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Page 218-222

## Book Review of Vandana Kumar's 'Mannequin of Our Times' by Prof Dr. Shiv Sethi

### Touching the Deepest Chords

'[Mannequin of Our Times](#)' by Vandana Kumar is indeed a heart-touching collection of poems which reflects on a medley of human emotions.

Creating poetic pieces has always been a daunting task, if we



compare it with several other literary genres such as Novels, Stories, Essays and so on. Undeniably, poets are divinely gifted human beings who possess sharpened sensitivity and the ability to channelise their pent up pile of feelings in quite a sublime and subtle manner. Similarly, reading this deeply emotive and highly evocative anthology, a literary critic is instantly transported into an imaginative world of Romantic Age with a section of his thoughts diverted toward poets like William

Wordsworth and John Keats. As we flip through the pages of the book and sumptuously savour the poetic delicacies enshrined in this magnum opus work, we rethink about '[The Preface To Lyrical Ballads](#)' in which Wordsworth, the great apostle of nature remarks that poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling recollected in peace and tranquility. Indubitably, [Vandana](#) has a remarkable knack for spontaneity. Her poetic pieces convey the impression that a mighty cascade of sublimated emotions is gushing out of her sensitive bosom in the fathomless profundity of which, the readers get absorbed and immersed from head to toe. Such an excellent and engaging fluidity her poems contain that one feels impelled to quote another great Romantic poet, John Keats, who most pertinently articulates that "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all."

Even Kashiana Singh, a great critic, remarks about this book that there is a glittering dream like quality to Vandana's writing. Most of the readers are fully in consonance with the

eminent critic who has written quite an elegant Foreword to this anthology and instantly fall in love with the poems like “When Night Falls”, “The Last Train Home” and “Kiss of Death”. These poems spread themselves into the minds of the readers as if “In no particular direction”. The elements of deep pathos and intense poignancy permeate Vandana’s poetry which make her stand apart and tall in comparison with most of the modern day poets who simply deal with superficial emotions and shallow feelings. (A word of caution, all poets are not alike.)

The collection ‘[Mannequin of Our Times](#)’ embodies Modern Indian Women as fully empowered (Though societal attitudes about women are also highlighted here and there). Gone are the days when Indian Women were merely confined to home and hearth and miserably doomed to domestic drudgery. Defying the patriarchal idea of society and also refuting the poets like Alfred, Lord Tennyson who rather raises the heckles of the champions of the feminist movement when he remarks, “Man for the field and woman for the hearth: / Man for the sword and for the needle she...”, Vandana fully celebrates women who possess the librettist heart and free spirit. Therefore, the book can be aptly designated an encomium to the mighty feats and phenomenal achievements of Indian women who have made the country proud with their colossal grit and indomitable courage. Here the poem ‘A Perfect Round’ fully fits into the context as the poet waxes eloquent and says “Every Indian Woman has a story with Roti novice, now expert.....”

In a nutshell, [Vandana Kumar](#)’s poems are well-woven and have a compact structure which is indeed class-apart as free verse is also a new format now gaining wider currency. David Crystal remarks that Language is for the ears and not for the eyes. Similarly Vandana’s language has a melody of its own. Laced with the literary jewels of metaphors, similes and rich

imagery, it is musical to the innermost ears of the readers. Artistically and aesthetically crafted phrases are the hallmarks of her poetic style and make her stand shoulder to shoulder with the poets of exceptional charisma. Here, the poet must be applauded for she emerges as a harbinger of hope, love and peace, the noble virtues for which she attains the repute of an excellent literary genius without dispute.

The lyrical luminosity, the proverbial pigments, racy style of versification, lucid expression, selection of apt words and, above all, the skillful usage of various scintillating figures of speech make her fully conspicuous and stand apart as a Mighty Ocean of Poetic Elixir. Therefore the poetic collection becomes 'A Must Read' for the aficionados of Poetry!

Book Title: [Mannequin of Our Times](#)

Author: [Vandana Kumar](#)

Available: [Amazon](#)

## References

1. Mannequin of Our Times, Vandana Kumar. World Inkers Printing and Publishing. February 2023.

## **Author: Vandana Kumar**

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Vandana is a French teacher, translator, recruitment consultant, Indie Film Producer, cinephile and poet residing in New Delhi, India. Her poems have been published in national and international websites, journals and anthologies of repute. She has been a part of seminal feminist anthologies like the Indie Blu(e) publication 'The Kali Project'. Her cinema articles appear regularly in 'Just-cinema' and 'The Daily Eye'. Her recent collection of poems 'Mannequin Of Our Times' (February 2023) - has been awarded the 'The Panorama International Book Award 2023' and the 'Mighty Pens Awards' 2023 in the poetry category.

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## **Reviewer: Prof Dr Shiv Sethi**

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Dr Sethi is a noted columnist and literary critic based at Ferozepur, Punjab.

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