ADEEM Rahman's first

published volume of

poems with its im-

pressive foreward by poet

Shamsur Rahman, has been

subtitled 'an (unau-thorized)

autobiography.' Beau-tifully

printed in expensive art-paper

by BRAC printers the get-up is

attractive and would tempt any

book-lover. In the preface

Nadeem asks himself, 'why

does one still write?' His own

answer to the question is:

pecause 'the heart is a lonely

hunter'. In the dedication he

describes poetry as open heart

surgery - which it is. As will be evident to the reader the

author's prose is as vibrant as

its poetry. Its pungent, crisp

beat captures one's attention

and interest so firmly that

perusal is compulsory. Alth-

ough the rather unusual

spelling which is also Ameri-

can might baffle some. The

corrigendum stands for only a

few of these anomalies. But

that is to do with the surface

- the least important part of

the process of baring the soul.

with its bitter diatribe against

those in whom such a lot of

trust was placed and those

who failed the nation voices

Bangladeshi:

with death

pressed thus:

Every day

tomorrow

the angry young

of Bangladesh.

the hidden anguish of many a

They have failed and be-

the lovers, who have slept

The towering wrath of the

fought for - are ex-

younger generation who have

actually fought and bled for the

birth of Bangladesh and their

despair at not finding what

The jocular yet vitriolic

quotation from Cummings sets

off the mood of the dubious

politics of our country. Some-

times Nadeem's wit stands out

with an almost aphoristic bril

T O one who is concerned

highly significant role played

in it by the mobility of culture.

A culture of a nation should

slowly, but ever-evolvingly, be

modified by time. In order to

widen the range of the

intellectual sphere of a nation,

it should not only confine itself

to whatever is indigenous, for

that matter, but it can also

expediently appreciate an alien

other culturally conscious

country, we come across the

vernacular version of many

books of foreign literature.

These translations into Bengali

offer our reading public an op-

portunity to have knowledge

about foreign literature, cul-

ture and people. Keeping these

considerations in mind, one

as curiosity to read

"Bangladesher Urdu Chhoto

Galpa" (Urdu short stories of

Bangladesh), a book edited by

S M Sajid Ayub Hossain and

published, in February, 1992,

by Shahkar Publications.

is "Matir Sughran" (fragrance

of soil) written by Ashmad

Sadi. As the title of the story

signifies, it is about the rural

people and surrounding. It

opens with beautiful descrip-

tion of a village that is near the

border. The village is almost

empty, for the military were

raiding the houses in order to

catch the rebels. (The back-

drop well implies 1971 libera-

tion war period). In the silence

of a night, three soldiers en-

ter a hut which belongs to an

old man. He has his daughter

and wife. The old man has not

and away from the village even

at the risk of losing his life and

family, because he loves the

village deeply -- he belongs to

the soil. However, at one time

one of the soldiers takes the

daughter to one room. In the

morning the soldier is found to

be killed and the girl is hold-

ing the rifle. The end of the

story is a bit obscure. It may be

interpreted that the simple,

A book that unveils to read-

ers the flurry of events sur-

The first story of the book

will surely find interest as well

In Bangladesh, as in any

culture.

with the well-being of a

nation, can deny the

that they failed to lay

the foundations

of a tangible

who have sung with rage

the song of the earth

and caesarean birth

The Ballad of Bangladesh

the humane approach taken by

by Razia Khan Amin

pressed contempt!

He quotes from the

exquisite sonnets of Michae-

langelo, thanks to Arthur Sy-

monds. 'Christened with water

colours' and 'babtized in ab-

sinthe are phrases which take

a permanent place in the

mind. The punishments for a

'misspent' summer are nothing

but added delights to an al-

ready indulged youth when

smudging the canvas with fin-

gertips in imitation of Van

Gogh's use of the thumb for a

similar purpose — intensifies

the zest and lust for life. The

final twist comes when he

I love the squish, when I

a tube of paint, and the

The celebration of mother-

Every mother is a sister of

'Requiem' again is such in

Mary. The divinity of mothers

brings him down to his knees

in deep and unqualified wor-

its enviable marriage between

'And love departed . . . .

phraseology and emotion

as they dance to life

Entranced 1 thought

I would paint forever

that I might exhaust

hood is tender & intense:

ever suspecting

my lust for life

with an excess

of colour.

confesses:

colours

## **BOOK REVIEW**

Courage is the stock-intrade of wives tied to headstrong husbands. The entire poem with its occasional rhyme sparkles with wit and a kind of eighteenth century

Augustan clarity. Sunlight on a broken column' is one of the best pieces in the collection. This partly sincere partly mocking homage to TS Eliot visualizes the 'bard' at his clerk's desk at the Lloyd's in the 'unreal city'organizing the bills of lading and leading the double lives of poet and bank clerk.

Tell me truthfully who confounded who you or Ezra Pound with a sflent sonic boom of doom's strange surreal music and laconic lipless poems rattling bones in under-

tanding underground' Ezra Pound's ruthless prun-

ing surely is partly responsible for the laconic liplessness. But Nadeem's ambivalent love-hatred towards the poet produces the song not of J Alfred Prufrock but the modern carpetbagger, the yuppy, the

the singer and musician turned businessman. In 'My Media' he declares: and despite the rumour I'm neither a loser

intellectual turned tradesman,

nor an over-achiever' the commercialization of the living arts he satirizes incisively

emoluments for this melodious ministry

nevertheless,I accept no

but endowments and gratu-

I humbly receive only in hard currencies. The Americanized over-mechanical generation is seen mixing lyrics with lollypops poetry they whisk into icecream cones.' The extrava ganza of the billion-dollar bonanza explodes on the readers' head with all Nadeem's supFrom the waste lands of my heart where a dying moon descends and no stars shinc . .

The terrible dissection of the anatomy of love in the poem of the same name pet rifles the reader with fear which shows Nadeem's apparently light-hearted jocularity can culminate into total disenchantment of the kind which disintegrates the human personality.

Thus love gives to each the shit that we deserve there is no tragedy in blood

and blood is sweet to love. 'Never love' has all the equisite lyrical flow of Elizabethan songs such as Shakëspeare and Ben Jonson penned only with its modern succinctness if you would not be accused of having robbed the night of the stolen stars above, never love

never, never love. The use of echoes made fashionable by Eliot evokes associations with Coleridge and of course Eliot himself. Frequently, the cleverness of the prose-poem is a trifle tiresome lacking the urgency and the pungent sharpness of the previous vignettes. His wish for the end of modernity, because it lays the veneer (spelled venir!) of romance', is understandable though. Love song of the fugitive captures the crisp rhythms of Anglo-Saxon verse so deftly put-to-use by Eliot: you might die from dining

and winning and choke in your turtle-

without even understanding the etiquette of grief ··· The finality of 'Possessive Individualism' will long haunt the readers:

Tomorrow the sun will rise

no reason at all and wanting to love, we may die and the heavens may be amused

The latest craze, environmental worries, has invaded Nadcem's poetry with a bang in his Tears:

like acid rain and love is the toxic waste of (my) distasteful lcars.

The writer develops a kind of affection for the girl

N the last week of August film-lovers of Dhaka were treated to joint German-Bangladesh production of a 46minute non-feature documentary-type film which could better be described as a film reportage.

The short film tries to throw light on some aspects of those young people seeking political asylum in Germany and remaining in a sort of purgatory for years on end. It has been made by Enayet Karim Babul and Golam Faruque Ahmed on the Bangladesh side and Michael Ane Kurt Keerl on the German side and has been called The Main Thing Survival'

## The Asylum-seekers

### A FILM REPORTAGE

### by Waheedul Haque

The clean, racy and efficiently made film grips the mind with a kind of hopelessness of the case of a bunch of seven such asylum seekers, out of possibly thousands swarming that proud Teutonic state ever since 1974, and does not itself make out case. Or refrains from doing so. It manages only to skim over the problem but has the merit of

professedly aiming at nothing deeper than that and succeeds in introducing the problem to the less informed ones. Perhaps quite unintendedly it exposes, on the one hand, the German dilemma of being forced by the weight of circumstances back into old and familiar jingoism which every decent German is extremely reluctant to, and on the other.

the churches amounting to go against the wishes of the state and sheltering the boys for more than two years from a certain deportation.

The presentation of the film was followed by discussions by Mr Mustafa Monwar, the television and stage presentation expert and Dr S I Khan of Dhaka University. The director of the Goethe Institute - the venue of the show - termed the film as being unfair both to Germany and Bangladesh. But that seemed too far less material as a point as the aspects were overlooked by the makers of the film.

## Bold, Beautiful and Benign by Fayza Haq

URSHIDA Arzu Alpana and Suratya Chowdhury held a joint exhibition of eye-catching oils, etchings and combined mediums, at "La Galerie" recently. The colours excited one; the figures pervaded one's mind; the fascinated one's sleepy bearing at 10 am on a weekend; while the display was a clever one, with the nyious shapes, sizes and angles. lon and chiffon backdrop of The entree was interesting scarlet, black, olive green, and and absorbing. magenta drapery. The pale "Reaching the Moon" was a wooden frames of Suratya and Alpana's olive ones arrested the spectator's attention- the main exhibit apart. A lot depends on presentation in art displays, dining and sales of

In Alpana's "Frightened Child with Mother" one saw a woman bedecked in a white necklace, cobalt-blue and magenta bangles. The face and body, along with the hair, had been done with confident and swift strokes. The child at the right, had a frightened appearance, with innocent features and hair in braids. The mother was markedly modern but the child was far from affected The painting depicted bold. modern mothers who had a hold over their children in the present times. This work was in oil brush work, as were all of Alpana's other pieces.

any items - ranging from mag-

azines and medicines to

clothes and jewellery- as one

knows full well.

"Secret Talk with Myna" delineated a delectable, modern woman - bereft of clothes, with a necklace with a turquoise pendant. "The woman was so alone that she took recourse to talking with the pet bird, taken out of the cage", the artist explained. The piece was bubbling with colours and highlights - which include geranium lake, ultra marine, cadmium yellow, and plenty of beige. "I usually use four main colours with variations in all my work," the artist elaborated.

In "People with Multiple vision", one could see the same persons having different visions, as Alpana, explained. There were five figures of different sexes to be seen. The men were bare chested while the women were heavily clad. The eyes were depicted in var-

landscape with rocks. "When I had gone to Chittagong for an

artists' camp, I was inspired by nature around me, and this is the product," Alpana commented. The backdrop of the sky was cobalt blue with ultramarine. The cliffs were in cadmium red, yellow ochre, while the forefront had splashes of white. The impact

remained impressionistic. There was a fascinating semi-abstract piece "Grandmother with Fairy Tales" by the same artist. The forms had been somewhat distorted, and lines of brush strokes had been used as colour patches. The grandmother, with the dark child, was seen telling stories of a white snake, in the forefront, a kite painted in grey and light red; while there was a dog and a washerman's donkey, seen in grey. The last two items were depicted well as they usually do not take to each other.

There was a representation of a man and woman in close proximity in the backdrop in "Tear Away" by the same artist. The image symbolised the close relationship between a man and his beloved, as courtship or marriage progressed. The figures in the forefront were women, depicted as lamenting in heavy shrouds. A fair measure of black had been used to enhance the depiction of the separations and divorces, and other bitter existence that prevail in our society. "This is

based on factors. I have known of four cases among my friends and acquaintances, and this is no myth or fabrication, the young artist explained.

A musical scene was depicted too by Alpana and here she showed the women as being older than the actual models were. She wished to depict the maturity and absorption of the players. The beige and crimson lake were balanced well with the darker Dwelling on the contempo-

rary scene of art in Bangladesh Alpana remarked, "I don't believe that we are westernised The western art is highly publicised whereas we have more depth and maturity in our work which goes back to centuries. We have a multicultural impact in our work." Talking about problems in getting materials, the artist said that after attending the environment workshop arranged by the Goethe Institut, she now knew that she could create out of stones, broken glass, torn baskets and even paper bags. Alpana was no longer worried about purchasing expensive papers and colours. She sings, and writes poetry as her hobbies. She has been lecturing at the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka, for seven months.

Suraiya, the other artist. was no less mature or engaging in her displays. Of a more serious deportment, her vision too remained less costatic than that of Alpana's, but this is not to say that her lithos or paintings were in any way inferior in charm or visual impact

Her pen and ink sketch "Nature" had flowers, bumble bees and even a butterfly. This symbolised the affection in every heart, the artist explained. This is the reality of life whether people notice or admit it or not," the artist elabo-The strokes were

exquisitely feminine and fine.

The litho "Endless Alley" depicted a never ending road with a white patch at the end that stressed the concept of infinity. The light posts and trees were in yellow othre and green, outlined by black. The image was one of sheer tranquillity. "Twilight" had the same lane in mind, but had been depicted in the evening Done in sap green, black and grey, it showed the change of nature on a same spot.

Suraiya's "Rolling Feels of Kashbon" was also a litho, and had been inspired by a scene of a railway line with weeds light posts at Shantiniketan, where she had studied. The vertical and horizontal lines held the composition in complete harmony.

A dancing figure had been shown in "Play of Light of Dancing Figure": The dancer, with the stage shadow, had brought in a double image. Here the artist had used rollers on three surfaces and had employed three colours: light emerald green, pink and pale blue.

The three depiction of bougainvillaeas showed blossoms falling over the porch of a house. It was fascinating to note how the artist had shown the same scene at different times of the day, using different hucs and giving a scintillating semi-abstract impact.

Voicing her opinion on the present art scenario in the country, Suraiya had this to comment, "I feel that we have yet to establish our known. style. Ours is a conglomeration of various themes and media; and we have not yet acquired an identity of our own." Suraiya works at a school for mentally retarded children at New Circular Road, apart from her artistic pursuits.

The display showed what a couple of women could offer the critical art lover, having combined their ingenuity and technical finesse - their imagination and dreams apart.



Play of Light of Dancing Figure: Suraiya

# A Cultural Bypath

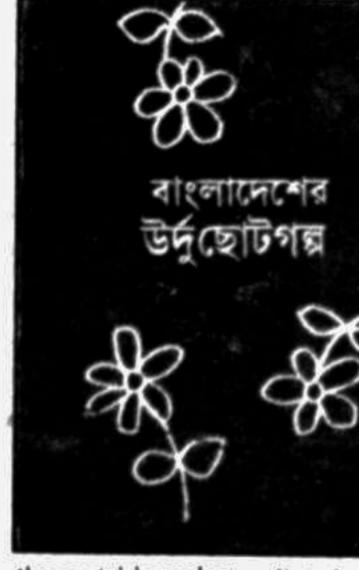
by Dipak Kumar Karmaker

### **BOOK REVIEW**

innocent village girl who can also show necessary courage if situation demands. A good story indeed. The next story is "Mosliner Angulira" (the Muslin fingers) written by Golam Mohammad. The story shows the political consciousness of Tanvir who is the general manager of a factory Tanvir thinks the British oppression over us has not ended. Once, the British colonialists cut the thumbs of those who were expert at weaving Muslin, the fabrics par excellence. However, the indigenous industry now cannot thrive for the market is dominated by foreign goods. This story is more a personal opinion than a fiction. "Prahari" (the sentry) is

written by Jaynul Abedin. The story presents everyday incidents of pain and pleasure in the rural atmosphere. Kalimullah has a wife and a child and also a cow. The reader comes across a set of psychological conflicts in the mind of the wife, Rabeya, as her husband is preoccupied with looking after the cow. She at times considers the cow her rival. She thinks that Kalimullah does not love her. but at one time, the truth dawns upon her that whatever he does, he does it to provide his family more happiness and comfort. There is a touch of universality in the story Kalimullah is a freedomfighter. He hates those who trade on freedom-fighting. There is a moral. However, the story ends with the tragic death of Kalimullah.

"Atal Chokh" (unfathomable eye) written by Jakir Ajiji is, however, not a very successful short story. The driver Ali Ahmed feels burning passion to come close to girls and women. He wants to destroy



the social boundaries. But the story does not provide a 'necessary' chain of incidents and it is not so closely-knitted.

Jaohar's Ayub "Swanamchuta" (stripped of name) is a humorous story. The writer has met a boy who seemed to be known to him. He is going to tell us something about the boy, but he digresses from one subject to another, he does not start telling the story. However, the author finally comes to know that he has mistaken the boy for someone else. The story may have appeal in our workaday life. We very often en counter such situations "Atkotir Jakham" (injury to eight crore) is written by Shyam Barakpuri. The author tells us about people who expected many things from Liberation, but got nothing. The story presents the tragic tale of a man who lives on the bank of Padma. In the post-Liberation period, the man suffered heavily, though before Liberation he had a better life. The story is historical as well

as political depiction of time. Naim's "Nepathya" (background) is a humorous

BOOKS

1992, 337 pp., illus., 16 x 24 cm ISBN 92-3-102642-9

Millennium (988-1988)

Christianization of Ancient Russia

who works in the house. He feels passionate for her even though the latter comes from a lower social class. However, one day she was crying, for which the author thought that she had been seduced by someone. And he starts avoiding her as best he can However, at the end of the story, he comes to know that it was not seduction any man but by an insect that got inside her ear, for which she cried. The 'short' story is an enjoyable "Nirlajja" (shameless) is

written by Kasem Anis. The story is based on social consciousness. Rabeya, a middleaged maid-servant, marries again and again. It so happens that her sons find their father younger than they. The story throws light on the point that at times the fathers of the bridegrooms in society trade on marriage. The point that Rabeya feels no shame in marrying repeatedly, is driven home satirically in the story. Kalim Ahmed's "Harano Swapno" (lost dream) is a pathetic story of a woman who lost her husband. Her loving husband died while fighting in the Liberation war. Now she has only one son around whom she has centred her dreams. But he also dies in the campus violence of Dhaka University. In the story, a terrible conflict between the demands of the individual and those of the state, has been given a serious treatment.

"Kaushal" (technique) is about the stranded Pakistani people. A poignant sense of loss of identity is expressed by the characters. However, the story is not merely concerned with the problem of national identity only, it also manifests the private emotions of a housewife for her husband.

However, on the whole "Bangladesher Urdu Chhoto Galpa" is a readable book. The readership must encourage the writers to write more and

### Eric Rohmer: The Colourist Continued from page 10

and his bonze-like lined face. those close to him describe him as an ascete who mainly lives on tea and crackers, but also as a rigorist combined with an eccentric.

Tears of Joy: Murshida Arzu Alpana

He has been called 'the watercolourist of the wanderings of the heart and mind" and "the colourist of the games of love and chance." "I attempt to describe beings as they are," the film-maker, who has always been fascinated by young The influence of Christianity | women, replies simply. Their torments in love have

> always dominated Rohmer's world. From film to film, he has described the whole palette of them : passion-love, reason-love, friendship-love, etc. His important films showing this include "Ma nuit chez Maude" (1969), "Le genou de Claire" (1970), "L'amour l'apres-midi" (1972), "La Femme de l'Aviateur" (1981), "Pauline a la plage" (1983), "Les Nuits de pleine lune" (1984), "Quatre aventures de Reinette et Mirabelle" (1987), and "L' amt de mon amte."

Rohmer's Little Music With a subtle scalpel,

Rohmer explores the intimate datly lives of his heroines. He sounds their little secrets and all the nuances of their feelings, from moral rigour in some to libertine temptations in others. The men are generally only there to set off the

Violence, abject poverty and death rarely have their place in the work of this director who goes against fashionable trends. "Spectacular and extreme situations do not interest me," he refterates. "Society is, above all, made up of ordinary people that the papers do not speak about. They are the ones who attract me. I like to translate what makes them tick, into pictures."

His actors, who are unknown or beginners, seem to live their own lives on the screen. He has them speak ev-

A new film by Eric Rohmer is always an event for cinema-lovers as, despite its reduced audience, his work is greatly considered as among the most important in French cinema. Playing in French auditoriums

recently, his "Conte

no exception.

eryday language. There are few carefully prepared dialogues but, on the contrary, frequent improvisation during filming.

Hence the tone of authenticity and truth which characterizes "Rohmer's little music" that the critics speak of. It is a bitter-sweet music, tinted with humour and producing emotion which leaves one charmed, as with "Le Conte d'Hiver" for which he got the idea from Shakespeare.

The film begins with the last moments of a holiday love affair. Felicie, a young Paris hairdresser, gives her address to Charles whom she has loved passionately for a few weeks.

In her emotion, she makes a slip and confuses the names of

two towns in the suburbs, so that the lovers are unable to get in touch with each other.

Years go by, Felicie brings up her little girl born of her love affair with Charles. She has affairs with other men, but only one matters, the one she has lost. Against all likelihood, she remains convinced that she will find him again. And then, one day, in the midst of an anonymous crowd on a bus.....

The moral of the story, for d'Hiver" (Winter's Tale) is Rohmer's tales always have one, is that one should believe

### CORRECTION We regret that in the ar-

ticle, "A Book Fair with an

Impact and Purpose", Mr

in unexpected wonders. It is

not the first time that the film-

maker tackles the theme of

wonders. It was already the

case in "Le Rayon Vert" which

won him the "Golden Lion" at

proach him the melodramatic

aspect of the ending to "Le

Conte d'Hiver." The director

answers: The miracle took

over during filming and I did

not want to change anything.

Moreover, isn't life often a

melodrama?"

Critics did not fail to re-

the Venice Biennale in 1988.

Mustafizur Rahman who has translated the book, "Of Blood and Fire" by Jahanara lmam, from Bengali to English, was inadvertently mentioned as the 'present Foreign Minister of Bangladesh". Mr Rahman, the translator in question, is at present the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Russia. Before taking up his present, assignment, Rahman, a career diplomat, was the Additional Foreign Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh. We apologise for the error. - Editor

#### rounding the Christianization of Rus', as known in ancient times, the spread of the Christian message, its significant influence in Russian culture and society and, more recently, the Russian Orthodox Church's contribution to the ecumenical movement. At a time of change, when history seems to accelerate its pace in that part of the world, this book brings new insight into the sources of the mystic hu-

thought. Contents include: Christianity reaches Klev and Rus', the sources: The world of Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria and its transmission to Kievan Rus'; the baptism of Prince Valdimir and

manism that permeates

Russian philosophy and

Christianity; the role of Christianization in the assimilation by Kievan Rus' of the Classical and Byzanitine heritage; the religious achievements of Yaroslav the Wise.

the conversion of Rus' to

Christianity, art and culture: Macedonia, Serbia and Russian medieval art; the development architecture and art in Western Rus': the evolution of

Russian ecclesiastical architecture in the seventeenth century: the Byzantine origins of medieval sacred music in Kievan Rus'; the role of the book in the Christianization of Rus.

The theme of 'Holy Russia': The gift and enigma of Holy Russia', its genesis and permanence; the image of Russian Christianity in the West.

on the cultural and spiritual development of society; the Russian Orthodox Church: past and present; atheism and reli-

Christianity and society:

Interchurch relations yesterday and today: The Russian Orthodox Church in the Ukraine and its ties with the Christian East; ecclesiastical and cultural relations with Romania; the Russian Orthodox Church and the ecumenical movement.

Also published in French