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## **BOOK REVIEW**

***Laal Palasher Renu* by Jaydeep Sarangi, Shikshan, Kolkata: 2011, Pp. 48, Rs. 50.00**

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The post modern bilingual poet-academic, an English teacher by profession and writer by choice Jaydeep Sarangi's *Laal Palasher Renu*, his maiden collection of Bengali poems, depicts the multiplicity of poetic images, ranging from the remote country side areas to the metropolitan Kolkata. The collection, consisting of 43 poems reflects the poet's deep passionate feelings regarding varied subjects expressed in the garb of his poetic heart. This shows the poet's easy access to diversified areas of contemporary concern.

Sarangi's poems cover a wide variety of themes and styles. The poet has given equal emphasis on dealing with social issues of grave urgency, as well as simple themes of day to day interest. The colourful diversity in themes has given Sarangi's book a mixed flavour. Central chords of his poems are love, fellow-feeling, while his concern for the marginalised don't go neglected in the abode of the *Laal Palasher Renu*.

But what is most striking in the Collection is that the poet's dealing with the common and simple themes and giving them an extraordinary reflective touch. In the poem, 'Missed call', the

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poet has started with a very common observation of missing cell phone call in every day's busy life, but with the progress of the poem, the outlook of the poet has got changed both in letter and spirit. The incapability of human beings of keeping commitment in the broader perspectives in any form gives the poem a different hue. According to the poet,

*Some calls are received  
Some are missed  
In auto rickshaw's sound or in the tunnel of metro  
Could not redial again later  
Commitments veil themselves,  
In the rush of everyday's work. (Translation mine)*

If concern for the marginalized and aspiration for the qualitative upgradation of their lives become politics, then surely political elements are there in Sarangi's one of the famous poems in the Collection, 'Lal Matir Taan' (The Attraction of the Red Soil). The revolutionary attitude of the poet has surfaced in his expression in the beginning of the poem:

*Have wishes, suddenly break  
The years' long untouched can of mind. (Translation mine)*

At the same time his realistic detailing of the saga of the people of the land of 'Red Soil' has been very touchy and original. In the end, the poet's attempt to relate himself with those persons despised is prominent. He writes:

*Who on the bank of canal,  
Dream, and vacate their hearts  
To refill it again.*

*Loose cotton from mother's cloth  
Reminds me that  
I have my family*

*On that land of Red Soil. (Translation mine)*

Another characteristic feature of Sarangi's poems is their universalism and international overtones. His powerful imagination has dared to cross the National Boundary and depicted the realistic pictures of both the countries– 'Epar Bangla' and 'Opar Bangla' (This Bengal and that Bengal, more clearly West Bengal and Bangladesh respectively) in his poem, 'Shantir Payra Urhe' (There Flies the Pigeon of Peace). Similarly, his approach to universalism is found in the lines of the poem, 'Baulder Katha' (The Words of the Bauls) –

*Baul says–*

*“O' heart awake*

*Accept all”*

Dr. Sarangi is from a district, which has heralded a strong folk cultural tradition, the patch of which is evident there in his creations. The traditional Bengali folk elements like 'Baul music', 'Tribal culture' etc. dominate his poems. Not only the folk cultural tradition of the western frontier Bengal, but his poems have upheld the metropolitan middle class Bengali culture of gossiping and chatting, regarding contemporary political activities and trends. His poem, 'Slum is Only Slum' offers these lines:

*Change or reversion?*

*Fascination or Love?*

*In crowded bus,*

*In metro-tunnel,*

*People are mad in discussion.*

The poet's forefathers settled in West Midnapore near the bank of the sweet silent river: Dulong and some of the poems of the volume are about that scenic river flowing through tribal villages. Jaydeep Sarangi uses the emotions of his poems to convey not only his own memories, but also to depict the lives of others. Some of Sarangi's poems attempt to provide a much deserved platform to a rich symphony of egalitarianism. Sarangi is a socially committed poet.

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Sarangi's poems are known for the lucidity of expression and profundity of thought. His poems are written in such a language, in which common people speak. He doesn't create linguistic distance and remains rooted in his soil. Ideas are expressed explicitly, which strike the thought process of the readers. He is an established name in the realm of English poetry and Indian English criticism. His first volume of Bengali poems, *Laal Palasher Renu*, has really marked a good beginning of his long potential journey as a bilingual poet.

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