ▶ Central image- Postcard ( highly imaginative & thought provoking)
  - ▶ Shrink- suggests the real place Kashmir diminishes to the tiny delicate picture printed on the postcard
  - ▶ Neatness- refers not only to the regular shape of the postcard but the neat and harmonious Kashmir in the memory of the poet
  - ▶ Magnificent picture of the scenic beauty of Kashmir
  - ▶ Half inch Himalayas- the most gigantic and iconic mountain range in the world.
  - ▶ The poet deliberately uses the same kind of contrast to express the wide distance between K n A

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- ▶ Tone is serious and bitter
  - ▶ Lamenting about the motherland by imagining what Kashmir will be like when he returns
  - ▶ “Home is where the heart is”- speaker’s heart belongs to Kashmir , his homeland that suffers from on-going disputes among India, Pak &China
  - ▶ Jhelum- ultramarine (deep blue in colour)
  - ▶ So –intensifies the poet’s pity and lament for the destruction of Kashmir
  - ▶ How overwhelming the nostalgic love to Kashmir

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- ▶ Giant (original Kashmir) and negative (image)
  - ▶ Commas
  - ▶ Reflects that memories are just pieces of flashbacks and feelings that tangled together.