

## Reflection, Memory, and the Fine Art of Poetry: Reading *Memories of Words* by Jaydeep Sarangi

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### Bibliographic Information:

Name of the Book: *Memories of Words*

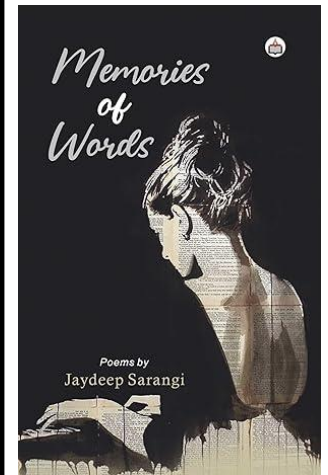
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In *Fundamentals of the Art of Poetry*, Oscar Mandel opines: "The work of art is that special form among all the forms created by man for which there is one and only one criterion of success- namely the satisfaction it delivers." (Mandel 24)

It is through this deft work of art that gives birth to Jaydeep Sarangi's poetic peregrination. *Memories of Words*, as his book is titled, is a fine balance of nostalgia, tranquility, memory, and the art of poetic perfection. Memory intertwines with imagery in his poems and gives birth to 'feathers and flute'. There is a semblance of time-travel through spiritual reconstruction, for instance, when he writes:

"If anybody goes for spiritual practices  
Without a veteran guru,  
journey of each inch  
becomes a journey of a thousand kilometers." (Sarangi 66)

In a mere moment, verses paint vivid scenes, resurrecting forgotten landscapes. Words in Sarangi's poetry echo the hues of a sunset or the scent of rain, finalizing moments otherwise lost. Each syllable, a brushstroke; each stanza, a photograph, capturing emotions and experiences in lyrical frames. As a part of the three segments *Tamas*, *Rajas*, and *Sattva* in which the book is divided, the poet's journey represents memory's tapestry, weaving threads of nostalgia and essence into lines that transcend time. He can at once feel how he held his 'father's hand / Crossed time's bed with a boat / I still think they are so, walls with doors.' His recollection of the scenes in Chilkigarh Rajbari becomes a bioscopic vision for all of us, where readers, along with him, anticipate future generation and their interpretation of the 'noises of the stone, panel of dark.'

One interesting observation about *Memories of Words* is that it does not become a strenuous, obscure platter of images. The simplicity of narrative style, mundane images that are contained in rainbows, living cultures, the ghost of his grandfather, and historical knocking at the heart's door- images birthed from memory leap off the page, etching themselves into the reader's consciousness, evoking their own forgotten whispers. Sarangi's poetry, the alchemy of memory and imagery, immortalizes fleeting instants in the heart of verse.

In *Rivers Within: An Interview with Jaydeep Sarangi*, the poet and academician talks to Elisabetta Marino about how for him, 'words never sleep' and how they 'keep happening', 'play a languid game of love and longing to where other forms wait.' It is evident from his poetic contemplation how he gives birth to illumination in thoughts. John Webb, a Professor of Creative Practice at the University of Canberra, therefore, writes about Sarangi's poems that they are 'rooted in the world of being and feeling, conjuring up colour and senses and sensibilities, asking how it is that we humans navigate the natural domain, survive the social domain.' For instance, if we read the poem *Memory as my Writing*, we find the waves of his emotion and surging thoughts coalescing into a central point of unanimous poetic reflection:

"My memory is like an old stone lying  
As I cross river beds under an alien sky  
Time's tongue is lolling out of hunger  
From Palm leaves to stones. Writing." (Sarangi 42)

Throughout this expedition, the mind navigates between structured cognition and unbridled creativity. It pivots between order and chaos, harnessing disciplined thought processes while embracing the untamed realms of imagination. This duality in Sarangi's poems fuels the creative journey, birthing the synthesis of structured innovation and unrestrained ideation. If we look at the poem *The Sun Moments for Jayanta Mahapatra*:

“As an obscure man I ask for words  
out of hunger or a summer poem  
looking out for some drops of holy water

My brown flesh is a missing person  
With bare faces in relationships  
lying down with wounds leaking blood.” (Sarangi 35)

It is the poetic humility in the obscure man that has a unique voice in art. The voice asks for words, reminding us of the famous works *Hunger* and *Summer Poem* by the people’s poet Jayanta Mahapatra. ‘Brown flesh’, ‘bare faces’ with ‘wounds leaking blood’ are at once strong, sharp, and vital to the overall progress of the poem. The journey of the mind’s creativity culminates in the materialization of ideas - translating abstract musings into tangible creations. Be it in art, science, literature, or technology, this voyage fuels progress, birthing innovations that redefine paradigms. The poet’s focus is, in essence, the creative journey of the mind, an intricate interplay of thoughts and imagination, where the synthesis of diverse elements births innovation and originality. It embodies the symbiotic relationship between structured cognition and boundless creativity, forging new paths in the expansive landscape of human endeavour.

With much precision, Sarangi writes about the Map Makers, but are the lines and maps only about the external attributes? Are they not the maps of the mind? The vestibules and long-drawn passages of cerebral darkness and luminosity? *Krishna, Life’s Frame, Varanasi, The Sun Moments, History of Waiting Out, The Earth Turned Green, Northern Rivers, Total Blockade, Wheels of Stones, A Passage to Myself* and many other poems in the book circumvent this disciplined thought processes while embracing the untamed realms of imagination. The mind orchestrates poetry, weaving images into existence through metaphor’s intricate dance. It births verses, sculpting thoughts into vivid landscapes where emotions take shape.

Like a master painter, the poems wield metaphor to imbue words with hues of deeper meaning, crafting vivid images that linger in our consciousness. Poetry becomes the canvas where the mind’s kaleidoscope of thoughts converges, painting abstract ideas with the brushstrokes of metaphor, etching indelible images upon the soul. Through this alchemy of mind and metaphor, Sarangi’s poetry transcends, evoking emotions that resonate far beyond the mere arrangement of words, in words of *Friendship* as the poet writes:

“One day by the fireside, you will remember  
how you were loved, desired, taken here

I was not for your poems only, not for anything  
only to be with your company, words." (Sarangi 67)

This is perhaps the way in which *Memories of Words* are reborn every moment.

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Sarangi, Jaydeep. *Memories of Words*. Authorspress.

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Sreetanwi Chakraborty is an Assistant Professor in Amity Institute of English Studies and Research, Amity University, Kolkata. She graduated from Presidency College Kolkata, did her Postgraduation from the University of Calcutta, and obtained her M. Phil from Rabindra Bharati University on *The Sleeping Beauty Wakes Up: A Feminist Interpretation of Fairy Tales*. This was published as a book in 2019, and it received the "Rising Star" Award for non-fiction category at New Town Book Fair, Kolkata. She has been the recipient of the "Charuchandra Ghosh Memorial Award" for securing the highest marks from Calcutta University. She is the Chief Editor of a bilingual biannual academic journal *Litinfinitive*. Apart from academic publications in reputed national and international journals, her translations and literary articles have been published in Bengali and notable English journals and magazines in India, Bangladesh, and South Africa. Her areas of interest include Indian English poetry, Indian English drama, Feminism and cultural politics, and South Asian Diasporic Studies. A contributor to 25 poetry anthologies, she has also written a novel *Rhododendrons* (Penprints 2023). Her recent work includes *Medusa Says in All* (Poetry, Red River 2024).