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Soothing Serenades: Straight from the Heart by Dr. Bhaskaranand Jha

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Dr. Bhaskar Jha's *Soothing Serenades: Straight From the Heart* is a beautiful journey of love on earth, water and air. His 'Eternal love' escapes in thick bowers of emotions, dances on the melodious strains coming out of his beloved's heart, sleeps under the shade of intense desires and finds solace in the intoxicating company of silent yet wooing words. Vernal wind gently strokes his heart with sweet reminiscences of his beloved, he experiences the pleasant fragrant breeze gushing from her beauty flies on the wings of heavy winds till he reaches on the cosy cloud of 'Celestial Beauty'. It sits firmly on the canoe of memories in "high waves in the roaring sea", floats smoothly on 'salty surges in the heart'. He wants to dive into the 'unfathomable depth of worldly love'. He wanders into the fast moving ripples and 'sweet whirling' of the memories of his valentine.

Love heals "the global wound/of violence, lusts and all ailments of hearts/with comforting and curing touch of divinity". For him love is a fantasy, 'a willing drug' and 'a sweet invisible relation'. It is also "an enigma/ Beyond the understanding/Of the body and the mind'. For him love is 'life, philosophy, art and religion/A discipline with transformative power'. A romantic love is a beautiful poem portraying the picture of drenched evening showcasing romantic love. *Love in Dreams* is a wonderful poem defining his beloved's beauty in sensuous way.

Yet again with me last night

You were there

In my dreams, tempting me

Through your exciting art

Lascivious eyes looking into mine

To transcend the reality

Of the manifest-

The earthly barricade

The cold night full of fogs and smog

For warmth of heart and soul. (49)

Serenade of Solitude is one of the most touching sad poems in this collection.

Solitude befriends me in
When days get drugged;
Dream hugs me sweetly
When I sleep unhugged.

The last stanza of this poem reminds me the lines of Wordsworth's poems.

Sullen, I brood within soul
In contemplative solitude;
Amid serenades of Nature
And feel soul-felt beatitude.

In metaphysical lovers he imagines himself and his beloved as 'invisible beings/Living in abode of Love/ Carved out beyond time and space.' The poet's mind is dazzled by the beauty emanating from 'Her' mind. The poet wants to plunge into the 'intimate sea of love, / Ensconced with gems/ of eternal ecstasy. He finds the world rock-hard and lost in hatred, violence and conflicts. Unlike Shelly for him life is not full of thorns only. The world feels like a hotbed bedecked with thorns and flowers. Sweet fragrance of his beloved's beauty wafts around him 'all blissful hours'.

Psychological condition of a person in love has been portrayed dextrously in Restless I Am For You: Sweet face of the beloved represents healing power of love. SHE is the indivisible part of poets' life. She is as important and mandatory for him as Oxygen for human beings. Love is something biological, philosophical and psychological as well. We find all, these states in his poems. Sometimes he portrays an obsessive lover, sometimes lusty one, and sometimes a dejected and broken person. He himself writes

"Love is life, philosophy, art and religion

A discipline with the transformative power..."

Like a drug addict he feels the intoxicating charm of love, magical effect of vernal fragrance and external solace in HER sensuous presence. We can clearly trace the influence of poets like Shelly, Shakespeare, Donne, Marvell, and Wordsworth on his poetry.

Dr. Jha's poetry abounds in figures of speech. Simile, metaphor, alliteration, paradox, apostrophe and personification make his poetry more attractive. Simile has been used in abundance. ('Like a vernal wind/ You gently caress me'. 'Like a pleasant rendezvous; '...dissolved/ Like sugar into the depth/Of the ocean/ Blissful'.) Metaphor is another striking figure of his poetry.

And my heart
Soars up high and higher
On the wings of joy.

Apostrophe creates the communicational effect magnificently in his poems.

O Goddess of Love!

...

O opulent Love!

...

O Muse of my heart?

...

O, You Sweet Swarthy Brunette!

Pictorial images impart a unique texture to his poems. Olfactory images frequently attract attention of its readers. Phrases like 'Vernal breeze', 'waft of her fragrance' and 'sweet fragrance of your beauty' are strong enough to capture the imagination of the audience. Tactile or sensuous imagery very strongly creates aesthetically pleasurable effect in its richness. Sunday Siesta is the perfect example of such imagery. Last three couplets of this poem establish him as master of sensuous imagery.

Language of Dr. Jha is adequate enough to convey the emotional and psychological state of a lover. His words sometimes play with their meanings, sometimes they go hand in hand with intense feelings, and sometimes they produce musical effect on the ears of their readers. Words taken from medical jargon, i.e. 'serotonin', 'oxytocin', 'adrenaline', 'testorones', and 'oestrogens', reflect his knowledge of this arena. At places he refers to 'cupid', 'Aphrodite', and 'Eve'. His knowledge of mythical terminology reflects from such words. Paradoxical and antithetical statements clearly reveal his mental capacity of designing unusual and extra special expressions.

Soothing Serenades: Straight from the Heart will indubitably establish Dr. Jha as first Indian sovereign in the world of amorous poets in English. His moods, shades, phases, visions, revisions, experiences, images, and expressions of love are unique and striking. This collection has all the potential and ascendancy to become the Bible of Love poets.