

BOOK REVIEWS

Mishra, Binod. *Multiple Waves*. New Delhi : Adhyayan Publishers & Distributors, 2016. ISBN : 978-81-8435-504-8, Price : Rs. 200.00, Pp.-

In the recent decades, a trend has gained ground in India that the academics turn poets or foray poetic creativity. This duality of role has a built-in danger. The cerebral acumen may smother the ease and spontaneity of the deeply stirred heart. Dr Binod Mishra is an exception. The multiple waves with their tenuous and tender edges find meaningful poetic configuration in his poetry. One interesting thing is that his poetry collection is a collection of varied and myriad experiences the poet has observed or undergone. There are poems on such topics as a child, woman, the wonder tree, a silent lover, interview, block you waiting, regulations, funeral songs, flood, the inner eye and so on. There is no thematic continuity. These songs are like flowers of different colours and different varieties strung into a garland named collection. These poems have independent splendour. What is observable is that there is a continual subterranean flow of sadness in his poetry giving them a tenderness which arrests readers' attention. They add to the depth required of a true poem for sadness is the core of sensitive human existence. The small poem "Woman" sees woman a tireless traveller against troubled times, whose fate is not becoming and whose only being is that of a caged bird and yet she raises civilization after civilization. The existential and the universal meet and mingle, the mundane acts as Shelley's invisible wind that awakens to transitory brightness. "A Silent Lover" is emotional, "the Postman" is impressionistic, "Mother" is tragical, "Identity" is puzzling, "The Superannuated Babu" is realistic, "Call-Bell" is reflective, "The Rising Sun" is cheerful, "You" is enigmatic, "Absence" is pensive.

Reviewer : Dr. Hari Mohan Prasad, Former Professor and Head, P.G. Department of English and Research Centre, Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya (Bihar)

Khatri, C. L. *For You to Decide*. New Delhi : Authorspress, 2016, ISBN-978-93-5207-406-8, Price : Rs. 250.00, Pp 82.

C.L. Khatri's collection of poems entitled *For You to Decide* is a sincere endeavour to capture a wide variety of themes like Love, Dream, Genesis, Freedom, Nature, Religion, Nostalgia etc. The new anthology of poetry attempts to record the different elemental emotions which human beings interface in their day to day life. Though the prevalent hollowness of human heart and shallowness of human relationships have received dominant voice in the anthology, the poet has tried his best to present his optimistic tone throughout.

The very first poem of the anthology “Mask” hits hard at the hypocritical attitude of the society. The writer is tired of wearing and frequently changing the mask. And when the mask is removed ‘everything looks transparent’. The poet’s positive attitude is reflected in the second poem “Flames Within”:

Who can say I will die tomorrow?
I will exist in the flames forever.

The title poem “For You to Decide” strikes a new note by repeating the expression ‘Sometimes I wonder’. The theme of Dream dominates the anthology. His faith upon God can be seen in the poem ‘I Have God’. He has talked about the changing Indian woman :

She is writing a new Ramayana
where Sita rules over Ayodhya in his absence.

‘Religion’ has been defined in various ways – dawn of a new sun, warm breath of a beloved, ecstasy of cricket, knowledge of Buddha etc.

The use of figures of speech, especially the alliteration of ‘j’ in the poem “Hundroo Waterfall” – jan, jal, jingle and jameen is remarkable. Besides, the metaphor – the flow of water from the Hundroo Waterfall, being compared indirectly to ‘long white beard’ echoes the poet’s wide range of knowledge. The Nirbhaya - tragedy has once again arrested the attention of the readers. The poet has brought the tragedy to the forefront through his poem “Poetry Wants to Stand with You”. The poem “A Happy Return” very well satirises the socio-political scenario of the country :

Begging in a beggars’ land.
I am the richest person in the world,
Realization dawns. A happy return.

The line ‘God resides where women are worshipped’ hints at the fact that the status of woman in society is of paramount importance. The poet has painted the picture of Navaratri, especially, its ninth day. The Goddess Durga rushing out of its black statue destroyed everything which is quite symbolic – the dawn of a new era completely ‘purged of dross’, lighter and brighter. The very next poem “Waiting for a Vishnu” also heralds the arrival of Lord Vishnu. The over-ambition of the devotees land them in multiple problems. Some sentences like ‘God has no religion’, ‘all are pawns in the master’s epiphany’, ‘power disables both ears and eyes’ are of universal significance. In the poem “Pangs of Parting”, the poet wishes to cherish the pangs of parting. He keeps remembering the feel, the smell, the kiss; he considers separation as a sweetener. He proposes to his beloved to play – ‘i-miss-you’ game. The poem ends on a positive note :

We will wait for the words
to sprout , to bloom, to sing...
craving a lurking hope of final union...

The scenes at hospital have been presented realistically with a satiric tinge :

Here time moves at snail pace,
snail breeds paradise for private purse.
Last night I walked in with writhing pain.
They welcomed me like a wedding guest.

The poem “Turban Man” is highly symbolic – the man holding on his hopes in coils of turban... Besides, the other titles “Cavernous Mouth”, “Soothing Balm,” “The Bliss of Beauty”, “E God” “Frail Fame’ and “Ripe Fruits” also attract the attention of the readers by their lively themes, colourful images and apt diction. The credit, of course, goes to the poet. The beauty of the “Anthology” increases by the addition of eight “three liners” and a few Haikus at the end.

Stirring up the sediment of dark thoughts and half - ideas most of the poems in the collection are charged with a passion at once personal and cosmic, self-cogitating and profoundly affirmative. Swimming against a vast range of emotions and sensations, the poet seems to be struggling with the classic angst of how to infuse a world of fascinating but chaotic sense data with a transcendent meaning.

Sailing through the troubled times of public and private breakdowns we are a dislodged and floating population today. The best of Khatri’s poems rekindle personal, inter-personal and racial memories so as to establish same kind of cultural, historical and mythical bond between the man and his milieu. He has talked about the ‘Eleventh Incarnation’, tried ‘to write a new Ramayana’, presented ‘statistics of suicide’, delineated ‘Unresolved Sensation’, painted ‘Statue of Liberty’, focused on ‘Cracks in the walls’, presented ‘Drama of Death’, depicted ‘Pangs of Parting’, presented ‘The Bliss of Beauty’ in a lucid style. Besides, his views on ‘Mask’, ‘Love’, ‘Genesis’, ‘Muse’, ‘Religion’, ‘Postcolonialism’, ‘Navaratri’, ‘Chessboard’, ‘Hospital’, ‘E God’ are also remarkable. All the poems are highly symbolic and they are expressive of innumerable ideas.

Khatri, a bilingual poet is a significant voice in Indian English poetry. His social awareness enriches his presentation. The anthology is replete with lines that stick to the mind. His references to several pleasant as well as unpleasant events that occurred in the past are noteworthy.

Thus *For You to Decide* puts forward a complete picture of modern human life. It unravels varied problems being faced by an individual and the society as a whole very realistically. The poet deserves credit for the selection of suitable poems. The collection unleashes a beautiful rainbow of varied themes as well as styles. The readers will definitely enjoy the blank verses, haikus and at times prosaic poetry, too. They will observe very plain, close to heart poems as well as pure intellectual poetry. The poet's figurative representations like usage of symbols, metaphors and imagery etc. allow the readers to appreciate the imaginative flight of the poet and to look for some hidden pearls of wisdom. Written in a simple language the poems require a careful reading from the readers, who are expected to exercise their mental readiness to perceive the technique used by the poet and also to have heart to feel the substance of the poems.

Reviewer : Dr. Neeraj Kumar, Professor, P.G. Department of English and Research Centre, Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya (Bihar)