

Infamous Rupi Kaur

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Weekly Contributor: Writing Scene

In terms of bad poetry, Rupi Kaur walked so Ginnie Bale and Aliza Grace could run. Rupi Kaur first posted her poetry on Tumblr in 2012 then gradually made her way to Instagram. Her poems are weak, empty, and without the imagery I preach all poems need.

“you have sadness / living in places / sadness shouldn’t live” (Kaur, lines 1-3)

This was followed by an illustration of a stick figure boy standing upright and a stick figure girl floating upside down on the page.

What Makes it Bad?

Emptiness. I’m a broken record, but I’ll continue to talk about it. When a poem has very little to work with, it doesn’t make it abstract or quirky—it makes it bland. The poem in question lacks clarity. Where are those places where sadness lives? Why do they have sadness? Did Rupi Kaur cause it? We want to know more. We want a poet to paint the picture for us.

It’s supposed to touch the younger girls that are going through a breakup. Of course, when a poem is this simple, they’ll read it. People who read books and real poems would definitely agree that Rupi Kaur isn’t as great as many other poets. They’d never say, “My favorite poet is Rupi Kaur” unless they just like minimalist poems, which at that point are just statements.

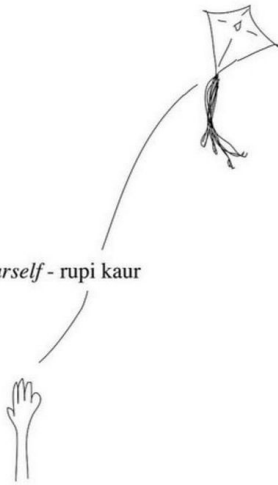
What’s Good?

Rupi Kaur typically involves little drawings in her poems. Not every single one has a drawing (and even then they’re not amazing), but they add to the meaning, support her minimalist aesthetic, and portray the image she’s trying to depict in her poems. So maybe she’s not good at imagery, but she can express the meaning visually?

In my senior year of high school I had taken a creative writing class and one lesson was analyzing Rupi Kaur poems. Each one had a drawing and we tried to decipher what the image had to do with the poem. My teacher assigned us to make a poetry compilation with small drawings of their own. That’s where I learned to value Rupi Kaur’s style... but it’s still not the best kind of poetry. Either way, the visuals are one aspect of Kaur’s poem that makes her better than Ginnie Bale and Aliza Grace.

let it go
let it leave
let it happen
nothing
in this world
was promised or
belonged to you
anyway

all you own is yourself - rupi kaur



How to Poetry: Lesson Three

I will always encourage poets to involve figurative language in their writing, however, drawings also enhance the meaning. Of course if someone wanted to write a poem about waiting for someone to come back, they're not going to draw themselves waiting. Maybe they could put an hourglass to display that they'll wait, but not forever.

Final Note

Rupi Kaur isn't the worst poet and through her poetry, I could tell she tried. I saw the pain that some of her poems displayed and the drawings definitely helped me empathize with her. Ginnie Bale and Aliza Grace seemed to have done it for popularity (TikTok being the one space that'll spread information quickly) and attention. Maybe if they included some thoughtful drawings, I'd say the same but it would also just be a repetition of Rupi Kaur.

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