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**Title of the book:** *Sukamaa and other Poems*  
**Author:** Dr. NandiniSahu  
**Publisher:** Gurgaon: The Poetry Society of India  
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**Price:** Rs 150/-  
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NandiniSahu's *Sukamaa and Other Poems*, her fourth poetry collection, is expressive of her emotional journey juxtaposed with her progressive outlook. She not only expresses concern for the subjugated mass but also pours her motherly love in her approach as a woman. This collection explores every essence of a woman as a grand-daughter, daughter, sister, lover and mother. Her poetry consistently engages with the humanistic deliberations.

Dedicating her first poem to Sukamaa, a tribal woman who was her family's domestic help and foster mother, she lays bare the real India, of deprived, downtrodden and the subaltern. Dabbling between the past and the present her personal self is in complete symbiosis with her poetic self. At times she is conscious of her poetic gift to express her agony and anxiety of being a woman and at the same time she is reminded of her social responsibility. To her, every subjective expression is also an expression of human life. There are also two interesting poems on poetry and the process of creation. The other poems address varied themes and try to capture different moods. For the poet the poetry is the soul of her identity, an expression of her inner self that empowers her to be 'the unacknowledged legislator of the world!' She is proud of her lineage; she asserts her heritage. She relives her sweet and glorious memories in her poetry; reminiscence of her familial and cultural past add flavor to her poetry. She celebrates each of her humble life through her literary expression. She would offer her love and affection to her beloved and the kinsfolk in the poetic bouquet. Being an Odia writing in English, she expresses her gratitude to both the languages in her confessional poem 'Bridge-in-Making':

Odia is to think, feel, dream and  
To be my funeral pyre. English, to me  
Is my garland and my sword, my sole refuge. (Bridge-in-Making)

She recollects her childhood days spent in the midst of a natural atmosphere. Through the poem 'Odisha Landscape' she is rejuvenated and reminded of the beauty and fragrance of its natural atmosphere, glow of the river, aroma of the native food, its cultural essence. The familial and the cultural past of the poet rings in her poetry as a social reformer. She delves deep into the social and cultural norms to examine and at times to question them with her progressive ideas. She knows her poetic limit and her poetic gift as well. In the current of two extremes as if she is in a balancing state. She is certain of her every endeavourer how to use her poetic gift.

Pen driven, my poems are  
 The modest human document  
 of a social panorama.  
 We are discourse-dominated or  
 mimesis-dominated—  
 Just Muses would reign.(The Other Side of Silence)

Her imagination is at best when she juxtaposes the real with imaginary. Poetry makes her to connect to every natural element she adores. The sun, the moon, the howling clouds and moonlit night are missed in her poetic expression. For her pursuing any dream is like 'Chasing the Mirage' and there is every possibility of dreams to tremble .

Life hangs on  
 Like lone thorny tree, dry,  
 Standing all alone  
 On the distant horizon of the desert  
 Spoofing the dappled sky.(Chasing the Mirage)

Having witnessed many highs and lows in her personal life, her mind is dithering for many positive options in life. She is hopeful of a better human life with a positive frame of mind. The poet has an itinerary quest. Her visit to many places of India and the world enable her to write more of the beautiful places that she is inspired by. In the poems like 'One night, In Another City', 'In the Andamans' and 'Growing up amid the Ruins and the Rains', her poetic self takes refuge again and again in these places.

I dreamed of a place  
 where we would be  
 peasants in the morning  
 parents in the evening  
 and poets in the night.(In the Andamans)

The poet seemingly empathises the poor and the disadvantaged people, especially women. Starting from the poem 'Sukamaa' to the 'Song of a Kondh Woman', the poems have captured the subtle nuances of the poet's life which shaped up her personality. Ringing through the themes of the poems her feminine tenderness comes as a rescue for the marginalized woman. The poems have vividly portrayed the poet's moods and feelings of the human life in varied conditions. The poems in this collection deal with some of basic issues of a woman's psychic and bodily growth, at the same time she provides kaleidoscopic details of the natural as well as cultural nuances of a diverse India. There is an unusual blend of the naïve and the sentimentalist in this collection. With her eclectic approach, the poet ushers in the imaginative as well as a visionary world.

Marked by the vivid imagery and apt vocabulary, her poems have the capacity to engross and sometimes enthrall the poetry lovers. The lyrical sense and the natural rhythms are at best along with a subtle message. With robust optimism these poems have strong social

implications. Recollection, nostalgic memories, the existential questions of life and sense of cultural awareness dwell on the thematic concerns of the poems. Like Sukamaa, her poems are ever nurturing and creating 'a symphony of time and place' and celebrate every moment of womanhood with élan.