

Human Nature: Analysis of Biology Haiku

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Haiku can be defined as the juxtaposition of two or more images that provides insight into nature or human nature. In India Guerrero's Biology Haiku, she explores physiological nature through her college biology experience. The order of the haiku tells the story of her romantic relationship that ended during her Florida research trip. There's a darkness in the beginning and ending haikus and a lightness to the middle haiku, like the climax. I think India's choice to allow the biological terms to stand on their own, makes the rest of the haiku seem like a definition. I think dissecting specific terms makes these haiku more literal. She doesn't stray far into biology where the reader is confused. She stated she wanted to show the versatility of biology, "Biology is only understandable to biologist and its simply not that difficult. (Guerrero 2022)" She explains these terms by explaining her relationship.

local dive bar
neon flashing sign
keystone species

India Guerrero, BH, 1

This haiku is the day she had met him. I can't say for sure who's perspective this is coming from, but I feel as if this was mutual. There is a warmness to this scene caused by the neon flashing lights and the hominess of a dive bar. Dive bars are more intimate because they are smaller and allow for conversation. Neon lights already get attention but flashing neon lights will go unnoticed. It's as if the flashing sign is a signal to start a conversation or someone has grabbed the attention of another. It reminded me of how light bugs signal to mates by flashing.

I thought the final biological term created an animalistic, predator-prey feeling. Almost like a hunt for this person who showed up in her territory. It's interesting she uses keystone species, without context it is random, but knowing it is a vital species to the community shows how more important this person is compared to others. Often keystone species are referenced when these species go extinct. She could be hinting at the future collapse of the relationship. This haiku in summary, explains her developing interest in this person.

In these next few haiku, India explores her relationship, both the good and bad. In this case, she uses more provocative biology terms to explain the bad. While using more relationship biology terms to explain the good.

ruminating
on your last words
all choked up

India Guerrero, BH, 2

This haiku begins with a throat wrenching feeling and it goes quite well with the feeling of being choked up. She is effective in using this term because of the feeling it causes, she makes you feel as if you were choked up. She said he often couldn't decide what he wanted causing him to choke up. The vulgarness of the word ruminating shows the disgust and discomfort she had during these conversations with him but also explaining his thought process before speaking. It's especially his last word, further showing the importance of what he says has consequence, which he doesn't want to face. She keeps the perspective open once again, which I think she does this to explore the dynamics of relationships.

baculum
the humble whale
can be a huge dick

India Guerrero, BH, 3

She directly pulls from her Florida trip and her experience working with wild turtles. She shows her knowledge of the turtle describing a baculum, or a penis bone. She takes a comedic stand point on the situation. She specifically references a whale, referencing the largeness of the person and is further described by huge. In her editor notes she specifically gives the whale's baculum length. Not that she literally is in the presence of a penis, but that this person is beyond rude to her. And she does that quite well with her word choice. She shows the complexities of the relationship, the word can, reveals that it isn't a constant occurrence. But that it occurs sometimes, other times he is humble. And during these humble times, India saw the beauty of what could be.

lovesick
quick Punnett square
what would our kids look like?

India Guerrero, BH, 5

Most of the time being lovesick, can cause one to do unthinkable things. In this case it's to look at what her kids would look like. This is somewhat comedic, she's doing a quick Punnett square, obviously keeping this to herself. A Punnett square is used to find the ratios of the passing of traits in animals. Again, she approaches this as if they're animals themselves and there's an animalistic feeling to being lovesick. The word choices and the idea of the Punnett square coincide with each other. Punnett squares are quite serious, and India shows they can be used for human purposes if you so desired.

I inhale, you exhale
you exhale, I inhale
mutualism

India Guerrero, BH, 7

India uses repetition to show that relationships need to be mutual throughout. She does a great job bringing the reader into the experience. While reading inhale and exhale the body naturally does. She brings you back to what human nature is, and that is animal instincts. I think focusing on this specific aspect of breathing reflects how often we disassociate ourselves from someone and the world. There's a rhythm caused by the words itself, by the breathing pattern, and by the chest movements caused by breathing. They must be close to exchange the air, again almost as if they're mates. She ends with mutualism, a mutual beneficial relationship. Air is something we need and allowing that exchange with someone is intimate. It shows that these two people need each other

to survive. Almost like they are sucking the life out of each other and maybe not so mutual after all.

your words strike me
exactly where it hurts the most
fontanelles

India Guerrero, BH, 8

India reveals the pain caused by the end of the relationship. She creates a vulgar image referencing a baby's soft spot, fontanelles. This works so well because it shows that India was the one effected. To use a word associated with a baby shows an innocence to her coming into the relationship. The soft spot is supposed to be protected at all costs and to strike it would be fatal. She fully pushes the line of being an animal, to be an animal is to kill and she shows that with the violent image. To end her collection with this haiku shows the true reality of all her haikus, in that human nature is to be an animal. Being in a relationship shouldn't require you to act on those animal instincts, "unless its sex. (Guerrero 2022)"

searing Florida sun
time slows down
Gopher Tortoise crossing

India Guerrero, BH, 9

Her last haiku seems to have no correlation with the rest of the collection. When I asked about this, she stated that it's the end to the story and called herself the tortoise. After going through the relationship, she wanted to show that she is doing fine. Her Florida trip was crazy at first but now she is able to relax. The reader can feel the heat and the slowness caused by the heat. A tortoise is often coincided with immense heat she further dramatizes it by showing how slow time is going. And she brings it all back together because the gopher tortoise is a keystone species, directly tying the first haiku with the last.

Works Cited

India Guerrero 2022, Biology Haiku, pg 1-10

India Guerrero and Nicholas Canton 2022, Interview for Biology Haiku