

Reader Response Essay:
Bittersweet Love, The Highs and The Lows

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Throughout this course, I have found myself heavily drawn to Haikus that express and emphasize the deep emotions of love. It is always nice to hear others' perspectives on how they view love and how it makes them feel. The highs and the lows combined are what makes everyone's experience unique and personal. I always tell people that it's never just a walk in the park, there will be times where you feel you've hit a rough patch but it's the fight and determination that makes love worthwhile. Knowing that there's someone who's deeply afraid to lose you as you are to them. Knowing that you are the only person they want to argue with because at the end of the day, they would not want it any other way. For the most part, the highs will always outweigh the lows as they are only temporary in a healthy relationship. In this essay, I will be exposing the false idea that love is always peaches and cream because every couple goes through something that makes them stronger as a unit. If you are not fighting for your love, do you truly care for your partner and your relationship? Throughout this essay, there will be a mixed discussion on the thrills of love, the heartbreaks, and the fights.

grandma pets her dog
one eye and one leg
missing

Andrew T. Harrison, Millikin University Haiku Anthology, p. 22

When you truly love someone, you look past their flaws and you take them as they are. It does not matter what others may think or how they feel. All that matters is that they are here with you as they continue to provide you comfort and security in their own personal way. This is the power of love, so potent and a conscious choice to see the best in others. It makes the simplest of moments turn into something magical. Love is pure and holds no boundaries, coming in several forms.

you trace the line
of my spine . . .
honeysuckle

Jennifer Griebel, Millikin University Haiku Anthology, p. 74

Love is delicate, love is kind, and love is patient. It is the soft breeze that kisses your skin on a warm summer's day. It is the beauty of a rainbow that glides so effortlessly across the sky. It makes you feel at peace, homely, as if all your worries and fears have been washed away. It is the peaceful sound of the ocean waves brushing against the warm soft sand as the palm trees sway. Love makes the world go round as it holds its own healing properties. It is you sitting at the top of the ferris wheel looking down at all the vibrant hues of the carnival lights and the world beneath you, making you feel as if the two of you are on the top of the world.

blazing summer heat
he dives in
after her

Jenny Douglas, Millikin University Haiku Anthology, p. 77

When thinking in terms of relationships whether it's between you and a significant other, friendship, or family, there is a deep sense of care. And when you love someone dearly, you will go to any lengths by any means to protect them. No matter the risks or consequences, you will selflessly put their safety before your own. This haiku perfectly describes what that would look and sound like if it were put into words. You'd rather risk your own than to see them in danger and nothing can stop you from doing so.

the rain slowing
my body rests
against yours

Betsy (Quigg) Osman, Millikin University Haiku Anthology, p. 32

My favorite time to cuddle with my significant other is when it rains. I love to lay down and watch movies as I snuggle as close as I can in his arms with the serene sound of rain in the background. You can hear the other person's heartbeat and you can feel their chest rising and lowering with each breath they take, their scent dancing around your nose. It provides a sense of comfort and security, your heart fluttering at the thought of how much you enjoy this moment; the rain pairs perfectly.

peanut butter lid
on the counter—
no longer newlyweds

Joanne Weise, Millikin University Haiku Anthology, p. 83

At the beginning of a new relationship, you both are walking on eggshells trying to avoid displeasing the other in any way, shape, or form. There are things you normally do that you will now avoid when you are around them like taking your socks off to get comfortable, stuffing your cheeks with food, or letting a fart out or two. You try your hardest to paint yourself as the perfect partner who has no faults. But as the relationship progresses and as you begin to learn more about one another, those soft steps slowly fade away.

You become more open about who you are, more genuine, without even realizing it. You both have accepted one another and that feeling of shyness or embarrassment gradually leaves your body. You each begin to do things that you did not before like leaving empty water bottles and clothes around your room or holding burp contests. You no longer fear their judgement and you love them for being genuine and open within your guy's relationship.

touching you
as you lie sleeping—
the days shorten

Caroline Gourlay, Lull Before Dark, p. 12

The dreaded feeling we all wish to never face. The feeling of losing someone who you are not yet ready to lose. In a perfect world, we would all find our soulmates and live happily ever after without a hiccup in the road. Unfortunately, that is not how life works and the world doesn't revolve around us and what we want. There will be pain, there will be heartbreaks, and there will be times when you feel like the whole world is crashing down on you. One of the worst feelings is watching the one you love fall out of love with you and knowing there's nothing that you can do about it. You exert so much energy into reviving the relationship,

draining yourself more and more each and every day as your efforts are not being returned. It pains you to think that all that time and history is going down the drain when you planned to spend the rest of your life with them. All you can do is admire them while they are still there and cling onto the last bit of hope that you have. I always say that you can't have a rainbow without a little rain. Keep your head up for better days that are soon to come; move with confidence and pride.

sunrise
I forget my side
of the argument

George Swede, *Almost Unseen*, p. 44

When I first read this Haiku, I thought of myself and what sometimes happens to me when I am arguing with my partner. Despite how upset or angry one may be, sometimes when they look at their partner they can't help but to also think of how there's no one else they would rather be doing this with. They think of how grateful they are to have them in their life and how beautiful they are to them, inside and out. These thoughts tend to soften their emotions as they try to end the argument as soon as possible just so they can be up under them again. Sometimes the argument just isn't worth the energy we oftentimes feed into. The second perspective I took was waking up the next day, having a fresh start, or hours passing and the two of you realizing that there's no point in staying upset with one another; that all you want is for them to be happy.

thoughts so loud
you
are my quiet place

Maddie Schroder, *Haiku Kukai 02*, 12

I love the way Maddie's haiku reads and how there's that emphasis on the word "you". Everyone has those days, weeks, or months where everything feels chaotic and like nothing is sane. Where you feel overwhelmed and exhausted by factors outside of your control. And with that, we often try to find our own personal safe haven where you can take a deep breath and relax. Where you feel that nothing else matters except their presence, they make you feel whole and almost as if the world has been paused. All your fears and worries have been washed away. It's like watching the world in black and gray and suddenly color begins to creep its way in, slowly turning everything into a variety of colors.

We are reminded that these problems are just minor setbacks and that they don't determine how the rest of our life will go. It's crazy to think that someone can have that type of power over you, where you can be completely chaotic one minute and the next you're as calm and peaceful as a still river all because of the presence of one person. Their touch, both emotionally and physically, warms you and makes you feel whole.

Works Cited

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