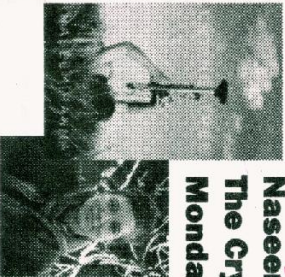


# Literary Inquiries

**Naseem Rakha**  
**The Crying Tree (Broadway)**  
**Monday, July 20 at 7 pm**



In her first novel, Silverton, Oregon NPR journalist Naseem Rakha leaves the reader with very deep thoughts. The story of a mother's search for forgiveness of her son's murderer, The Crying Tree opens 29 days before the long-anticipated execution of the convicted killer.

Switching from journalism to fiction was not as hard as one might think, Ms. Rakha notes.

"In both, my goal was the same: to tell a story that makes people stop, think, and feel something they may not have otherwise. And in both I was working from a premise – a compelling,

controversial question that I then attempted to answer. The big difference is the tools used for each. Reporters have facts, figures, quotes, character description, and setting. Novelists, on the other hand, have all these, plus a medicine bag filled with potions we call plot, tension, character analysis, narrative voice, dialogue and of course, whatever setting suits our needs."

A geologist and environmental consultant before she became a writer, the setting of her novel is critical to Ms. Rakha. "The Crying Tree purposely contrasts the very moist and bucolic setting of southern Illinois with the more harsh and stark environment of Central Oregon in order to build upon and contrast the vastly different emotional worlds of my characters," she says.

The idea of the novel came from Ms. Rakha's experience covering executions for public radio, and in interviews with death row inmates, victim survivors, and prison staff. "After listening to their stories, I knew I wanted to tell a story that combined the various emotions that surround loss and the ability to forgive the unforgivable," she says.

She notes that New Mexico and New Jersey both recently repealed death penalty laws, Colorado is close, and with the advent of DNA testing "capital punishment ... will one day go the way of public hangings."

As part of the Third Place Books ongoing support for emerging and local authors, we will host a casual reception for Ms. Rakha at 6:30 Monday, July 20 before her 7 pm reading. RSVP to [wmanning@thirdplacebooks.com](mailto:wmanning@thirdplacebooks.com) to attend and chat with the author.