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Review Article of Ishika Bansal's "My Diary and Other Poems"

Reference: *My Diary and other Poems*

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"My Diary and Other Poems" by Ishika Bansal is a panoramic view of her fluid, kaleidoscopic impressions that flow through her mind. It is similar to the "stream of consciousness" technique or "internal monologue". This technique is used unconsciously by the young poet in a natural way. Her poems are broad spectrum. They are dynamic, full of life and profound in meaning. The originality in her poetry is like a fresh water mountain spring. The words she uses are the sparkles on the surface of serene waters. Her poetry reminds one of Wordsworth's definition of poetry---"Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, it takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity." To see such maturity and potential in one so young transcends the common person's understanding. Ishika Bansal is truly a born-poet, a child prodigy.

Spontaneity rules the roost. In her poems on "Words" (1 and 2) and "My Diary", one notices the fluidity of thought and expression spouting out like water from a fountain. At the same time, her innocence and magnificence is well portrayed in "Childhood". This feature is one that every individual can relate to, and it resonates with Aziz Premji's (former Chairman of Wipro) words in one of his writings----"Robbing children of their childhood is a criminal act." Our young poet too mentions that children are freshly planted trees that need to be appreciated and nurtured with care and affection, which in turn, would help them achieve their own dreams.

Another feature that captures the attention of the reader is her whole hearted advice to humankind to learn how to spend quality time with themselves, without sacrificing being true to their own aspirations and well-being. Her phrase, “Zero Period” is praiseworthy and aptly coined to highlight the significance of taking a break to introspect oneself. In other words, to have time to detach oneself from the hustle, bustle, and cacophonous sounds of the world around us. This “Me-time” is essential for our psychological growth.

Keen observation and an eye for detail marks most of her poems, for example, “The Otherside of Today’s World”, where absolute deterioration of Mankind is lucidly visualized--“Mankind is gone to hell”---this pithy statement says it all. No further explanation is required. Next, “Trust Your Instincts” advises the individual to focus on originality and attempt to reach the stars, and this is possible when we believe in our inherent abilities and potential. In tune with this is “Be an Actor, Not a Reactor”. If one decides to stand “erect”, “None of the worldly powers” can stop one “from rising”. How very true! The same tone is echoed in “Hardships”. Fortune favours the brave and those who have faith in their potential using them as “another chance to excel” with the utmost “patience”.

Her poetry has made ample use of Stylistic and Linguistic features in a natural and flexible way. In the poem, “Where am I?” she uses the words, “I am “in a zigzag pattern that reminds us of the “question mark” in her title. Similarly, the word “like” used as an “end rhyme” in “A Day That Went Productive” depicts her natural sense of rhyme and rhythm. All her poems are written in free verse style and this reflects her love of freedom and her dislike to be chained with the shackles of traditional metrical patterns as they could hamper the “freedom of expression” or “poetic licence” that a poet should have in order to be original. Her main intention is to write “to impress”. She has also used a number of “grammatical deviations” to drive her point home. This is best exemplified in the line, “So cheerful, friendly you’re” (A Birthday Present For A Friend). Normally, this contraction (you’re) needs to be followed by a “main verb”—however, it is used twice in the third stanza of the poem. Poetically we can interpret it as a linguistic feature that indicates an “interruption” in the friend’s understanding, because one moment the friend is “cheerful” , but the next moment, she is “a little stiff” at the “sarcastic comments”. If, one, as a reader can comprehend this, then the young poet can be excused for what would have otherwise been considered a “grammatical error”.

Close reading of her poems reveal many creative literary “gems” of expression, which leave an indelible impression on the reader’s mind. “Proper words in Proper places” proves that the young poet is well on her way to creating a unique “style” of her own, and the revelation of her true self.

Let our words do all the magic,

As clothes don’t make the man (pg 78)

This collection of poems is truly exotic and thought provoking. Every poem compels the reader to think “scientifically, logically, and scholastically”—to quote her own words from “Conclusion”. Every theme is heart-touching and relatable. Ordinary, mundane thoughts and activities have been elevated to surreal realms of interpretation. Reading these poems has been extremely pleasurable and insightful. They are like the fresh morning breeze that cools a hot flushed forehead, and satiates the soul with peace, solace and renewed confidence.

To sum up, a word of caution needs to be given. The poet ought to pay serious attention to punctuation that is conspicuous by its very absence. Punctuated is related to meaning and this needs to be used meticulously and meaningfully so as to reveal the intended meaning in the poet’s mind. Also, a change in the tone and the theme would be welcomed in her future compositions. All in all, one cannot fail to notice the “therapeutic effect” that emanates from well-written poems. Hence, I choose to end this lengthy review in Ishika Bansal’s own words—

We’ll have to leave this world one day,

But our work will stay forever.

The synopsis of our achievements

Will always be here.

(Our Work Lasts Forever)

The magnanimity and magnitude of such solemn thoughts and expressions in her poems transforms her into the “MUSE OF INDIA”.