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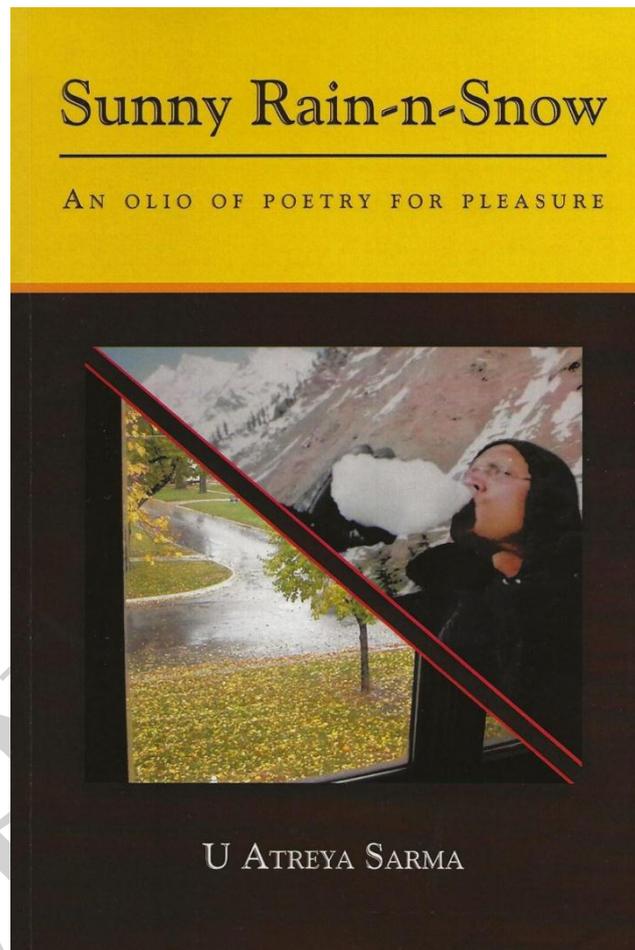
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***SUNNY RAIN-N-SNOW: AN OLIO OF POETRY FOR PLEASURE***

***BY U ATREYA SARMA, 2016. PARTRIDGE PUBLISHING, INDIA.***

***P.139; ISBN: 978-1-4828-6854-8 PBK; ISBN: 978-1-4828-6853-1***

**Reviewed by Robert Maddox-Harle**



This is a delightful, joyous volume of poetry, and as the title suggests, indeed *an olio for pleasure*. Atreya has managed to rise above the “doom and gloom” of daily events and see the bright, colourful side of things. His poem *A Riot of Colours!* (p.78) starts with colours arguing with each other! White chastises black for being “grimy and gloomy”, black counters by telling white it is full “of pallor with no originality”. All is resolved as the Oracle proclaims in the last two verses:

*You are siblings, the offspring of the Same.  
Forget not that you're all symbols of harmony.  
Just look up, high up into your mirror!"  
Illuming so, the Oracle vanished  
Leaving all the colours lavished  
With ... the Divine Rainbow.*

Atreya loves playing linguistic games, combing words in novel ways. Good poets reinvent language and grammatical expression in their own unique ways, Atreya does this very well. He uses metaphor brilliantly, helping with the enchanting imagery he is so adept at conveying. From *Your Tender Hand* (p. 101)

*Somewhere a Beethoven or celestial fairy sings,  
Eerily sweetening our ears, transcending time and space.*

As the poet Sanjeev Sethi notes: "He chooses topics carefully and lavishes them with the attention they need, adroitly employing language that suits the setting." Continually experimenting with language and changing it, to best express his feelings and intentions with each poem, gives his poetry a unique quality.

Atreya's poems vary in length considerably, some are quite long, well over fifty lines, others such as *Hills* (p. 13) short and succinct at a mere six lines;

*God turned  
All hardness  
Into hills.  
Hard-hearted man  
Entered  
And began blasting them.*

Many of the poems in *Sunny Rain-n-Snow* convey an almost child-like sense of wonder, this conveys uplifting feelings of joy and happiness. However, all subject matter is fair game to Atreya and he does not shy away from contentious “touchy” concerns. *Crush it and finish it!* (p. 4) is a heavy-duty poem about the deceitful deflowering of a virgin and the proposed sacrifice of the resultant illegitimate baby, the child survived! A few lines from the middle of the poem:

*The tiny, innocent one wished to pray:*

*“Can a lotus be damned*

*For the slush it springs from?!”*

*Before it could ready itself,*

*Was its voice and life snuffed out*

*In a prowling world where*

*Preyers get the better of prayers.*

The book is nicely produced, runs to 137 pages with over 60 poems. There are a small number of black & white images (photographs) together with a Foreword by Dr Sunil Sharma. Atreya has arranged the contents into twelve sections, each section features poems loosely grouped by subject matter. To give the prospective reader an idea of what to expect I will list the titles of these: *Femina; Facets of Nature; Epiphanies; Americana; Musings on Poesy; Relations & Equations; Romantic Peeps; Reflectively Yours; Social Bristles; Tongue-in-cheek; Occasional Voices; and Metrical Forays*. It can be seen from these titles that Atreya has as much fun with his titles as with his poems.

*Sunny Rain-n-Snow* is an eclectic collection in the extreme, a delightful smorgasbord one might say, something for everyone. In the *Metrical Forays* section, we get Limericks, A Sonnet (with heroic couplet), A Ballad and a Ballade! I have to say the Limericks are some of the strangest I have ever read, one example below (p. 132).

*The coiffeuse was mad over her hair;*

*She tried every dye with much fanfare,*

*And her earning rose well.*

*But one day her wig fell;*

*With that no lady went for her care.*

Atreya is not one to shy away from giving some good insightful advice in his poems either, in the *Tongue-in-check* chapter we have poems with the following titles; *An exotic-n-quixotic affair*; *Femmes fatales*; *My atheist friend*; *Facebook escapades*; *What's in a name, Ms Rosie*; this last one is simply hilarious! Facebook escapades raises all the social issues which have arisen from this recent global phenomena, (p. 114) the last stanza says it all;

*So blokes, beware of the spooky Facebook.*

*Ring a death knell to your geeky and nerdy lives;*

*Come out into the open*

*To enjoy the healthy breeze;*

*And feast on the bounties*

*Of the real face book of the world.*

(And I would add, perhaps purchase *Sunny Rain-n-Snow* and read a real book!)

Back in the *Social Bristle* chapter we go from the silly limericks to an absurd six act play! *Toast To The Terrorist [TTTT] (Theatre of the Absurd)*, alluding of course to Camus and the post war existentialist plays. But then Atreya stops playing word games for a while with his moving philosophically orientated poem, *Let's Succour our Nepali Brethren* (p. 102), this poem tries to make sense of the recent earthquake tragedy of 2015 in Nepal, one stanza below.

*Like fuel added to the fire,*

*Avalanches rolled down and swept everything into a graveyard in their wake.*

*Ere the dazed survivors came to and began to gauge the disaster,*

*The aftershocks lashed and slashed them, not once or twice but thrice!*

*What an unbearable agony!*

It is not possible to neatly classify this volume of poetry into a style, or genre etc. it is unique! I think I can guarantee everyone will find some poems within to lift their jaded spirits, make them think seriously about the hazards of daily life, and to have a good belly laugh.

**Bio**

Rob Harle is a writer, artist, photographer and reviewer. Writing work includes poetry, short fiction stories, academic essays and reviews of scholarly books and papers. His work is published in journals, anthologies, online reviews, books and he has three volumes of his own poetry published – *Scratches & Deeper Wounds* (1996) and *Mechanisms of Desire* (2012), *Winds of Infinity* (2016). Recent poetry has been published in *Rupkatha Journal* (Kolkata), *Nimbin Good Times* (Nimbin), *Beyond The Rainbow* (Nimbin), Numerous specific anthologies, *Indo-Australian Anthology of Contemporary Poetry* (2013) and *World Poetry Year Book* (2014), *Setu Journal* (monthly), *Asian Signature* (2013).

He is currently a member of the: Leonardo Review Panel: Manuscript Reviewer for Leonardo Journal; Advisory Editor for Phenomenal Literature (India); Member Editorial Board of numerous international literature journals, and Australian – NZ editor for Setu Journal. Artwork, Publications, Reviews and selected writings are available from his website:

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