

**Review of *The Rock and Other Poems* by Dr. Ezzat Khattab:
A Modest Attempt at Understanding the Great Work**

By: Naela Danish

Reading *The Rock and Other Poems* is like opening the almanac. Conversely, instead of finding the usual divisions of an almanac, into the four seasons of spring, autumn, winter and summer, this book's divisions are spread out like one long incessant and magnificent experience of the spring season. The reading of one section after another is in fact a never-ending, indefatigable and an invigorating comprehension of the beautiful insights from which the reader can partake all he likes without ever exhausting the fountainhead. The book "affords that beauty which others die to command," (The Rich, 32).

The title of the book is well thought of. In the e-world of today, when things change overnight, the stability of human relations, the authenticity of experience, the opulence of expression is momentous and concrete at the same time, being supported by the firm strength of the ROCK. The gossamer thoughts are arranged in harmonization of the strength of tangible emotions and words which are steadily balanced by "The Rock". The polarities are factual and fantastic at the same time. The poet knows that the quicksilver self is never static and the world isn't either. Each manifestation, he knows, is as true as the next and this is what impresses the readers' mental agility eventually.

The effect of the poems on the human psyche is one of re-fortifying a firm faith in the constancy and steadiness of our otherwise thwarted existence! With each poem, then, there seems to be a promise of a new beginning, some hope for the persona, only to keep us from staggering when we realize that this is another incarnation of the same harsh reality which makes the world go around. Arranging the poems and the illustrations therein with an awareness, that diversity can be a source of unity, seems to be the forte of Dr. Khattab.

The fine blend of objectivity and subjectivity is exceptionally palpable. Even when the readers feel that the poet is sharing some personal moments, they will still find enough space for themselves to squeeze in and call the moment their very own — a

moment or an experience they had always sensed BUT had never before found articulated so effectively and beautifully.....

The totality of the experience is tantamount to having an exhilarating experience of going around the world of memories, nostalgia and reminiscences in a few secure leaps and living an enriching moment like never before..... Although technically speaking, this work is a maiden attempt of the poet; nevertheless, it establishes him as a masterful poet of repute: a postmodernist Frost, Yeats or an Eliot, whose near perfect reverberations expressively and effectively act as the sounding board of the pulse of the people!

