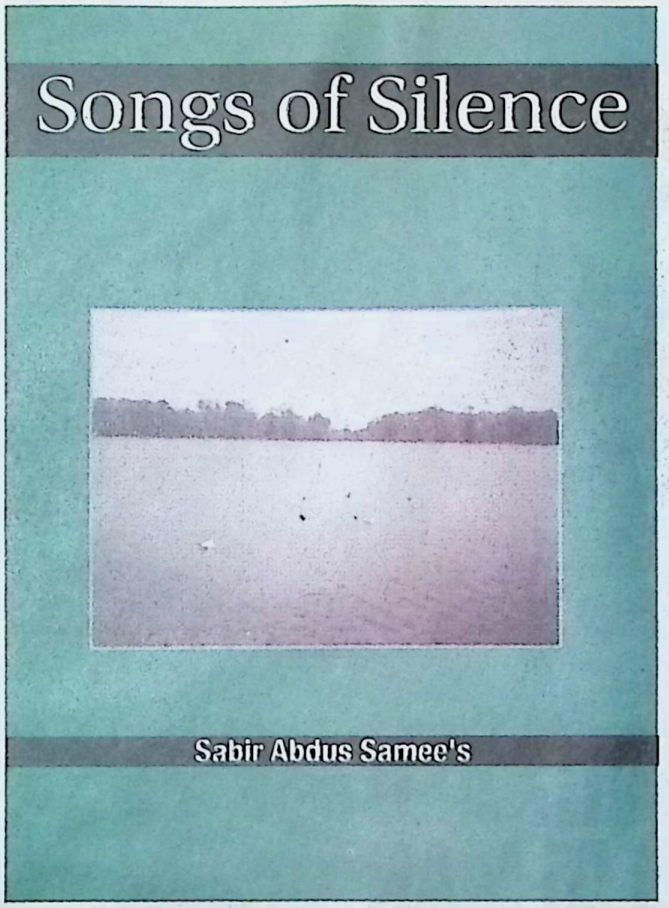


Hafsa Bintey Faruq

LITERATURE is a field that deals with human mind and emotions. Many Bangladeshi writers feel that Bengali is one of the very few languages of the world which can truly express emotion. Thus, in Bangladesh most writers feel comfortable expressing their thoughts in Bengali. For this reason, it is difficult to find English writings by Bangladeshi writers. However, exceptions are always there, and one such exception would be Sabir Abdus Samee's poetry book *Songs of Silence*.

Published in February 2006, *Songs of Silence* contains poems written at different moments, with various emotions working behind them. Obviously these poems belong to categories such as love, angst, hate, sad, personal, etc., are full of diversity. They speak of freedom fighters, lovers and also of a heart devoted to near and dear ones. Apart from that, *Songs of Silence* also contains some intensely thought provoking pieces that can leave the readers musing about the reality of life.

Poems such as "The Rising of Millions" and "Of Blood and Fire" are sincere tributes to the Bangladeshi freedom fighters of our Independence War. In the poem "On the Bank of the River Bug", the speaker, a German company commandant, is found forsaking his personal desires for the sake of responsibility. The poem "Give Me My Right" provides a different tone where the speaker is asking for his rights.

A big portion of *Songs of Silence* contains poems that show the many sides of love. Among the poems that deal with love, a striking piece is "Mr. Burger and Miss Sandwich". This is striking for its title and the subject matter, which shows the untrustworthiness and careless attitude of modern relationships. Another interesting and thought-provoking piece on love is 'The Limitations of a Modern Man", which exposes the reality of the world to a lover and conveys the message that modern man is not allowed to do whatever he wishes to.

Besides these two, there are love poems that are hopeful. Some mention worthy names are, "Yes", "Frozen", "To Ophelia from Hamlet", "Thoughts of a Rainy Dawn", etc. Poems such as "Little Brave" and "For the American Queen" are akin to invitation to the beloved to accept the proposal of the speaker. The poem "Realization" is a simple confession of love whereas the short and sweet "A Verse" assures of the relationship between friends.

The poem "The Only Red Apple" is provokes wander by alluding to Shakespeare's play. There are personal poems in the book, such as "A Gift for the Goddess", "Reunion", Rose of Arabia" and "Beauty of Tunisia". Though these are personal pieces, the readers can easily relate to these poems.

The poem "Thoughts of a Dying Child" is a sad and very touching poem, as is the poem "Bluish Death". Both the poems are similar in that they deal about death -- the first one shows the death of a child and the latter is about a pilot's death.

The poems "Good Bye and Good Night Sweet Bengal", "One British Summer Night" and "A Poem for a Princess" must also be mentioned for their distinctive themes and for the emotions and thoughts that worked behind them.

The book *Songs of Silence* is different because it tries to uphold the problems of modern life, definitely not an easy task. It also shows the happiness and sadness of life, such as meeting a dear one or losing a loved one forever. This book gives the readers an insight tp love and hate, to passion and emotion.

Songs of Silence is a good companion at leisure hours. It is a book that should be in the collection of poetry lovers. This book proves the author Sabir Abdus Samee, a Lecturer of English at Manarat International University, as a talented writer who is expected to come up with more writings in near future.

Songs of Silence
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