



**“Red is visceral, red is amniotic”
Reading Sudeep Sen’s *Red***

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*If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.*

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON, *Brahma* (Emerson)

Introduction

If the colour of blood is red, then what is red in itself ? (Casey). Perhaps, ‘red’ is the beginning — the hot heaving earth, that “underneath a heap / Of jarring atoms lay, / And could not heave her head”, until lifted by “heavenly harmony”, the music of the spheres (Dryden 117). Perhaps, ‘red’ is the ending — the Doomsday when the “dead shall live / the living die” and music shall “untune the sky”. And, between the opening and closing, ‘red’ becomes a hydra-headed creature, leaping through landscapes — turning everything it touches into red: life, love, literature, culture, and nature.

In Sudeep Sen’s *Red* — a multi-genre book of poetry, prose, and photography — we may find ourselves in the “amniotic” belly of this creature. *Red* illustrates Sen’s creative response to the ecotones and the wider ecology in and around South Africa’s Nirox Foundation and the Cradle of Humankind. It is a cinematic, panoptic, cosmic ball, breathing literary life into the autumnal beauty of ‘ecoscaping’ — water, skies, clouds, trees, flowers, grasslands, stones, fossils, wood, vultures, toucans, starlings, lions, cheetahs, zebras, impalas, giraffes, wildebeests — each poem is an appeal to conserve harmony among all that breathes.

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Red is also rhetoric. A language of literary refraction that preserves stories of vanishing worlds. We see through Sen's colour spectrum, a rare visual experience of sustained associations between nations, ethnographies, rituals, and disruptions — both in private and political spaces. So, is *Red* a significant book? Is it valuable enough to avow like Audre Lorde, that "poetry is not a luxury?" Imaginative enough to carry us on the Keatsian "wings of Poesy", to a universe of mysteries? Magnetic enough to bring back the Yeatsian "falcon" to the "falconer"? *Red* is all of this and much more. *Red* is *motion*; *Red* is *dialogue*; *Red* is *roots*; *Red* is *geohumanities*; *Red* is the *beating heart of a bird-poet*.

Red as Motion

The Woman in White, *The Masque of Red Death*, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, *Black Beauty*, and *The Bluest Eye* — colours have always been a vital literary device in English literature. Not only do they imprint the literary imagination with symbolical possibilities, but also add a scientific dimension to a work of art, especially in terms of motion. This is not a coincidence — readers familiar with Sudeep Sen's poetry would know that 'physics' (and science and architecture in general) have always captivated the imagination of the poet.

In an interview, Sen once said, "Science has always been an important part of my work. The way I looked at objects was very much influenced by the way I thought about light when I was thinking of physics — refraction, reflection, and so on. It has always been a very strong shadow in my writing space" (Kingsnorth 53). Colour is a transient medium. "It can move in, on, above, below, behind, within, towards, and under; but its most potential power is movement, particularly in-between. It moves between states, between dimensions, space, matter and time; between internal and external; between human perception and the world; between light and shadow; between the eye and the brain; between the imaginary, the illusory, and the so-called *real*. It specifies notions of transparency, translucency, opacity, and of proximity and distance" (Tauke 36).

In Sudeep Sen's work, the colour is 'red' and it seeps into the form and the formless. *Red* exhibits possibilities of the human

consciousness from the cosmic beginning of the earth to the post-human universe. In 'Part 1', titled 'Children of the Stars', the poem, 'Ritual', creates a moving colour scheme — from "heavy-grey clouds", to "pompom-purple". In 'Split Fossil', "a filigree of coloured lace-lines", moves towards "splitting light — / angular shafts of coloured cones / radiating centrifugally". 'Dolomite', carries "incarnadine granite", to "old continent's Black history". "Congealed crimson rock shades", split open in the poem, 'Children of the Stars'. In 'My Intimate Skies', "memory is starlight"; "It is astronomy's language, / a slow charting of celestial memory on the granite-black backdrop —." In the poem, 'Waterfall', "Greenish-blue pool water" cools the poet — surrounds him with — "a calm meditation —." In 'Sun(w)hole', "Red packed-earth, mud, stones and bones —" meld into the African sunset: "By now, the setting sun's deep earth-red African-orange / accentuates the wall cerise, ruddier. / Red congeals, holding everything together". These are not myriad colours of an objective scape, but portraits of the poet himself; an old-fashioned soul rising in the modern world through the ordinary miracles of colour.

"Colour, in early modern rhetorical terms, meant figurative language. The colours of rhetoric communicate something more than propositional content. They show that language can be used non-literally, and can speak outside the bounds of truth and falsity. In Puttenham's account, poetry's colourful rhetoric "inueigleth the iudgement" in a way that ordinary speech does not (8). Actions, no less than words, are called coloured when they trouble judgement. Calvin tells us that the custom of confession ceased because "a certain woman faining that she came to confession, was found so to have coloured under that pretence the unhonest companie that she used with a certain Deacon" (fol. 140v). Colour indexes a gap between what seems and what is. Colour's absence is then noted to close this gap. The Princess, in Tyler's translation of Calahorra's *The Mirrour of Princely Deeds*, is "not able to colour her affection". Internal states are made external affairs through the language of colour. Using colour in these ways emphasizes that judgment is predicated on sense experience, but we also see that truth sometimes exceeds sense experience or is perverted by it" (Casey 18).

Colour is an unavoidable element in Sudeep Sen's artistic world; it is rooted in Sen's interest in photography and light. In an Interview with Shivnetri Kushwaha, *Garhwal Post*, Sen speaks about the influence of colours:

SK: We would love to know about your journey as a photographer and a graphic artist.

SS: I have actually been trained in documentary filmmaking. One of my postgraduate degrees is a Master of Science in Journalism from Columbia University in New York. I have been taking photographs from a young age. And much later when I made documentary films, I worked both as the cameraman and the director. Photography and poetry writing have been close allies for me, both being equally important like the two sides of the same coin, or Side A & B of a vinyl record. My photographs tend to be abstract in nature — with the emphasis on pattern, shape, shade, light, colour, absence of colour, depth of field, and so on. I like to focus on what is unnoticed by the everyday eye.

(Kushwaha 279)

Red illustrates Sen's explorations of the ordinary through the aesthetic eye of colours. It is transferrable and transmutable. *Red* is the motion of light; the sparks that are born with every human, non-human, and even galactic touch:

I trace the contours of the cosmos,
plumb its depths of dense darkness.

Witch-haired asteroid-streaks —
diamond-pointed starlight shafts —

try to pin-locate light's primal source.
I do not have a compass or telescope
or any modern instrumentation

to deconstruct galactic mysteries
(“Origin of Light” 83)

Red as a Dialogue

A dialogue is also a conversation. It is an effective communication strategy between two entities to build a healthy relationship and work together for a better world. In the present Metaverse, where we all live primarily, isolated in a virtual vortex, the poem ‘Red I’ in ‘Part 2’ is a plea to participate in flesh and blood in the reveries of the world. ‘Red’ like Rabindranath Tagore harks to all ‘*griho bashi-s*’ (home-bound people) to open their doors and windows and talk to each other. ‘Red I’ highlights the need for communication, the determination to search common thresholds between cultures and unite for a greater cause:

Red is *palash*, red is *alta* —
it is nuptial, it is birth.

Red is Kali, red is Durga —
it is Sappho, it is Andal.

Red is my vocation,
my *Chandipaath*, your Onam.

On your forehead — I apply
triad-streaks of white-ash,

red vermilion mingled
in coconut-oil, glistening.

Love passion death decay, you say.
Red is forever & every day.
(“Red” 31)

Sudeep Sen like David Bohm, perceives dialogue as the flow of shared meaning within groups of people or larger societies (Bohm):

My blood — alive in red heat.
Red is visceral, red is amniotic,

red is rebirth, red is *de rigueur*.
With the power of poetry,

I can transform all. With the power
of my poetry, I can ignite all.
(“Red” 37)

Poetry is Sen’s medium to spread awareness about the dangers of climate change. Environmental damages cannot be resolved until man repairs his relationship with other men; the world must come together as communities with shared interests. Nature is not an isolated structure; it is an ecosystem where man, animals, plants, and minerals work together.

Sen’s previous book, *Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation*, was a humane commentary on man’s role in the pandemic; a book that reflected upon the consequences of environmental hazards but also offered hope to readers. The idea of the ‘Anthropocene’ is fraught with definitional inadequacies in the fields of anthropology, the human sciences, and environmental humanities. Critics like Donna J. Haraway, Jason W. Moore, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Alf Hornborg have expressed their concerns on climate crises through different terms like ‘Capitalocene’, ‘World Ecology’, and ‘The Dithering’. In the given context, it is apt that a poet speaks. This is the uniqueness of Sen’s *Anthropocene* — it delivers urgent messages on climate consciousness through images, metaphors, rhythms, and narratives, instead of jargon. Like all good poetry, it is the marriage of truth and beauty. As Jonathan Safran Foer puts it, “History not only makes a good story in retrospect; good stories become history” (Von n.p.).

The poem, ‘Red’ weaves several inter-cultural references to African and Indian ways of life, indicating the existence of communities that already live in harmony with nature; not everyone is out there to destroy the world. The anthropocentric worldview evolves into ‘communocene’*, a geological phase ushered by emotionally awakened men and women — they are united by a common purpose to preserve the earth. Sen’s idea here is very similar

to Vandana Shiva's idea of, 'ecocene'. Shiva writes, "The Ecocene is informed by the increasing awareness among humans of the ecological processes of the earth that shape and sustain life. We are part of the Earth community. We are earth citizens. The earth has rights, and we have to care for the earth, all her beings, and our fellow humans. The Ecocene asks us to correct and transcend the mistakes, false assumptions, and limitations that have brought us to the precipice of ecological collapse" (Shiva 97).

Sen's idea of establishing a permanent relationship of nurture through the poem, 'Red' materialised in its actual performance on the 28th of May at the Nirox Word Festival, 2023. This act of performativity, which is more than a performance, is also an echo of the idea of the 'Symbiocene'. Glenn Albrecht and Gavin Van Horn argue that the next era in human history should be named the Symbiocene (from the Greek *symbiosis*, or companionship). The scientific meaning of the word "symbiosis" implies living together for mutual benefit. They wish to use this profoundly important concept as the basis for what they hope will be the next period of Earth's history. As a core aspect of ecological thinking, symbiosis affirms the interconnectedness of life and all living things. "As many thinkers have pointed out, such interconnection and interaction put a human worldview back into the community of life and resists the Hobbesian and Spencerian views of nature as essentially hostile and a competitive war of all against all. No doubt, the conflict between organisms exists, but an overall balance of interests (eco-homeostasis) is in the total interest of all life. In addition, ecology itself is a radical concept in that it requires us all to live within the limits of nature and to live with all the other life forms that share this home we call the Earth" (Albrecht 83). Sen finds a common rhythm of coexistence in Mahatma Gandhi's presence in South Africa:

The morning sun bathes the brown
thatched cottage roofs — the finely woven
reeds preserving history in their folds —
the uneven wall-plaster mapping the
glow's gentle ink.

Serenity, simplicity, sparseness populates
the spaces here. Bapu's cursive scripts —
deep-etched on scattered concrete wall-
slabs.

The silence in this place is constant.
Mahatma Gandhi, Herman Kallenbach —
intimate inhabitants from a time of turmoil
— soldiers of peace, architects of destiny.
(“Satyagraha House” 98)

In ‘Red’, Sen imagines a world rich with the varied forms of ‘red’. He creates thirty different manifestations of the idea of red — cultural, spiritual, environmental, ethnic, regional, and political. Red is “quartzite”, “Red is a ‘toucan’s fossil beak””; “Red is also a carved skull”; Red is “red rash, micro-warts birthing itch” — Red is a “red hyena”; Red is “defiance”; Red is “molten — red is joy”; Red is ‘love’, among many other representations. The poem ‘Red’ presents a poet who persists in reaching out to the world — a poet who is also a public intellectual — ready to seek and respond. More Emersonian than Saidian— more Romila Thapar’s idea of an inquisitive intellectual — one who stirs up contrapuntal conversations (Lightman).

Red as Roots

“I did not choose poetry, poetry chose me” (Chattaraj n.p.). ‘Red II’ is a quest for roots — the origin of Sen’s poetry and its consequent growth across frontiers, cultures, and memories. The section begins with the prose poem, ‘Red Fence’. This poem is particularly about Sen’s experience of Africa. It is a meditation on the poet’s beginning in poetry. The fence, a predictable symbol of fragmentation, and isolation stand stark on the grass, as a tangible expression of the ‘poetic act’. The fence is an echo of the poet’s desire to seek freedom through poetry. The ‘Red Fence’ is the ‘red talisman’ and sits still like a Buddha:

There are no gatekeepers here, no topographical or
political boundaries obstructing travel. The fence is

a porous connector, a conductor, and a conduit for the elements to flow through. Air travels (like breathing), unhindered — through filters, organs, chambers, capillaries — each mirroring a mini-state, a country, a micro-continent. Free flow is a political act, an act of freedom (42).

The next poem, ‘Rash Red’, explores the corporeal truth of the poet. Readers move like mites through his rash-eaten skin. It is like “thorn-scarred desert-ravaged cacti”, waiting for some cool relief. The poet is a stretched piece of dermis, lying parched and coarse, waiting for some gentle tactile experience; a desire that later transmutes into the desires of the flesh. The body in this poem is not a vehicle to carry the poet’s existence in the world, it is the main actor in the drama of life. The poem is a reminder of several of Sen’s prose poems in the book, *EroText: Desire, Disease, Delusion, Dream, Downpour*. The body, both in its beauty and drudgery has always occupied Sen’s work. Sen in an Interview with Jhilam Chattaraj in the book, *Sudeep Sen: A Critical Study* (Nair 137), states:

The human body is very important to me. I remember, as a young boy, seeing the Carl Sagan documentaries on the wider cosmos, the macro and micro. One episode was on the human body where a computer-generated rocket is shown to travel inside our body, sailing through the arteries, veins, ventricles, and auricles. And having seen all the earlier episodes, which concentrated on the cosmos, I realised that the internal architecture of the human body is not dissimilar to the cosmic one outside. The cell and atomic structures, their architectural patterning is very mathematical, organised and harmonic. So, the celestial bodies and human bodies deeply mirror each other, even though the scales vary. (255)

The next prose poem, ‘Holi’, is a significant one:

Forests full of redolent, fire-bright, orange *palash* flowers flood my mind. I imagine I am walking in Bengal's Purulia groves surrounded by red, and more red. It is the colour of my memory now, lit in passion. Today is Holi, India's festival of colour. I sit far away in South Africa's Gauteng where the colours I see are saturated blues, greens and browns. The air is pure, the light sharp, and everything smells of nature at its freshest. (45)

Memory, nostalgia, and ethnic pride come alive through the tint of red. Sen echoes Rabindranath Tagore, and far in the distant land of Africa, he wishes to be touched by the gentle petals of the 'palash'. The palash flower is the queen of spring flora in India. Thickets of red-orange blossoms are ideal for bees and birds to begin their new life in a new ecosystem, regenerated each spring. "Memories establish connections between a collective and individual past, between origins, heritage, and history. Those who have left their places of birth to make homes elsewhere are familiar with the question, "Where do you come from?" and respond in innumerable well-rehearsed ways (Agnew 144). Sen writes evocatively in the poem, 'Dig', *four monostiches*:

I slow-scour for bones — as some do for gold.

I speak with the stars — to decipher cosmic codes.

I seek my ancestors — to map my genealogy.

I dig — it is a quest — for past's present & future.
(92)

"Diasporas construct racialized, sexualized, gendered, and oppositional subjectivities and shape the cosmopolitan intellectual commitment of scholars. The diasporic individual often has a double consciousness, privileged knowledge, and perspective that is consonant with postmodernity and globalization" (Agnew 144). This insistence on roots is a testimony to the fact that no matter where we go, we cannot change who we are, essentially. The 'end of history',

thus, is not a possibility— our ethnic moorings stand strong and whorl within the gyres of history that not historians but poets visualise — in poetry.

Red as Landscape

‘Part 4’ of *Red*, titled ‘Cranial Red, Bone Red’, is a graphic exhibition of an artist’s vision of geography. We may understand Sen’s work from the perspective of geohumanities. Sen’s knowledge of the African landscape, the Nirox Foundation, and the wider ‘Cradle of Humankind’ creates a visual experience of geography for readers across the globe. This geography is laced with the poet’s imagination. *Red* provides a critical exploration, and a celebration, of the relationship between geography and contemporary visual arts — “With the growth of research in the GeoHumanities and Spatial Humanities, there is an imperative to extend and deepen considerations of the form and import of geography-art relations. Such reflections are increasingly important as geography-art intersections come to encompass not only relationships built through interpretation but also those built through shared practices, wherein geographers work as and with artists, curators and other creative practitioners” (Hawkins n.p.).

Sudeep Sen approaches *Red* in the same spirit. *Red* emerges as a representation of ‘creative geography’. The poem, ‘Before the Beginning’, presents stones of the Kalahari Desert as messengers of Africa’s colonial past. Stones that are born with abstract forms, gain a new form in the hands of the sculptors and echo songs of the ancestors. The stones, and the sand, are ancient bards, and no matter, the modern mutations in form and structure, they will always remain sentinels of the earth — ‘Before beginning’:

I see the glazed quartzite of Kalahari — jewels of the desert

—

brought here to this vast serenity of earth, water, light.

Before you start grinding, shaping them into your own
narratives, you arrange the colony of history-soaked stones

in no particular pattern. But I see a coded striated matrix —
mapping an architecture of shapes, weights, hues.
(53)

Something very particular happens here. Sen not only paints his idea of geography as an oral narrative but also interweaves the idea of time. *Red* becomes a unit of measuring time. Anything in its 'red' form is always in its beginning; the foetus in the 'amniotic' fluid of the womb; the sun, rising 'red' over the sky; a wound when fresh, is 'red'. *Red* is also the measure of the ending. The sun sets 'red', blazing 'red' in the sky and the lifeless body burns in embers and becomes 'red'. The book *Red*, emerges as a qualitative measure of our time on earth:

Vesicle-like, the brain bleeds pink-white —
stone hues of the Namibian desert.

Weather's mood and time cast their imprint
on the craft's grafting. Even chain-saws,

grinders, buffers, polishers, cannot predict
its outcome — its shape, its sculpted intent.
("Memory: Head" 55)

This poem, 'Memory: Head', highlights a unique aspect of Sen's poetry. The poet once said, "Poetry is like a disease. It is a mental health problem" (Saxena 39). The poem is a map of his mind and it seems to correlate with African flora and fauna. His usually razor-sharp memory survives like a whisper among rocks with a sculpted intent.

Red is the Beating Heart of a Bird-Poet

'Part 6', 'Brown, Black, White', is a treat for readers wanting to learn about the inner spheres of the poet. We assume that "I" (in part) is the vehicle for the poet to add autobiographical elements in *Red*. In 'Synthetic Heart', Sen weaves a beautiful connection between an African song and an Indian word:

a spontaneous duet with poetry. Haunting hum-
chants, guttural clicks, elongated lyrical strains

string songs of humanity, love, brotherhood.
Your salt-pepper beard, plaited dreadlocks,

lend lyrics to your tongue, singing 'Subaleka' —
threading syntax in this crisp-dry Savannah air.

In my language, "Subh lekha" translates as 'pure
writing', or "Subha lekha" as 'morning words'
(73)

This link with African culture evolves into a connection with African birds. Sen seems to have reached a spiritual summit through poetry. In his early poems, Sen stood by the window looking out into the world, but now, he looks inward. Sen is recurrent in his use of bird imagery throughout this collection. Perhaps, a desire for departure from the mundane festivities of the world. For example, the poem, 'Two Birds', is a celebration of communication between two birds, in a parallel universe. He writes in the poem:

Amid relentless stormy weather,
growling dense black clouds —
an unexpected sliver of sunshine,

brief and bright. In that momentary
light, I spot a blue bird tracing
love songs. I feel weightless, in flight.
(“Flight” 84)

Human language becomes inadequate to the poet and he begins to converse with the birds in Africa. In his imagination, birds arrive and the poet lovingly deciphers their twitter:

I decipher bird language
through their tweets —
decoding their twitter.

I feel their feathers ruffle,
hear their slow whispers,
grade their plumule colours,

cup their pliant bodies.
Blue birds, red birds,
seagulls readily visit me

across hemispheres,
continents and shores —
flying spontaneously

at my imagination's call.
They fly on instinct,
buoyant with the lightness

of their own avian dialect —
a language I understand.
Circling, swooping, they

perch gently on my palms —
plumage fluffed.
Now, I am one of them.

(“Bird Language” 85)

In the poem, ‘Waiting for Light’, Sen writes about a fireplace — stagnant, unheated, waiting for warmth and light; without light, there is no action, there are no possibilities of existence; the hearth waits like the poet — for passion, for illumination, for tenderness and kindness to fill the body, mind, and soul.

In ‘Flotsam Haiku’, Sen imagines the crimson sea and yearns for a glimpse of “Nator-er Banalata Sen”, who might bring some solace to his parched eyes. Banalata has always been a haunting figure in Sen’s poetry. Sen’s admiration of the Bengali poet, Jibanananda Das, and his iconic poem ‘Banalata Sen’, find a place even in the most unexpected places; within the African savannah. Sen’s Bengali soul stokes ideas that have enriched his artistic

nucleus since his early years as a poet. In an interview with Ziaul Karim, Sen once said:

ZK: One discovers that in the pages of your various books, you move smoothly between one home and another.

SS: I think the reason why you don't see any sense of displacement in my writing is because I'm actually a very rooted person. My rootedness comes from my family and the way I was brought up. I'm first and foremost a Bengali writer who just happens to write in another Indian language that is English. So, my cultural and intellectual spaces are very much defined by the fact that I come from a thoroughly Bengali milieu. I am also fortunate to have grown up in a trilingual situation — I spoke Bengali at home, Hindi on the streets, and English at school, not by design but by circumstance. So, this wonderful tripartite situation was such that I could slip in and out of several mother tongues and languages. At the same time, it certainly made it linguistically richer, and we as South Asians are very lucky because of that. I also come from a typically liberal, educated, middle-class Bengali family who have always been an immense source of strength for me. So, that kind of jargon-ridden 'postcolonial' displacement you are talking about is very alien as a concept to me, and even more difficult for a person with my background to rationally understand. The other aspect of this is that I grew up in the capital city of Delhi, which is a very cosmopolitan place; it has a curious mix of the First and Third World atmospheres, depending on where or what you are engaged in at any given moment. So, wherever I have travelled subsequently, be it a cosmopolitan place or a rural one, I was in some manner or the other, somewhat familiar with that new place from before; at least I was never in a state of cultural shock, however remote. We, in India, have been exposed to the Western culture, along with our very own, from our early childhood, so neither of them is unfamiliar to us. So, when one is actually inhabiting these so-called Western (and Eastern spaces), they are places one feels equally at home.

In fact, I quite enjoy being in both worlds. I love the taste of *singara*, *sandesh*, *kabab*, and *phuchka*; and at the same time, I love blue cheese, smoked salmon, wine, and single malt. I do not personally see any conflict in these two worlds; rather, I feel lucky and infinitely richer in experience, since my taste buds as well as my intellectual and emotional terrain can accommodate all of that happily and simultaneously (Karim 52-53).

‘South African Woodcut’ in ‘Part 10’, carries poems on the South African landscape. The poem, ‘Durban’ in certain ways is an echo of Matthew Arnold’s *Dover Beach*:

The city rises and falls as easily as the waves
never allowing one the same perspective.
But here, one is sure of two things:
the perennial sunshine, and
the separateness of the races that do not mix.
(73)

The poem, ‘Dargle Valley, Midlands Meander’, concludes the poet’s relationship with the soil — a Shakespearean birth from dust and return to dust, and in between, we experience, fire, water, and air. An elemental birth from ‘red’ and demise in ‘red’.

Conclusion

Red is a book of intensity. In terms of the content, it is an extension of Sen’s previous book, *Anthropocene*, and in form, it is a blend of objective and subjective stances. Critics observe that over the years, “Sen’s style has evolved into a highly objective form of poetry premised on architectural composition, clarity of thought and a spectacular range of images — his poems, especially in the definitive collection, *Fractals: New & Selected Poems | Translations 1980-2015*, imprint the reader’s imagination like the bejewelled domes of Samarkand. His work has engaged poets, writers, and critics across borders and cultures. Sen’s poetry demands complete submission of the reader. An initiated reader of poetry would know that Sen’s poetry adopts techniques of artistic

‘defamiliarization’ as elaborated by Russian critic Viktor Shklovsky. Sen’s idea is to prolong the process of understanding the poem — for it is not merely words arranged in stanzas, but an artwork as detailed as the textured body of an ancient rock exposed to the winds of time. One has to look at his poems with the precision of a horologist or a goldsmith; his merit lies in carving fine details — like the wings of a butterfly; complex, subtle, a celebration of pure intricacy” (Chattaraj n.p.).

Red is a spectacular and important addition to Sudeep Sen’s body of work — a visceral, passionate experiment with colours — a wing-powered link between India and Africa. *Red* makes a significant effort to initiate dialogue between communities of the world — to wake up, break upon a hug, and sing together of a space unbroken by race, class, caste, or religion.

Red is movement, *Red* is dialogue, *Red* is landscape, and *Red* is and always will be the poet’s heart — warm and beating.

Notes:

*Communocene: ‘Communocene’ is a neologism coined by the author of the paper in the context of the creative approach of the poem ‘Red’ by Sudeep Sen. The term does not have a theoretical history or background but it is inspired by terms like ‘anthropocene’, ‘capitalocene,’ and ‘ecocene.’

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