



***Panjab Moods- A Literary Adagio* by Satish Kumar Shukla, New Delhi: Sanbun Publishers. ISBN: 978-93-80213-24-8, 2010, Price-100/-, Pages-111.**

Reviewed by Shaleen Kumar Singh

Panjab Moods is a collection of poems that deal with various moods and modes of Punjab, one the most culturally, materially and even spirituality rich state of India. The fantastically written blurb clears the poetic motive of the book:

Panjab is one wholesome movement, extended adagio in the eternal music of Indian nationhood. Those who know the land know to know it in its Himalaya fresh airs, pastoral surreal scenes, the fertile fields and that one off hearty JAT JIGRA. Those who don't may get a first introduction in the pages of this book per bons mots- the literary adagio. (Blurb)

The Author's note is also worth reading for the Indian English Scholars chiefly those who have developed a peculiar kind of distaste for the Indian English poets and their visions as well. Once again, Satish K. Shukla has raised the question of expected seriousness of Indian Writers in English who "are blandly poor, both in themes as in syntax". He has justifiably criticized such "Indians" who "have at best learned Pidgin English, remarkably poor in colloquialism and Idiom, both together building the backbone of any literary language and without which no 'learning' can flower and fruit". And this context "the language of most of the Indian English poets suffer "solecism", malapropism, bad punctuation is remarked by him.

He has considered his poetry volume as an "extraordinary initiative" (which is advocated by him) as an immediate redressal of persisting imbalance in matters English Language and progress is at stake..."

He also considers that his book "will lighten the students' burden "somewhat", at least make sure they learned English language via material which is nearer to their sights, hearts and minds than all the Othellos and Hamlets which anyway teach but human insufficiency..."

The self-laudatory proclamations in which the author on one hand terms his poetic attempts as "extraordinary" and on the other trivializes this "extraordinary" initiative, as an initiative as that will merely lighten the student burden". The author is not fully confident about the responses or impact of his sincere initiatives? Or has he too not come out of the conch shells of phobia which made panicked most of Indian English professors and authors for decades who have criticized Tagore, Ezekiel, and other translated poets and writers for their English language skills, however the criticism ended with the passage of time but not surely the popularly of afore mentioned writers.

At first, the poet Shukla has to know that his self proclaimed extraordinary initiative is not a new one in Indian English writing. Innumerable poets have brought out countless anthologies of such kinds. Poets from Orissa, North East and Bengal have remarkable anthologies of poetry and criticism all in standard Indian English. Even in Panjab, Prof. Hazara

Singh has done commended service to the Muse and prose and Mother Earth by penning qualitative poetry and anthologies.

However, the sentiments of the poet shared in the poems are well-composed and equally well expressed. All 43 poems of the book are soaked in the fame of Panjab. The most beautifully penned poems are the poems on the five rivers of Panjab- titled “Satluj, Beas, Chenab, Ravi and Jhelum”. One can enjoy all the seasons of the State by going through the poems as well as can have a very graphic glimpse of the state by the perusal of the collection. In fact, these poems are encyclopedic in range and will surely not just “lighten” him but will enlighten him with knowledge about literature, society, History, Geography and tradition of the great State.

The language of the poet is remarkable and the style is impressive. The poems Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Tej Bahadur, Guru Gobind, Panjab Holocaust, Khalistani and Neo Panjab are some of the finest pieces of the book. I must congratulate the poet for such a nice poetic volume.