In the new century, many of us have multiple places we call home, plus different versions of ourselves and our lives, resulting in an explosion of new kinds of writing, culture, and being. With this in mind, how has literature been made new? After travelling the world for more than 35 years, Pico Iyer offers some informal answers to the question that commands us all: Is the globe coming together or pulling apart—and what can we do about it?

Pico Iyer, Distinguished Presidential Fellow at Chapman University, is a longtime essayist for Time magazine, a frequent contributor to the New York Times, and author of 10 books. Pico’s writing contributions span genres such as National Geographic, Vanity Fair and Wired.

Born in Oxford, England, and raised between England and California, Iyer has been living for the past 25 years in rural Japan.