

Unveiling Self-Identity of Teachers: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Perception and Interpretation of Selected Poems of Rupi Kaur's "Homebody"

Faiza Liaquat¹, Aqsa Naimat², Urooj Fatima Alvi³, Habibullah Pathan⁴

¹Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Lahore, Lahore, Pakistan

²Department of English Language and Literature, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

³Department of English, University of Education, Lahore, Pakistan

⁴Faculty of Language Studies, Sohar University, Oman

Correspondence: Faiza Liaquat, Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Lahore, 1KM Defence Road, Lahore, Pakistan. E-mail: faiza.naveed@ell.uol.edu.pk

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Abstract

This study focuses on the unique amalgamation of linguistic and visual elements in Rupi Kaur's Instapoetry, and how it contributes to the self-identity representation of university-level teachers in English Literature or Linguistics. Ten participants, each with considerable teaching experience and active research engagement in their respective fields were individually invited to participate in this research from various universities in Pakistan. Data collection includes two sessions of semi-structured interviews. Additionally, a supplementary questionnaire was used to gather demographic information and insights into participants' academic backgrounds. The transcribed data were analyzed using Norman Fairclough's Three-dimensional framework of CDA, revealing the transformative role that linguistic and visual elements play in shaping teachers' self-identity by fostering their innovation, individuality, and inclusivity as professionals and individuals. However, the study also highlights persistent challenges related to cultural conservatism and academic freedom when adopting new trends in Instapoetry. The study suggests practical implications for teachers and educational institutions to benefit from a subtle understanding of the relationship between Instapoetry and self-identity. The study has two main limitations: a small sample size of university-level teachers and a primary focus on selected poems from Rupi Kaur's "homebody" for analysis.

Keywords: instapoetry, rupi kaur, self-identity, university-level teachers, critical discourse analysis

1. Introduction

The term "Instapoetry" pertains to poems crafted and shared on social media platforms, particularly Instagram, contributing to a genre that is marked by innovative trends in free-verse poetry and minimalist imagery (Oliveira & Fazano, 2020). As Vincent (2021) declares, Instapoetry is attracting millions of supporters and critics and becoming both acceptable and controversial (p. 1). This genre is characterized by the addition of visual elements, such as illustrations, typography, and layout, that enhance the effects and meanings of written words. Visual elements include various characteristics like page layout, typography, spacing, punctuation, and imagery (Forceville, 1996). Linguistic elements consist of decision-making about word choice, syntax, rhyme, meter, and figurative language (Goering, 2019; Lakoff, 1993). These linguistic and visual elements are combined together to construct the poetic expressions.

Rupi Kaur rose in fame with her extensively praised poetry collections, including *milk and honey* (2014); *the sun and her flowers* (2017), and *homebody* (2020). *Homebody* (Kaur, 2020) is categorized into four sections: mind, heart, rest, and awake. The collection comprises intimate poems reflecting Kaur's journey of self-discovery and acceptance. Addressing her experiences as a woman of color, an immigrant, a survivor of sexual abuse, and a creative artist (Gupta, 2020), Kaur complements her poems with personal drawings, adding a distinctive dimension to her work (Kaur, 2020). This not only distinguishes her poetry from other forms but also significantly contributes to its broad appeal, forming a central focus of this research.

The impact of Instagram poetry on the interpretation and perception of poetry is multifaceted. Firstly, it challenges traditional notions of poetry and the identity of poets. It exhibits a unique aesthetic, deviating from conventional literary poetic norms with characteristics like brevity, simplicity, straightforwardness, and a focus on visual elements (Khilnani, 2021). Secondly, Instagram poetry cultivates a sense of community and belonging among individuals who share common emotions, values, or challenges. According to Yu (2019), Instagram poetry is not solely a literary phenomenon but also a cultural and social one. Thirdly, Instagram poetry candidly addresses a spectrum of subjects, including gender, race, sexuality, mental health, environment, and human rights. It does so with honesty, personal reflection, and potency, motivating action, resistance, and activism by calling for empathy, compassion, and solidarity. For instance, Rupi Kaur challenges taboos around menstruation, body image, and sexual violence through her poems (The Arizona State Press, 2019; Book Riot, 2019); Nayyirah Waheed explores themes of identity, belonging, and healing as a person of color (Waheed, 2013; Skip the Small Talk,

2018); r.h. sin empowers women who have experienced toxic relationships through his poems (Sin, 2016; The Odyssey Online, 2017). Consequently, this research explores how Instagram poetry shapes the political and social discourse of contemporary society by raising awareness, igniting discussions, and advocating for change on various fronts.

Online poetry transcends artistic expression; it serves as a means of self-exploration and identity construction. Bennett and Boothroynd (2020) argue that online poetry is not only a form of creative expression but also a tool for shaping and presenting one's identity. This is achieved through the use of visual and linguistic elements that contribute to aesthetics and authenticity. Many poets and readers are using Instagram as a channel to express themselves and display their identities. Poets utilize a numerous number of images and words to leave a distinguished identity. Simultaneously, readers go through these expressions, building a connection to their personal experiences and emotions. As Yu states (2019), "Instagram poets enjoy the role of being the only writers, considering themselves as performers, entrepreneurs, and tastemakers" (para. 4). Therefore, Instagram poetry is the medium for the construction and communication of self-identity for the readers and writers. Hill and Yuan (2018) point out that Instagram poetry is often criticized for being simplistic, clichéd, and unoriginal (para. 3). Moreover, Peter et al. (2021) suggest that social media experiences can have both positive and negative effects on adolescents' self-esteem, depending on their type of engagement (p. 11). Therefore, Instagram poetry is not a neutral or universal form of self-expression, but rather a complex and contested one that contributes to the construction and representation of self-identity of its consumers in a social context.

According to Zotzmann and O'Regan (2016), "the concept of identity is of interest to applied linguistics for a variety of reasons. It links the level of the individual with the social and thus allows us to capture the complexity of human interaction and communication" (4, p. 143). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach that examines the role of language and other semiotic resources in the construction and negotiation of self-identity in different contexts and situations. CDA assumes that discourses are not neutral or objective, but rather imbued with power relations and ideologies that shape and are shaped by social structures and practices (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2001). CDA also recognizes that discourses are dynamic and contested, and that individuals can use them strategically to position themselves and others in various ways (van Dijk, 1993).

Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model is one of the most comprehensive frameworks for conducting CDA. Fairclough (1995) developed a three-dimensional framework for studying discourse, where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of socio-cultural practice. According to Fairclough (1995), a comprehensive analysis of discourse involves three dimensions: text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation). Fairclough's model offers multiple entry points for analysis, emphasizing that the order of analysis is flexible as long as all dimensions are ultimately incorporated and demonstrated to be mutually explanatory. The intriguing patterns and disjunctions that require description, interpretation, and explanation emerge in the interconnections between these dimensions (Fairclough, 1995).

By applying Fairclough's model, a more profound comprehension of how self-identity is constructed and portrayed through discourse can be achieved. For instance, one can scrutinize how discourses shape and portray various facets of self-identity, such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, class, and profession (van Leeuwen, 1996). Additionally, an analysis can explore how discourses establish and perpetuate social categories and boundaries, either inclusive or exclusive of particular identities (Gee, 2005). Moreover, the examination of discourses can unveil how they mirror and perpetuate power dynamics and ideologies that either favor or marginalize specific identities (van Dijk, 1998). Further scrutiny can focus on how discourses empower or constrain the agency and choices individuals have to express or alter their identities (Wodak, 2001). Lastly, an analysis can investigate how individuals creatively or critically utilize discourses to resist or challenge prevailing oppressive narratives (Fairclough, 2003). One can also analyze how individuals negotiate or reconcile conflicting or multiple discourses and identities in different contexts and situations (Scollon, 2004).

The aim of this study is to examine how university-level teachers in English Literature or Linguistics perceive and interpret the visual and linguistic elements in the selected poems of Rupi Kaur's book *homebody* and how these interpretations contribute to the formation and representation of their self-identity. The research questions that guide this study are:

RQ 1. How do university-level teachers in English Literature or Linguistics perceive and interpret, the visual and linguistic elements from selected poems of Rupi Kaur's book *homebody*?

RQ 2. How do teachers express their self-identity through these interpretations?

RQ3. How do contemporary modes of Instapoetry, such as brevity, free verse, visual design and digital dissemination influence the construction of self-identity among teachers within the realm of Literature and Linguistics studies?

In this study university level teachers' identities are influenced by the social and political context in which they operate, such as the institutional policies, academic norms, power relations, and ideological agendas. University level teachers' identities are challenged or resisted by their students, colleagues, administrators or other stakeholders, and how they cope with or respond to such challenges or resistance is the focal point of discussion in this study. Van Dijk (2001) states that "one of the crucial elements of the social power of dominant groups is their control over public discourse and hence over the minds and actions of others" (p. 355).

By analyzing the perception and interpretation of Instapoetry among teachers, this study also aims to explore how contemporary poetic styles influence the educators to perceive themselves fostering creativity, individuality, and inclusivity. This is an important issue to

explore because teachers influence the literary canon, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment in their fields (Bennett & Boothroyd-Jones, 2020). However, teachers also face various challenges in adopting new trends in poetry and maintaining their academic freedom in the face of cultural conservatism (Cummins, 2020; Bennett & Boothroyd-Jones, 2020). Moreover, this study intends to demonstrate how Instapoetry can be used as a valuable tool for molding self-identities and encouraging a critical exploration of societal norms in the digital age.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, the landscape of poetry has undergone a remarkable transformation with the advent of social media and digital platforms. One of the most notable developments in contemporary poetry is the rise of “Instapoetry,” a genre characterized by concise, visually appealing poems that are shared and consumed primarily on social media like Instagram. Rupi Kaur’s poems have been chosen for the instructional use of Instapoetry (Amarante et al., 2019). According to Katy Waldman (2018), who comments on the poetry of Atticus and Rupi Kaur, “their work carves out a pristine space for reflection”—it challenges readers to look at the familiar from a different angle (para. 10). The easy accessibility of Instapoetry and brevity have garnered readers from varied backgrounds, enabling poets to reach broader audiences and engage with literary circles worldwide.

Rupi Kaur has gained widespread popularity in recent years for her poetry, equipped with emotions and momentous themes like trauma, healing, self-love, and identity. Kaur is recognized for sharing her unique, simple, and raw style of poetry that incorporates visual and linguistic elements on social media platforms. Eagar and Dann (2016) contend, “the internet permits noncelebrities to construct and display an image of themselves to a mass audience without the power ascribed by fame” (p. 1837) and Kaur is precisely the kind of person who can establish a personal brand using Instagram. People now have opportunities to present a fabricated public image as the power of celebrity is shifting to the “every person”.

Despite using Kaur’s poetry as their subject matter, the studies examined numerous literary theories or models to conduct their research. As an illustration, Vega (2022) inspected the possibilities of Rupi Kaur’s poetry through the lens of affect theory, focusing on the satisfying objects that created comparisons between great and low art. On the other side, Tikkha (2017) investigated the lonely voices in Kaur’s poetry in relation to how women are represented in Indian culture. Similarly, Deka (2020), who explored Milk and Honey using feminist ideologies and discovered the multiple feministic features. Finally, Mary (2020) scrutinized Kaur’s poetry by examining the feministic aspect, which is the specific audience that the poem is intended for, namely, the women who were physically, mentally, and emotionally mistreated.

Even some of the Instapoets themselves have demonstrated misgivings about Instapoetry, according to critics and Instapoets alike. In 2014, Macias frankly stated to a reporter, “I would never consider these poems.” “I’m not a poet,” Leszkiewicz (2019) declared. Critics argue that the conciseness and simplicity characterizing Kaur’s poetry, often comprising brief verses and straightforward language, deviate from the sophistication traditionally associated with poetry. This style might oversimplify intricate emotions and experiences, rendering them easily digestible sound bites. However, some supporters of Instapoetry contend that it is a valid and accessible form of expression that resonates with a large and diverse audience.

Rupi Kaur emphasizes feminism in her poetry. Val Plumwood in her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* describes feminism and ecofeminism. Plumwood narrates that many critics wrongly mention it in a wrong way that women are closer to nature than men. They basically try to compare women with nature. She also added that it was considered a matter of shame but today it has become a badge of pride. Plumwood describes those qualities like caring and being honest with oneself and women’s experiences are really paramount to ecological feminism (1993, p. 5).

The significance of mental imagery in the formation and understanding of poetic metaphors has frequently been discussed by poets, philosophers, literary critics, linguists, and psychologists who are interested in metaphors (Gibbs & Bogdonovich, 2009). A new visually-oriented approach to Instapoetry that is often referred to as “visual poetics” or “image-driven poetry” has restructured the traditional notions of poetry as a written form. This approach involves the fusion of words and visual elements, such as images, illustrations, or graphics, alongside the textual content of the poem. It aims to create a harmonious interplay between language and visuals to convey complex emotions and profound messages with notable briefness and simplicity. These linguistic metaphors are considered image metaphors, according to Lakoff and Turner (1989), since they use images rather than more abstract concepts. Therefore, Lakoff and Turner (1989) also call them “one-shot” metaphors, as they have a limited impact on the reader’s imagination. Gibbs (1994) agrees with this view and suggests that image metaphors are less effective than other types of metaphors in creating novel and vivid associations.

Language is required as the source of representation. People use a language to convert their mental thoughts into shared, understandable signs (icons, visual signs, indexical signs, spoken signs, and written signs). A tool we engage to “make sense of things in which meaning is created and exchanged” is language (Hall, 2003, p. 1). Additionally, according to Allan et al. (2010), people consume language to communicate with themselves. It may be inferred from the studies of Hall (2003) and Allan et al. (2010) that language helps us communicate what is in our minds into a meaning that can be shared with others as well as with ourselves.

McGinn and Stevens (2004) argued that “poetry in the classroom setting can promote creativity, arguments, critical thinking, analysis, self-expression, and self-reflection of the learner’s position in and relationship with the world” (p. 2). Poetry can be used in various modes that suit different classroom contexts, such as listening, illustrating, and interpreting (Locke, 2010). Poetry is not limited by the linguistic devices and vocabulary on the page; rather, it serves as a platform for personal expression through diverse media (Locke, 2010). Gordon

(2004) also emphasized the role of gestures and sound in performing poetry, which enables students to explore meaning-making from a multimodal perspective and go beyond analyzing how the poet conveys the themes. Steele (2014) suggested that poetry's value lies in its ability to "lift off the page" (p. 19) when presented in various ways, such as visual or oral modes. Steele (2014) further proposed that poetry should be seen as a text to be played with and listened to rather than a fixed set of meanings.

New technology is changing the standards of communication, according to The New London Group (1996). They describe that literacy should go beyond the printed texts and include some new modes of communication, such as multimedia technologies. Kress (2003) predicts that screens are soon going to be the dominant medium of communication. Multimodality is an advanced mode of expressing ideas, gestures, language, and personal ideologies (Jewitt, 2006). Multimodality highlights the modern modes of communication by emphasizing how digital modes enhance creativity, self-representation, meaning-making, and learning.

An approach that accepts these digital modes and new ways of teaching poetry introduces various modern and digital ways of learning and enhances the critical thinking of the learners. Miller (2007) concludes that this way makes students more active and interested in the learning process as it engages students to learn poetry through diverse mediums. In this digital age, the concern should not be whether modern technologies should be used in teaching but how effectively teachers can integrate modern writings and ways in the classrooms (Hughes, 2007).

Previous research has explored Rupi Kaur's poetry from various perspectives such as feminist perspectives, linguistic patterns, the sensitivity of the content, and criticism of her work. However, there appears to be a significant gap in adopting her poetry as a part of the teaching curriculum and teachers' perception of it. This gap would encircle the pedagogical technologies, the difficulty in accepting digital poetry as curriculum, and teachers' opinions in making it a part of teaching. Investigating how Rupi Kaur's work is accepted and analyzed by educationists and making digital poetry a part of literature is the aim of this study.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a qualitative research design to thoroughly investigate how university-level teachers in English Literature or Linguistics perceive and interpret selected poems of "homebody" (Kaur, R. 2020) in relation to their self-identity representation. The aim of the study is a deep exploration of participants' interpretations, encompassing the intricate dimensions of their engagement with the poetry. Objectives of this research adhere to fundamental characteristics of qualitative research, emphasizing its suitability for investigating the complex dynamics of university-level teachers' perceptions and interpretations of selected poems of Rupi Kaur in the context of self-identity representation. The qualitative nature of the study harmonized with the unique structure of contemporary poetry, providing adaptability to unveil unanticipated themes and insights.

3.2 Sampling

The sample comprised ten university-level teachers from various universities in Pakistan, Lahore, recognized for their expertise in English Literature or Linguistics and considerable teaching experience at graduate and postgraduate levels. Notably, preference was accorded to those actively engaged in research endeavors in their respective fields. By employing purposive sampling, the researchers' intention was to ensure a coherent harmony between participants' proficiencies and the aims of study. As Polkinghorne (2005) points out, "Because the goal of qualitative research is enriching the understanding of an experience, it needs to select fertile exemplars of the experience for study. Such selections are purposeful and sought out; the selection should not be random or left to chance. The concern is not how much data were gathered or from how many sources but whether the data that were collected are sufficiently rich to bring refinement and clarity to understanding an experience" (p. 139). This technique endeavors to elicit profound and finely nuanced insights into different dimensions of selected poems, including their themes, cultural resonances, linguistic and visual components.

3.3 Selection of Poems

An initial set of five poems was precisely selected from Rupi Kaur's book "homebody" and is presented in Appendix A. The objective was to encompass the rich tapestry of themes embedded within "homebody", including cultural identity, child abuse, women's empowerment, hegemony, capitalism, gendered classification, and the interplay of nature and nurture (Hussain & Ali, 2021). In the context of highlighting the basic structure of Instapoetry, which incorporates "short texts written, primarily, in verses and usually loaded with emotions, imagetic forms" (Sales, 2022, p. 306), the selected poems from "homebody" were intentionally those that feature both visual and linguistic components. This deliberate selection aimed to capture the essence of Instapoetry as a genre that merges linguistic and visual elements to convey complex emotions and messages (Sales, 2022).

3.4 Research Approach and Participant-Centric Adaptations

The study adopted an interpretive approach, aiming to understand the subjective experiences and perspectives of the participants. As the interviews were conducted face to face in academic settings, such as classrooms, university cafes, and offices, the aim was to create a comfortable environment for the participants to freely express their opinions. However, during the selection of participants, the researcher observed the reluctance of several participants to engage with explicit illustrations in poems, leading to the selection of less controversial illustrations. Participants found them "offendable", "intimate", "uncomfortable" and indicative of a "restricted discourse" in their culture.

The new set of five poems was purposively selected to align with the comfort level of the participants and avoid any potential discomfort

while still capturing the essence of Rupi Kaur's poetry and the aims of the research. By adopting the poem selection based on the participant's preferences, the study pursued open and meaningful discussions while respecting the cultural and personal boundaries of the participants.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

Participants were provided with comprehensive information about the study's objectives, methods, and the safeguarding of their input's confidentiality, ensuring their informed consent. The research process was conducted with utmost ethical diligence, prioritizing participants' rights and maintaining their privacy.

3.6 Data Collection

Data collection involved two sessions of semi-structured interviews, aligning with Kvale and Brinkmann's perspective (2009) on interviews as a valuable tool for exploring individuals' interpretations of their daily experiences, narrating their personal journeys and self-perceptions, and bringing depth to their unique worldviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). During the first session, participants were introduced to the purpose and process of the research and then asked to read five selected poems and pick one of their choices to provide insight. A pre-interview questionnaire was prepared and distributed via email among participants to collect data about their backgrounds. The rationale of the questionnaire was to collect demographic information of the participants including their age, gender, educational and teaching experiences, and familiarity with poetry and digital media.

The second round of the interviews covered the interpretations, emotional correspondence, and themes identified by them in the selected poems. A set of predefined questions was asked during the interview. The main agenda behind these interviews was to collect the data on participants' deep understanding of the poetry, depending on their personal and professional expertise.

3.7 Transcription

In terms of transcription, AI technology was used to convert the spoken interviews into written text. After this initial transcription, a thorough manual review and refinement was conducted to correct any discrepancies or misunderstandings that may have arisen during the automated transcription. This thorough manual review guaranteed the precise representation of the transcribed content. It's worth noting that the transcription method employed here was orthographic, not verbatim, to maintain readability and focus on the content of participants' responses. Keeping in mind the interpretive nature of the research, orthographic transcription aligns with this goal by providing a clear and concise representation of their spoken words, which can be analyzed more effectively.

3.8 Research Model

The data obtained from the interviews underwent Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) through Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (Fairclough, 1993), which encompasses text analysis, the examination of text production and interpretation processes, and the broader social analysis of discourse events. This model adeptly enabled the recognition of linguistic features such as lexical choices, and sentence structure preferences, thereby providing insights into participants' modes of expression. Furthermore, it revealed the socio-contextual backdrop and power dynamics intertwined within the language used, illuminating the participants' stance in their cultural and scholarly contexts (Fairclough, 2003). The model's ideological facet facilitated the scrutiny of underlying convictions and inclinations inherent in participants' discourse, giving a deeper comprehension of how societal norms and individual ideologies shape their interpretations. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach to language analysis that examines language patterns within texts while also considering the social and cultural contexts in which these texts are situated (Fairclough, 1995).

An adaptation of Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, this model covered the following components in this study:

1. *Understanding Participants' Views on Visual and Linguistic Elements.*

The primary objective was to comprehend the nuanced meanings embedded in the participants' responses regarding the visual and Linguistic elements present in Rupi Kaur's homebody.

2. *Exploring Discursive Practices of Interpretation.*

The study investigated the discursive strategies used in the interpretation and perception of visual and Linguistic elements. It examined how these practices both facilitated and constrained the ways in which participants communicated and made sense of the poem. This exploration encompassed considerations of cultural contexts, emotional responses, and personal experiences.

3. *Contextual Analysis of Visual Element Interpretation.*

The research undertook a socially situated analysis of elements perception, recognizing that it is shaped by broader social structures. Factors such as prevailing discourse norms, power dynamics between participants and the text, and the influence of contemporary academic practices and the emergence of new poetic genres, such as Instapoetry influenced this analysis. The unique identities and perspectives of teachers further contributed to this analysis

3.9 The Process of Data Analysis

Potter and Wetherell (1987) presented a pair of data analysis phases that researchers frequently employ within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Expanding on their model, Willott and Griffin (1997) have expanded it to encompass seven stages that are sufficiently comprehensive for application in any CDA-based research. In the present study, these stages provided a flexible and effective

structure for generating themes related to the interpretation and perception of university-level teachers in English Linguistics and Literature.

Creating Chunks: Transcribed interviews were divided into meaningful sections called “chunks,” delineated by interjections from interviewers or shifts in topics.

Coding with Themes: Each chunk was assigned thematic codes representing key concepts, opinions, and interpretations expressed by participants.

Grouping under Themes: Chunks coded under specific themes were aggregated to focus analysis on each theme.

Identifying Discursive Variations: Different ways of discussing each theme were identified, capturing diverse perspectives.

Developing Theoretical Accounts: Variations were used to build theoretical explanations grounded in existing literature and observed discourse patterns.

Exploring Additional Themes: Choose the chunks that have been coded under a different theme from the ones previously examined.

Refinement of Analysis: If the discourse patterns recognized in Step 5 are not well-suited to the newly introduced theme, reiterate the process from Stage 4 to 7.

By applying Griffin’s stages, the study efficiently organized data analysis and revealed patterns within teachers’ feedback. This approach accommodated the dynamic nature of the research and facilitated the extraction of meaningful themes from the interview data.

3.9.1 Creating Chunks

The initial phase of data analysis included a careful process of reading and re-reading the transcribed data, leading to the creation of distinct “chunks.” Each interview was subject to multiple readings, facilitating an informal exploration of the data’s content. This segmentation was guided by the interview guidelines, closely aligned with the research questions.

3.9.2 Coding with Themes

After the chunking process, the subsequent phase in data analysis entailed assigning codes to individual chunks, identifying them as themes. This procedure aimed to create a structure of thematic ideas that encompassed aspects of importance and pertinence to the research inquiries in focus.

Beginning with Visual Elements and Interpretations (VE), the focus was on how imagery, symbolism, color, and layout impact participants’ thoughts and emotions. Linguistic Elements and Interpretations (LE) then came into play, exploring how language style, metaphors, similes, repetition, and rhythm intertwined with visual elements to create a complete artistic experience for the participants. Shifting to Self-Identity and Connection (SI), the exploration revolved around participants’ personal resonance with poems. This dimension examined emotional connections, relatability to themes, and cultural and social identity reflections. Lastly, Contemporary Poetic Expression (CPE) was examined, highlighting how modern modes of expression differed from traditional poetic expressions. This dimension also addressed societal impacts, including themes related to controversy, gender bias representation, cultural, and religious sensitivities in an academic setting.

Table 1. Data Extract

Data Extract	Coded for
<p>"That is how you are going to carry yourself towards... that’s how I was from childhood. I was like that, I was never cared caring what other people are saying. I’ve got very supportive friends, very supportive family. Yes, some colleagues will not say that I am unwelcoming because some people might say, some people have said even that they are unwelcoming. It’s not unwelcoming. Do you always like feeling that you are going to give a smile to strangers every time? but I don’t care of public validation in a sense that what profession I choose, how would I behave? How would I dress? You see, you’re Hijabi, you are Hijabi so how, how are you very religious? People asked me this question. So I have, it’s just my connection with God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal connection to themes (SI1) • Emotional Resonance (SI2) • Cultural and Social identity reflection (SI3) • Cultural and Religious sensitivities (SI3)

Table 1 demonstrates the attachment of codes to a smaller chunk.

3.9.3 Grouping under Themes

This process involved analyzing the coded chunks and organizing them into potential thematic categories. This approach helped in identifying patterns and connections within the data.

Table 2. List of Themes and Sub-Themes

Visual Elements and Interpretations (VE)	VE1: Imagery and Symbolism VE2: Color and Visual Representation VE3: Typography and Layout VE4: Visual Interpretation of Emotion
Linguistic Elements and Interpretations (LE)	LE1: Language Style and Tone LE2: Metaphors and Similes LE3: Repetition and Rhythm LE4: Poetic Devices and Techniques
Self-Identity and connection (SI)	SI1: Personal Connection to Themes SI2: Emotional Resonance SI3: Relatability and Empathy Cultural and Social Identity Reflection
Contemporary Poetic Expression (CPE)	CPE1: Comparison with Traditional Forms of poetry CPE2: Cultural and Religious sensitivities CPE3: Gender Bias and Representation 4: Controversial themes and academic practices

Table 2 displays the grouping of themes and Sub-themes in the data. There exist two categories of themes: emergent themes and a priori themes. Stemler (2001) explains that the a priori coding method pertains to predefined categories that are established before the data analysis process. This study investigated priori codes to form the data.

3.9.4 Identifying Discursive Variations

This segment of the study focuses on various ways for theme identification, with one approach involving the examination of the broader “text structure” as highlighted by Fairclough (1992, p. 75). Within the framework of CDA, particular emphasis was placed on scrutinizing the formal aspects of language with lexical choices, personal pronouns, modality and certainty, repetition and rhythm, negation and hedging.

3.9.4.1 Lexical Choices and Repetition

Lexical choices, including specific words and expressions participants used, provided insights into their affiliations, beliefs, and attitudes.

Table 3. Lexical choices and repetitions in responses about Instapoetry

Responses	Lexical Choices	Repetition
“In dramas, like recently, I was watching a show. And in that show, they were like breaking the taboos of sight. They were they were showing transgenderism, very you can say, without any constraints or restraint. That is a long road to achieve to achieve redefining taboos.”	Dramas, taboos, sight, transgenderism, constraints, restraint, long road, breaking the taboos	Repetition of words like “breaking taboos”, “they were” and “to achieve”
“The poetry that I read is completely different from such you know it doesn’t have this much of simplicity and illustration or image, it gives a very different perspective of poetry, sketches, paintings that comes with words, this is very new for me, and I believe we need to do this more.”	Different, simplicity, illustration, image, perspective, sketches, paintings, poetry, you know, very different, new	Repetition of phrases like “you know” and “very different”
“I think it is promoting the ongoing trends that we see in world literature, like it is telling us to not conform to this world, we shouldn’t have herd mentality, you should be independent...”	Conforming, world literature, herd mentality, independent, trends	Repetition of the phrase “we see”

Table 3 lists the lexical choices and repetitions in responses about Instapoetry. Analyzing their choice of vocabulary helped identify whether participants align themselves with certain ideologies or communities. Identifying patterns of repetition provided clues about the participants’ priorities and the aspects they find most salient.

3.9.4.2 Modality and Certainty

According to Gordon (2004), language is played through gestures and sound during performance. This perspective aligns with the idea that modality and certainty markers within participants’ language revealed their stance toward the discussed themes.

Table 4. Modality and Certainty Markers in responses about Instapoetry

Responses	Modality and Certainty Markers	Analysis
“So, I chose this for a number of reasons, it was very relatable. Because we I strongly believe that in this fast-paced life, especially the one that I am living, I actually don’t have time to slow down...”	strongly believe	The participant expresses a high degree of certainty and belief in their statement.
“In my case, it’s applicable to all of us, not just one marginalized community, anybody who’s experiencing this, you know, they’re going through a very fast-paced life and they want to slow down for whatsoever reason it is for them.”	anybody who’s experiencing	The participant uses phrases that imply general applicability and moderate certainty.
“And when it comes to the one that I’ve chosen to talk about, I felt instant connections, and it was like a switch on that, yes, this is what I actually want to do, you know, I actually want to be alone...”	I felt instant connections	The participant expresses a high degree of certainty and immediacy in their choice.

Table 4 shows the modality and certainty markers, along with the participants’ responses and analysis. Modality reflects the degree of

commitment to a statement and can indicate participants' levels of certainty, possibility, or necessity. This dimension provided insights into how participants positioned themselves in relation to the topics and how confidently they expressed their interpretations. It also highlighted their alignment or resistance to dominant discourses like Gordon (2004) who promoted the multimodal approach to poetry in classrooms.

3.9.4.3 Personal Pronouns, Negation, and Hedging

As narrated by McAdams (2001) and McLean et al. (2007), personal narratives constructed during self-authoring exercises consist of important aspects of an individual's identity and personality. Personal pronouns (first, second, third person) offer clues about participants' perspectives and relationships. For example, their use of "I" indicates personal engagement, while "we" signifies group identification. Negation and hedging strategies (e.g., "kind of," "maybe," "not") signal hesitance, ambiguity or a cautious approach to topics. These linguistic choices reveal participants' negotiation of authority, power, and social positioning within the discourse.

By analyzing these linguistic features across Fairclough's three-dimensional model, this study uncovers how university teachers construct their identities through language. Their choices and strategies offered valuable insights into their affiliation with certain groups, their positioning within power dynamics, and their negotiation of ideologies. This analysis contributed to a comprehensive understanding of how participants use language to convey not only their interpretations but also their social identities and roles.

3.9.5 Developing Theoretical Accounts

This stage involved generating fully developed themes, as directed by Willott and Griffin (1997). It emphasizes presenting a concise, coherent, and engaging analysis, supported by relevant data extracts. This necessitates selecting impactful examples that highlight theme prevalence. The subsequent stages (6-7) follow a similar process for theme identification, repeating steps 1 to 4.

4. Data Analysis

The analysis revolves around exploring the influence of visual and linguistic elements in selected poems of Rupi Kaur's "homebody" on the self-identity perceptions of university-level teachers in English Literature or Linguistics. The utilization of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework provides a comprehensive approach to critically analyze the text and context, linguistic features, discursive and social practices. This framework assists in revealing the underlying ideologies, power relations, and social dynamics that shape the discourse.

The analysis is categorized into three dimensions: Text Dimension, Discourse Practice Dimension, and Socio-Cultural Practice Dimension. These dimensions collectively provide a holistic approach to dissecting the layers of meaning inherent in the interactions between visual and linguistic elements in the selected poems and the perceptions of teachers. The discussion suggests that these aspects are not isolated but rather influenced and shaped by each other in complex ways.

4.1 Decoding Visual and Linguistic Tapestry of Rupi Kaur's "homebody"

Selected poems of Rupi Kaur's "homebody" demonstrates the intricate interplay between linguistic choices and visual elements. The engagement with the poems goes beyond deciphering their literal content; it becomes a platform for negotiating personal experiences, cultural beliefs, and societal challenges. The Three-Dimensional Framework highlights how this creative work functions as a multifaceted discourse, showcasing the dynamic relationship between language, image, and society.

Participants discuss various aspects of their selected poems, such as imagery, colors, placement, and typography. The imagery of a person within a plant, blossoming into a new self in Poem 3, serves as a focal point for interpretation. The brevity and choice of words in Poem 1 and 2 also contribute to their impactful message. One participant astutely states about Poem 1, "The text is very short. So, the picture does give you a little more insight into what Rupi Kaur may be trying to say to us." This observation underscores how the succinctness of poem 1 encourages readers to actively contemplate its essence and implications. Moreover, the lack of punctuation and capitalization in poems adds an element of defiance to traditional norms, inviting them to engage with the text on a personal level.

Participants unpack the poems' thematic layers, connecting symbolism to their own experiences. The interplay between linguistic and visual elements prompts discussions on personal growth, nostalgia, and the human journey. One participant eloquently emphasizes, "The symbolism of the sunspots as souvenirs really stuck with me. It's like a reminder of life's journey" (Poem 3). This profound insight exemplifies how the poem's visual cues trigger poignant reflections on the passage of time and the accumulation of experiences. This suggests a collaborative negotiation of meaning between the poet's intent and participants' individual perspectives. Additionally, the black and white color palette of all poems is noted by the participants for its simplicity and the way it allows individual interpretations.

The placement of the illustration on the page is questioned by some participants, who wonder about the need for an illustration when language is present. Others, however, have found it complementary, providing additional insight into the poems' interpretation due to its brevity. For instance, one participant raises doubts about the image's relevance in relation to the existing language, "So yes, image there are probably image is very dominant in this poem. Like I don't know why this image is there. Like why a poem needs an image if language is there. So why through image" (Poem 3). These opinions discuss the significance of the use of imagery in poetic metaphors as discussed by Gibbs and Bogdonovich (2009) and its demonstration in Instapoetry's visual-centric approach. In contrast, other participants have found the illustration to be a valuable addition, especially given the poems' concise nature. Another participant acknowledges that despite the brevity of the text, the presence of the image enriches the understanding, "But the presence of them both together on the paper, it does give you because the text is very short. So, the picture does give you a little more insight into what Rupi Kaur may be trying to say to us. So, it does help in the interpretation of the text" (Poem 2). These varying perspectives highlight the interplay between visual and linguistic elements

and how they contribute to the readers' engagement and interpretation of the poem.

Societal roles are the main concern in Rupi Kaur's poetry to trigger gender representation, highlighting the ability of the poems to reflect and critique norms, much like the complicated web of societal norms mentioned within her writings (Hussain & Ali, 2021). The poems become a canvas onto which participants project their cultural and religious backgrounds. Gender representation triggers discussions on societal roles, revealing how poems' potential to reflect and critique norms. Furthermore, the poems' defiance of linguistic conventions symbolizes a broader resistance to conforming to established rules, inviting reflection on breaking societal constraints. The inclusion of gender representation catalyzes discussions that probe into the intricate web of societal norms, allowing the poems to function as both a mirror and a critique of established conventions in one's culture. An example that vividly illustrates this is when a participant responds, "And she's not a princess, she's just a simple woman. So that brings all the women of the world... when it comes to solitude, we're all equal, we're all together. So, she's giving me that room..." (Poem 1). This observation underscores how the brevity of Poem 1 encourages readers to actively contemplate its essence and implications. Furthermore, it highlights the absence of punctuation and capitalization, which serves as a unifying force, breaking down hierarchical boundaries and fostering a universal sense of solidarity among women.

Rupi Kaur's "homebody" serves as a versatile platform for participants to unravel and deliberate upon themes encompassing life, nature, gender, and societal norms. Concurrently, it acknowledges the interplay between visual and linguistic elements. The assorted interpretations offered by participants underscore the intricacy and richness of the visual and linguistic fabric within these poems, demonstrating its capacity to nurture both personal affiliations and shared contemplations regarding the human experience.

4.2 Rupi Kaur's "homebody" and Self-Identity Formation

The interaction among linguistic selections, visual components, and the societal backdrop weaves a multifaceted fabric that aids in the development of participants' self-identities and encourages intercultural associations. Chosen poems from "homebody" surpass conventional text, evolving into a conduit through which participants navigate their self-concepts and interact with more extensive cultural stories. The themes strike a profound emotional chord, nurturing compassion and a feeling of shared connection among participants. Therefore, the digital media allows non-celebrities to construct and reveal their image to a mass audience without a celebrity status (Eagr and Dan, 1837). The use of phrases like "speaking to my heart", "reflecting my own experiences and emotions" and "capturing moments from my life" highlights how the linguistic choices within the poem evoke emotional responses and resonate with the participants' self.

Interpretation of the teachers reflects their limitations to accept the beauty norms, strong declaration of their individuality, and commitment to domination and self-identity, echoing this concept that poetry goes beyond the words written on a piece of paper (Steele, 2014). Perception of teachers portrays a resistance to dominant beauty norms, an assertion of individual identity, and an emphasis on empowerment and self-acceptance. The social context surrounding gendered power relations and ideologies of empowerment and ecofeminism further shapes how they interpret and internalize the poet's message, potentially contributing to the formation of their individual identities. The participant mentions societal norms related to women's appearances, including the pressure to conform to certain beauty ideals. The focus on physical features like scars and undergoing surgery to achieve societal standards reflects how beauty norms influence women's self-identity: "She is quite happy with the state she is in, if you see her state is alarming for the rest of the people. It is going to open up ways for people who are not thinking outside the box of beauty standard, we have to meet, people expect girls to use certain gadgets, straighteners and tools; they should know the basics of makeup and all that." (Poem 1).

Interpretations of teachers are intrinsically woven into the social fabric, taking into account gendered power relations. For example, one participant's insights into Poem 1, "I think it could potentially talk about the journey she is taking... targeting a certain demographic where men are not welcomed," reveals an understanding of gender dynamics and the recognition of women's experiences within societal contexts. It represents gender dynamics and women's experience with society as Val Plumwood in her book *Mastery in Nature* (1993) relates the image of the female body with nature and recollects the dualistic notion of mind/body and male/female, limiting female to only body and use of imagery for female can be harmful to empowering women through ecofeminism. Furthermore, Participants' references to ecofeminism, "Probably I have in my mind Rupi Kaur, that's why I thought that she has to be eco-feminist," (Poem 4) demonstrates how larger ideologies are brought into the interpretation of a particular identity, infusing the poems with deeper layers of meaning.

Society expects teachers to fulfill the function of resolving conflicts (Merrazi, 1983). Teachers are under pressure to prove themselves as the role models of the society. Participants' discussions are situated within wider social contexts. Analyzing societal norms and challenges reflects the intersections of interpretations with larger societal structures. This underscores that participants' evolving identities as teachers are intertwined with prevailing societal norms, illustrating their potential to both influence and be influenced by these norms. "I strongly believe that in this fast-paced life... I actually don't have time to slow down," (Poem 4) showcases the assertion of individual identity. This assertion aligns with the theme of valuing personal experiences over societal expectations. Additionally, when considering the influence of external factors on identity formation, another participant's perspective resonates: "I work where we work, it's quite far from my house. So this journey feels like a journey that I undergo every single day. And twice a day for that matter. When I'm commuting here in the morning, I zone out, I put my earplugs in and I just listen to music" (Poem 3). This highlights the impact of daily routines and environments on individuals' self-perception, emphasizing the ways in which external factors can shape and contribute to the construction of one's identity. Personality characteristics influence the liability to experience burnout and provide different perceptions of teachers. Three dimensions of burnouts are extroversion, agreeableness, consciousness and emotional stability (Colomeischi, 2015). The participants' interpretations are shaped by and also shape discourses and practices within their broader educational and societal contexts.

This application reveals the multifaceted nature of their interpretations, showcasing their growth as critical thinkers and active participants within intricate socio-cultural landscapes.

4.3 *Shaping Identity: Modern Poetic Modes and Teacher Selfhood*

Modern poetic modes possess the capacity to mold teacher selfhood by encouraging openness to innovation, promoting individuality, and challenging societal norms. As educators navigate these contemporary expressions, they negotiate the delicate interplay between evolving self-identities and the transformative potential of Instapoetry. The convergence of literature and self, unfolds as a dynamic process within the modern digital era, underscoring the intricate bond between poetic expression and the teachers' sense of self. According to Hirsh and Peterson (2021), "narrative representations function as high-level generative models that direct our attention and structure our expectations about unfolding events" (p. 216). It indicates the reflection of literature on the teaching profession and emphasizes the growth, transformation, and relevant educational experience (Hirsh & Peterson, 2021, p. 217).

Poetry is playing a vital role in meaning making by using the multimodal techniques and students use themes to think out of the box. Moreover, it has been described that language is played through different signs, symbols, and gestures during performance (Gordan, 2004). The transition from traditional poetry to Instagram poetry marks an evolution that resonates with the self-identity of teachers. As one teacher stated, "The poetry that I read is completely different... sketches, paintings that come with words, this is very new for me, and I believe we need to do this more" (Poem 1). This perspective highlights a willingness to engage with innovative forms, signaling an openness to revising personal identity constructs. Another teacher's observation, "I think it is promoting the ongoing trends... you should be independent..." (Poem 4) reinforces the idea that modern poetic modes align with the ethos of self-empowerment and individuality.

Comparing contemporary and traditional poetry opens a doorway to the transformation of expression over time. According to Katy Waldman, who comments on the work of Atticus and Rupri Kaur, "their work emerged as an immaculate space for reflection". By contrast, teachers witnessing the transformation of poetic language over time indicates that these shifts in expression are mirrored in the way teachers perceive their roles and identities within the academic sphere. Instapoetry diverges from traditional norms, mirroring the departure from structured verses to free-form expressions. This shift not only influences the style of poetry but also resonates with teachers who are navigating a changing educational landscape.

The intersection of modern poetic modes with cultural, religious, and gender dynamics plays a significant role in shaping teacher selfhood. The recognition of cultural and religious sensitivities within contemporary poetry underscores the inclusivity required in education. "Addressing cultural and religious sensitivities is essential in contemporary poetry. It's like recognizing the diversity of readers and their beliefs," (Poem 2) reflects how teachers' self-identity is informed by their roles as cultural facilitators. Cultural and religious sensitivities are integral parts of contemporary poetry as they highlight the diversity in the readers' beliefs (Gulla, 2014). Similarly, the focus on gender representation in Instapoetry holds the potential to challenge entrenched gender biases. "The poetry's focus on gender representation is a step forward. It's like challenging gender stereotypes and encouraging equality," (Poem 1) reflects how teachers' self-identities are shaped as advocates of inclusivity and gender equality.

The enduring psychological impact of one's cultural and religious background is strongly reflected in teachers' perceptions. Their personal experiences and beliefs are deeply rooted and continue to influence their views, even if they physically distance themselves from their cultural or religious origins. The number of assumptions is encountered during this study that highlight the potential dangers associated with discussing female rights within strict Islamic perspectives in a specific context. A cultural generalization within the discourse asserts that women face societal challenges in Pakistan. It also reflects traditional expectations regarding marriage and its role in defining a woman's identity as an individual and a professional. Women got the identity after the term 'feminism' came into being and women started to question their inferior status in society by demanding improvement in their social identification (Freedman, 2001). While referring to the image of a woman in Poem 2 one participant states: "No woman can have this degree of freedom unless she has the title of a husband or she's either a widowed or divorced". This reinforces the notion that, in a particular cultural context, a woman's freedom is contingent on her marital status. It underscores the influence of cultural norms on personal autonomy.

Moreover, constraints on intellectual and artistic freedom within Pakistani universities suggest that societal and religious norms restrict the interpretation of literature and call for more critical and unconventional perspectives, even in the face of resistance. Male teachers' hesitation to teach Rupri Kaur's poetry in a women's writing course due to concerns about societal judgments regarding explicit themes reflects the complex interplay of cultural conservatism, gender dynamics, and academic freedom within educational settings. It also highlights the potential impact of instructors' gender on students' reception of sensitive themes. Such challenges underscore the importance of fostering inclusive and open dialogues within educational institutions, addressing cultural sensitivities while promoting diverse interpretations of contemporary poetry in the pursuit of shaping identity and fostering selfhood among teachers and students alike.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzes the perception of Rupri Kaur's "homebody" among university-level teachers. It reveals a dynamic interplay between linguistic choices, visual elements, and societal context. These factors shape our sense of self and connect us with people from different cultural backgrounds. Selected poems offer a platform for personal and shared interpretations. Their brevity, deviation from conventional language norms, and exploration of gender representation spark conversations about societal roles and empowerment. Furthermore, contemporary poetic styles affect how teachers perceive themselves, promoting creativity, individuality, and inclusivity as professional and individuals. However, it is important to recognize the challenges of navigating cultural traditions and maintaining academic freedom.

To summarize, Instapoetry serves as a valuable instrument in shaping teachers' self-identities and prompting a critical examination of societal norms in the rapidly evolving digital age. Nowadays, everyone relies on technology not only in a professional setting but also as a vital mode of learning and communication. Introducing digital modes of teaching poetry and making it part of the curriculum will make the learners more efficient, creative, and engaged to learn through diverse media.

6. Implications and Significance

This research explores the impact of contemporary poetry, especially Rupi Kaur's work, on the self-identities of university-level teachers. It shows how poetry can cross cultural boundaries and foster empathy among diverse people. The research advocates for the integration of contemporary poetic forms into educational curricula, aiming not only to foster critical thinking and self-exploration but also to question prevailing cultural and societal norms, particularly those pertaining to gender and identity. Additionally, it underscores the importance of maintaining a balance between cultural sensitivity and academic freedom, promoting open dialogues within educational institutions. In short, this research supports the creative use of Instapoetry to empower individuality and enhance inclusive teaching practices.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

This research examines the significant impact of contemporary poetry, as exemplified by Rupi Kaur's work, on the self-identities of university-level teachers. However, it also faces some limitations. First, the study mainly involved participants from similar cultural backgrounds, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Second, although the qualitative approach yielded valuable insights, the addition of quantitative data could strengthen the validity and breadth of the findings. Third, while the focus on Instapoetry was worthwhile, the study did not explore the potential for comparative analyses with different poetic forms or poets. A longer-term investigation could reveal more about how poetry engagement influences self-identities over time. Despite these limitations, this research provides a solid basis for future studies to diversify participant demographics, use mixed-method approaches, and examine the wider implications of contemporary poetry on self-identity in various cultural and contextual settings.

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Authors contributions

Faiza Liaquat^a and Aqsa Naimat^b contributed equally to the conceptualization, design, and execution of the study. Aqsa Naimat^b primarily led the data collection, while Faiza Liaquat^a focused on transcription and data analysis. Urooj Alvi^c and Habibullah Pathan^d actively participated in the interpretation of results and the drafting of the manuscript. Critical revisions and intellectual contributions were made by Faiza Liaquat^a as a corresponding author during the review process. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

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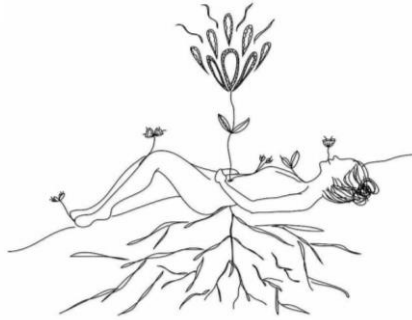
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Appendix A

Appendix A: Poem 1

i have to honor my mind and body
if i want to sustain this journey

life -



Source: Kaur, R. (2020). *homebody* (p. 116). Simon & Schuster.

Appendix A: Poem 2

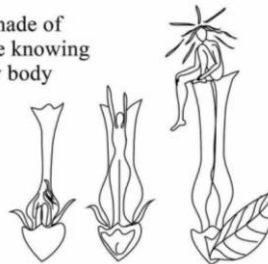
we've worked so hard
to be here
we can afford to
slow down and enjoy the view



Source: Kaur, R. (2020). *homebody* (p. 127). Simon & Schuster.

Appendix A: Poem 3

give me laugh lines and wrinkles
i want proof of the jokes we shared
engrave the lines into my face like
the roots of a tree that grow deeper
with each passing year
i want sunspots as souvenirs
for the beaches we laid on
i want to look like i was
never afraid to let the world
take me by the hand
and show me what it's made of
i want to leave this place knowing
i did something with my body
other than trying to
make it look perfect



Source: Kaur, R. (2020). *homebody* (p. 169). Simon & Schuster.

Appendix A: Poem 4

we've ruined
our only home for
convenience and profit
neither of which will be
useful once the earth
can't breathe



Source: Kaur, R. (2020). *homebody* (p. 102). Simon & Schuster.

Appendix A: Poem 5

i can't take my eyes off of me
now that i see myself
i can't take my mind off of me
can't believe the tricks
my hands have been up to
the sermons i spoke into existence
the mountains i crushed
with my fingers
and the mountains i built
from all the shit
people tried to
stone me to death with



warrior -

Source: Kaur, R. (2020). *homebody* (p. 170). Simon & Schuster.