“TikTok’s New Shakespeare”

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Who will win the title “Worst TikTok Poet”? Again, as I scrolled and swiped on social media, I came across poems that didn’t sound like poems, but more like text messages. Dramatic ones. Ones that probably have been sent in a group chat in response to a breakup.

“He didn’t like drama / And I was fucking Shakespeare” (Bale, lines 1-2).

This specific poem is found in Ginnie Bale’s poetry collection “Drama Queen” which is filled with “poems” similar to those of Aliza Grace. Quick, empty, and lacking imagery. It’s like those to-go peanut butter packets because they’re so simple, straight to the point, and plain. Of course, whoever likes plain peanut butter is a tad odd, but with a Granny Smith apple slice, it’s great. That Granny Smith slice for Ginnie Bale’s poetry is the person who is reaching for someone that understands them during their heartbreak.

Why is it Bad?

When a poem has no substance, it’s almost useless to the target audience. Great, he didn’t like drama, good for him. Oh, you were Shakespeare? How so? Why’d you say you were Shakespeare? Are you the problem? Didn't Shakespeare do comedies, too?

These are not the kind of questions that should arise from a poem. These could be answered if the poem was a bit more figured out. Questions that should be asked for a poem are “What does this symbolize? Why did they space it this way? Why is this italicized and does that mean anything?”

How to Poetry: Lesson Two

Don’t write about anything you don’t know. Being a writer and poet involves research. I’d even argue we’re one of the professions that researches the most. Whether it’s world building in a story or a poem using whales as a metaphor, it includes research.

Ginnie Bale’s famous Shakespeare poem is an example of not doing research. Does she know Shakespeare did more than dramas? Those two lines are ridiculous it’s humorous. Not to mention the fact that this poem is shallow. It tries to have a deeper meaning but doesn’t seem to work out.

Jokes in the Media

There are several posts on Twitter/X that make fun of this specific poem.

@/paddysroyco : he didn't like philadelphia / and i was always fucking sunny

@/konosadmaru : he didnt like hunger / and i was the fucking game

@/chipdae : He didn't like killers / and I was Jeff the

The media is vicious and these people aren't even professional writers. Can you imagine your work getting made fun of by some randoms on the internet? A writer should always get their work workshopped and reviewed. That's what proofreading is for.

<u>How to Strengthen</u>
Here's a poem that could be stronger:

"I believed you wouldn't hurt me / and you believed I would never leave. // *Guess we were both wrong"* (Bale, Lines 1-3)

This entire poem is just something to be said. It lacks an essential element found in poems—volume. Figurative language gives a poem depth. After the first line she could expand how she felt during her relationship with this person. For example:

I believed you wouldn't hurt me.
The way you held me under the silk covers,
brushed your calloused fingers through
my bronze-colored hair.
Your kiwi eyes trailed my shape
as you adored the view.

But you believed I would never leave,
laying on that bed forever
because you saw through my clothes
and my peachy skin, my heart.

We were both wrong.

Of course this is just off the top of my head and could use work. Maybe those metaphors don't work, maybe there's awkward sentences that might sound smoother. As a writer, you have to consider what might be weak.

<u>Final Note</u>

Ginnie Bale has a lot of work she needs to do and exposing her work to the internet will help. I'll admit that these people are brave for sharing their unfinished work (even if they think it's finished). Though, there will always be people like me who have something serious to say about it.

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