

On Days Like This

JOURNEYMAN
BOOKS



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Shaira Afrida Oyshee
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To
Shakera Anika Orthee
my beloved sister

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A CHRONICLE OF DAYS: POEMS OF
SHAIRA AFRIDA OYSHEE

When I first read Shaira Afrida Oyshee's poems, I found them worthwhile – Oyshee, apparently was too hesitant to take on the task herself – I was struck by the candidness and confidence with which she wrote her coming -of- age accounts. The poems, which have been collected under the title *On Days Like This*, have varied lengths and tonalities, some are even one liners, and most attempt to put together a range of feelings and emotions, but they all have stories to tell. These have to do with her experiences in a foreign land, far away from home where she takes all of the new experiences in stride. She is interested in people and places and in human relationships, but prefers not to get too involved as she is not sure if she can understand their underlying complexities. What she does instead is settle on moments, and chooses those that have the power of revelation. Her preoccupation with moments is both her strength and weakness – at their best, they have an epiphanic quality, and at their most ordinary, a certain fragmentariness and a confusion about subject and object. I liked the

poems chiefly because of their freshness of approach, the simplicity with which they recount her varied feelings, and a sense of wonder with which she looks at her world. The poems reveal a mind at work which shows poise and confidence in coping with her aloneness, her romance –imagined or real—and her constant need to express herself.

Oyshee also integrated few ideas of ‘poetry slams’ that provided an edge to her expressions. She was perhaps drawn to such style since it gives the poets a voice and power to say what usually remains unsaid. One aspect of her poetry I find admirable is the absence of ornamentation as she avoids unwarranted adjectives and elaborate metaphors. She likes to keep her voice ‘spoken’ and true to her experience. Her poems also begin with a central image and leave no loose threads to turn it fuzzy.

Oyshee, for *On Days Like This*, has chosen a personal style – one which begins with a rumination or revelation and a moment and then gradually reveals the reason why the moment is special. The poems have an impressionistic nature that links the stories with pictures and projections of her mind so that they complement each other. Eventually, her

poems are like paintings – often abstract, but sometimes with figures and familiar or unfamiliar objects as well as trees and gardens. Many of them take the appearance of mindscapes where impressions record their fleeting presence; rhyme seems to come naturally to Oyshee.

I am hopeful that *On Days Like This* will be well received, not only by the young readers but also by others who love poetry.

Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam
Writer
Dhaka

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I grew up with pickle jars
Giving out whiffs of aroma
With an aftertaste that said,
'I love you no matter what.'

I grew past my grandmother's superstitions
And my first lover's promises.

I grew on muffled conversations
Carried out under the pillow,
And outbursts of my opinions.

And I am still growing

- *Growth*



Hemingway books
Sidney Sheldon on Afternoons
Re-read *The Great Gatsby* a few times more
Lush Honey Soap
Yankee Candles, Butter Cream,
A small apartment of my vintage dreams
Milk foam on your upper lip
And one more sip of tea.

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- *Things I will come back for*

