

## Chapter 1: Past, Present, and Poetry on Instagram

Susan Sontag (2001 [1964]) charges western reflections upon art as mimesis (representation) for putting art in a position where it needs a constant defence and is required to fulfil some purpose—either moral or aesthetic. Enforcing the necessity of either of these purposes dissociates the form of art from its content. Further, she draws attention to the tendency to following content in order to confirm the presence of a moral, which, in turn, propels the tedious and endless project of *interpretation* of art. Discussions that stem from this interpretative lens also exhume form, tracing patterns, styles and tropes to elucidate its embedded aesthetic meaning.

In many of the recent theories on aesthetics<sup>22</sup> form is emphasised over content, where art is judged by its potential to produce new meanings with fresh metaphors and innovative styles. The parameter of originality and aesthetic difficulty are foregrounded in judging the experience afforded by a work of art. Poetry too is subjected to this fashion of judgement, which hardly sees Instapoetry (with its rinse and repeat templatability) as a legitimate art form. Anna Leiszbweic's anxiety in thus admitting Instapoetry in the category of poetry is apparent when she notes,

The quality varies, but there is plenty of comically or offensively banal work to be found on Instagram: genuinely insightful or distinctive work is the exception, not the rule. The same tropes and themes appear again and again: lower-case platitudes in typewriter fonts; earnest insistence of the importance of self-love; writing in the second person; petals, rainbows and coffee stains sneaking onto pages (2019).

There are two fundamental issues with this view. Firstly, it is essentialist; in that it characterises "Instapoetry" with a set of tropes and themes that are not common to all Instapoetry. The claim that all Instapoetry is the same lacks a broader perspective. It is problematic because of the following reasons: It does not take into account the affordances and accessibility of the medium, and it overlooks the experience afforded by poetry posts that

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<sup>22</sup> Analytic Aesthetics of the latter half of the twentieth century, like Monroe Beardsley (1982) and more recently Alan Goldman (2006), who follow Immanuel Kant's disinterestedness in appreciating art.

Leiszbweic calls "exceptions." As a result, these exceptions do get mentioned, but merely as a footnote.

The way Instagram works as a media platform needs attention in these considerations because repetitive templates exploited in Instapoetry are a result of the purposes for which Instagram is used. The discussion on sameness of posts is fickle, when the agency of Instagram user/reader, who chooses to read a particular post over others, comes to consideration, as platform algorithm lines up only those posts in the *Feed* that the user repeatedly shows interest in. Again, even if one poet follows a particular repetitive style (e.g., Rupi Kaur), Instapoetry is not read like a book, so all the posts by the same poet do not appear at once.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, Instagram, as a commercial platform, would not exhaust the user to boredom by serving the same kind of content. So, the argument about recurring tropes and themes falls void when reception of poetry is taken into account.

Secondly, this view ends up standardising some features of poetry over others. Disregarding subjective experience of poetry, certain features—"lower-case platitudes in typewriter fonts; earnest insistence of the importance of self-love; writing in the second person; petals, rainbows and coffee stains sneaking onto pages"—are narrowly universalised. Here, the appearance of canonised works of poetry on Instagram, such as those of Shakespeare, Rilke, Whitman and so on, problematises the assertion that Instapoetry is shallow and direct compared to traditional poetry. Because the standards by which Instapoetry is painstakingly separated from traditional poetry are subversively flouted when the reading experience of both becomes almost the same by sharing a common platform. And hence, it is clear that the term "Instapoetry" itself needs an extended definition that broadens the perspective towards its much-criticised aspects.

The present chapter offers two sections, which attempt to accurately position Instapoetry in the tradition of poetry by proposing a comprehensive exhibit of past traditions and present conventions in poetry on Instagram. The first section, "Classification," seeks to refute the claim that all poetry on Instagram is the same by illustrating the different types of poetry, both

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<sup>23</sup> Even if Instapoetry is read in printed format (e.g., Lang Leav's printed poetry collection), before deriding it for its repetitiveness, the way it is read needs to be taken into account. Reading cannot be separated from the environment in which it takes place. Thus, directly comparing traditional printed poetry to printed Instapoetry can be fallacious if the reading circumstances are forsaken.

digitally produced and reproduced for the platform.<sup>24</sup> It sketches a brief history of Instagram as a social media platform to explain the evolution of Instapoetry along the development of the platform.

The diverse range of Instapoetry in the first section evidences that the definition of Instapoetry extends beyond just a conservatively defined cast of font, design, and narrative styles. Therefore, a broader perspective is required to determine what counts as poetry on Instagram. The question that follows is, "What features define Instapoetry, and are they sufficient to exclusively define Instapoetry and nothing else?" To arrive at this, one may study the works of the so-called popular Instapoets (given that their works are considered to be "Instapoetry") and examine the features they possess, comparing them to those found in other traditional works. Subsequently, the second section, "Attribution," aims to explore and evaluate parallels between the formal features of "Instapoetry" and traditional poetry. The section aims to conclude that while Instapoetry is yet to be defined definitively, it is evident that a single type—as characterised in "Instapoetry"—does not meet its criteria.

## 1.1 Classification

Instagram, founded in October 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger as a simple photo-sharing mobile application, has today transformed into a multifaceted social media platform and has marked its noteworthy presence in the sphere of social media and the cultures it has permeated. The platform has revolutionised audio-visual media in a way that has surpassed engagement levels on all media platforms that preceded it. It is not only a networking based platform but by and by it has become a groundbreaking digital space for promoting art related activities. Evidently, it has also witnessed emergence of various types of poetry as a result of the modifications it has undergone as a social media platform. So, this section attempts to briefly explore the historical development and progression of Instagram to emphasise the effect of Instagram's trajectory—from a humble company to a worldwide sensation that influences contemporary digital and visual cultures—on Instapoetry.

As mentioned, the initial iteration of the platform was simultaneously simplistic but innovative: it was specifically designed for the sole objective of exchanging photographs captured using mobile devices. Instagram quickly gained the attention of users around the

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<sup>24</sup> Digitally reproduced works of poetry here refer to the traditional and canonical poetry recreated and posted on the platform.

world because of its easy-to-use design and large range of artistic effects known as Instagram *Filters*. Later, the app also facilitated uploading pictures from the phone gallery. So, text poems, which may have been in the form of an image *Caption* previously, could now be edited to fit in the image itself. For instance, Instagram community profiles such as Terribly Tiny Tales present an excerpt from the poem in the image (as a highlight), while the rest of the poem goes as an image *Caption* (see fig 1.2). Initially, though, these were plain text images with little to no visual appeal (see fig. 1.1).

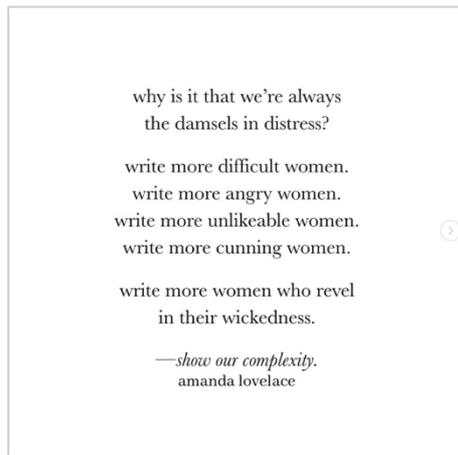


Fig. 1. 1 Plain-text poetry post by Amanda Lovelace (11 May 2023)

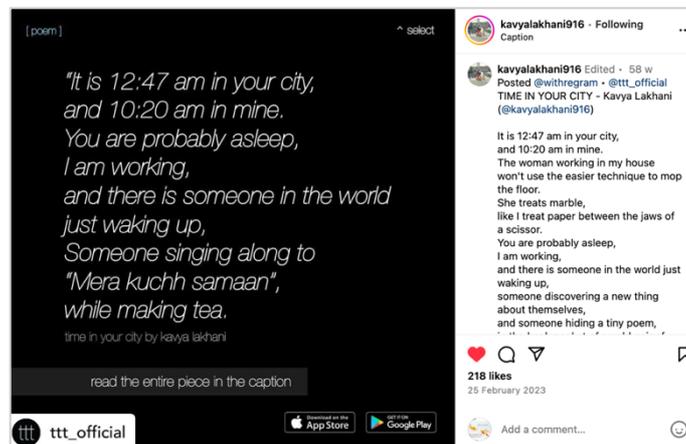


Fig. 1. 2 Excerpt and poetry in *Caption* by @ttt\_official and Kavya Lakhani (25 Feb. 2023)

Instagram quickly acquired over 1 million users within two months of its introduction, indicating its capacity for rapid and substantial expansion. Eventually, an important turning point for Instagram came about when Facebook, under the leadership of Mark Zuckerberg, purchased the rapidly growing network in April 2012 (Lee). Instagram maintained its

autonomy, notwithstanding concerns regarding the acquisition. It is however pivotal if one considers how Facebook's resources may have helped Instagram grow its user base by contributing to Instagram's improved services. This reflects the prevailing presence that Instagram's visual aesthetic exerts in both online and offline cultures. One of the repercussions of this was that many Facebook users turned to Instagram, which then also became their top preference for social networking.

This was also the time when Instagram began to be associated with a unique identity of its own, and aesthetics of Instapoetry posts, which so far aligned more with Tumblr poetry posts (typewritten and nostalgic), gained their own language as poets started adapting to the *Grid* structure of Instagram profile page. (See fig 1.3 and 1.4)

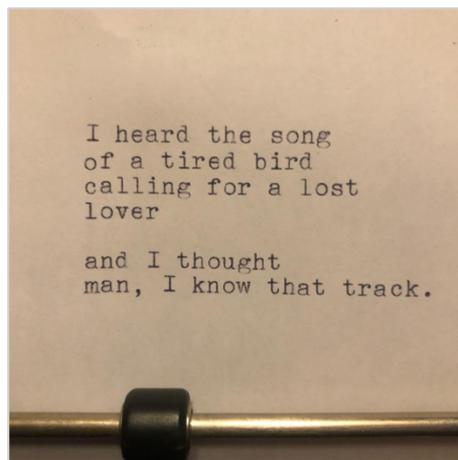


Fig. 1. 3 Poem featuring nostalgic aesthetics in typewriter font by Marco Cavazos (17 July 2022)

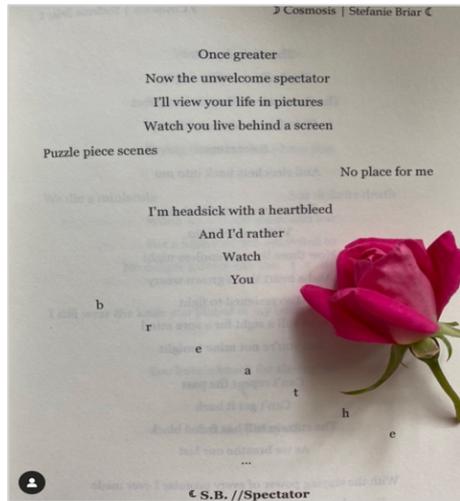


Fig. 1. 4 Profile language maintained using a specific aesthetics in image posts by Stefanie Briar (20 May 2020)

By now, Instagram was also able to bring together various art cultures with the help of interest-based algorithms. Consequently, artwork, digital graphics, doodles, and stills from movies and shows accompanied text poetry in image posts (see fig 1.5, 1.6, and 1.7). Recently, many posts, including poetry, have been seen using audio accompaniment to add to the aesthetic experience. This is the result of the *Music in Feed* feature that was introduced in 2022.



Fig. 1. 5 Artwork with poem by Abhishek Lamba (27 May 2023)

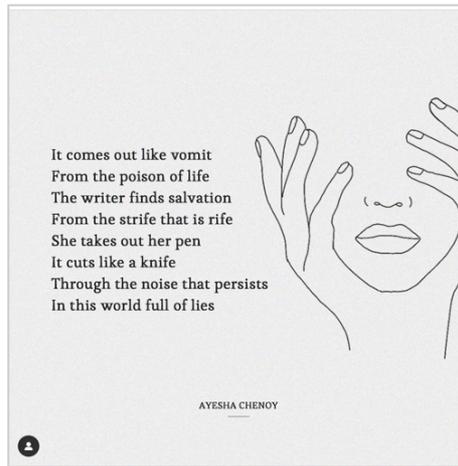


Fig. 1. 6 Doodle with poem by Ayesha Chenoy (6 Feb. 2020)

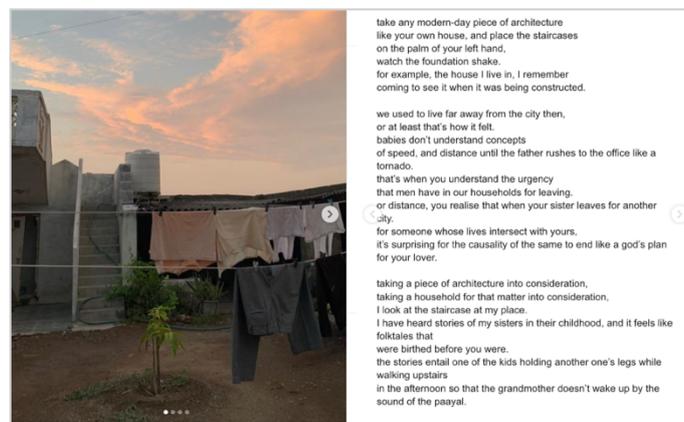


Fig. 1. 7 Photograph with a poem in a *Carousel* post by Divyang Mokariya (31 May 2023)

Instagram's popularity resulted in its expansion beyond its initial objective of sharing photos. In 2013, the platform introduced a video sharing feature that allowed users to publish short videos besides only images. This innovation enhanced the appeal of Instagram, attracting users who sought captivating visual content. After introducing Instagram *Stories* in 2016 and IGTV in 2018, the platform expanded its variety of services to cater to different sorts of content and user preferences. Thus, Instagram's development has been characterised by its capacity to adjust to evolving trends and react to competitive forces. Instagram's implementation of *Stories*, influenced by the triumph of Snapchat, showcased the platform's readiness to incorporate popular functionalities from other platforms while adding its own unique touch. In 2020, Instagram's introduction of *Reels* established it as a competitor in the short-form video industry, directly challenging TikTok's dominant position.

In response with these additions, newer styles in poetry posts materialised. Performance poetry was the first amongst the video posts that followed. While poems with reading time less than a minute could be posted on *Feed* and *Stories*, longer ones could be posted on IGTV. While shorter formats were also successful, with the introduction of *Reels*, performance poetry and video poetry with animation graphics, film, narration, and audio gained more traction (see fig 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, and 1.12)

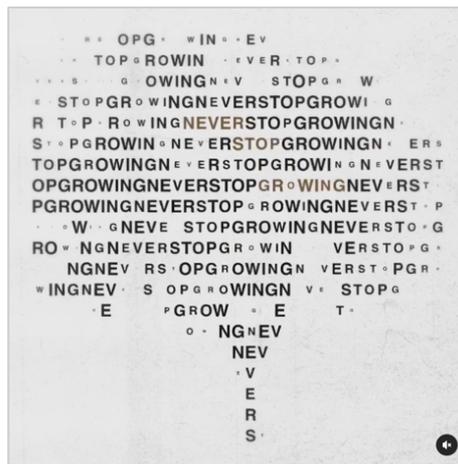


Fig. 1. 8 Motion graphics with visual poetry by Dase Boogie (Video Clip: 11 May 2019)

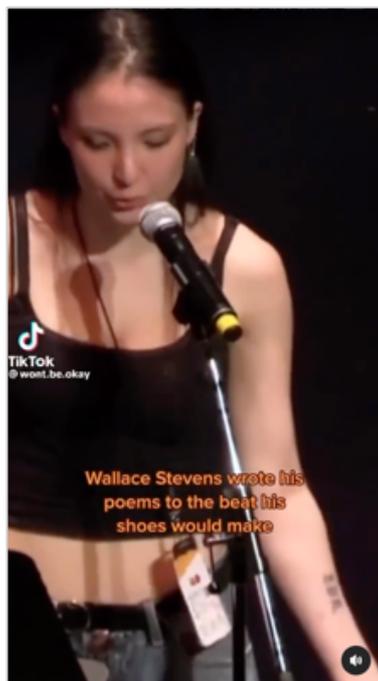


Fig. 1. 9 Performance poetry "I Wish I Was The Poet" by Bee (*Reel*: 19 Apr. 2023)



Fig. 1. 10 Voiceover poem—Ghazal—featuring a movie scene by Jai Singh (*Reel*: 1 Oct. 2022)



Fig. 1. 11 Short film with a voiceover poem with subtitles (captions) by Evie (*Reel*: 14 Dec. 2022)



Fig. 1. 12 Voiceover poem with music and moving image, written by Wendy Cope, created by Secret Chords (*Reel*: 26 Jan. 2022)

Thus, in addition to its technological advancements, by creating an omnipresent force in everyday life, Instagram has had a significant cultural influence by defining contemporary concepts of self-expression and aesthetics in poetry. Table 1.1 briefly shows the range of types of poetry posts that have surfaced because of the tools and features of Instagram.<sup>25</sup>

**Table 1. 1**  
Types of Poetry Posts on Instagram

Category	Types of Poetry Posts	Illustrations
Image  (Single Image & Carousel)	Poetry in <i>Caption</i>	Fig 2
	Simple text	Fig 1
	Aesthetic text and design (e.g. typewriter fonts and/or profile language and design)	Fig 3 and 4

<sup>25</sup> The list is not exhaustive and is used only to draw an estimated status of poetry on Instagram.

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	Text over image (photograph, artwork, sketch, digital graphics, movie stills, etc.)	Fig 5, 6, and 7
	Image and music	-
Video (IGTV, <i>Reels</i> , & <i>Stories</i> )	Animation graphics and text	Fig 8
	Video with subtitles and voiceover (e.g. video crafted from montage of artworks, photographs, animation graphics or film backed with narration)	Fig 10, 11, and 12
	Performance Poetry	Fig 9

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## 1.2 Attribution

Artworks representing traditional visual art and photography as a precedent of digital visual arts are so fundamentally disparate from each other in both material and philosophical apparatus, that it is almost preposterous to call a photograph a digital painting. This equation does not strictly apply when one draws a comparison between digital poetry and traditional poetry. While the former differs from the latter in materials, it does not disagree with the latter at length in terms of techniques and philosophy. Thus, even though Instapoetry bears a disorderly resemblance to poetry, it continues to borrow from the traditional forms of poetry. That is to say, either Instagram lets one graft traditional poetry into a new frame, or it recreates the art of poetry in newer ways—a kind of "newness" indicating not a dichotomous opposition from the tradition, but a point of development.

Followingly, this section concerns itself with one basic question: "Are there any features that make up the quintessence of Insta-poetics, so as to completely dissociate them from traditional poetics?" Ensuing questions that may be raised to answer this are: 1. "Are formal features of Instapoetry only exclusive to it?" and 2. "How have the forms of traditional poetry seeped into Instapoetry?" Subsequently, following sections endeavour to engage with these

questions to reinvestigate the status of the so called "Instapoetry" as being completely alienated from the definition of poetry.

### 1.2.1 Features of Instapoetry and Traditional Poetry

Indeed, various forms of Instapoetry have emerged in response to the evolving features of the platform, leading to the broadening of its possibilities and capabilities. However, in the new and upcoming Instapoetry, the same features—brevity, visual engagement, and directness—can be seen working their influence in a complex way compared to the simple functioning of these in the initial posts, for which at least the popular Instapoets like R. M. Drake, Rupi Kaur and so on were known. The fact that these features have the potential to be worked on in a multiplicity of creative ways can also be gathered from the way they have been adopted and absorbed, even in traditional printed poetry that serves as a site attesting to how these features are not exclusive only to Instagram but were in use before the platform.

A majority of what is labelled as "Instapoetry" is known for being brief. Taking into account the limited area per image and the attention span of the audience, which is conditioned to scroll away at the screen, the poems effectively attempt to communicate intense emotions with fewer words, employing strategies such as symbolism and metaphor (see fig. 1.13). Regardless of the weight given to each and every word, the conciseness of the content enables swift assimilation and effortless dissemination, rendering it highly compatible with the rapid tempo of social media. Although traditional print poetry does not have the same character constraints as Instagram posts, brevity is nonetheless a defining feature of many traditional poetic forms—Haiku, Clerihew, Cinquain, Limerick, and Epigrams—that maintain the economy of language and exist outside of the platform. One only needs to recall a few instances from the sea of illustrations, such as Dorothy Parker's "Resumé," Leonard Cohen's "Gift," William Carlos Williams' "Red Wheelbarrow," Matsuo Bashō's Haiku, "The Old Pond," which captures a serene moment in nature with just seventeen syllables, to name a few. Another undecidedly related example would be William Blake's famous epigram, "To see a World in a Grain of Sand/ And a Heaven in a Wild flower/ Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand/ And Eternity in an hour." Even though these lines only form an excerpt from a much longer poem, "Auguries of Innocence," because of the completeness they represent in form and idea, they have been quoted multiple times as a standalone poem.

When discussing Blake, it is unlikely to overlook the graphic elements of his works which demonstrate how the combination of pictures and poetry text is not a concept exclusive to Instapoetry or digital poetry. Imagist poetry uses words to create a visual image, while pre-Raphaelite poetry from the eighteenth century provided detailed visual descriptions. In contrast, Blake actually engraved visuals alongside the text (see fig. 1.14). Other traditional forms of visual poetry, such as ekphrastic poetry, blackout poetry, and concrete poetry, also incorporate visual aspects. Although it is widely acknowledged that visual accompaniment is not a recent addition to poetry that has only been made possible by Instagram, it is indisputable that one of the key characteristics of Instapoetry is its integration of visual elements. Notwithstanding the purpose of use in traditional poetry, poets frequently incorporate appealing visuals in the form of images, artwork, or aesthetic typography for a range of reasons, including: 1. to optimise the overall effect of the poem; 2. to add layers of subtext to the words; 3. to captivate the audience on a platform such as Instagram, where users are accustomed to content that is visually interesting; 4. to enhance the level of immersion; and so on.

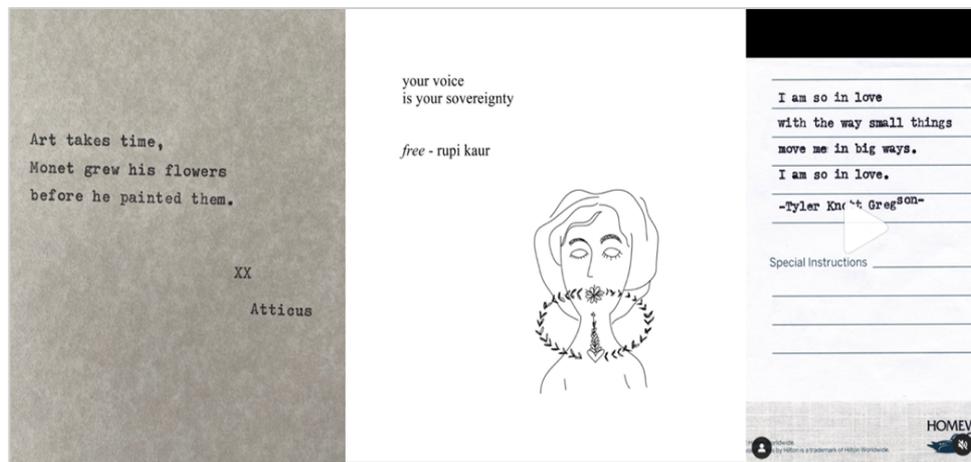


Fig. 1. 13 (From Left to Right) brief poems by Atticus (6 Mar 2024), Rupi Kaur (27 Oct. 2023), Tyler Knott Gregson (9 Feb. 2024)

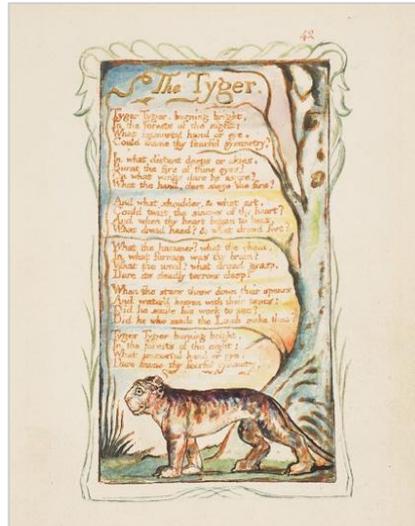


Fig. 1. 14 William Blake's "The Tyger" posted by Elizabeth Barker

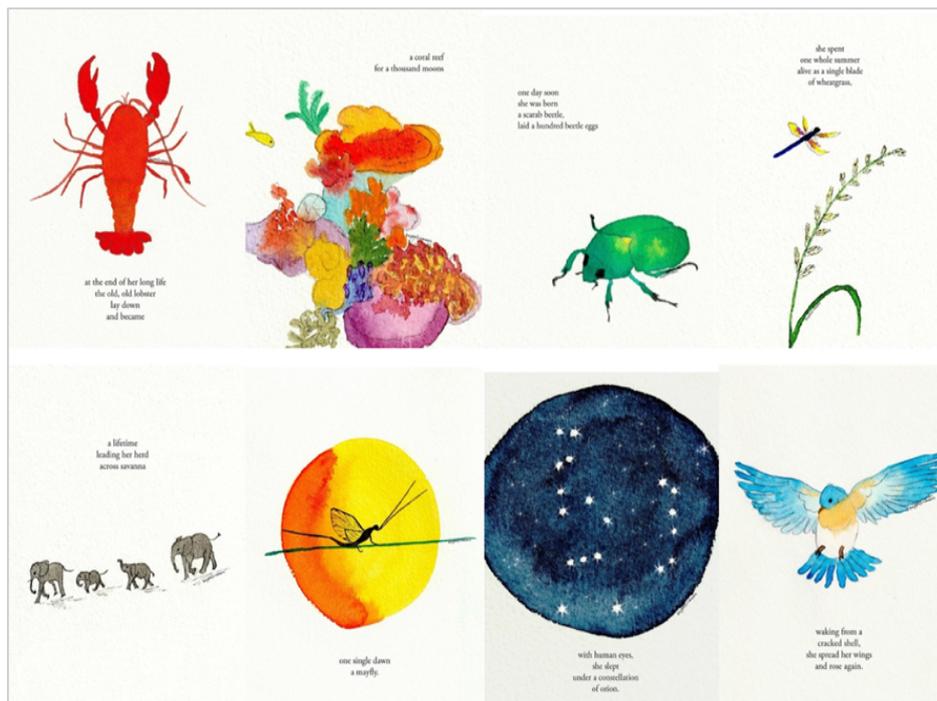


Fig. 1. 15 *Carousel Poetry* post with aesthetically attractive visual art by Amber Fossey (31 Mar. 2024)

Besides providing the subtext, visuals also furnish the text with a context to which the poet aims to draw the audience. Such contextualisation seeks to make the message of the poetry more direct (see fig. 1.15). Since the motive here is to serve the short-lived curiosity of Instagram users, most of the time text itself is constructed with a morphological, syntactic, and stylistic simplicity. However, one more way to achieve directness in poetry is by incorporating everydayness as a material theme and a functional form. Again, viewing poetry as a natural

occurrence in the everyday is not something that is unconventional or something that pertains only to Instapoetry. For instance, it can be seen in the handwritten poetry of Emily Dickinson (see fig. 1.16), as well as in the works of confessional and Fireside poets, and even in poetry published in magazines. Traditional printing has long embraced the idea of creating poetry that revolves around ordinary subjects, enabling people to establish a connection with it. Therefore, the presence of everydayness in Instagram poetry is not a new phenomenon but rather a natural consequence of the medium's association with everyday life (see fig. 1.17).

Another recurring content-related criticism Instapoetry receives is the use of specific themes like feminism, either confessional or uplifting. Nonetheless, these are as much prevalent in offline traditional poetry. The overuse of themes for the purposes of gaining traction on the platform may be an issue that can be raised and discussed in detail elsewhere.



Fig. 1. 16 Emily Dickinson's "Alone and in a circumstance" illustrating how poetry is organically weaved into the everyday objects (Amherst Script 1870)

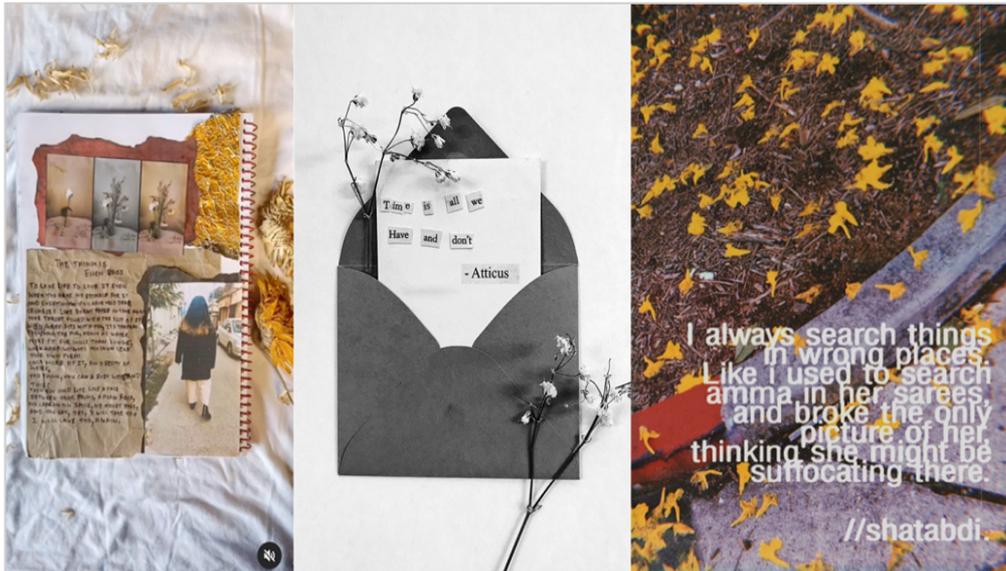


Fig. 1. 17 (From Left to Right) Poetry posts situating the use of poetry in the Everyday by Prasangana (13 Jan. 2023), Atticus (9 Apr. 2024), Cruelsummer (17 July 2021)

Therefore, the denominators of brevity, visual engagement, and concrete language remain integral to both Instapoetry and traditional print poetry, where only the presentation and constraints may differ in accord with their respective mediums. Although, a direct comparison is not possible and not recommendable because the logics of the systems sustaining the two kinds of poetry—print and digital—are very different. Such a comparison would be flawed in two ways, both of which are represented in the analysis proposed by Adek and Satria on the one hand and David Solway on the other.

Adek and Satria aim to establish legitimacy of Lang Leav's work *Love and Misadventure* by using the formalistic method to determine whether or not Instapoetry must be criticised or appreciated for bringing poetry back in the vogue. They point out the strategies and techniques Leav uses in her work and conclude that Leav's poetry must not be condemned because it is very much like traditional poetry. However, the formalistic features they highlight do not make for the case of all poetry on Instagram. The reason why Leav was chosen, as it seems in this case, is because her poetry seamlessly continues the poetics of traditional poetry. The definition of poetry doesn't need to change here because Leav's work conforms to the "standard" structure of poetry. The reason why Rupi Kaur's poetry was not even mentioned in the analysis suffices as an indication that such a study of comparison will only represent a few cases to defend Instapoetry for the characteristics that do not depict the larger picture. Therefore, the

conclusions arrived at become as lopsided as Solway's comparative analysis of Rupi Kaur and Emily Dickinson does.

Solway's approach to attack, censoring Instapoetry for its prosaicness, is clear when he writes,

In America, one need only consult *The Poetry Foundation* to find an innumerable cohort of poetic nonentities who have brought the craft down to the level of barstool confessions. This is thanks in large measure to the pedestrian influence of Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* with its all-too-intimate revelations of self, its reminiscences of personal trials and ordeals, its family histories, and its flat, prosaic, unbosoming language.

On a similar note, he describes Rupi Kaur's poetry as "self-indulgent rubbish" and criticises it for being shallow, superficial, without meaningful insights, and devoid of cadence. Solway argues that Kaur's poetry, exemplified in one of her referenced poems, does not meet the standards of traditional poetry, unlike Dickinson's work on the same subject, which explores the complexities of human experience with rigorous linguistic creativity. Therefore, Solway's assertion that Kaur's poetry lacks artistic and intellectual merit compared to Dickinson's may not hold true, as formalistic analysis (without the given contexts) can always be turned around and manipulated in favour of either poet here. On a further note, his argument on the timelessness of poetry, even though it is considered reliable, is not valid. Kaur's poetics are ephemeral in context with the present medium. That does not imply that her poetry is any less of an art than Dickinson's. Again, it is not logical to criticise the mediums as a context of reading because of their dynamic nature and lack of an identical sequence of events that constitute their structure. Likewise, it is not practical to compare one form with another, regardless of whether they exist in the same period or a different one. One may deny the mutual comparison owing to the poems lying in different realms, and by the same logic, none of them can be expelled from the definition of poetry.

The exercise of identifying features has only been taken up in these sections to see how medium may or may not change the form of poetry. Seth Perlow (2019) acknowledges this impossibility of equitable comparison as follows:

You might think literature published online should lend itself to computational analysis. Indeed, bulk textual analysis of the many comments on each Insta-poetry post might reveal what modes of participatory readership these poems tend to garner. But the Insta-poets frequently deploy

visual effects that underscore our embodied interfaces with reading and writing equipment. Neither traditional hermeneutics nor computational analysis can adequately unpack these effects. Instagram poetry instead calls for a reading practice that distances itself from individual texts enough to note these structural effects of the platform, while also remaining attuned to how these effects register visually for individual readers.

Thus, the brevity, visual appeal, and directness of Instapoetry can be attributed to the influence of Instagram's emphasis on visuality and platform engagement.

### 1.2.2 Exceptions and Traditional Poetry on Instagram

As outlined, the assertion that Instapoetry is homogenous in form is subject to error. Although only as exceptions, examples of poems that otherwise prove unfit as "Instapoetry" can be found on the Instagram *Explore* page with simple keyword searches like "Instapoetry", "Poetry", and "Instagram Poetry" (see fig. 1.18). At first glance, it is evident that not all of these poems are brief or particularly engaging in terms of visuals. A closer examination will also reveal that not all of them are straightforward and uncomplicated in their tone and style. However, a contextual analysis would reveal how elements of the platform seep through their production and reception and how, once posted on the platform, they cannot be completely divorced from its conditions.

Atticus, in a departure from his typical manner, has posted a Word Find Puzzle on his profile. In this post, the poet challenges his viewers to write a poem using the first three words they find in the puzzle (see fig. 1.19). By employing a formalistic approach, one might argue that the act of constructing a poem from three words, which generates numerous poetic possibilities, is a characteristic of postmodernist aesthetics, as is seen in @nickasbury's three-word poem crafted with Wordle (see fig. 1.20). Although it may be too cluttered for a conventional Instagram post, it provides the visual aesthetic that Instagram requires. Additionally, it is intriguingly *new* to the Instagram audience (because puzzles are more popular among newspaper readers), which may be eager to undertake the task, making it an interactively engaging Instagram post.

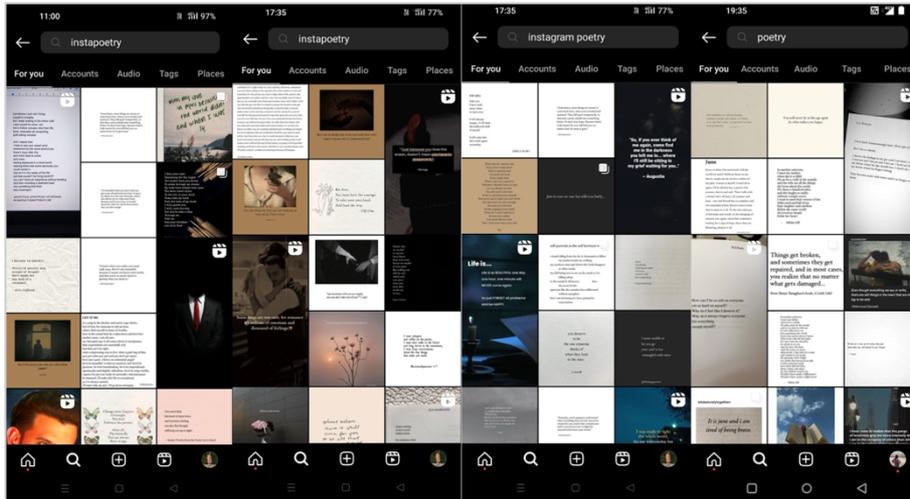


Fig. 1. 18 Screenshots of metadata search for the keywords: "Instapoetry", "Instagram Poetry" and "Poetry" shows different kinds of poetry posts on Instagram



Fig. 1. 19 Atticus's post on finding poetry from a Word Find Puzzle (20 Mar. 2024)



Fig. 1. 20 Three-word Wordle poem by @nickasbury on Instagram

Another interesting anomaly, which might be argued as not truly deviating from the norm, is blackout poetry on Instagram. One such example comes from Kate Bear on Instagram, who effectively deals with troll comments by blackening them out or erasing them. This action reflects her awareness of the trolling culture on Instagram and she transforms it into a resilient poem. While her poetry posts' visual clarity makes them well-suited for the platform, the viewer's inherent curiosity to learn about the denigrating comment in question contributes to the engagement in the said post. The author expertly combines elements of engagement, images, and brevity, making it a significant example of Instapoetry rather than an anomaly.

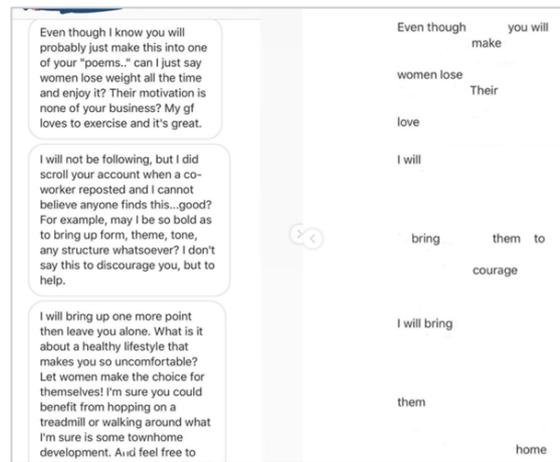


Fig. 1. 21 Kate Baer's blackout poem in the wake of trolling culture on Instagram (6 Apr. 2021)

One more instance can be seen in the *Carousel* post by Arch Hades for the poem titled "Patchwork." In this case, the complete poem is not displayed as one image on a single page. Instead, it is presented as a *Carousel* post, which means it allows users to swipe and access the poem in bits and pieces. The *Carousel* post is designed to accommodate readers who may not be interested in reading a lengthy poem, i.e., they may stop after reading the desired image slides, experience the part as a whole (as each page of the *Carousel* represents a distinct theme conveyed through different stanzas) and scroll away. Furthermore, the post can be saved for later if not read immediately. If immediate reading is necessary, the first or second page can be swiped over and read before scrolling over to the next post on the *Feed*.

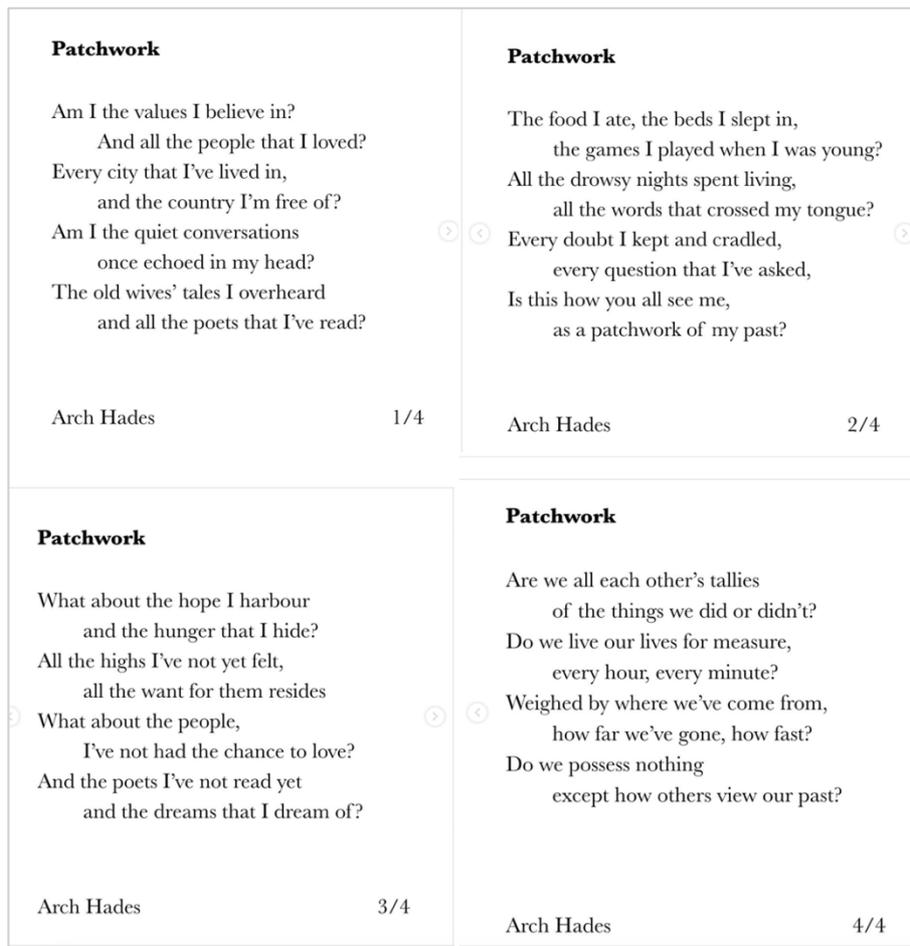


Fig. 1. 22 Arch Hades's poem "Patchwork" which is not brief as usual but posted in a *Carousel*, adjusting the length of the poem (14 Feb. 2023)

Over and above these, a wide array of traditional poetry also features frequently on Instagram. One is illustrated in Divyang Mokariya's post, where he uses Langston Hughes's poem "Tired" to construct a narrative around his current life experiences. The way in which he utilises Instagram as a medium to chronicle the events of his life through posts and the way in which he experiences it through the aesthetic immersion of poetry (where his poem and Hughes's poem can be seen as a poetic dialogue) demonstrates the potential of this conventional style of poetry on the platform. Kristin Diable's video, where she presents a stop motion video with voice over audio reciting Mary Oliver's poem "Wild Geese," is another example of traditional poetry reincarnated on Instagram. The selection of stop motion pictures aligns perfectly with the concept and tone of the poem, exhibiting a creative adaptation of traditional poetry on a digital medium.

Thus, the issue at hand is not whether the form of poetry is correct or incorrect for the platform. The issue at hand is whether the medium can adopt and adapt poetry in a way that is advantageous for both the platform and the art form of poetry.

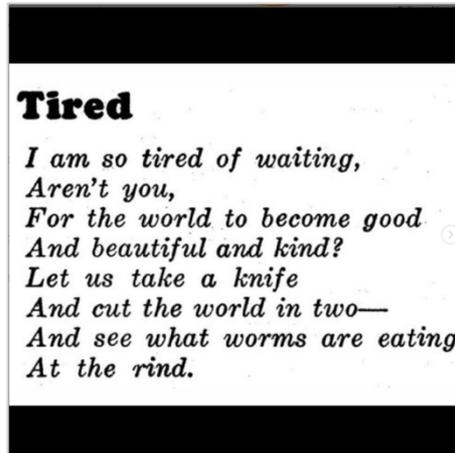


Fig. 1. 23 Divyang Mokariya's post featuring Langston Hughes's "Tired" (20 Apr. 2024)



Fig. 1. 24 Kristin Diable's video translation of "Wild Geese" by Mary Oliver (7 Sep. 2023)

## Conclusion

It is evident that, similar to how poets in the past depended on print media like books, magazines, journals, etc. to distribute their work, Instagram has now emerged as a modern conduit for sharing poetry, promoting community involvement through *Likes*, *Comments*, and *Shares*. And while Instapoetry draws inspiration from traditional poetry, its presentation may seem to offer a different experience. This experience is distinctive due to the extratextual factors introduced by the media platform on which the art form is located. Peter Stockwell's

ideas in *Cognitive Poetics* (2022) and those of Hessa Alghadeer (2014) are both pivotal for understanding poetry because they both emphasise the significance of comprehending the text and its context, as well as the circumstances and goals that led to the creation of the poem and the knowledge and beliefs that shape the act of reading it (Alghadeer 87). Thus, the process of reaching poetic meaning can be seen from an entirely different perspective.

Clearly, the emergence of digital media has significantly altered the concept of poetry and the manner in which it is appreciated. This is due to the fact that not only the reception of poetry but also the composition of the text in a distinct medium plays a role in changing the meaning-making process. This case, in particular, urges one to practice analysis that goes beyond conventional printed poetic texts, thus welcoming more holistic approaches to analysing poetry.

Reflecting on the rapid technological and societal changes of the past two decades, the present research concurs with Alghadeer's assertion that the changing media landscape requires an innovative theory of meaning (88). This theory must be fundamentally dependent on the context of the platform and refrain from concluding that ephemeral experiences are distinct from aesthetic experiences; likewise, it must also avoid discerning the works that afford ephemeral experiences as non-art. It is necessary to adapt the theory to the subject, rather than forcing the subject to fit a theory that was originally designed for a specific sample. To understand how, as an art form, Instapoetry's status, value, and meaning are constructed, one must seek an answer to some of the most primary questions about art, aesthetic properties, and aesthetic experience that seem to assume the major foci of Philosophical Aesthetics in contemporary times.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the following chapter engages with these questions, corroborating the impulse behind Sontag's sweeping pronouncement: "In place of a hermeneutics, we need an erotics of art" (10).

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<sup>26</sup> Jerrold Levinson (2003) suggests seeing the field of Philosophical Aesthetics having three foci, 1. involving study of art as a *practice or activity or object*; 2. dealing with certain *properties or features* of art, or those aspects that can be said to be aesthetic 3. Engaging with understanding art through *attitude, experience, or perception* that can be called (3).

