

Global Haiku – April 8, 2021

Reader Response Essay by Paige Hockman

Aubrie Cox Reflection: An Endless Interpretation

I really enjoyed reading all the haiku written by Aubrie Cox in tea's aftertaste. I think she is such a relatable author. Her haiku are very easily interpreted but they give you as the reader the opportunity to make it your own. As she states in her about the author portion, haiku is "a literary art that engages the reader as an equal contributor" (Cox, 2011). I enjoy her work as it is much more contemporary than some other the other works we have read over the past couple months in class. Her haiku provide for each reader to individually read, feel, imagine, and respond exactly how they see rather than a black and white interpretation. I also think it is neat that she went to Millikin University, so some of her work relates back to Millikin's campus and community. It is neat when someone has gone through a class and you can relate with them in that sense. She also shares how such a small work of art and how such a small number of words can hold "countless possibilities" (Cox, 2011). It is such a challenge to create the perfect haiku, because everyone interprets it differently. You could change one word or add a pause and it creates an entirely different perception of the work. I chose poems from tea's aftertaste because they consist of so much variety.

old moon
we talk about
the next life

Aubrie Cox, tea's aftertaste, pg. 2 (13)

This is one of her haiku's that I wrote about during the first week or so we had of class. I think it is such a sad, but also such a wise poem. It instantly made me think of my nursing career and the elderly patients that I care for. They are usually so full of wisdom and advice. They talk about being ready to move on to Heaven and just having such a fulfilled life whether that have been the work they have done or the family they have made and relationships that continue. It is such a wholesome feeling sitting by a patient's side and having this type of conversation with them when you know they may not have a lot of time left. Especially when family is not present in that moment. I think it can also be taken for those who aren't in the medical field and don't understand that feeling as like a grandparent or great-grandparent even. They are just so rich and full of sound advice, because they have lived it and they know what is the best choice for you or maybe it could be they sometimes believe they know I guess.

helicopter seeds
my life spiraling
out of control

Aubrie Cox, tea's aftertaste, pg. 3 (20)

This haiku was one that made me laugh really hard. I am the helicopter seed during the semester. This semester has by far been the most difficult for me through all of the nursing program. Within the first couple of weeks, I failed my first test as well as my first quiz. This poem hit home hard! I thought "oh my goodness... I made it through 7 semesters of absolute craziness, and now after it is finally almost over, I am going to fail my last semester!" My professor for my main class has not made things much easier, because the class is very unorganized. It has caused me to focus more on that class and forget others in the meantime. However, things are starting to look up a little more each day. I have learned to go with the craziness for now, and keep pushing to graduation, thank God! Who would have known that the last semester which is normally thought to be fairly easy would be the craziest.

endless conversation
the river runs
through my fingers

Aubrie Cox, tea's aftertaste, pg. 3 (27)

This poem gives me a summer kind of feeling and it is so relaxing! I spent a lot of last summer in a kayak going down the Sportsman's Cove little channels off of the Decatur lake. It was always so much fun. I spent a lot of time out with friends. It was a summer of packed lunches, adult beverages occasionally, sunshine, currents and calmness sometimes, and deep but quality conversations. The best time is with friends where you can relax and have quality time and learn more about your friends, but you also have the opportunity to reminisce and make more memories in the meantime. The waves carry ripples along your fingertips as the current carries your kayak. You can just relax your arms down to the side and you feel a certain calmness in the water running through your fingers. I really enjoyed this poem. The best part is someone else has a completely different reader response than what I do.

autumn leaves
new neighbors
take down the treehouse

Aubrie Cox, tea's aftertaste, pg. 4 (30)

This poem isn't one that originally picked when we were reviewing Aubrie during the beginning of the semester. However, reading through them again, I had a completely new connection with it. A very old memory... I had a neighbor who I always said I was going to marry when I was super little. We would always climb this huge tree with an empty center that branched into 4 separate stumps or trees, I guess. We said we would get married in this and all the neighbor kids climbed this tree also. The older kids went higher up into the tree and we hung out close to the bottom since we were younger. Well, update in life, they moved, we aren't married, and I never speak to him anymore. The next family to move into that house had a daughter my age who had been born with clubbed feet. She had to wear special braces on her feet and she wasn't allowed to do the normal activities as well as the other neighborhood children. Her parents thought the tree was a danger to her, therefore they decided to cut it down. This poem sent me back to how upset I was when they actually decided to cut it down. I don't think I talked to her for a couple days which seemed like weeks, because she let her parents cut this tree down.

harvest moon
rises above the branches
tea's aftertaste

Aubrie Cox, tea's aftertaste, pg. 4 (34)

I picture a nice fall evening where the sun has just gone down. It is still pretty early in the fall season therefore it is still fairly warm outside. This means you can sit outside and enjoy yourself still. The bright full moon slips up through the tree branches that are starting to lose their leaves a little at a time. I am not 100% about the tea's aftertaste here in the third line. Maybe she was writing this work when she was outside just enjoying the natural setting and she was inspired. Maybe she couldn't think of what else she wanted to include in the last lines of this poem without making it too obvious and sending it a certain direction. Maybe you are thinking something completely different than I am currently. That is her whole purpose behind her writing. To leave you interpreting and questioning your thoughts as well as others.

overgrown bridge
I tread lightly
through my childhood

Aubrie Cox, tea's aftertaste, pg. 4 (35)

This poem also takes me back to my childhood and my hometown specifically. I live in Dalton City, which is a small township rather than town. It has a very limited amount of people and resources. It has 2 bars, a post office, a bank, 2 churches, and a fire station. Priorities, right? Well, down the road from me there are railroad tracks that are overgrown with weeds. Underneath the tracks there used to be a very small creek area that was mud-based with some rock around it. Well, we used to climb down this rock and fish for crawdads. They were all different sizes and could normally be found under or near the rocks. They were very quick, so you had to be on the lookout. My older brother had a large group of kids we hung out with "the DC gang" ... because that was cool. Looking back, I'm like what in the world. This poem brought back all these different memories for me that related to my childhood with my brothers and all their friends. Everyone knew all of us kids and they knew where we could be found and what we were doing as well. Nothing harmful just easy kid entertainment. I think it is also very hard to rid yourself of memories like these when younger children today do not have any relation to this kind of "playing".

school desk
one name carved
deeper than the rest

Aubrie Cox, tea's aftertaste, pg. 4 (40)

I picture the cute boy that half the girls in school probably had circled in their yearbook. They wrote their name on the desk but hoped no one knew it was them. Eventually, someone else would sit there and know the name and trace it. That or they would be bored and start tracing it to avoid anything the teacher was saying during class. Eventually it leads to this deep carved mark in the desk that is so noticeable. Some people may read this as a bad thing. This student could have been the bully or the nerd. It is all about the different interpretations of the reader.

I really enjoyed reading Aubrie Cox's haiku because in some shape or form you can relate something. It may not be word for word relatable. It could be the feeling or the environment, but a majority of the time. If you sit and read it, allowing your mind to wonder a little, something will happen. You just have to let it happen. Be open minded.

Work Cited

Cox, A. (2011). *Tea's aftertaste*. Decatur, IL: Bronze Man Books.