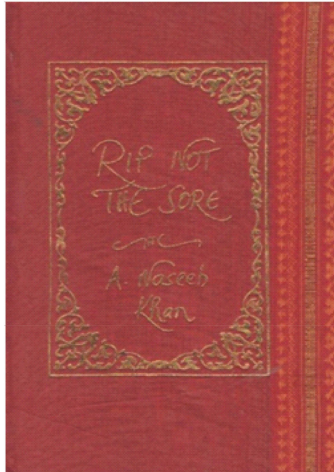


# Rip Not the Sore: A Collection of Poems

Ghazala Siddiqi



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by A. Naseeb Khan. *Writers Workshop: Kolkata, 2010: Pp 110, Rs. 200 (hardbound)*

Consisting of 60 poems, *Rip Not the Sore* is the first collection of A. Naseeb Khan. Beginning with 'Ramu and Abdul' showcasing lucid state of quietude and communal amity, the collection culminates into 'Launch into Fray', which not only contemplates the issues of human existence, and fear that threatens to seep into the spine, but also exudes rare energy to brave challenges.

'Ramu and Abdul' takes the readers onto a journey that narrates the saga of two characters living in an idyllic world with salubrious surroundings. Fluidity and ease with which the poet delineates their life is remarkable. Representatives of constructive reality, they believe in perpetual keeper of humanity. Their life does not rest on the shifting sands of time, thus not vulnerable to any onslaughts. The subtlety with which Naseeb concludes the poem is an indication of continuity.

'Mayhem' presents a sheer nakedness of emotions. Vulnerability in state of being, outcome of morass and bedlam caused due to intolerant nature, gradually gets shrouded in the mist of fear and uncertainty. The expressions evoke an imagery of a world caught in throngs of reckless attitudes leading to an emotional rape of sensibilities. It projects the cataclysmic end of human bondages.

'Terrorism' etches out an ambiance that is fostered by violent activities, impregnated with shrieks

of wailing mothers and death of nascent lives. Amid all topsyturvydom, it is difficult to retain one's vital elements, as sense and sensibilities get warped by dust of whirlwind. Feelings of disorientation, fear and panic dominate the concluding stanza. The poet meticulously takes the reader to a different domain of human sensibility wherein the reader is introduced to a forced sense of apathy that sets in with maturity. The sense of detachment and lackadaisical attitude that comes with apathy is a mere camouflage.

'Victors of War' represents an ideology - a philosophical view of elusiveness of life and denouncement of war. Mind and machine, abstract and concrete coexist in tandem with arrhythmic beats of life. The choice of words may have varied connotations; suggesting repercussion of an aggressive act and implying a state of human mind that war perpetuates. The weapons speak the language of destruction and suffering of mind, body and soul. Manifold misery brought by war benumbs consciousness to an extent that reality and illusion merge.

The poet's expressions in the first three stanzas convey a static projection of war. All activities seem to have come to a standstill as war immobilizes movement. Amidst this inert existence, movement acquires dimensions of an illusion. Ironically, a war that may result in victory often has no survivors to commemorate it. The irony is depicted in a subtle and understated manner, as opposed to ambiance of a war ground that is loud and violent. The paradox of victory is rather concrete. The poem, adorned with a lucid style, is profoundly solemn, compelling the reader to wonder who the victors of war are. The concluding line deftly captures elusiveness of life and leaves the reader wondering whether life in all its abstractions can manifest itself tangibly.

The collection spans as multifarious areas as hard and suffering lives of the dispossessed, family chats lubricated by steaming hot brew and so on. Through unvarnished pictures of life's brutal realities, Naseeb expresses his recurrent concern for social awakening, justice and equitability. He presents everyday woman, man and themes in a way that one can easily relate with them.