

**CREATING RE-CREATION: A BOOK REVIEW****DANIELLE HANSON'S SIGHTLINES ON  
SUSHEEL KUMAR SHARMA'S "THE DOOR IS HALF-OPEN"****Dr. E. Ram Bhaskar Raju**Asst. Professor of English, Department of English  
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"When the flower blooms, the bees come uninvited" – Ramakrishna Paramahansa

John Keats's close friend Charles Armitage Brown once said, "I'm of the school that no publicity is bad publicity." He continued, "If a book is worth its salt, it's going to attract attention, good and bad." A critical review that is sufficiently harsh could encourage readers to read the work and form their own opinions, even though it might temporarily bruise the author's pride.

**About Susheel Kumar Sharma**

Author, poet, and critic Prof. Susheel Kumar Sharma (born 1962) works at the University of Allahabad's Department of English & Modern European Languages in Prayag Raj, India. G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology at Pantnagar, I. K. S. University in Khairagarh, and Chitrakoot were his teaching institutes. He published works by James Joyce, John Milton, Samuel Johnson, Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats, D. H. Lawrence, George Orwell, Sandra Lunnon, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Rabindranath Tagore, Arun Joshi, and Anurag Mathur in prestigious magazines and anthologies. Prof. Sharma writes authentic research papers. He is a happy man who enjoys studying literature and social issues and being with like-minded peers. Occasionally spends time, energy, and resources pleasing his kind and humanity. Prof. Sharma occasionally writes and critiques poetry.

**About the Book: "Sightlines"**

"Sightlines", published by Paragon International Press in 2024, is a delightful sonata of interviews and essays about Susheel Kumar Sharma's poetry collection "The Door is Half-Open." It has been expertly put together by Danielle Hanson, a well-known poet and editor from the United States who teaches poetry at the University of California, Irvine. This collection of essays uses Sharma's work as a starting place to talk about mythology, literature, philosophy, and the roles of humans in the past and present. Everyone will find something useful in this book, from poets and writers to critics and students of Indian poems written in English. It is a collection of pictures made from feelings sparked by everyday things in this beautiful world.

**About the Editor Danielle Hanson**

Poetry is something that Danielle, editor of *Sightlines*, loves to share both in person and online. Danielle entertains and touches readers with elegant restraint, fascinating metaphors, and amusing language in her work. While painting a fantasy vision, she also provides what appears to be a plausible explanation. Her brief epigrammatic poems paint a

more vivid picture of her travels than the extensive works of most authors. With her spectacle of literary zeal, she can produce and enable amazement, and she is glad to edit *Sightlines*. Prof. Kapil Kapoor, an Indian scholar of history, linguistics, and literature who also happens to be an authority on Indian intellectual traditions and a recipient of the Padma Bhushan (2023) award, has praised Sharma's poetry, calling it "a kind of watershed poetry" that breaks away from conventional frameworks and establishes resonant Indian structures. Kapoor says that Sharma's poems are profound reflections of an earnest Indian mind, elevating ordinary objects and events to heights of verbalized emotions. Another point of discussion from Chris Wharton of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA, is the volume's blurb, which highlights Sharma's poems of praise and protest for Indian social tensions like modernity versus tradition, preservation of the environment and the holy Ganges, India's streets and natural spaces, and belief traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity.

Assuming it succeeds in attracting readers, the title "The Door is Half Open" is commendable. There are a lot of presumptions regarding the proper interpretation of *The Door is Half Open* in these reviews. Most of the interviews and articles included in the book were published in other journals at various times. This book's review pieces span a broad variety of subjects. As editor Danielle so eloquently says, poetry truly comes to life when it zeroes in on a specific feeling, concept, or time. The poet and the reader can delve deeper into a particular aspect when concentrating on it. Through its focus on minutiae, poetry reveals the ultimate truth. As a poet, Sharma shines here. In his quest to understand our common humanity, he follows a river, a personal story, a historical event, and a mango. This literary offspring takes it a notch further by analyzing a single poem by poet Sharma to delve into politics, thoughts, writing, the beginnings of religion and philosophy in mankind, and the connections between authors from different nations and eras. It is possible to read this book as both a poem and a collection of poetry. This volume finds four interviews with Sharma and reviews of his second poetry collection, "The Door is Half Open." Contributions from esteemed academic journals, writers, and editors of several of the articles that make up this collection help to assemble it.

This is where my job as an editor of the collection "*Sightlines: Viewpoints on Susheel Kumar Sharma's 'The Door is Half Open'*" comes into play! As a passionate reviewer of "Sightlines", I am humbled to place my honest thanks on record to Madam Danielle Hanson's insightful editing. I acknowledge the significance of reading and understanding the scholarly work that has concentrated on Sharma's poetry to undertake the honourable task of writing a book review.

### **Academic Articles**

Even though not everyone possesses the esoteric knowledge necessary to write about poetry, poetry reviews provide an opportunity to analyse a piece of literature or performance, express one's feelings about it, and explain why. Through these reviews, one can gain insight into the poet's thought process, the importance of their work, as well as one's own biases, interests, and preferences. All the same, poetry reviews allow one to be heard in a larger poetry community and have one's opinions evaluated by other readers.

Poems often incorporate human viewpoints and experiences into their writing, and a good poetry review should aim to educate the reader, provide helpful context, and draw conclusions based on solid research. Poetry is a metrical discourse that uses structures like

verse, lyrics, and rhythm to create beautiful sentences. Poetry can use these devices to inform, entertain, convince, or even satirize.

Poetry reviews are essential because they help keep poetry alive as an art form. Publishing high-quality poetry and constantly redefining what constitutes good poetry is necessary for our culture's well-being. Book reviews of poetry should take the lead in this regard. Reviewing poetry enhances the reading experience. A reader unfamiliar with the poems can learn a lot from the thoughts and observations of a writer who is insightful, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic about the poetry. Poetry is better off when it gets critical criticism. It's just as important to disagree with an example as it is to praise its achievements.

### Research Articles

Arbind Kumar Choudhary of Assam, India, in his article, "Poetic Flavour by Susheel Kumar Sharma", observes that the poet is courting Indian cultural icons while also painting a peaceful and touching picture of the iridescence of nature. Due to his unfaltering commitment to spirituality rather than worldliness, Sharma is a literary infantry member who excels in both English and Indian English poetry, blending indigenous language with mythological messiahs in a manner that no other Indian English poet has managed. He assists Tom, Dick, and Harry while mocking dowry and butchery.

The essay dissects Susheel Kumar Sharma's *The Door is Half Open* as a spiritual quest for human knowledge. The poet, in his role as a nomad, rediscovers Indian mythology, culture, and scriptures to shed light on the multifaceted nature of life and to show how one might live differently in a materialistic world. The essay encourages readers to "escape" this "decline" by embarking on a transcendental journey, and it also demonstrates how the poet used the terms "self" and "sublime" in his poem. The authors, Binod Mishra and Rangnath Thakur of India's IIT Roorkee focus on "Sojourn of Collective Consciousness".

Susheel Kumar Sharma's *From the Core Within* (1999) and *The Door is Half Open* (2012), which depict the poet as a God-follower and transcendentalist, are used in Hyderabad-based Damodar Gurrapu's study to explore modernization through tradition issues. He emphasizes the Indian influence on Sharma's poetry while bridging the Eastern and Western worlds, noting that Sharma writes eclectic poetry that blends Indian mythology, ecology, social issues, and psychology. The poet emphasizes the mythological and scientific significance of the Ganges as a river of release that must be cleaned in his call for poetic justice. He considers (a) an ideal state free from corruption, pollution, and degradation and (b) moral concepts that enhance Indian culture, like "*Vasudhaiv Kutumba*" (the world is a family).

According to Kalikinkar Pattanayak, an Odishan native who studied the "Poetry of the Green, two of the finest environmental poems are "Thoughts in a Garden" by Andrew Marvell and "Mangoes" by Susheel Kumar Sharma". In the former, the poets reflect on civilization, nature, and humanity; in the latter, they contemplate the various uses of mango stones, leaves, fruits, and timber; in the former, they admire nature; in the latter, they seek out a cow and herder; in contrast, Marvell investigates society, a garden, and paradise. In environmental studies, both Sharma and Marvell concentrate on the ongoing relationship

between humans and nature, highlighting how nature aids, counsels, and teaches; they concur that nature aids, guides, and teaches.

An analysis of ecological creation versus construction is presented in Manju Jaidka's poetry collection "For Reasons Unknown," Professor Susheel Kumar Sharma's *The Door is Half Open* teaches sensitive readers about humanity and the environment. In a different article focused on Ecological Perspectives, Kalikinkar Pattanayak states that poetry, particularly ecological poetry, must be spoken in a war-torn world.

In her analysis, Karen J. Head lays out the poems in a way that makes them coherent and demonstrates how they employ epic conventions and tradition. She presents the "Echoes of the Odyssey from *The Door is Half Open*," a fragmented epic in which the scholar-poet portrays the legendary Greek hero Odysseus. In Sharma's "epic," the protagonist travels to the United States and the United Kingdom but consistently returns to India and the Ganges. Referring to Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist faiths, the "epic" promotes reconciliation.

William Wordsworth, an English Romantic poet from the 19th century, and Susheel Kumar Sharma, an Indian English poet, both write about the environment. This essay examines how their two greatest poems, "Tintern Abbey" and "Ganga Mata - A Prayer," reflect nature and civilization. Mary Mohanty, a poet from Puri, Odisha, investigates the natural eco-sphere and the man-made techno-sphere, which have long worried sensitive poets. From her vantage point, the Anthropocene, she compares the concerns of a Western poet at the start of the environmental crisis with those of an Eastern poet amid the crisis, when the damage is incalculable.

*The Door is Half Open* by Susheel Sharma can revive everyone on Earth. Sharma's protest poetry addresses indifference, inequality, inhumanity, brutality, and ecological injustice in today's civilization. Sharma criticizes society's harsh treatment of women and worries about their modesty. The poet's faith in God protects him from evil, but how exactly does that protection work? Sharma quotes important Sanskrit texts to illustrate the journey from invocation to freedom and how devotion drives a fulfilled existence. N.S.R. Ayengar, an Odishan, examines the spiritual, intellectual, and emotional pain of creative artists as social beings and Sharma's poetical creative consciousness, previously described as "Poetry of Protest".

Natasa Miladinovic, a Serbian by birth and a published poet, opines that taking cues from ancient spiritual to modern-day liberation perspectives, her article reflects upon the symbolic meanings of doors, threshold, water, consciousness, (vicious) circle of life and death, good and evil. Several theories of archetypes are considered to reach a coherent meaning involving doors across different religious sects that find an expression in Susheel Kumar Sharma's poetry. The door may stand for an entrance; an exit and a half-open door may have a cohesive interpretation, including an entrance, an invitation, or an acceptance. A door entails a threshold and a building, which may be a desired resting abode in this world or another. The poet- hero journeys through life and faces the dark and bright sides of existence in the line of significant historical figures who faced evils in their journeys described in several myths. The poet expresses his emotional states in poems whose concerns are consciousness, divine and vicious cycle, liberation, suffering, and enlightenment.

Late Nikunja Kishore Das was a perceptive literature reader and researcher from Odisha Educational Services. In his article “Mapping the Ganges: A Comparative Study of the Poetry of Keki N Daruwalla, Arvind K Mehrotra, and Susheel K Sharma” Das makes a comparative study of the poetic ruminations on the Ganges, the most sacred river that occupies an important place in Indian psyche, consciousness, thoughts, ideology, beliefs and cultural practices, by three contemporary Indian poets in English viz. Keki N Daruwalla, Arvind K Mehrotra, and Susheel K Sharma showcase the diversity in Indian poetry in English through a) selective images and metaphors, b) Western and Indian ways of thinking, c) an inclusive improvement, d) Indian rituals and their impact and e) realistic representation of Ganga. The poets focus on the civilization’s creative continuity on the banks of the holy river, but they have their ways of describing the Ganges as they have different attitudinal bents to see the sacred river. Among the three poets, Sharma and Mehrotra, having different approaches towards the Ganges, stand closer than Daruwalla.

“Like a tortoise in your water/I want to play in your lap/Like a dolphin in your floods/I want to ferry people to your banks.” (1). This article will show how deeply ecological cognizance is present in Sharma’s poetical oeuvre. Sharma’s poetic sensibility is rooted in cosmopolitanism, which dissolves boundaries between humans and other living things and between humans and non-human entities. Om Prakash Dwivedi and Navya Aravind Karalingannavar, both from Bennett University in Greater Noida, respectively, analyse how this interconnectedness manifests in Sharma’s poetry collection.

Pragya Mishra from Poornima University, Jaipur, in her article, “An Analysis of Images, Symbols, Metaphors, and Allusions in *The Door is Half Open*,” remarks that Susheel Kumar Sharma’s *Door* is a poetic painting that reflects multifarious shades of life in the form of 52 poems. It is said that painting is poetry that can be seen rather than felt, and poetry is a painting that is felt rather than seen. Susheel Sharma’s collection of poems is a vast collage of different paintings replete with immense images, metaphors, similes, allusions, and symbols. The title of the book, *The Door is Half Open*, is a symbol, a replica of life, hope, and faith. This paper is a brief analysis of the collection to help the readers to seek a new world. It will also reflect on the poet’s desire to explore something hidden, unexplored, and unnoticed. The readers will get an opportunity to make assumptions by getting fragmentary glimpses of the integral devices used to convey the depth of multi-layered meanings.

Rabindra Kumar Verma’s (from Manipal University, Jaipur) studies “Spiritual, Socio-Cultural and Political Consciousness in *The Door is Half Open*” considers Susheel’s poetry in three categories known as spiritual, socio-cultural, and political. He says that Indian English poetry from Henry Louis Vivian Derozio to Jayant Mahapatra has dealt with multifaceted themes of human life to depict Indian culture, society, tradition, religion, spirituality, Indianness, nationalism, myth, and folklore. These Indian English poets have claimed to use their unique style and techniques to touch and deliberate upon the different aspects of human life. Their styles can easily be divided into three categories viz. imitative, assimilative and experimental. But, unlike these poets, the emerging bard of Indian English poetry, Susheel Kumar Sharma, goes beyond the limitations of these three categories of poets to string the reality of Indian society and culture and inculcate a long-lasting impact of spirituality, socio-cultural, and political consciousness among readers through his collection of poems. Unlike the other poets, Sharma’s style of versification showcases originality of expression,

Indianness, and language usage. This study explores spiritual, socio-cultural, and political consciousness in Sharma's *The Door is Half Open*.

Maharaja College, Vizianagaram-based educator Rama Rao Vadapalli V.B.'s article focuses on the deep sensibility of the poet Susheel Kumar Sharma concerning both humans and non-humans. Writing poetry is one of the most creative works that involves peripheral imagination besides keen observation of the people, things, and happenings around. The poet is sometimes perturbed to see people's injustice and incohesive actions. While watching this, some poets get illusioned and disillusioned, but Sharma tries to face them stoically. However, Sharma's poetry is not devoid of the worth- appreciating positive aspects of life. Sharma's second collection, *The Door Half Open*, has more reconciliatory deeper truths, unlike the first collection, *From the Core Within*, where the poet gets baffled between what he has been taught and what actual life is. In the first collection, the poet has questions of understanding, knowledge, truths, and learning, and in the second collection, he has answers about devotion, faith, acceptance, and God's grace.

Rohtak (Haryana)-based Ramji Yadav's "Semiotics of Cultural Signs" voices his remarks saying that On reading different shades, patterns, and kaleidoscopic events of life as reflected in the 52 poems of immediacy in *The Door is Half Open*, one becomes interested in knowing the gifts of poetry that can lead a man to see man's actions in contextual ordeals of a given past recollected in the present for the cause of *moksha* in future by invoking Bhavani (a synonym of *Parvati* or Egyptian *Isis*) and *Mokshadayini* Ganges at the *Sangam* to liberate the brave soul by chanting '*Shivoham*' at Varanasi, the city of Valhalla of Norse mythology. Religious sentiments apart, the poet's reflections on people's voice in old and new democracy for justice in general and 'Gifts' in particular are the reflections of developing possibilities of the iconic form, value, and beauty amid deteriorating spineless signs of the shattered dreams of different moments. If hope remains the last dream, its multiple shades are wrapped up differently in the cause of retribution against the vicious circles that shatter a free-man's hopes on the 'ocean of timelessness.'

A Lecturer in English, Ranjita Barik from Khalikote of Odisha, in her article "Experiencing Indian English Poetry through Indian Poetics: Sharma and Jaidka," says that Indian poetry in English is a thing of beauty that is enjoyed by a perceptive reader, especially if he is born and brought up in India and is in an intimate relationship with nature surrounding him/her and culture he/she practices. Susheel Kumar Sharma and Manju Jaidka are two living Indian poets who reflect on natural phenomena in India that attract their attention, be it the river Ganges or the Shimla hills. The uniqueness of their poetic expression can be best evaluated through the application of tools of Indian poetics because Indian poetics relies more on intuition than intellect. This paper aims to revisit the poems of Sharma and Jaidka and explore poetic beauty through the application of Indian theories: *Rasa*, *Dhvani*, *Alamkar*, *Vakroti*, and so on. What comes to the limelight through such a critical literary endeavour is the manifestation of Indian sensibility.

In her paper "*The Door is Half Open: A Mythical Study*," Rashmi Jain, from the University of Allahabad, Praygaraj, notes that Susheel Kumar Sharma's *The Door is Half Open* demonstrates the unification of tradition and modernity because the poet incorporates Greek, Biblical, and ancient Indian myths and archetypes in his poems. He focuses on a variety of contemporary issues like environmental degradation, women empowerment, and

spiritual degeneration through the poems “Ganga Mata- A Prayer,” “Routine,” “Agony,” “Dilemma,” “Yama,” “Hope is the Last Thing to be Lost,” and “Liberation at Varanasi,” among others. He attempts to find order in chaotic circumstances through the collective unconscious. In this paper, an analysis of the poems in *The Door is Half Open* has been done.

Savitri Tripathi, from Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, in her study entitled “Susheel Kumar Sharma: A Poet of Philosophical and Social Concerns,” focuses on the social concerns and philosophical solutions as find a reflection in Susheel’s second collection of poems. Because of its long obsession with the personal self, Indian poetry in English has alienated itself from the readers. Unlike other contemporary poets, Susheel Kumar Sharma, in *The Door is Half Open*, has written poems on society’s burning issues, like poverty, malnutrition, pollution, corruption, and different sorts of crime, including those against women. Unlike many others, he suggests solutions to these problems primarily based on Vedic wisdom. Sharma thinks that the goal of life can be achieved by practising Karma Yoga and humanism. He urges us to be away from ego because ego leads us towards cruelty, cruelty towards sin, and sin towards destruction. The poet believes that spiritualism can bring reformation in society.

Syed Ahmad Raza Abidi, from Raebareli (India), in his article “Spiritual Strain in Susheel Kumar Sharma’s *The Door is Half Open*,” reviews that Indian Poetry in English is fortunate in the sense that it has got various connoisseurs who delved deep in the spiritual world in search of the reality of life. Our tradition, issuing from the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the devotional saint poetry, the great rivers of India, the treasure house of Indian myths and legends, the memory of our racial or local history have shaped modern poetry. Sharma has a sound and profound knowledge of Indian culture and ethos. His vision is humanistic, and his writing confirms his faith in the spiritual unity of the world. There is clear evidence of his being inspired by Hindu mythology, religion, and culture. Rooted deep into the Indian soil, his poems reflect not only the moods of a poet but of a complex age. There is a spiritual strain in Susheel Kumar Sharma’s poetry, as his view of life is existential and religious.

A Marion L Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow at Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, USA, Wendy J Truran’s article “The Ambivalence of Belief: Hope and Despair in Susheel Kumar Sharma’s *The Door s Half Open*” comments that Susheel Kumar Sharma vacillates between hope and despair in an attempt to come to terms with an unjust world. How one should not lose hope is a critical theme that Sharma addresses in his poetical works. This essay highlights how the poet’s imaginary power touches upon multifaceted human problems and challenges, such as pain, regressive belief systems, jealousy, and the struggles of everyday life. *The Door is Half Open* explores the subjects of pain, desperation, and injustice and shows how hope and peace are essential to endure these conditions. This essay also discusses how Sharma sets these issues within the context of belief, emphasizing humanity, empathy, and the imperfect striving for good. Amid the messiness of life, Sharma shows how hope is the last thing to be lost, and courage is necessary to face the suffering on Earth.

### Interviews

During his tete-a-tete with T. Sai Chandra Mouli, Susheel expresses his disbelief in the “School of Arts for Art’s Sake” out loud. He believes that because he is a human, he is a member of a specific social group (humans are gregarious creatures). He is extremely grateful

to this group for giving him a place in the political, social, cultural, geographic, and economic spheres. He naturally feels accountable for all of these locations. His small area has been cut out of a larger one at the same time, and it must coexist with that. As a result, he believes that he is a component of the total, similar to a gear in a machine, rather than an isolated entity. He cares about everything that feels, endures, and exists in my world and beyond. To facilitate understanding relationships rather than necessarily redefine them, he attempts to see multiple relationships, both obvious and not-so-obvious.

Susheel summarises the concept in his conversation regarding Classics, as many of them as possible, are the obvious solution, according to Daniel Hanson. They have components that are universal because they have withstood the test of time. Reading them will undoubtedly provide some insight into life and the issues one is going to face. One should begin reading whichever book they come across rather than waste time hunting for the one they want to read. It doesn't mean reading everything available; rather, it means that if someone wants to read the Iliad but can't get their hands on it, they shouldn't waste their time. One needs to open a literary work and begin reading!

