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### Feminine Rage: The Angered Poets

Feminine rage is not anger. It is the ugly, spitting, and crazed response to wrongdoings of a man or the society men have created. In the media, women who are angry often have minimal atmosphere; the woman sobs by the end of her “abrupt outburst” and finds comfort in a man, or she’s labeled as psychotic. Similar to other creative forms, haiku opens the doors to readers wanting to express emotional experiences within their lives in hopes that readers can relate or learn from their message. Feminine rage is one of those experiences, although it is less talked about until recently.

I appreciate the raw feminine rage that female authors portray in their haiku, but the deviant or uneasy poems are also unique in women’s responses to the vengeful experience of anger. Most feminine rage haiku does not evoke a direct rageful emotion from the reader but rather shows the meticulous steps a woman took to write about her rageful experience into three careful lines. I question what trigger words make a haiku rageful, and if not a word, a phrase that ties in with the universal experience of female anger. The concerns in feminine rage haiku portray reality for women; however, the situations must not be too direct, as the haiku could collapse.

The first female author to exemplify feminine rage is Masajo Suzuki in her book *Love Haiku*:

in these three worlds  
 a woman is never at home;  
 snow on snow on snow

Suzuki, *Love Haiku*, p. 28

The haiku’s notes emphasize that there is no place for a woman in the world to just live as a person. According to Suzuki, the three worlds are a woman’s life with her father, husband, and eventually her eldest son. As the world has progressed past this way of living in some aspects, it still remains true that women are always attached to the men around them. From last names taken in marriage to the glass ceiling at jobs, the world is every man’s comfortable home, complete with a fireplace and insulated walls. Meanwhile, a woman’s home is situated out in the cold, fighting to open that very same door men live behind. The emphasis on the word “never” intrigues me. It’s centered directly in the middle of the poem, leaving no room for altercation or focus elsewhere.

that one time  
 my heart so merciless:  
 I burned a hairy caterpillar

Suzuki, *Love Haiku*, p. 27

Women are frequently portrayed as soft, doting people with motherly instincts for any animal. In this haiku, Suzuki notices this in the line “my heart so merciless,” as if burning a caterpillar is the most terrible action a woman could do when men have done far worse things. Most of Suzuki’s haikus are delicately placed words, causing reaction or relatability in the reader rather than intense emotions. Here, she does the same. While the poem may lack in rage, the series of events causing her to burn the caterpillar and feel so merciless in “that one time” allows this poem to be a summary of her rage rather than the emotion itself.

woman’s autumn—  
as I finish dying my hair  
heartache seeps in

Suzuki, *Love Haiku*, p. 71

Part of womanhood is the never-ending cycle of keeping one’s physical appearance presentable. From youth, aging is viewed poorly and deemed unattractive. Women frequently dye their hair, like what Suzuki mentions in this poem. The heartache in the last line emphasizes the feeling of growing old. It’s the bittersweet age of wisdom, growth, and “unattractiveness” forced onto women in society. While this poem does not directly portray rage, it encompasses the long, exhausting years built up to this moment. The repetitive act of dying hair in “woman’s autumn” as she lets the stress of keeping herself presentable “seep in” slowly.

Likewise, it’s a common thing for young women to dye their hair after relationships. Through transforming their locks, they become a new person, hoping they can move on after a rough breakup and become a new person. Suzuki highlights this as well through the use of the word “heartache.” Her word choice can demonstrate two sides of feminine rage in this haiku: the ending of a bad breakup or the pressure to stay young.

The second haiku author to indulge in modern, feminine rage poetry is Alexis Rotella in *The Color Blue*:

Third date  
He points out the pistils  
On every flower

Rotella, *The Color Blue*, p. 12

An often phenomenon that causes feminine rage is mansplaining (man + explaining). In my opinion, mansplaining is when a male assumes his knowledge of a situation, object, or thing is significantly more substantial than a woman. Sometimes, he can be right. Other times, he can be wrong. Mansplaining can also mean he’s talking about nonsense, thinking that she might be as interested in a topic as he is when she’s clearly not. Rotella points out that this is the third date, meaning she’s taken some interest in her potential lover. He even got her flowers.

The haiku suggests that the couple either didn't have enough to talk about or that he's overshadowing her for *his* kind gesture of buying flowers. One might even see the poem as a man excited to be on a date, but the "third" in the first line suggests that his excitement should be less now that he knows her more. In this instance, the mansplaining is that he knows more about the flowers than her, offering up words like pistils and counting them on every flower. The monotone voice in this poem demonstrates the speaker's boredom with him. She realizes he wasn't who he turned out to be when he began mansplaining flowers.

*You were prettier last night*  
he tells me  
in the elevator

Rotella, *The Color Blue*, p. 27

Assuming this poem is about a one-night stand getting walked out of an apartment or hotel, the audacity some men have to comment on women's appearances is the feminine rage that this poem brings to the forefront. His comment, highlighted by Rotella in italics, feels as if she's mocking his regards. The haiku reads like a woman talking about her experience to another woman, swearing that this man was crazy for saying that. The most prominent part of this poem is the italics, showcasing another instance where feminine rage caused her to write this.

Cab driver  
insists on showing me  
the town

Rotella, *The Color Blue*, p. 41

If there is one thing that men fail to comprehend in women, it is our safety. This haiku demonstrates the fear of being trapped in a car, driven around in an unknown area by an unknown driver. This is yet another instance of mansplaining: the cab driver believes he knows best, so he takes her on a drive around town when all she wants is to get home safely. While this poem does not directly mention a man, the fear in "insists" and the last line, "the town," emphasizes the point that the speaker feels she is in danger.

He asks  
for more pork chop  
uninvited guest

Rotella, *The Color Blue*, p. 48

While it's difficult to assume the direct scenario of this haiku, we can tell the speaker notices that the person is unwelcome at the dinner party. If the poem were occurring in her home, the rude gesture would be more notable. He demonstrated ignorance of the people and situation around him by asking for another pork chop. The emphasis on "uninvited guest" shows the anger Rotella put into this haiku. To her, he is not welcome and should understand that by politely eating and leaving quickly. However, like some men, he acts like the space is his to dominate and take up.

Already, she is suffocated by his presence and can't comprehend how he seems to believe the world revolves around him, which is a direct theme relating back to feminine rage.

Through Rotella and Suzuki's works, feminine rage embodies haiku in more unique ways than the media. From the rage of the reader to the causation of the haiku, the female experiences are encapsulated in moments that every woman understands. More importantly, haiku that uncover these situations are not angry in their words; the authors show their readers what exactly caused their rage rather than the rage itself. They describe scenarios that bring rage to the readers and leave them realizing that "this happens to me too." The authors do an excellent job of capturing the world as it is rather than how it feels to them, which is the essence of haiku.

The themes that Rotella and Suzuki primarily mention in the haiku above are feminine rage; however, each has its own hidden theme. Some note a person's place in the world as a female-appearing person, while others add to that what a woman's place is aesthetically through old age and physical appearance. Suzuki writes about being fed up with society, or an unexpected "snap" that women experience. Rotella frequently mentions the men rather than a general rage through discussion of mansplaining, fear for her safety, and the audacity of some men. The seven poems examine feminine rage in its whole through real situations that all women experience at some point in their lives.

#### Works Cited

Rotella, Alexis. *The Color Blue*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2017. Print.

Suzuki, Masajo. *Love Haiku: Masajo Suzuki's Lifetime of Love*. Decatur, IL: Brooks Books, 2000. Print.