

KV Dominic: *Winged Reason*, Authors Press, Delhi, 2010, ISBN 978-81-7273-530-2 Book Review: Sunil Sharma

Aural. And Simple. That is KVD- poetry for you.

Aural: you can distinctly hear the musical sounds of Thodupuza in his poetry.

Simple: The natural Kerala beauty is miniaturized in the rolling Iddukki district. The viewer gets hypnotized by the simplicity of the primeval landscape spread out as a culture shock for the first-time visitor. It is simple, yet haunting. The tall tress rustling in the unspoilt wind; the dancing river glinting in the broken shaft of the bright sun-light on a cloudy monsoon September late morning; the gleaming highway and the prancing flowers in a riot, encountered in a corner as a stunning visual surprise. Hundred years' solitude is still preserved-almost un-violated by the ugly mobile towers of the telecom companies and consequent radiation seen in Indian metros. These elements slide smoothly into the synthetic imagination of a simple religious poet and get transformed into lines that are purely aural. You hear the transmitted sounds of this familiar milieu through the printed words constituting poems on different themes and common creatures inhabiting the semi-rural quiet self-contained universe there: Old age, tsunami, beauty, cuckoos, solitude, harvest feast, mango trees, Onam, vegetarianism, Gandhi and his favourite animal, the furry, shy, arching cats in the fading light. It is an inclusive world-view of the ancestors that is now permanently lost in a post-colonial country trying to imitate a Western life-style. The everyday dominates in his poetry. The commonplace that can be sublime for an intelligent alert mind discovering divinity in an ordinary atom. For others, it is deadening routine. Nothing exciting for the regular denizens orbiting in the mundane scene on daily basis in an uneventful small town where everybody knows everybody else and an elopement becomes hot news for weeks. Even the heavens-after a long stay, the cynics claim- tend to become dreary for the bored angels. But, for the sympathetic KVD-excuse me this journalistic penchant for the abbreviations for a rich personality-the everyday is the daily gateway to the divine, both within and without. Sacred lies in human eyes. We create our own hells and heavens. Great sublime Milton proclaims so. Poets reproduce exalted ethereal realms; capitalists maraud and raid impenetrable rainforests for timber and spoil them for greed-like the rest of the mother-earth that becomes mere balding earth for these profit-mongers. One creates beauty; another destroys. Tsunamis come uninvited. The man who put the little Thodupuzha on international literary map wants that raiding to be stopped. His weapons are his words and poems. Simple words charged with poetic power of 2000 watts. Dominic is superb in his *Winged Reason*, his first collection of 39 poems, often illustrated. Like Hemingway, his simplicity is deceptive. It reveals more than it initially promises at mere surface level for a hurried reader. Beneath the calmness

of the Thodupuzha River that flows nearby his artistically-done bungalow, you find centuries coiled and sedimented on the river-bed. Tintern Abbey-like, the river has witnessed empires come and go in its daily smooth flow in a quiet country over the unfolding time. As the talented observer and blessed son of the riverine civilization of multi-hued Kerala, Dominic explores these hidden concentric cultural layers that get visible on a sunny clear morning only for the determined watcher, sitting beside the river and finding the essence of the moving historical formations in its flow. The bond between a river and community is very strong in the palm-fringed spicy Kerala. You can still find folks doing morning rituals after a dip in it near the sacred waters that have long irrigated and enriched a simple social Spartan- existence (an alternative philosophy to the urban consumerism and mad desires for more and more commodities) and the artistic Malayalee soul. The eternal river finds its silent way in Dominic's consciousness and its rich expression on paper.

As a delighted reader, you feel the waves gently talking and the cuckoos, singing to you in dulcet tones from a tall tree- perch in a thick dark grove, thousands of miles away. On the wings of these happy empyrean birds, you get transported to that magical land and start humming with them in that holy place visited by the early gods.

That only KV Dominic can make happen by creating an enchanted region where reason, otherwise dry, controlling, sterile and intellectual, gets wings poesy-like and soars above the ordinary, calling for sanity and moral order in these turbulent, hate-filled times...



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