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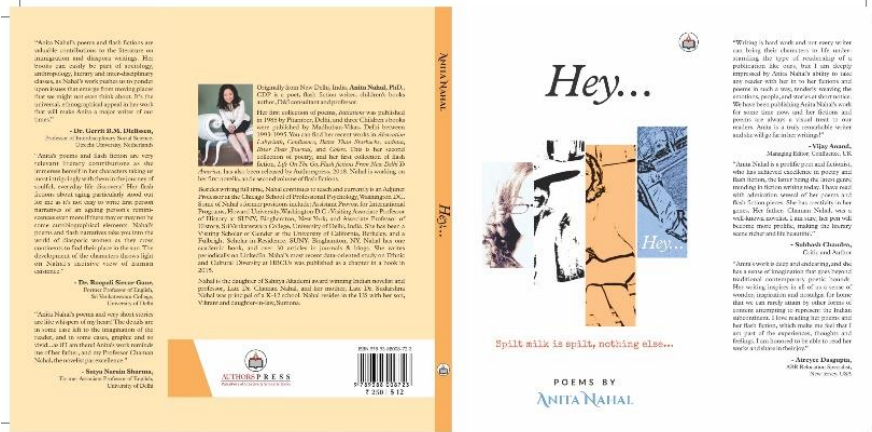
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Reviewing Anita Nahal's two volumes

Anne Madhu Gammon



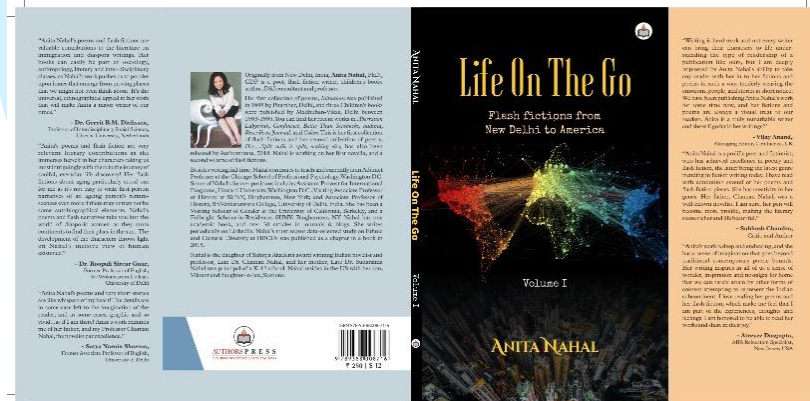
Hey...: Spilt milk is spilt, nothing else

By Anita Nahal

Paperback: 124 pages

Publisher: Authorspress, New Delhi (2018)

ISBN-10: 9388008723



Life on the Go: Flash Fictions from New Delhi to America (Volume I)

By Anita Nahal

Paperback: 84 pages

Publisher: Authorspress, New Delhi (2018)

ISBN-10: 9388008715

{ Popularly known as Nahal, author, professor, historian, talented teacher, Anita Nahal as a writer gives another look into the deeper dimensions of relationships impacted by the ordinary daily walk of life. Nahal's writings are forthright yet subtle, suggesting a conversation with her inner self in the myriad resonating themes she speaks to and about in her books. The reader immediately feels engaged with her style of poetic expressions of words and phrases, and lines set in prose relating a woman's story as she moves countries. Nahal is very perceptive and employs many idioms and aptly illustrated images to express emotions and themes. }

Nahal's recently released books, "Hey, spilt milk is spilt, nothing else..." and "Life on the go-flash fictions from New Delhi to America..." are collection of poems and very short stories which are at once arresting, straight from the titles themselves, as these call you out of your reverie, and grab your attention as Nahal fills in the details from simple joys to complex perplexities of life. Clearly, the message would appeal to folks anywhere, especially to women.

Nahal's poems narrate with a flow that keeps the rhythm of the facts and feelings of the character to quickly draw the reader in to the emotional interactions of life. The poems presented are deliberate, to cause one to pause over thoughtful but sometimes unnoticed warnings, as for example in the poem "Life" she says, "beware of the hills" alluding to many vulnerabilities of life. Or, in the poem, "No such thing as an ideal world" she speaks directly to Shakespeare saying, "The stage is no longer a place for a comedy of errors...it is, a stage of errors..." Nahal astutely addresses the seemingly small yet deep repercussions of "Spilt milk" in a positive manner when she says, "What is the use, milk spilt is usually sour or bitter/Let's just go buy new milk", or the loneliness of a woman and immigrant's world in other poems, and in the poem "I am a new aging woman," she candidly presents acceptance of a woman's aging and loving grey hairs, wrinkles and glasses.

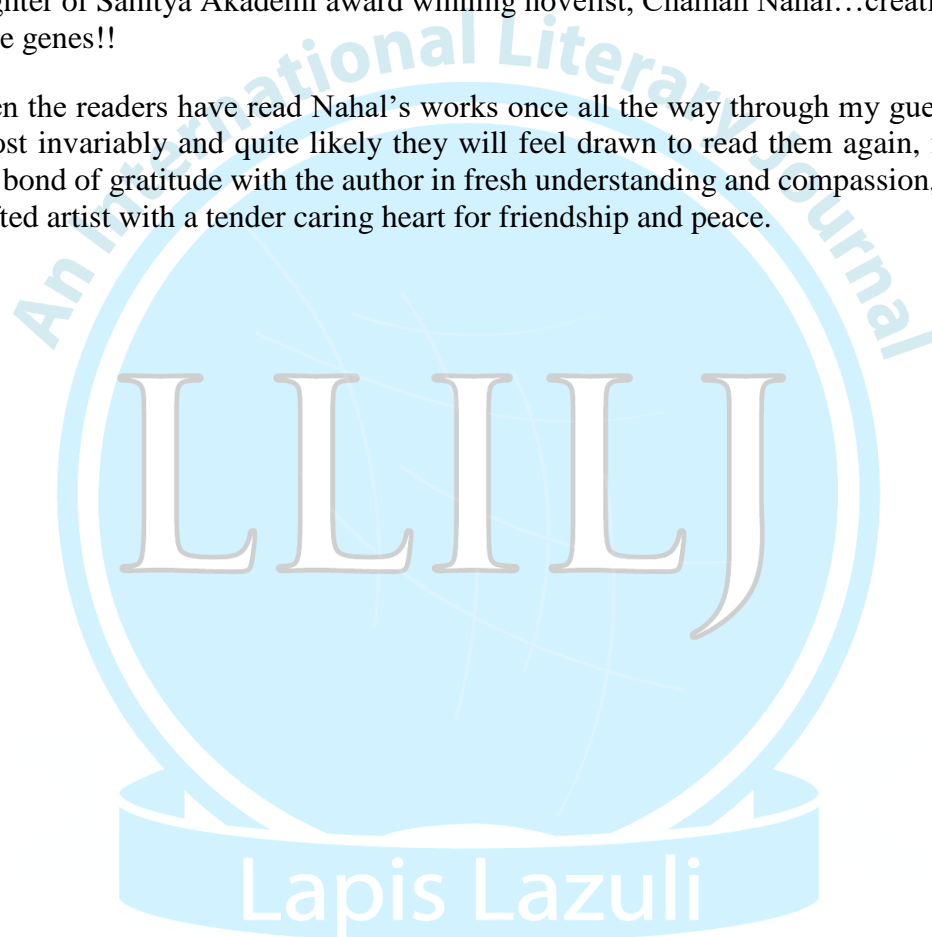
There is an innate practicum that the reader would see through in her flash stories as presented in her book, 'Life on the Go...' Call it a spirit of adventure spurred by a spirit of acceptance that stirs the author to an upbeat clear diagnosis towards the end of the story, "Trick is treat and treat is trick." The protagonist, Priya, tells her granddaughter that, "Trick is never to let anyone/give you a treat you didn't want/Or give you too many treats/so as to trick you into anything." Nahal is constantly relating her writings to every day lessons in a quiet, yet impressive manner. Another element that is a very unique writing style is that Nahal employs poems in her stories...the merging of genre! The effect is one of surprise and respect that Nahal has the ability to bring genre together in an easy, smooth transitional way.

In the flash fiction, "Feeling down, being down," Nahal employs the symbolism of a girl being down...having a period...and folks feeling down. Nahal displays a deep humanistic understanding for other people's feelings and wounds. In another flash fiction, "Bridal car in the fall," we see Nahal's celebration of lightheartedness while setting our thoughts thinking about other meanings that could be derived from the simple fall of leaves. In this story and others, and in many of her poems, the Indian diaspora comes through though the emotions expressed are universal in their appeal. The flash fictions, "Blessed caesarean", and "God send" speak clearly for themselves...a mother's love for her son. By this time, it would seem to the reader that

the protagonist, Priya has come through many layers of loss and loneliness and that it was now a time to let go...and she does, wiping away disappointment in the flash fiction, "Trust", where Priya trusts herself not to calculated human decisions but instead to hot Chow Mein! Particularly endearing is the flash fiction, "The day I broke mama's fancy wedding China," wherein Priya lays her heart open in surrender and catches the brokenness of the moment till one sees the restorative spirit of grace and honor uplifting the soul. Her reward is the one keepsake unbroken plate in remembrance. Before all is done, one is drawn also to the simple and straightforwardness of love passed on between generations in the flash fiction, "Love the Wrinkles".

"Life on the go..." keeps you going from one story to the next, from first to the last, leaving the reader awed and satisfied! Beyond the words, the discovery of the value of family and society is striking, the indomitable impact of devotion to parents, and the gift of love for a child remains the force that drives and holds one together on the roller coaster of life's experiences in Nahal's poems and flash fictions. Anita Nahal is the daughter of Sahitya Akademi award winning novelist, Chaman Nahal...creativity runs in the genes!!

When the readers have read Nahal's works once all the way through my guess is that almost invariably and quite likely they will feel drawn to read them again, finding a new bond of gratitude with the author in fresh understanding and compassion, to know a gifted artist with a tender caring heart for friendship and peace.



BIO-NOTE

Anne Madhu Gammon, Social Worker & Former Doctor, based in Princeton, NJ, USA. Anne Madhu Gammon is an MBBS, MO (Dermatology), BT Studies (TAFTEE 1996), and holds a 3rd Degree Black Belt (ATA American Taekwondo Association).

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