



ANNA HAY

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Untouchable Spring (Orient BlackSwan) by G. Kalyana Rao is an essential read. First published in Telugu in 2000 as *Antarani Vasantham*, it was translated in 2010 by Alladi Uma and M. Sridhar. I read it at the age of 17 or 18,

and returned to it a decade later while writing my first play. It is a novel, a kind of memoir, a family saga, and, to me, a Dalit epic.

The book traces seven generations of a Dalit family, reflecting the lives of the Mala and Madiga communities in Enneladinni, Andhra Pradesh. It interrogates dominant narratives around Dalit conversion to Christianity, highlighting the search for dignity, self-respect and education, even as caste discrimination persists in new forms. The book through its characters asserts that resistance is a necessity, not a choice. At its core, the book holds the memory of my people whose lives, culture, and histories are just like their spring – “untouchable”.

