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## An Analytical Study of Dr. Suruchi Arora's 'Snowdrops'

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Columnist.*

### Abstract:

In this paper, Dr. Dalip Khetarpal analyzes the poetry anthology of Dr. Suruchi Arora. Suruchi underlines mystical sphere through her awesome, enlightening, and spiritually awakening poems.

**Keywords:** Indian poetry, poems, literature, English literature, mystical poems, spiritual poems.

When Dr. Suruchi Arora, a practicing doctor, steeped in medical sciences, but also forays consciously or unconsciously into the realm of art and poetry and eventually into the world of mysticism, of spirit, it should then explicitly betoken her mellowness of vision, her completeness as a human being. Suruchi made her first irruption into the mystical sphere through her awesome, enlightening, and spiritually awakening book entitled, 'Find Yourself' wherein psychical revolution is the focal point. The book, the author says, uncovers 'precious soulful answers to life's most elusive questions and intriguing mysteries...presents spirituality in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century'. Incredibly, the exquisite second volume, an anthology of 51 poems also has astounding substance and is marked by rare originality. Dr Suruchi has distinctly carved a niche for herself in the literary world by authoring 'Snowdrops' obviously with a view to capture 'the reality of our lives, as it is –just slows it down, presses pause, and holds the mirror up for us to connect, reflect, learn and integrate precious, and empowering life lessons.' [p. Xiii]

The title, 'Snowdrop' is highly symbolic and metaphorical in the sense that each poem, as unfolded by the poet, is like a snowdrop that holds 'in it, the power to break through the frozen soil of limiting beliefs, awaken to the spring of wisdom within, and allow the inner innocence and beauty to blossom'. [p. Xiii] This in fact, is precisely what I've also witnessed while going through her poems. Besides this, the poems in this anthology impact effectively and evenly almost all vital gamut of emotion like feelings of sadness, anxiety, nostalgia, delight, elation, adoration, amusement, cheerfulness, awe, or broader affective features, such as positive valence, like joy, optimism, and love– all underlie and underline the recognition of emotional expression. Interestingly, her poems display a complex, high dimensional space of mental, psychological and emotional states recognizable in speech prosody cross-culturally. Metaphorical, symbolical, psychological, spiritual, mystical and metaphysical in nature, her outpourings have a strong undercurrent of humanity, kindness and selfless love for the whole mankind.

Through the stream of consciousness technique and through a certain character, the first poem, 'I Wish' [p. 1] reveals the psychic on goings of the poet replete with misgivings and queries: 'If you really love this life,/Can you defy the fears of mind?/The give and take, the losses you make,/To follow your heart, until you reach/The heaven I live,/The heaven you like?' The painful state of solitude and a traumatic experience a child goes through on being left alone along with the humanity of the poet is psychologically explicated in 'That Lonely Child' [p. 6]. The tattered and dilapidated plight of a girl child is portrayed with heart-rending picturesqueness: 'Abandoned, uncared,/scrunched up and scared./Sitting alone/on a platform across me.' The poet's love, empathy, concern and compassion are all manifested in one go when she takes the little child into her arms and soulfully asks, 'What took you so long?'/How far had you gone?' Poems like 'Letting go' [p. 10] and a few more, in tandem with Wordsworth's poems, psychologically but naturally highlight the blend of the beauty and fragrance of solacing nature with the mood and mental state of the poet: 'I took much-needed solace/in a flower pure and white./Its sweet fragrance/and delicate petals/remind my soul/of beauty and freshness/still present in my life.' The same soothing effects and enchantment of nature are discernible in 'Follow Your Lead [p. 18]: 'Crunching leaves and singing birds,/that sang to me nature's music,/soothed the chatter in my mind...Swishing grass and freshness of leaves/awakened my senses to the joy of breeze,/Replaced the anxiety in my heart...' 'The Estuary' [p. 84] denoting the tidal mouth of a large river, where the tide meets the stream, systematically unravels the beauties of the flow of the river with their concomitant 'thunderous sounds...with mighty roars...bubbling to streaming...thousands of miles/the river travels-/All the way,/seeking the sea...the river that sought/ In this estuary, when it seeks no more,/the river itself becomes the sea'. The simple natural flow of water and the merger of river with sea have been personified and delineated so picturesquely that the whole scenario comes alive in its concrete form before the readers with its boisterousness and 'thunderous sounds', indicating the poet's

picture-making quality like that of John Keats. Similes and metaphors like 'Announcing it's arrival/like a baby who cries...', '...turning boisterous/Entering adolescence,/it's called the river' further embellish the poem.

'Allowing', [p. 11] a psychological poem deals with the reminiscent of the past: 'My childhood haven,/memories of which warm my heart' followed by certain images perceptible by touch, tactile and sensuous appeal: 'The compost that comes/from the stinking waste,/every bit worth it,/with nutrients precious./It deepens the colors/of those deep roses,/and makes their fragrance/ever so charming'. The poet finally concludes the poem with a highly metaphorical and meaningful thought: 'Maggots digest/the rubbish despised,/making compost/for our garden beautiful./Allowing untangles/emotions buried,/transforming them/to wisdom precious...a painful journey/from waste to manure'. At a deeper level, the lines symbolize how even odious thoughts are a catalyst that triggers mellowness in a person and infuses him with wisdom. Here, like Eliot, the poet considers the human mind a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, emotions, images, which remain there until all the particles, acting as a catalyst, unite to form a new compound.

'The Calling of the Soul' [p. 22] another metaphorical poem has a unique combination of psychology, philosophy and spirituality. Through very close observation the poet subconsciously learns 'how the salmon lives', how after it 'died' a new life 'was created' whereafter 'dozens of little salmon thrive,/that travel down the stream so far-/Searching for food,/playing and growing...they stream upstream,/back to where their mother died./They pay her a silent tribute,/for giving them a life so pure/that they could follow the calling of the soul'. Plunging into aquatic life—a vital aspect of nature, the keen eye of the poet falls on salmon—a fish native to tributaries of the North Atlantic (genus *Salmo*) and Pacific Ocean (genus *Oncorhynchus*). Normally, salmon are anadromous: they hatch in freshwater, then migrate to the ocean, and return to freshwater to reproduce. However, a large number of other species is

confined to freshwater throughout their lives. Traditionally it is believed that the fish return to the exact spot where they conceive to spawn. From this simple fact of nature, the poet, after marshalling her thoughts, opines how even humans can learn and be inspired by this commonplace way of how salmon live and act. This is then finally given a spiritual and philosophical tinge by her minute analysis and rare perceptiveness. The salubrious effects of nature on the poet's psyche have been stressed time and again in various poems: 'The seagulls called/their kids and mates...their playful singing,/the gentle soothing/sound of waves...made a music that lifted my spirit...And, as I followed/their collective sounds...I noticed the sun/winking at me': 'Mindfulness' [p. 47].

Mysticism is one of the key elements of Suruchi's poetry. Mysticism, as most presume, is not a belief; it is a unique concept in that it denotes a typical kind of practice or effort to procure some conscious experience of spirit. It is a belief that knowledge of God or of real truth can be found and attained through prayer and meditation rather than through reason and the senses though paradoxically these two [reason and senses] are often used to illuminate one's own divinity within the domain of spirit rather than the mundane. This is what we witness in the work of Suruchi. Indeed, a simple thought as 'what is God', consciously mused upon, can be considered mysticism because of the state of mind it can cause. Her meditative quality, mysticism and even deep spiritual sense are best seen in 'Meditation' [p. 56]. By simply closing one's 'eyes limited by sight', avoiding thinking 'that brings fret, despair', 'loops of fatigue and sorrow', closing eyes to 'what your mind has created', one could achieve vision infinite, 'peaceful connection with your soul and self', open 'the portals of energy unbound' and finally experience 'what has created the mind.' 'Bird Hide' [p. 57-59] breathes an air of mysticism in a way that could captivate any aesthete: 'Resting and eating'/Mating and rearing'/Without labels...was enough to/ feed my seeking soul/with joy unbound/like never before.' Again, in the same poem, 'Just like the gap in that

birds hide,/ when I look at the meaning of life/ through the stillness between my thoughts,/the momentary pause in-between my thoughts,/ the momentary pause in-between breaths, the crack that opens from intense pain,/and experience and live/what I can never learn/from the pictures and words/in any books...lectures', 'guidance', 'images', 'lessons', 'touching', 'hearing', 'seeing and smelling./When I peep within my soul,/What I find/is so much more/than what I can ever learn'. Knowledge from outside gets absorbed in the brain, and interacts with the cells lying within, and only then starts working for us. This is almost equal to knowledge working and coming from within. Further, knowledge can also come from within when one cuts himself off from the external world by forgoing all attachment to such a world. However, Suruchi's poetic creations testify her rare artistic feat; her knowledge comes not only from without but surprisingly from within also sans detaching herself from her milieu.

'Self-Doubt' [p. 62] is another fine specimen of mystic and spiritual experience gone through by her. She introspects and meditates on her 'powerlessness' and hears 'words of wisdom' from within her soul that remind her to remember who her creator is thereby also clarifying her doubts: 'Are you doubting the design of nature?/Nature never makes mistakes'. 'You Live Through Me' [p. 90] is an artistic synthesis of mysticism and spirituality with an underlying metaphor. A fair amount of perceptiveness and profound understanding is required to comprehend the essence of the poem. When the poet becomes too tired and weak there's something that carries her through and that is 'Part of You that walks through me', when 'gripped by fear and failure'... A part of You that fights through me', when 'feeling lonely and sad...A part of you that loves through me,' and the concluding gravest, deeply mystical, metaphorical and spiritual lines are: 'When I die and breathe no more/All of me is reduced to dust...The part of You that lived through me'. This is how the poet eternalizes her life by immortalizing her soul as Robert Browning does in 'The Last Ride Together'.

Suruchi's spirituality lies in higher and deeper understanding, connecting or interacting with the spirit till the connection is established. As such, it entails philosophy, mysticism, and religion, but refers to the basic purpose behind all these spheres, which is to deepen one's spirit. Furthermore, the poet's expanse of spirituality is boundless as even communicating with spirits of nature and animals falls within its range and scope. Illustrating this in 'Others' [p. 66], the poet admits that whenever restlessness overtakes her she listens 'to the to the voice of wisdom within' and remembers who her 'creator is'. On deeper introspection, a query arises from within: 'Are you doubting the design of nature? Instantly she hears a pat response from her soul: 'Nature never makes mistakes.' 'Self-Worth' [p. 64] evinces lines that subtly synthesize mysticism and spiritualism: 'When I find that inner trunk,/roots that bind me to the earth,/ branches that reach out for the skies,/ and spread out into the world so wide./ When I connect with this inner self/and stand tall in its barren glory./When I realize the depth I reach,/feeling complete as my own creator,/I do not chase spring anymore.'

The poet's simple prayer also has clear-cut aims and purposes that also even consists of minor unimaginable acts as exemplified in 'A Prayer' [p. 86]. To her all acts, even menial activities like peeling a carrot, sweeping a floor, helping a person, promising someone and every 'little thing' she does '...expands to become/an act of love,/a prayer that reaches/the Sources of all'. These lines may appear too simple at a surface level but their depths are unfathomable. Spiritual love permeates every stanza of 'I am the one' [p. 96-97]. The reciprocal love of her 'family and friends', of '...everyone/even the stranger' [who creeps her out], 'the creator who created and the creation alike' fill her with infinite bliss 'because love is the only language' she knows, as she is 'one with God'. She finally winds up her spiritual venture in a sacred and devotional tone: 'I am the one that you seek/I am the one that you seek to be'. Her strong and irrepressible divine spark could instantly rarefy the spiritual thought of any reader. The anthology thus affirms that the poet is a great mystic and a true spiritualist.

Suruchi's poetry defies any straitjacket or isms and can be conveniently deemed the poetry of the entire. The poet in Suruchi is ever ineffably exquisite and unsurpassable. Her spiritual and mystical effusions have the intensity, immensity, beauty, magic and sublimity of the divine. Her poems infuse a deeper and higher state of consciousness into the spirit of readers making them also feel one with whole mankind and the entire world as one single family. Her poems should be read and felt soulfully as if one enjoys an exquisite piece of music. The notes have soothing sweetness as their gentle, natural, uncontrolled, unhindered and unflappable flow spontaneously issue forth directly from the heart. While going through her poems one feels as if the entire existence sings through it and resultantly an objective correlative or metaphor is being created.

As evidenced by her poems, it is her profundity of thoughts that speed up her mystical advances which quickly moves towards her conscious, unconscious or subconscious union with the Ultimate. In fact, it is this very awareness that fills her whole being with divine ecstasy. The mystic in Dr Suruchi perceives the universe as a blend of science and art. For her, all phenomena are interrelated and operate in a unified field thereby a harmonic orchestration of all disparate wings is created, stirring up not only readers' imagination, emotions and sensibilities but also offering them a comprehensive solution to the fundamental problems of art and aesthetics through reconciling the perspectives of science and spirituality in a mystic confluence.

The empirical perspective of the poet annotating how all phenomena have veiled affinity in the form of causes or determining relations, how all matter stunningly orchestrate countless objects of nature and the unique way the poet ends up the whole scientific truth with the concept of karma, reveals a fine synthesis of science, religion and her overpowering spirit of mysticism.

Though I may seem to go off-track, it is worthwhile, rather relevant to elucidate the fact that the two hemispheres of human brain function differently and independently. The two sides of the



brain communicate with each other via corpus callosum which allows for information processed on one side to be shared with the other side of the brain. Information that enters the left hemisphere traverses the corpus callosum going to the right side of the brain and vice versa. The left brain mainly receives connections from the parasympathetic system, while the right brain largely receives connections from the sympathetic system. People are said to prefer one kind of thinking over the other. A person who is 'left-brained' is often said to be more logical, orderly, analytical, methodical, and objective and tends to be more quantitative. A person who is 'right-brained' is deemed to be more intuitive, subjective, and thoughtful. They are qualitative and considered creative free thinkers, 'big-picture thinkers who experience the world in terms that are descriptive or subjective'. However, the study of Neuroscientists discovers that creativity does not entail a single brain region or even one single side of the brain, as the "right brain," instead, 'it the encompasses whole brain'. This process comprises 'many interacting cognitive systems' including conscious, unconscious and emotions. All separate brain regions are deputed to do each work but at the same time to jointly work harmoniously also. Thus, broadly speaking, the brain is holistically used though some personality types are more analytical and logical than artistic and vice versa. With some, however, logic and creativity walk hand-in-hand as seen in the writings of Dr. Suruchi who represents the perfect blend of science and art, of a doctor and a spiritual poet.

Among various mystical poets like [William Blake](#), [Hafiz](#), [Rumi](#), [Mirabai](#), [St Teresa of Avila](#), Emily Dickinson, Sri Chinmoy, [St Francis of Assisi](#), P. Yogananda, Sri Aurobindo, Li Po, and a few more, Dr. Suruchi, a young mystic, made a mark with a series of innovative mystical ideas and thoughts. Even today, only a few mystics could create an indelible imprint on the readers' psyche as Dr Suruchi has done. While being indescribably rich in meaning and substance, mystical and profound, it is marked by the lucidity of expression, as if, it were the work of a perfect poet-mystic, of a versatile genius. Through her artistic juxtaposition of the earthly and

spirituality, she reveals her ingenuity in poeticizing mysticism, and emerges as a rare poet. Through spiritual poems, she has dared to tread the abstruse labyrinthine path of literature that only the literate few would dare do. Sans underrating her sublime spiritual and mystical splendor and accomplishments, I can affirm that the poet has the potential to rise to greater heights by focusing on diverse subjects and themes.

Finally, viewing the anthology extensively, one finds that 'Snowdrops,' is a very thought-provoking, enlightening, transcendental, divine and glorious document wherefrom not only the readers of the modern era, but also posterity can draw spiritual, emotional, moral inspiration, and mental strength for all time to come. I'm sure, Suruchi's creative ability, diligence, and passion for literary creations will dazzle like the sun in the firmament of literature soon as it is doing in the field of medicine. I ardently hope and wish she maintains the effulgence and grace of her mystical spirituality that was bestowed on her by the Almighty and Nature, both.

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## **Dr. Dalip Khetarpal**

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Dr. Dalip Khetarpal worked as a Lecturer in English at Manchanda Delhi Public College, Delhi. He worked in various capacities, as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and H .O. D (English) in various academic institutes in Haryana. He was a Dy. Registrar and Joint Director at the Directorate of Technical Education, Haryana, Chandigarh.

Dr. Dalip has also started a new genre in the field of poetry, which he would like to call "psycho-psyhic flints".

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