

**BREAKING TO HEALING IN RUPI KAUR'S "the sun and her flowers."**

***(Transformation of a poet to a therapist concerning Rupri Kaur's collection "the sun and her flowers").***

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**Abstract:**

With social media invasion into every aspect of our life, every form of art has evolved and adapted to the inevitable changes and has found new media of expression. Social media platforms are witnessing an outpour of emotions on their various platforms, and literature, especially poetry, has been given a new lease of life. With the arrival of Instagram poets, the image of the poet as a loner pondering over the mysteries of life has given way to an "influencer" with lakhs of followers. This article examines Rupri Kaur's "the sun and her flowers" with a focus on the poet's efforts to heal through words with expressions and illustrations suited to every step of healing and well understood and accepted by her followers.

**Keywords:** Breaking, Healing, life, heal, expressions and illustrations.

Today's generation cannot fathom a world without the internet, being exposed to it and social networks at a reasonably young age. They are indeed natives of the digital world, and they value their online community and insist on documenting every moment of their life. They go online to share their happy moments, pain, and suffering and find solace. It is their space to escape the loneliness of heartbreak or reach out in support. Thus, one cannot deny that social media has created an environment where one is most likely to share their experience. The buzzword here is content and content sales. It can be said without reservation that social media has consumed our lives since the late 20th century. The present generation only exists on their phones and social media accounts. Every emotion and every experience is reflected on their Instagram pages, and poetry, like most forms of art, has learned to adapt and look into the needs of this generation. For a generation that feels the pressure from multiple quarters and the fragile nature of family relationships, social media has become the space for individuals to vent their anger, disappointment, frustration, fear, and pain. Social media gives these young minds a platform for open and honest dialogue about issues that causes them great distress.

The age of social media and the incessant need to be online has resulted in the rise of the most unexpected things, and poetry has risen with the rise of Instagram poets. Their poems are about breakups, depression, and an attempt to explore how we heal to return all refreshed and how people find the strength to thrive in grief.

Social media has transformed poetry from an art form understood and enjoyed by a few. It is today reflective of the determination to recover from traumatic events. Poetry today has garnered admirers like never before, and today's poets have moved away from Wordsworth's declaration of 'emotions recollected in tranquility' to a therapist who uses poetry and voice to help people get access to wisdom that they are familiar with but fail to have words to express in an ordinary language. Today's poets walk through and interact with their readers on a journey of healing and recovering, allowing them to come to terms with their vulnerability and drawing strength from an event that has caused personal damage.

The poems of Rupi Kaur in her collection, "the sun and her flowers," will resonate with a generation who may have been far away from books and poems, and yet these lines- though they seem to be reworded versions of what we have heard or read before will appeal to a generation that does not have the time or the attention span to agonize over every word and love it when things are straight forward. If therapy aims to develop coping strategies to help one handle difficult situations and eventually inspire to bring about a change in the individual through self-awareness and self-exploration, the poems in *The Sun and Her Flowers* cater to a reader who is suffering and needs emotional support. For those who face hurdles that are difficult to conquer, the poet therapist understands relationship issues and offers effective treatment. The poems thus seem to provide online therapy by offering understanding, guidance, and support:

I woke up thinking the work was done  
I would not have to practice today  
how naïve to think healing was easy  
when there is no end point  
no finish line to cross  
healing is everyday work

The book goes through the various stages of grief, such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In the five sections of the book- wilting, falling, rooting, rising, and blooming, the poet has compared these stages of grief and the process of personal growth to the life cycle of a flower.

What does love look like? The therapist asks  
one week after the breakup  
and I am not sure how to answer her question  
except for the fact that I thought love  
looked so much like you

For every stage that the individual lives through, coping with the consequences of a broken relationship, there is a poem that reflects on the emotions and gives the right words to help the individual to navigate this difficult phase of life. Some of these poems are just a few short lines, while others are relatively longer. The poems seem to be a digital companion allowing the individuals to confront their despair. 'the sun and her flowers' is a story about breakup, depression, struggles, identity, and the ability of the individual to overcome. The collection has garnered new and young admirers, as it is evident that the poet chose to publish it on her Instagram account. With 2 million followers (counting), Rupi Kaur's short poetry has become a global sensation with her 'self-care' movement.

In 1969, a Swiss American psychiatrist, Elizabeth Kubler Ross, wrote in her book, "On Death and Dying," that grief could be divided into five stages. Her observations came from years of working with terminally ill patients. While it was initially devised for people who were ill, these stages of grief have been adapted to other experiences of loss. According to Elizabeth Kubler Ross, the five stages of grief are:

**DENIAL:**

The overwhelming response to a loss or a break in a relationship is to pretend that the loss is not happening. One may pretend that the loss and change are not happening and think the significant other is returning.

Here, the poet therapist steps in, using words to feel your feelings and providing a safe space to talk about their pain and loss.

I spent the entire night  
casting spells to bring you back

I remained committed  
Long after you were gone  
I could not lift my eyes  
to meet eyes with someone else  
looking felt like a betrayal  
what excuse would I have  
when you come back  
and asked where my hands had been

**ANGER:**

Suppose denial is a coping mechanism, as it buys time for the person to acknowledge and understand the alterations needed in their life. In that case, anger is a mask for pain, fear, bitterness, and resentment.

yesterday  
the rain tried to imitate my hands  
by running down your body  
I ripped the sky apart for allowing it

**BARGAINING:**

This stage results from vulnerability as one tries to rebuild a relationship or offers a change to a more acceptable friendship. The coping individual may create a lot of 'what if's and 'if only' statements.

it is not what we left behind  
that breaks me  
it is what we could have built  
had we stayed

This stage helps one postpones the sadness, the confusion, or the hurt. It also involves self-blame and a promise to improvise:

what draws you to her  
tell me what you like  
so I can practice  
DEPRESSION:

While the suffering individual may express anger and bargaining, depression is a more silent stage. The person may choose to isolate oneself to cope and understand the loss fully, yet it is a very overwhelming phase where the individual faces confusion.

yesterday  
when I woke up  
the sun fell to the ground and rolled away  
flowers beheaded themselves  
all that's left alive here is me  
and I barely feel like living  
ACCEPTANCE:

Acceptance is not an indication of a happy place' but more a willingness to understand that life has to be lived in changed circumstances and one has to focus on self-care.

day by day, I realize  
everything I miss about you  
was never there in the first place

One of the major hindrances in overcoming the grief of a loss of a relationship is the impact it has on self-esteem. The accumulation of pain, insecurity fear results in the draining of self-worth and a feeling of having slipped. To accept the altered reality of life, the individual has to restore his/her self-worth.

many times  
we are angry at other people  
for not doing what  
we should have done for ourselves.

Since no manual can guide us to various stages of increasing self-worth, the poet therapist includes pinning and yearning for the loved one and self-loathing as part and parcel of the process of dealing with grief:

when I hit rock bottom  
that exists after the rock bottom  
and no rope or hand appeared  
I wondered  
what if nothing wants me  
because I do not want me

The idea often repeated is that life is complicated and one will face turmoil, and no one is perfect, so time and again, we need to remind ourselves of the need to be our best friend:

first  
I went for my words  
the I cannot. I will not; I am not good enough.  
I lined them up and shot them dead  
then I went for my thoughts  
invisible and everywhere  
there was no time to gather them one by one  
I had to wash them out

The poet therapist Kaur gives her audience lines and thoughts easily accessible. To launch the 'Sun and her Flowers,' she put on a unique theatrical performance at the Tribeca Performing Art Centre in New York City to a sold-out crowd of over 900 people willing to spend \$75- \$200 to see and listen to her. The poet transforms into an influencer and a social media star who can heal through words.

to heal  
you have to  
get to the root  
of the wound  
Moreover, kiss it up.

The primary focus is grief and collective trauma. Grief and sadness are universal yet strangely personal.

In her interview with Rolling Stones, Kaur says, "People will understand, and they will feel it because it all just goes back to the human emotion. Sadness looks the same in all cultures, races, and communities. So does happiness and joy."

Like a good therapist, the poet does not believe she has answers to the individual's

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problems. However, instead, she believes in the individual's potential to improve, never putting them down and never making them feel bad about themselves.

Her protagonist makes the journey from:

on the last day of love  
my heart cracked inside my body  
TO  
what is stronger  
then the human heart  
which shatters over and over  
and still loves

For today's generation, which uses social media to gain attention and to express "what we all feel" in a language "we all understand," the poet has successfully democratized this genre, setting aside literary canons. She expresses what we all feel, and her words continuously reverberate that the pain will pass- designed to make the reader feel better. Though the lines are short and the style is subtle and controlled, the topics and the range of emotions are well-developed- sadness, anger, loss, grief, pride, guilt, nervousness, shame, surprise, and love. The illustrations at the end of every page make the words tangible and the feelings visible. The five chapters are a tribute to an individual's vibrant journey of healing and growing.

like the rainbow  
after the rain  
joy will reveal itself

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