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## Book Review

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### BOOK REVIEW

***Time Whispers in My Ear. Lucknow: Aju Mukhopadhyay***

Online Gotha-The Endless Tale, 2014. Pages 117, Rs.102/-

Reviewed by **Prasun Banerjee**

Assistant Professor  
Kabi Joydeb Mahavidyalaya  
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Aju Mukhopadhyay's *Time Whispers in My Ear* is a volume of a total of seventy seven poems, some of which are published earlier, as the author states in his 'Acknowledgment' as well as in the back cover of the book, in 'various journals, e-zines and websites' and some are 'fresh poems'. It is also stated that Mukhopadhyay has already authored eight books of poems in English and two in Bengali, and has been the recipient of some 'poetry awards from India and abroad', though the present reviewer has not had the access to his earlier publications and is reading him for the first time. The poems included in the volume seems not to be thematically arranged as the subject matter ranges from Buddhism to modern city life, a quest for the state of being to the descriptions of important events in the life of Nelson Mandela, yet the very lyrical title of the volume, 'Time Whispers in My Ear' give indications to the strong lyrical leanings of versifier at least in some of the poems like the poems entitled 'Invisibly with me', 'Pleut', 'Rowing Still', or the title poem 'Time Whispers in My Ear' etc. Both the diction as well as the rhyming scheme employed in the poems sounds extremely archaic to the contemporary ear, and flickers the doubt whether Mukhopadhyay has any acquaintance with the present style of poetry-writing. His treatment of the subjects is shallow and lacks imagination both from the thematic or structural points of view, and many of his lines are flat prose passages forcefully broken into shorter lines just to have the shape of a poem. And some of his biographical takes seem to be the worst of the lot as they contain dull, uninspiring description of details:

Graduate he became after protracted efforts

and law-graduate at the age of 71

then the President of African National Congress at 73.

He married thrice and divorced twice. (*Nelson Mandela: An Epitome of Struggle and Victory*, 14)

He quotes whole passages from poets and writers in his verses, such as:

‘God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep

For man shall not know the coming till its hour

And belief shall be not till the work is done’ -

said Sri Aurobindo in his epic poem “Savitri”. (*Sri Aurobindo*, 41)

He strangely starts many of his lines with small letters perhaps to denote continuity of thought but the childish lines make the effort look more ludicrous than a worthy experiment. However, Mukhopadhyay sometimes show certain control over the use of vowel sounds, and some of the lines do give nice sound to the ear when recited, such as:

susurrus over the vast undulating grass

tumbling of water in the forest river at night

cackling of hilly meandering streams

flowing of molten lava down the ravine

spewing of ash; (*Time Whispers in my Ear*, 11)

However, in spite of some lines like this, even a generous reader has to go miles before she/he can call these verse scribbling poems and their producer a poet.