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Review

Voices at the Door: Critical Responses to Susheel Kumar Sharma's The Door is Half Open, ed. Pradip Kumar Patra. Delhi (India): Upanayan Publications, First Edition 2023, ISBN: 978-93-91467-00-5.

Voices at the Door (2023) represents a compelling and comprehensive compendium of critical reviews and insightful commentaries, offering a multifaceted exploration of Susheel Kumar Sharma's literary opus, *The Door is Half Open* (2012), a collection comprising fifty-two poems. This curated anthology of reviews, thoughtfully assembled by a consortium of perceptive literary enthusiasts, deeply examines the thematic richness and emotive profundity that underlie Sharma's poetic compositions. The contributors collectively explore the intricate and enigmatic tapestry of various human experiences meticulously interwoven within the fabric of his verses. Through the diverse analytical lenses applied by the contributing reviewers, *Voices at the Door* meticulously portrays the profound and enduring impact *The Door is Half Open* has had on its readership over the years.

The collected reviews presented herein transcend surface-level evaluations, delving into the profound complexities of Sharma's poetic artistry. These reviews challenge the readers and help them form their own opinions about the art of poetry and the poet. These critiques resonate with

readers on multiple levels while unveiling an intricate tapestry of sentiments and emotions. Within these pages, one encounters poignant contemplations on enduring themes such as nature, love, religion, spirituality, loss, human crisis, and resilience, each discussion infused with a discerning understanding of the subtle complexities that define Sharma's verse. The reviewers undertake introspective analyses of the intricate symbolism woven into each poem, illuminating the rich layers of meaning and interpretation that permeate *The Door is Half Open*. The outcome is a refined and multifaceted collection of reviews that encapsulate the intricate emotional odyssey evoked by Sharma's lyrical mastery, elucidating the profound influence of his poetic creation on the contemporary literary sphere.

Voices at the Door presents a captivating display of the harmonious interplay between contrasting interpretations, exemplifying the multifaceted nature of Sharma's literary composition. The introduction section takes us through the thematic concerns of Sharma's poetry. It highlights how Sharma's poetry juxtaposes the mythical and the real, as evident in the poem "Ganga Mata- A Prayer." Sharma creates an artistic world that is about our moribund life. Awadhesh Kumar's analysis of Sharma's poetry highlights the nuanced brilliance of the poet's wit, which radiates a sparkling quality rather than inflicting harm. Kumar's discernment suggests an appreciation for the artful use of language that captivates without offending.

On the other hand, Barbara delves into the spiritual dimensions embedded in Sharma's poetic creations. Her observation underscores the poet's emphasis on universal love, steering away from themes of disunity, dissension, and division. This spiritual lens implies depth in Sharma's work, transcending mere linguistic constructs to explore broader, metaphysical realms. In aesthetics, Carol Abrahms characterises Sharma's poetry as picturesque and denotes an artistry that paints vivid mental images, evoking a sensorial experience for the reader. Abrahms' description hints at Sharma's ability to craft verses that transcend the written word, offering a visual and emotive landscape through his poetic expression.

Moreover, Abrahms points out the duality in Sharma's thematic approach. While universal love is prevailing, Sharma addresses specific issues tied to India. This juxtaposition of the global and the local adds a layer of complexity to Sharma's poetry, making it not only artistically enriching but also socially sacrosanct.

Similarly, many reviewers have articulated their perspectives on Sharma's poetry, forming a diverse spectrum that delves into the multifaceted issues in his verses. This collective discourse traverses a broad terrain, encompassing many themes and concerns that Sharma aptly navigates in his poetic oeuvre. These discerning reviewers, each with their unique analytical lens, contribute to a comprehensive tapestry of critique and appreciation. From the intricacies of linguistic finesse to the profound layers of thematic depth, Sharma's poetry becomes the focal point for an intricate examination

by these literary commentators. Some reviewers emphasise Sharma's adept use of language, drawing attention to the subtle nuances that characterise his poetic diction. Others gaze towards the thematic underpinnings, unravelling the intricate web of universal and culturally specific issues in his verses. The collective result is a rich mosaic of perspectives, reflecting the varied facets of Sharma's artistry and how his poetry resonates with different readers. This collaborative endeavour by diverse reviewers is a testament to the richness of Sharma's work and fosters a more holistic understanding of the poet's impact. Sharma emerges as a masterful wordsmith whose verses weave together wit, spirituality, aesthetics, and socio-cultural commentary. The convergence of these myriad opinions encapsulates the intricate interplay between language, theme, and cultural resonance, shedding light on the broader significance of Sharma's contribution to the literary landscape.

While certain critics engage deeply with the intricacies of Sharma's elaborate metaphors, others focus on irony, as shown in the poem "The Masquerade," and universal truths that resonate with his evocative verses. This confluence of diverse perspectives weaves a rich tapestry of critical insights, reflecting the intricate complexities inherent in the human experience. Furthermore, the inclusive approach taken by the book in curating a wide array of viewpoints amplifies the reader's comprehension of the nuanced strata embedded within *The Door is Half Open*. From avid literary enthusiasts to seasoned analysts, each distinct voice contributes a unique facet to the comprehensive analysis of Sharma's poetic finesse, underscoring the enduring impact of his literary contribution in the contemporary literary milieu.

Nevertheless, amidst the commendatory appraisals, certain reviewers provide constructive feedback, illuminating aspects where Sharma's verses might have benefited from deeper exploration or achieved enhanced lucidity. These discerning criticisms impart a balanced perspective to the compilation of reviews, providing a comprehensive evaluation of both the strengths and potential avenues for development within Sharma's poetic body of work. The conversation between Patra and Sharma at the end of the book sums up this excellent anthology. In essence, *Voices at the Door* not only stands as a testament to the profound influence of *The Door is Half Open* but also underscores the enduring potency of literature in cultivating introspection and evoking emotive resonance. *Voices at the Door* is an invaluable companion to Sharma's poetic corpus. It offers readers a nuanced perspective to immerse themselves in and comprehend the profound intricacies of his poetic brilliance purified in the holy waters of the Ganges.