



Healing Waters Floating Lamps

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Background information:

“During an informal meeting with one of my reviewers, Gopal Lahiri, an earth scientist and an Indian poet (who writes in English), he urged, “You have included so many poems in your last

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two important nonfictional memoirs, *My Glass Of Wine*, and *The Reverse Tree*, it is high time you think about an exclusive collection of your poems.” This was, in fact, the source of inspiration of the making of *Healing Waters Floating Lamps*. I have included a few poems that were first published in those books along with a few fresh ones. I consider poetry my existence. It is indeed challenging to successfully present philosophical and spiritual poems to a larger audience. Now it is up to my readers to decide if I have succeeded in my endeavor.” – Kiriti Sengupta

Excerpts from the foreword

Healing Waters Floating Lamps is Kiriti's short-form work, and you will find no long epic poems here. That is not to say, however, that these are simple poems without deeper meanings, textures, and nuances. Quite the contrary! This is some complex work, which invites the reader to explore and derive the meanings which seem most suitable to the individual ... In much of the modern poetry I read the poet seems to go out of his way to construct arbitrarily complex settings, relationships, fantasies, convolutions, and obfuscations which the reader then has to (sometimes painfully) dissect to extract the essential core nature of the poem. Kiriti has a real knack of describing just the sorts of things we all encounter in our everyday lives, in unpretentious language, so we're all familiar with them. But are we really? ... There is even some irony in the title, *Healing Water Floating Lamps*. The title is drawn from Varanasi, where devotees of Lord Shiva place floating lamps (*diyas*) in the Ganges River. The title seems to imply that what we may find in this book is work which is fluidic, gently flowing, bending only as the subtle contours of the linguistic river requires. But as we start to read what we discover instead are short, hard, almost staccato poems which are throwing out images almost as fast as we can take them in. But if you look at the poems again (as you should; these are not poems to be read only once!) I'm sure you'll find that the poems actually flow quite well. Although some may seem quick and abrupt at first read, I'm confident you'll be able to find and appreciate their

melodic textures. The poems actually flow quite well within themselves, and amongst one another. This complex style is not an easy thing to accomplish, and reveals a poet of some high skill and talent. — Don Martin [A bestselling author and editor from Tucson, Arizona, USA]

Remarks & Overviews

□ “These poems are different from the run-of-the-mill Indian English poems in being far closer to our humdrum daily experiences and their baffling paradoxes and cruel ironies.”

— K. Satchidanandan, renowned poet-critic-translator; former Editor of *Indian Literature*, published by Sahitya Akademi (The National Academy of Letters).

□ “*Healing Waters Floating Lamps* root us in the spirit of memory and the ritual of the spiritual with such poems as *Clarity* and *Evening Varanasi*. While we are not assured of reaching our destination, whether it be love, God, or death — as in the poem *The Morgue*, Kiriti Sengupta promises a journey *Beyond the Eyes* that takes the reader step by step, down and down again, deep and deeper still. And where deep means beyond, where swirl the galaxies of the human heart, we fly.”

— Mary E. Torregrossa, a “Newer Poet of Los Angeles,” as named by the LA Poetry Festival, has been featured in the *Los Angeles Times*. She facilitates poetry workshops, and teaches English in LA, California.

□ “After a writing record of intensity and versatility, Kiriti Sengupta presents his poetry in English for the first time in *Healing Waters Floating Lamps*. The author’s refined sense of command over the intended content displays itself throughout the book, including the patches of

the occasional short prose. Whether he seeks depth through brevity in seemingly common-day-symbolism or surprises with sensual imagery to a subtle invite to imagination, his written word reaches out to his audience with impact. The melodic tune of *Sleep ... Yet to Arrive* then takes the reader to a yearning-filled slumber of love, while *After Bath* leaves them eagerly waiting for ritual in “the water of the Ganges” of which Sengupta tells. With his newest book, in other words, the author sates yet once again the reading appetite of an audience that awaits variety. Enjoy!”

— hülya n. yılmaz (Ph.D.), Liberal Arts professor, The Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.; Author of *Trance*, a collection of poems in English, German and Turkish by Inner Child Press, Ltd.

□ In *Healing Waters Floating Lamps*, Sengupta’s poetry refuses to be limited, addressing everything from meditation practice to achieve spiritual perfection, Hindu rituals involving the Ganges River, the precarious position of a bride when the family into which she married is hostile, photography, and classical poetry. Most poems make use of very forthright, unpretentious language and appear to express simple observations from the poet’s life. Other poems are lyrical, such as “the mother [bird] changes to sky,” a line that makes a reader’s heart leap up with both delight and recognition.”

— Donna J Snyder, a poet from El Paso, Texas, and author of *Poemas ante el Catafalco: Grief and Renewal* and *I Am South*. Recognized for her work as an activist lawyer on behalf of indigenous people, immigrant workers, and people with disabilities.

□ “Deep poetry, multi-layered meaning ... *Healing Waters Floating Lamps* is not for the casual poetry reader who simply seeks melody, rhyme and rhythm. Kiriti Sengupta writes poems that require in-depth thinking to capture the true essence of his words. At first obscure in some cases, upon further examination, his prose and sensual poetry reveals the deeper, more profound knowledge of life captured within them. To understand them is to begin to know the poet’s complex psyche, his emotions, and the very heart of his culture. India is revealed through the heart and eyes of a true poet.”

— Eileen Register is an author, teacher, and owner of The International Directory of Published Authors, Florida, U.S.A.

□ “Sengupta’s *Healing Waters Floating Lamps* connotes ethereality in different hues. Water suggests movement, fluidity. The poems are marked by movement, in their short frame, staccato like. They remind one of Tagore’s mysticism and colors abound in the poems. At the same time Sengupta is a poet of a lost world, the rural life epitomized here by Nadia. The Bengali synecdoche of the poems is also present — the reference to a woman, likened to a fish ... the Koi fish. These are powerful poems not because of any daredevilry, but because of their interesting blend of tradition and modernity, thought and feeling. This is evident in both style and structure. Form and content are contiguous. The sensory “escapism” if one may call it, a spiritual force, is rooted in the Bengali culture. Always experimenting, Sengupta is poised to break new grounds in English poetry.”

— Ananya S Guha is a Senior Academic, widely published poet, and a well-known critic from Shillong, India.

□ “Delicately poised between a viscerally concrete imagery and a sweepingly abstract philosophy, Kiriti Sengupta’s poetry takes us to many places at the same time: the wilted pathways of memory, the teasing tickles of laughter, and when we least expect it, the sharpest splinters of wisdom. Energized by endearing colloquialisms and engaging narratives, this is verse destined for the kind of popular, folkloric life which is the true home of poetry.”

— Saikat Majumdar, the author of two novels, *Silverfish*, and *The Firebird* (forthcoming), and a book of criticism, *Prose of the World*, teaches world literature at Stanford University.

Bio:

Dr. Kiriti Sengupta is a professionally qualified Dental Surgeon from Calcutta, a bilingual poet and translator both in Bengali and English. He has five books to his credit until now: *My Glass of Wine* (a novelette based on autobiographic poetry), *The Reciting Pens* (his interviews of three published Bengali poets along with his translations of a few of their poems), *The Unheard I* (literary nonfiction), *Byakul Shabdo Kichu* (Bengali poetry), and *Aay Na* (Bengali nonfiction based on free verses). His poetry has appeared in several e-zines, *Tajmahal Review*, *The Hans India*, *Kritya*, and in international anthologies – *Heavens Above: Poetry Below* (Canada), and *Twist of Fate* (U.S.A.). Details of his account can be accessed at www.kiritisengupta.com.