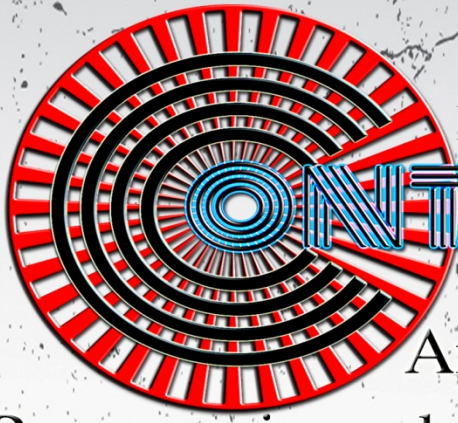


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An Intensive Study of Profound Feeling: Graceful Dust

Soutik Sen

Poetry is perhaps the most difficult, mysterious enchanting and uncertain expression of human feelings and emotions that can encapsulate an entire universe in its brief periphery. Naturally it is really a Herculean task to critically appraise a book of poem. A book of poem is like a closed envelop, which if opened, can unravel the vast firmament of human realization. Once Joy Goswami, the famous contemporary Bengali poet confessed in an interview that what is happening in my life, around me, in this world, even outside this world and beyond this world is a part of my autobiography and my creation. This endless horizon can only be reflected in a small pocket mirror of poetry; it is like feeling *the essence of eternity in an hour*. Only a great poet can realise and make us realize ‘the still sad music of humanity.’

The anthology ‘Graceful Dust’ by the poet Dinabandhu Ghosh spontaneously presents agony, ‘overwhelming pains’ ecstatic joys, ‘deadly feelings’ of our day to day life and this is the presentation of ‘thinking soul besmeared with ‘pleasure of philosophy.’

The poet feels-
I suffer in body
The mind grows up
When I suffer

His feelings obviously elevate our mind to realise the universal truth inherent here. Physical sufferings leads a creative mind to enlightenment. An agonised creative mind murmurs ‘the sweetest song that tell us of our saddest thoughts.’ This is how intimate feelings combined with true experience create a mature amalgamation and association of sensibilities. The poem ‘when I suffer’ penetrates our heart and leaves an indelible imprint on our brain as it is, at the same time, sensitive and cerebral. In the midst of constant flux and impermanence, the poet tries to understand ‘a central force’ which creates and expresses ‘Life birth and death’. The poem ‘Dream like shows that the material world is almost like a dream which will ultimately come to an end with stern realisation-

Nothing has permanent value
(Dream like)

A mute ‘Nora’ rises and voices her true spirit of emancipation in the poem ‘Renunciation’ where the poet with subtle suggestions creates a poetic discourse of the confessions of a new woman’.

She has renounced all
Saree and serenity
Bracelets and beauty
Vermilion and verity.

Feels unburdened and free
In the new atmosphere of barrenness
Without shackles she walks on.
(Renunciation)

A new woman asserts her freedom overcoming the social shackles that restrain her individuality.

The sick hurry and divided aims of modern complex life make us oblivious of our own identity, faith declines gradually. Lost in the illusion of happy life, we unknowingly distance ourselves from truth which is ‘essential reality’. The poet reveals-

Truth lies far away us
We grobe in darkness for essential reality

Truth remains unattainable forever ‘ like the enigma of potry’. It can be felt but can never be experienced.

Labour, meditate, pray
It grows more distant

This poem includes a brilliant and silent synthesis of ‘truth’ ‘essential reality’ and ‘the enigma of poetry’ which are compressed into a complete whole in our mind. In this way a good poem extends the boundary of our experience enriches our realisation and widens our vision.

The essence of spirituality lies in realising ‘ the truth , reality and existence ‘- the poet shares his bitter experience and his enigmatic vision with his readers through the poem ‘Adoring God’. The poetry of earth never dies , so also the invisible bond between the creation and the reality or crisis of existence.

‘The Exterior , ‘Melted’, ‘Beauty Tender’, ‘ A Terrible Weakness’ , ‘ Woman Pretty’ – all these poems portray the poet’s intimate and diverse experience of love, relationship in our day to day existence. The ecstasy of love is sobered by rude and real blows of life, the charm of beauty is limited and adjusted by the necessity of life. These poems are deeply associated with the realisation of a man who has been trudging the weary ways of life with keen introspective eyes and a passionate vibrating heart.

When the poet says everything in his poem, he deprives the reader. The reader fails to find out anything new on his own in his poem. After all reading a poem is like an adventure for a reader; a true reader is almost on a quest of the holy grail. The impact of reading a good poetry for a true reader is like bearing the chalice silently and in a surreptitious manner through the hostile surrendings, storing it in the treasure house of memory and enjoying it as the ‘ bliss of solitude.’ That quest is thwarted and painfully spoiled when he finds a definite clue to the poem. A good poem should be like a labyrinth which beckons the readers to find his own way out. This labyrinth should not be cenfused with the sense of obscurity. It is the subtle suggestion , symbols, image which evoke a willing suspension of disbelief. Let us examine the poem ‘ A Difficult Sum’ carefully—

Every step is the prelude to another step
Every day brings about the other
Things beget things, Cause creates cause
Action and effect; effect and aftermath
Are coherently inter-related

Life is a difficult sum
It should be carefully summed up

At the end of the poem, the poet himself has justified the title, explaining the significance hidden in the preceeding five lines. One thing, however is wonderful that the use of words ‘sum’ and ‘summed up’ has assumed a witty dimension. But the poet has abruptly summed up the poem, dousing the curiosity of the readers. Eliot once remarked ‘ A good poetry communicates before it is understood’. Here the poem is well understood but it will not leave any lasting impression on the mind of the readers on account of the poet’s forced intrusion and conclusion. He should leave it open-ended so that the readers can enjoy the wide polyphonic possibilities hidden in the poem.

The poet perhaps felt it necessary to accommodate all these poems in this anthology- but this has made the book a bit clumsy and congested . Two poems though short, have been printed in each page. This does not

provide enough space to individual poem. A single poem on the bosom of a white page really looks decent and intensifies the silence which surrounds the poem. The arrangement of the poems , proper use and distribution of space in printing each poem along with a preface and dates of composition by the poem sometimes enable the reader to explore the chronological progression of poetic thoughts. Illustration in the cover reveals the glaring inner eye of the poet looking at us with a penetrating vision.

There can't be any final interpretation of a book of poem. Once we open a book of poem, different poems appeal to different minds in numerous ways. No critic can describe explore or ascertain these diverse ways which are unique , ever changing obscure and wonderful. The poet is painfully aware of the technological boom where gadgets replaces books, machines dominate human emotion.

Robot and rhinoceros
Poetry is lost, passion develops
Books are despised
(The World Eccentric)

Perhaps poetry can emerge as a potential force of resistance against the technological onslaught and cultural void. In this eccentric world , poetry is the antidote that can heal fatal disease of life; in this 'age of anxiety' poetry can give us relief. Poet Dinabandhu Ghose deserves accolades for giving us this anthology which will be constant companion of true lovers of poetry.

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