

Keep it in the Notes App

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Weekly Contributor: Writing Scene

Bad poetry grinds my gears like nothing else. TikTok has a diverse array of content, spanning a wide spectrum of genres and interests. It ranges from cooking recipes, dancing, art, silly cat videos, celebrities, and so much more. Everyone uses their “For You” page to find videos similar to those they've interacted with.

On a random day I decided to spend some time on TikTok. It wasn't until a few scrolls that I saw a video of what looked like an open book and some words on a page. I got excited as I'm an English (Creative Writing) major and my whole life is literature. The excitement quickly faded as I read the short “poem” on the screen.

“it hurts doesn't it? / seeing other boyfriends / do big romantic gestures / for their girlfriends // *knowing he would never do that for you*” (Grace, lines 1-5).

“a conversation about how you feel / is not suppose to end in an argument” (Grace, lines 1-2)

Aliza Grace has been the face of “TikTok poetry” for almost a year. Her writing targets girls who had gone through break-ups and wanted to find some sort of comfort or relatability. Most of the poems didn't take up an entire page and others were simply broken up sentences to resemble a poem. This style of writing tends to be frowned upon by the writing community for multiple reasons.

The Media & Poetry

First, I want to discuss how this is honestly a little bit disgraceful. Certainly I would never discourage anyone from writing; it's a healthy way to cope and digest one's emotions. I've heard that a lot of people write poetry in their Notes app on their iPhones. However, Aliza Grace is a prime example of Notes App poetry being *published*. Any kind of writing should go through workshops until you're completely confident it's finished. If hers were workshopped and edited, then I want to know the thought process behind the approval.

How to Poetry: Lesson One

An essential aspect that needs to be applied to all kinds of writing is figurative language. It is always necessary and it makes writers unique. Using metaphors, similes, imagery,

personification, etc. makes a piece stronger. Look at any Sylvia Plath or Robert Frost poem and there will always be some sort of figurative language. However, we don't often see short poems like these by famous poets and it's because their figurative language takes up space. If it's short, it means that there's a heavier meaning.

To compare to Aliza Grace we can see the lack of figurative language. Her poetry, unfortunately (or fortunately), isn't on [poetryfoundation.org](https://www.poetryfoundation.org), so if anyone searches her up it's either her TikTok posts or the Amazon site where you can buy her poetry collection. When anyone (who appreciates real poetry) looks and reads these poems, they'll notice that they have very little substance to them.

“reading old messages / crying to his favorite song / smelling his clothes / the ones you still have / looking at photos / trying to remember the / guy he was // *its not gonna make him / come back*” (Grace, lines 1-9).

“writing feels like / the therapy / i never knew / i always needed // reading feels like / the world i never / got to experience” (Grace, lines 1-7).

“shes all the thing / ill never be” (Grace, lines 1-2).

Aliza Grace Controversy

There is a Twitter/X thread made by user @sabrinalaurenpoet that has accused Grace's poems as plagiarism. They come from small and large singers and writers, celebrity quotes, and apparently Instagram memes. How can Grace's poems be so bad if they're copied from other people? It's bizarre.

Final Note

Write poetry. It's fun. Write whatever you want, but maybe it's best to keep it locked away until you can get some proper feedback to further strengthen your work. People should be allowed to express themselves, but the writing community is brutal and nothing is sugarcoated.

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