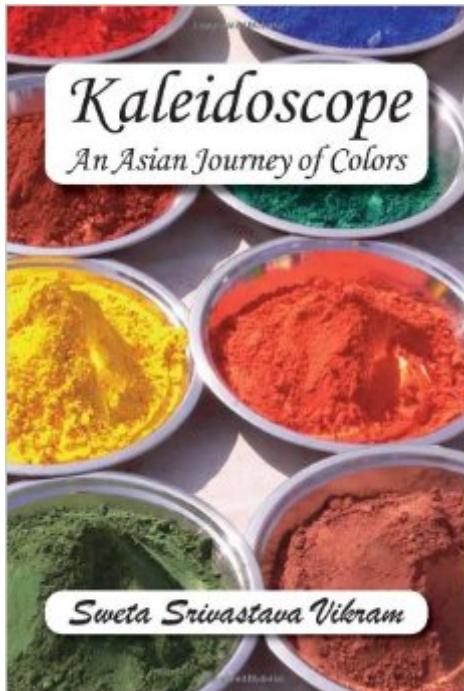


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Kaleidoscope: An Asian Journey Of Colors (World Voices)



Synopsis

About the Author Sweta Srivastava Vikram is a multi-genre writer and marketing professional living in New York City. She is the author of *Because All Is Not Lost* from Modern History Press and the co-author of *Whispering Woes of Ganges & Zambezi* (Cyberwit 2010). Her work has appeared in six countries across three continents. Sweta has held recent artist residencies and workshops in Portugal, Ireland, and several within USA. She is a graduate of Columbia University. "In this innovative series, Sweta Srivastava Vikram re-appropriates color. Cultures and mythologies collide along the way, and the result is a chapbook that feels like a quest. In the end, the colors are a map to identity. The child's pink tonsils or the bride's red sari are not symbols, but rather mile markers. Like Vikram's poems, they lead toward understanding" --Erica Wright, Senior Poetry Editor, *Guernica* About the Chapbook The book delves into the implication and philosophy of colors from a Hindu woman's point of view, from birth until death. The color she adorns herself with almost depicts the story of her life. Expressed through different poetic and verbal forms, each color in the book has its own tone and is specific to different age groups. Learn more at www.SwetaVikram.com From the World Voices Series at Modern History Press www.ModernHistoryPress.com

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Customer Reviews

This slim chapbook is a quick bite. Poems appear and disappear in the blink of an eye, but linger in consciousness longer than you might think they would. The use of colors is fascinating to the desi

mind; we, as one poem remarks, "exist in a hue of experiences."

I am in love with "Kaleidoscope." Each poem excites more than the last one read. What a gifted poet you are. "The Color of Conception," "Reflecting on Iridescence in Mama's Wardrobe," just wonderful. And yet, it's hard to pick just two out of the whole offering. Bravo.

Sweta Srivastava Vikram has had another of her poetry collection published recently called *Kaleidoscope An Asian Journey of Colours*. The Chapbook is made special by the amazing idea behind the poems. Sweta tells the reader the story of color that has the pleasure and pain of growing up, of love and of desire and also of the death of these transient phases, gradually like a raisin but even in death life has a colour. Sweta's verses lure the readers into the mythical world of Gods and Goddesses and the birth of the color in the beginning of the book. 'Few suns ago, Latin, the goblet of romantic lexis created a recipe for color and poured it into verbal-moulds so the echo could traverse the human orifice, the Ganges' and then slowly the poems take a life of their own and although the words are still sweet, the images and metaphors innocent, a sense of forboding looms. My marigold heart, a few kisses old, echoes the thunder and confesses to the transient spell of beauty, tulips - "Me knows, he wasn't a blunder." Each color tells a different story within the story of the extraordinary life of an Asian Woman. Red and yellow tells of puberty and wedding, pink of innocent virginity, brown of chocolate of desire, blue when the rocks take her down and 'A smile adorns my visage, an embalmed cadaver rotting from the inside. Societal worms laying maggots in my soul and gnawing on them until I relinquish all desire. I am sixty, not dead; not beige, color me red.' The most outstanding of all the poems in the book is 'Reflecting on Iridescence in Mama's Wardrobe' It has the gaiety of a toddler and frivolousness of innocence, same in youth and same in death. The last para sums it all up quiet aptly when the author says she hid behind mother's black saree and 'I'm ready for the next destination' as in life we come from our mother's womb so in death we go back to where we came from and 'Shades halt narration.' Sweta has woven such a spell with her word usage and the symbolisms that the most complex becomes the simplest of all, just as all colors when mixed, end up being just black. The end that Sweta narrates is not gloomy but something mysterious where words fail to convey meaning. A fantastic read for sure for the lovers of poetry. Smita Singh VAANIÂ *Kaleidoscope: An Asian Journey of Colors*

"Colors are the smiles of nature." ~Leigh Hunt Having recently interviewed Sweta Srivastava Vikram on my blog, Suko's Notebook, after having read *Because All is Not Lost*, I was thrilled by the

opportunity to review her new book of poems, *Kaleidoscope: An Asian Journey of Colors*. In the introduction of *Kaleidoscope*, the author says that her book, part of the World Voices Series, "delves into the implication and philosophy of colors from a Hindu woman's point of view", and that "the color she adorns herself with almost depicts the story of her life". The colors of an Indian woman's wardrobe are certainly significant; they represent her emotional state and thoughts. For example, the color red means marriage, green indicates conception, and white signifies widowhood. In the poem "Reflecting on Iridescence in Mama's Wardrobe", the author uses the colors of a sari, from pink to black, to depict the various stages of life from youth until death. The golden warmth of the third stanza is palpable: "I hid under mama's yellow sari, warm, as the sunrays at dawn, so I could lose myself to words, write an ode to daffodils, and pretend I was Wordsworth." While I am not Hindu, I'm particular when it comes to the color of my clothing, too. During the hot months of summer I tend to wear white, but since it was mild this year I wore blouses in the colors that I find most appealing, bright blues such as cobalt, turquoise, and purples; I rarely wear neutral colored tops because they feel too drab. I'm drawn to certain colors in clothing, and recognize the power of color to influence my mood and outlook. This chapbook goes beyond wardrobe colors, though, and mentions color in a myriad of other ways, directly and indirectly, citing her "soft lungs" and the "skies of London". Each verse is beautifully crafted, expressed in a variety of poetic and verbal forms. I dove into this book of poems quickly and eagerly, then slowed down to savor the words and the images, marveling over Sweta Srivastava Vikram's unique mix of grace, humor, and eloquence, which forms a medley of beauty and color.

It is said that the human eye can identify approximately 10 million different shades of color. Yet how we perceive color depends upon our subjective experiences as well as the wavelength of light. It is no wonder then that Sweta Srivastava Vikram's *Kaleidoscope: An Asian Journey of Colors* uses a dazzling spectrum as a meeting point between reader and poet to share the most intimate and human of experiences. Each poem captures authentic emotion that makes Sweta's words so accessible to the modern reader. Essentially, *Kaleidoscope* is a marriage of ideas and moments that whisper its punch lines and allows the brevity of language to carry the full emotional impact long after the poem has finished. From a young girl's charming innocence (When daddy tells me grandpa is a star in the sky....I take out my Wonder woman transport..., and ride through optimism to bring him back) to a middle aged woman's defiance (colour me red), this chapbook is the dazzling display of a poet who teases us with fresh imagery and delicate linguistic craftsmanship. The result is a stunning array of 19 poems that transcends the singularities of ethnic identity.

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