

Kesar Lall's poems are as fresh as he is unpretentious

Ageless wonder

Kesar Lall has spent most of his writing life documenting the lives of others and collecting their folk tales. Many of his admirers have hoped for some time that he would turn inwards, and address his own background and experiences. These poetic *Reflections*, released by the prolific Vajra Publications, are a partial window into his thoughts. And what modest and honest



REVIEW
Mark Turin

thoughts they are. This collection of 127 of Lall's poems, with an

appealing introduction by Don Messerschmidt and a candid cover photo by Kumar Ale, is as much a pleasure to read as it appears to have been a pleasure for Kesar Lall to write.

At 81, Lall appears more unstoppable than ever. At a recent meeting, he showed me collections of folders with drafts of his ongoing projects: prose, poetry, translations, and more. What's more, he writes for himself, for his own happiness, not to please others.

The simple profundity of Lall's words and his unpretentious sentiments are inspiring, and serve as a reminder that not all good writers have to be tortured or miserable. "An open mind without pride and prejudice is a blessing," Kesar Lall writes in his preface, and he himself has been blessed with both. The sentiments he captures, particularly regarding changing seasons, convey the joy and wonder of a child:

Summer is a season I've sorely missed
In my reckoning until once in June
I looked out and found it at my doorstep.

Or:

A summer's growth holds my home
In close embrace, denying me
A view of the neighbourhood.

Lall frequently returns to his mortality and self-worth, taking stock of life's experiences and challenges:

But I would love to leave my little place
Lovelier than when I had found it
When I leave forever.

And:

Once I lent my hands
To my little child

To walk across the street.
Now he has paid me back.
He gave me his hand
To go from room to room.

The sensuality of nature and of women are recurring themes, sometimes overlapping, as in:

One night, through a half open window,
I caught the moon
Shamelessly looking
At a women on her bed, dreaming.

Although ostensibly apolitical, some of Lall's poems exhibit shrewdness about the temporal nature of power:

A man who longs to be remembered
Long after his death
Is oft forgotten before he is gone.

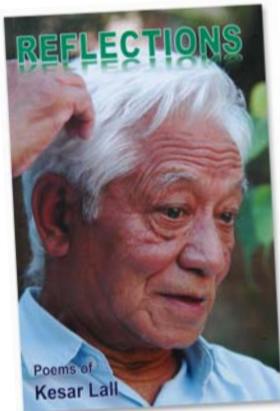
But enough abstraction and analysis, let his poems speak for themselves. Two of my particular favourites are:

Precious little moments
Give a garland of memories to wear
To him who dares to dream...

And

A piece of charcoal
Is all I can think of
To compare myself with
At this late hour.
Yet it might still be used
If one has the skill
To draw a picture of my life.

Mark Turin, PhD, is a linguistic anthropologist and director of the Digital Himalaya Project (www.digitalhimalaya.com).



Reflections: Poems.
Kesar Lall. 2006.
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Hip turn

Getting your golf swing right

In every sport, achieving better results means mastering a combination of components. Most golfers I've seen have common problems. Either they lack a shoulder turn on the back swing, don't drop the right shoulder as they downswing, or rotate their hips through the shot.

The trick is to first turn the shoulders to 90 degrees. And as you reach the top of the back swing, drop your right shoulder, followed by the hip turn. With this move perfected, you have more chances of hitting the ball solid.



TEE BREAK
Deepak Acharya

seemingly effortlessly. This is because pros use their bigger shoulder and hip muscles to hit the ball whereas club golfers just use their hands.

Now there are few checkpoints to mimic the pros. On the back swing, turn your shoulders until your left shoulder touches your chin. At this point your hands shouldn't be higher than the height of your shoulder, to avoid over swinging.

However, remember to keep the shaft of the ball parallel to the target at the top of the back swing to ensure a solid angle of attack. Then on the downswing start by dropping the right shoulder followed by the hip turn while keeping both hands straight before taking the swing up to the finishing position.

With this move, besides getting the clubface square while hitting the ball, you generate more power and swing speed. That's what I'd call a real swing. ●



Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu.

Art of the senses



NARESH NEWAR

As a young art student at the Sir JJ School of Art in India, Shobha Adhikari Wagley was so affected by the misery of Mumbai's homeless and slum dwellers, she says her own perspective on life changed permanently. The artist's new show, titled *Sense Awareness*, showcases new works in her distinctive, constantly evolving semi-figurative style.

"You see life and something clicks, you get inspired," says Wagley, whose paintings are said to explore the impact a state of mind can have on the senses. Wagley says it took her seven years to refine this idea and develop a style and techniques that helped her explore the connection between patterns of thinking and behaviour. She is especially fascinated by how the mind can be manipulated.

Wagley is first and foremost an artist, not an activist or spiritual leader, but she says she hopes her work can help people become self-aware, and realise how destructive ways of thinking can lead to abusive actions, and the mind of a single person can be dangerous to millions of people around him.

Wagley shot to critical acclaim in 1994, when her solo exhibition in the UK garnered raves for paintings such as *Sense's Awareness*, and *Inner Reality*. She has had solo shows in the USA, Japan and, of course, Kathmandu, and represented Nepal in group exhibitions in India, Tibet, Bangladesh, Korea, Japan, and France. Her paintings are in permanent collections at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan and the Birendra Contemporary Art Museum in Kathmandu, and in private Nepali and foreign collections in ten countries.

"I still feel that Nepalis need to be more exposed to different kinds of art, and challenged by styles that they are unfamiliar with," Wagley says. Her new exhibition, which opens on 12 November, at Imago Dei Café in Nag Pokhari, will do just that. ●

Naresh Newar

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