

SUMMERS AND BEYOND

By Dr. Sangeeta Sharma

(THIS SUMMER AND THAT SUMMER: POEMS BY SANJEEV SETHI, BLOOMSBURY: NEW DELHI, 2015, ISBN: 978-93-85436-70-3, PP 53, RS. 199/-)

Sanjeev Sethi is back!

With a vengeance.

And making waves again in the international art scene on the basis of his sheer talent for images, words and implied messages.

A reputed poet and skilled innovator, Sanjeev brings a rare mix of representations and meanings, in a delightful manner for the well-informed readers. The whole world is his province. And reason for meditation.

See this great exposition:

WORLDS

Existence is a grand triptych.

First one occupies mother earth

that you and I understand

as wheelbarrow of worldliness.

Another populates our head.

Individuals control

rights to grant

passports to this microcosm.

An uncluttered brain

is the boulevard of bliss,

one's porch to peace.

Third in the triad is maya.

The way language glides over his fingers in a smooth manner and yields truths that heighten our awareness about the complexities of our world is...simply superb!

This beautifully-produced book of poems contains many of such verbal profundities offering new insights. Sanjeev makes the words perform a difficult task---articulating his unique vision about life and living, and, moving in different worlds, in a most natural manner of an evolved author.

In another poem, both the word-play and thought intermingle in a rich literary mix here:

SOUL SCAN

(1)

Shells of silence underneath my skin

burst in a rash of run-ons.

Clear as mud, carp the critics.

But I soldier on like an infantryman

bulwarking his nation's border,

hoping to be helpful

in an era of nuclear warfare

or bombardments from the Net.

(2)

In my growing years I wished to be famous.

Parents gave value to visibility.

It was reassuring for them

to have others accept their issue.

When their pressure ended

I realized,

I am best in my booth.

(3)

Without strain of the perfect gargle

or granules of pitch

I sing sweetest for myself.

Skills of a soloist

I have not gathered.

I thrive when my skin trills for itself.

Self-acceptance and a comfort with your skin!

Sanjeev delivers a powerful message in this poem that examines soul of an individual in a narcissistic age, the age of ads that sell the unique I to a collective of identical beings. The desire for authenticity is a hallmark of this poet's aesthetics.

Here is another poem that is vintage Sanjeev:

NOCTURNAL ACTIVITY

After I switch off the lights,

cockroaches

crawl out of closets.

They waltz on walls

as flashbacks

choke my conscience.

For insects, various repellents

are available.

But is there a pesticide

for the past?

How to sanitise, disinfect the past?

That is the question here. The way histories are getting sanitized, such a poem alerts us to the dangers of such an enterprise for individuals and histories.

This one about lessons in survival for us:

LIFE LESSON

(1)

There is no lesion.

I was trying to test
your skill in nursing.

Some wounds require
healing of the hurt.

(2)

I was terrified of the negativity
in your nerves. I tossed and turned
pondering how to be a palliator.

The third turn introduced me to my

incisions. Instinct, drove me to scratch

the scab, and sanitize the skin.

Life's lesson: it is best

to purge one's own pus.

Well, this is a book you would want to carry with you on your long journeys as a companion and every new reading will keep on surprising the critic within.

Bio

Dr. Sangeeta Sharma, head, department of English, Birla College, Kalyan, is also a freelance, poet, reviewer and literary editor. She has gone to Clayton University, Georgia, USA, twice as an exchange professor. Music and reading keep her happy.