

the reader. The book is an example of bad proof-reading and publishing. I wonder why Prof S Ramaswamy had to choose such publisher.

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*December Poems*, Ranu Uniyal, Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 2012. pages 60.

Prof. Ranu Uniyal whom I personally know, is a pleasing personality with a highly sensitive heart of a poet. The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, U.K. in Sept. 2007 issue, praised her first book of poems *Across the Divide* as "a mosaic of sublime feelings expressed with great creative energy". On a personal note, I must confess that I fell in love with the book 'December Poems' at the first sight when it was offered to me by Dr. S.C. Hajela for a review. The green hardbound cover with a beautiful cursive font mesmerized me instantly. The presentation of the food increases the appetite and entices the food lover to enjoy it. The same happened to me and I really savoured every dish (poem) delectably.

The very first poem 'Krishna to Kaunteya' takes the reader to the battle field of Kurukshetra where the great *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita* came into existence. A beautiful oxymoron in the last line of the first stanza unravels the philosophy of life in the words of wisdom uttered by Lord Krishna – *Death in life and live in death*. The fourth line of the second stanza motivates the learner to move to the path of knowledge with an ardent heart – *the tree of jnana stands rooted to the earth of bhakti*. Our religious feeling reaches the ultimate height of emotion with the preachings of Krishna to his *sakha* Arjuna to remove the fetters of Maya and delve deep into His Soul and feel the eternal joy – *Sat Chid Ananda*. The transcendentalism, the art of living is beautifully presented in these twenty lines.

'Behind the Periyar' directs us to the modern man's loneliness and alienation. 'The Library' reminds us of the importance of books and reading together, meeting point of intellectuals, now converting to e-books. 'Delhi is not for burning!' sketches the recent picture of unsafe Delhi with the metro culture and active political throbbing. 'Invigilation' presents truly the change of time in the world of education. The Guru-Shishya culture inculcating the seed of goodness as God has converted to the shortcut of powerplay and fame. We, the teachers have a role to play but truly a few, nowadays, have the courage to stand for truth. It's a mirror to society of professionalism and saleability. Nice sarcasm in *Who am I writing these lines for?...* and *Poets are not meant to be heard anymore* and *women have never been good at jokes*.

'Daddy' initiates me to the movie of Mahesh Bhatt- 'Daddy' and Anupam Kher playing the title role as a singer and the poem also sketches visually a pianist. The lines crooning in my heart –

*Aaina mujhse meri pehli si surat maange,*

*Mere apne mere hone ki nishani maange.*

'Ahilya to Ram' and 'Realization' explores the aspect of feminism in different dimensions. 'Requiem for the living' pours out the emotions of the poetess for her father whom she adores deeply. The symbolic presentation of 'Earth', patiently bearing

all turbulences, has wonderful expressions like: *Forever watchful, bold and bracing... time sits curious and still and the fear of loss grips the believers and the kafirs alike.* 'Leitmotif' and 'Yesterday no more' gives a glimpse of this mechanic, selfish world where we all are searching ourselves in vain. Twelve years are expressed in *Twelve Decembers*. The dead emotions and feelings are ironically presented in the last line – *And my lips have slaughtered all cravings for a kiss.*

'Papa at eighty-two' and 'From a young girl to her father' portrays the old figure of a father very lively; the inspiration, guide and comforting soul forever for a daughter. 'Between Us' sombrely paints the relationship status. Once again the title reverberates in 'Winter Blues' and depicts two lifestyles of a chawl and the elite class in scintillating manner. The Feminist gushes forth in 'I am game' vividly speaking – *...So foolish are men and so little they know of women.* 'In love' soulfully treads to a hopeful world of peace, love and dreams. We always cling on uncountable, insatiable desires which have been expressed pithily in 'Desire has no name'. Then comes 'December', the sweet rhythmic short poem, bubbly like the personality of the poetess, paints the celebration of Christmas and New Year joyfully.

As the beaches of Kerala are so enchanting and captivating, similarly we've the glimpse of 'Kapad beach in Calicut' taking us into the lap of Nature in romanticism. 'Dear Me!' is a soul-searching experience in this selfish, self-centred world. The light within is ignited when we look deep within ourselves and find the Super Soul—the transcendental being. The words: *temples, mosques, bhagwa, Gita, Quran, Bible* arouse religious intonations instantly. The loneliness of a person is beautifully sketched out in 'As beautiful as ever'. This male dominated society leaves a woman lurking in the dark endlessly to find out 'who she is and what her existence is?' This aspect is nicely being portrayed in 'A woman has no dreams'. Two intellectual modern women in tete-a-tete are lively presented in 'Woman to Woman' (Kamala Das to Judith Wright). A woman *...smiled and hugged her tears as if nothing at all happened*, although her bones are soured and her blood soiled. Wonderful references of Draupadi, Anasuya, Medusa, Clytemnestra give the globalised look to feminism.

A romantic aura pervades in the poem 'Radha to Krishna', the emblem of mystified Love incarnated. These Two are One as Donne depicts in 'Good Morrow' *thine in mine*. Radha has lost herself into Krishna, sweetly requesting to find her. *Shringar-Rasa* is aesthetically blended in the lines of each stanza, while combing hair *in front of the mirror*; the kohl in eyes *brimming with light*; the naughty anklet; the teasing tinkle while meeting at the *Banks of Yamuna shielded by cows* creates the sensuousness of Keats. I am reminded of 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' as each stanza paints a new image before mind's eye. 'Thanksgiving' seems a personal and symbolic poem as well; showing reverence to parents and God who show us the way in Darkness and we should remain grateful to them forever.

'Intuition' (For Shakti Nigam) depicts the pangs of separation, a bonding of two souls in a picturesque manner. 'In Friendship' (To Viay Bhatt) also shows sadness of being failed, though tried hard as *dreams were difficult to follow*. This body is made of 'Five Elements – Panch Tattvas' and it's been lively expressed in this poem. Few words, depicting the modern lifestyle *Winds disperse Dry dreams, Run riot*; modern

tensions, emotionless, *getting and spending* yet hope to improve and life moves on. 'Paradox' truly depicts the inner and outer difference in a person, giving apt example of ants and bees. There are two poems entitled 'Prayer' and 'The Prayer will be my song'; the former creating an ambience of religious sentiments by *Yogi, Moksha, sin, divine* etc. How true! The first stanza paints the hungry children praying for food. The latter one has emphasis on faith in God by repeating *I believe* thrice in all five stanzas. A happy soul with a prayer song of goodness in life where true love reigns – a blessed life again – Utopian world.

'Dream and a photograph' presents the shades of dark and gray ...*shadows embossed in white*. 'Truth' speaks the naked truth of our lives in short and serious expressions. 'At fifty' gives a depiction of the present lifestyle at the middle age with young children and their own life, advising- *learn not to interfere or meddle in affairs*. To enjoy each moment of life in fullest is the message ringing in the ears. The enchanting *shlokas* of Gita has a mesmerising effect in the lives: *I am not this body but soul... Chidananda... in hope of eternal bliss* etc. Once again the feminist persona leads to the character of Draupadi – born of fire. Panchali was born of the five elements, a woman with five husbands... tales of different names... Pertinent questions are raised by the wounded soul – *where do I write my story, on leaves, stones or the sari? How do I soak my elegy, in wax, milk or in blood?*

'Stones and I' relates to the stone that has entered into us deep within, although used to build a home and of course, it's a concrete jungle we are dwelling in. The sensitive poet runs an NGO Pyssum and the poem 'Angels at Pyssum' peeps into that side of her life. Different cases with different problems but *light, joy, smile* are the words that show how considerate she is towards these *bright* souls. 'Gift from an artist' (inspired by a painting of Sarita Chauhan) is a word-painting of different aspects. We are celebrating International Yoga day on 21<sup>st</sup> June and it is already a part of us as in the lines *Mornings drown in yoga*. Even the revolutionary poetess Kamala Das is also mentioned *with her poems prickly and shiny as her nose pin*.

Towards the end, the poem 'Before the storm' delineates the disturbed nature, alarming for the storm which she calls *grand finale* and hopefully tells that *Life is precious and only love can take its place on this earth*. Last but not the least, 'Pigeons and the child' once again leads back to Nature: the sweet story of a pigeon pair and the birth of young ones befriending her son, brooding over innocent queries and the final verdict comes with *Everything in God's world is perfect*. We, humans have to change our perspectives.

For me as a reviewer, reading her poems, is a journey of emotions, religious, mesmerizing, enchanting and of course romantic.

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