Bishnupada Ray. *White Lotus and Other Poems*. New Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers, 2014. pp. 60, ₹ 95.00.

Reviewed by
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God grants a poet the serenity. When we glimpse a wide range of armoury existing in correlation to themes and cadence, modulating and stimulating our intellect His images unlock our hearts. Bishnupada Ray's poems are collage of varied impressions and moods. They invoke many beautiful settings and bring to our attention. The poet's creativity and imagination are reflected in novel metaphors that evoke incessant images of hope and picture of life's daily course in the readers' minds. Poetry for Bishnupada Ray is "an expression of the non-grammar of being." In the 'Foreword' to *White Lotus and Other Poems* the poet says, "The fable that poetry presents is neither true nor false." We easily apprehend the fact that Bishnupada is well versed in aesthetic function of poetry. Basho said, "A poet doesn't make a poem, something in him naturally becomes a poem." There are thousands of ways to define poetry. It's an ongoing process. Poetry is eyes to a poet. Niranjan Mohanty in *Prayers* says, "Grant me an eye to see things as they are."

Bishunapada Ray, a gifted artist, is a poet with felicity and veracity:

> "today we need white lotus
> to worship the goddess
> of creativity
> but the water bodies are bereft
> of white lotus." ('White Lotus', p. 1)

Painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting with the gift of speech. Bishnupada paints his home of thoughts with words:

> "the offseason swarms of bees
> sting with anarchist philosophy
> so that I may lose
> appetite and desire." ('Purpose', p. 6)

Poetry is the revelation of a composite feeling that the poet believes to be social and at the same time personal which the reader recognizes as his own. Poetry for Bishnupada, is an echo, asking a shadow to dance. No matter what we touch and we wish to know about, we simply end up in the enigma that his words and phrases generate. His subjects are varied, and that too a rich feast of ideas. He talks about different subjects like Kundalini, Kandahar, Stone Age, mystic river and peace with effortless ease. His works invite the readers with deep insights and surprise them as the foundations of his poetic idioms are laid on well-researched truth and beauty.

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Poetry is not a pre-planned, deliberate exercise, but, as John Keats very appropriately put it, "That if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all", what in Urdu is known as *Aamad*. For Bishnupada Ray, poetry is expression of *joy*, a 'space clearing act'. There is the pleasure in the recognition of a shared moment followed by a heightened awareness and anxiety. These poems can be read, studied, thought about and reveal deeper meanings of life's acts:

> "my poetry is
> to draw a picture
> of my strange bedfellow
> a rogue philosophy." ('Idiom', p. 34)

Here, an indomitable gusto turns the key to a chamber of elevated thoughts. Images are woven one into another with rare brilliance and effortlessness. Bishnupada writes for who are sensitive, who think about existential issues and who want to free themselves from hypocrisy and move towards an authentic way of life. His artistic sensibility is pregnant with varied shades of feelings and emotions recollected in tranquillity. His poems capture each rainy moment of life's daily acts. He walks through long corridors of inspiring discourse through which there is often no return; but returns with the coloured wings of successive images, metaphors and poetic cadence:

> "this peace among the leaves
> is a mockery of the peace
> I have to buy among people
> this peace among the leaves." ('Peace', p. 51)

A powerful poetic imagination enlivens even rusty metals and bricks. Bishnupada has a key to do that. The result is a lyrical moment of ecstasy.

Gone are the days when people were victims of colonial snobbery. Indian poets have found their own idiom to write back in the global code. Bishnupada Ray scripts his vast academic knowledge and in depth sensibility for Bengali and English literatures in poetic cadence, and becomes a member of a rich family.

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