

Review by Dr. Sapna Dogra

Damini Rathore

In Good Hours with Frost

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**Engaging poetry collection on hope and depression inspired by Robert Frost's
'Good Hour'**

W B Yeats said that "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry." It is true that poetry sometimes is borne out of conflicts with self on the one hand, and helps resolves them on the other. Damini Rathore's *In Good Hours with Frost* is a book about powerful feelings and vivid sentiments that aims at unravelling the cores of the troubles that runs deep within Frost, the protagonist. This is Damini's debut book and looks promising. The book is compelling as it invites readers to engage with the character of Frost. Even though there's not much action within its pages the readers will find themselves deeply involved, intrigued, perplexed and affected.

The intertextuality with Robert Frost envelopes the entire work. Damini quotes Robert Frost's 'Good Hours' in full. Robert Frost is famous for his poems, 'Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening' and 'Road Less Travelled'. In 'Good Hours' Frost describes a winter evening walk that evokes loneliness, peaceful quiet and a sombre assertion and realization of the passage of time. The protagonist of Damini's book is named Frost. As the blurb tells the readers,

Frost is just an ordinary person with a beautiful power of expression. This book is not just about her journey through depression but a lot more other things like societal conditioning, love, attention, abandonment, world peace, etc. She effortlessly takes you along in an instance onto an engaging one-go read. It is in the form of monologue with several poems woven onto a short story.

It's an experimentative book in terms of form. It's a mesh of various forms of writings. Damini doesn't follow a conventional novelistic structure or poetry anthology. The book consists of 12 chapters that are interwoven with poems. It's a slim book but well brought out with a beautiful cover. Notes and a glossary of difficult words are

provided for the readers towards the end of the book. There are hardly any editing and proofreading errors.

As I moved from poem to poem, chapter to chapter, I could feel myself engrossed and drawn into their candid nature, belief in life and a sense of triumph that one always expects. Her word craft, brevity is indubitably very promising. A sense of desire to surmount every strain of despair is discernible in the entire work. Her aim behind penning this book is,

This sort of gibberish-ness
Has been an object of an extended quest
To understand myself better.

(Enigma)

One of the best poems is ‘Sometime Back’ where she faces an identity crisis and feels directionless and social disconnected. The poetic device of juxtaposition is deployed to simultaneously comment on the past and the present.

I was in the world, lively
I was in the choir, rhythmic
I was at home, belonging
I was known, identified
...
I am lost
I look for an opportunity,
I dream of a way that cures this sway (24)

The book also has elements of metafictionality. She constantly accepts her inability to either write or do justice to her emotions.

I am not sure.
Not sure about what I want to write.
What I am thinking are not mere feelings but emotions,
So deep that my limited vocab
Finds no appropriate expression for the same.
This feeling of getting lost is no stranger.
This familiarity has struck me before many times.

(Enigma)

I enjoyed reading every bit of *In Good Hours with Frost* and would congratulate her for her courage to fully lay bare her deeper self with such honesty and bravery.

******About Reviewer**

Dr. Sapna Dogra completed her B.A and M.A. in English Literature from University of Delhi. She holds a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is presently working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English in the Government College Baroh, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. Her research interests include Folklore Studies, Translation Studies, Indian English Writing, Hindi Literature and Popular Literature. She can be reached at sapnarm@gmail.com.