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feeding paper into a typewriter, this anxiety was still present to our minds, and was revealed in the pointillism of Wite-Out, or even in the dapple of letters that were darker, pressed in confidence, as opposed to the lighter ones, pressed more hesitantly. A page produced on a manual typewriter was like a record of the torture of thought. With the P.C., the situation is altogether different. The screen, a kind of indeterminate space, does not seem violable in the same way as the page. And, because what we write on it is so effortlessly and undetectably erasable, the final text buries the evidence of our struggle, asserting that what we said was what we thought all along. Wershler-Henry suggests that the P.C.—with some help from Derrida and Baudrillard—ushered us into a world in which the difference between true and false is no longer cause for doubt or grief; falsity is taken for granted. I don't know if he was thinking about the spurious perfection of the computer-generated page, but it would be a useful example.

Something else to think about is the effect that the computer, with its astonishing capabilities, has had on us as writers. Take just one example: the ease

## STORY DÉBUTS

*Karma*, by *Rishi Reddi* (*Harper Perennial*; \$12.95). Each of the stories in this startlingly mature collection shows first- and second-generation Indian-Americans attempting to manage the disconnect between cultures. The premise is hardly a new one, but Reddi's understated prose and her choice of detail give her revelations a quiet power. A meek housewife is able to challenge her husband after seeing a three-hundred-and-fifty-year-old bonsai; a retired judge is slighted by a fast-food worker, and almost ends a lifelong friendship as a result. Reddi's nuanced handling of her characters' anxieties shows the delicate paradoxes that the children of immigrants face: "They thought that every opportunity was waiting for them, careers, travel, love, the world; their parents had told them that's why they'd moved. . . . But in the end, the talons of tradition would close in."

THE TRIUMPHANT  
BESTSELLER

## The Girls

Readers everywhere are spellbound by "the girls"—two sisters destined to spend their entire lives together

**"Pure joy..."**

What wonderful writing! What glorious characters!

—Jane Hamilton,  
author of *A Map of the World*

**"Remarkable."**

—Arthur Golden,  
author of

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