

Global Haiku

Reader Response Essay

Words Bubble Up Like Soda Pop: The Haikus of Yui Sakura (Cherry)

Words Bubble Up Like Soda Pop is a Japanese animated romantic-comedy produced by Sublimation and Signal.MD and directed by Kyōhei Ishiguro, haiku was also written by Kyōhei Ishiguro. It was first shown at the 2020 Shanghai International Film Festival, then released to Japanese theaters on July 22, 2021, and on Netflix (if you have Netflix, please watch it). Its set in a rural city in Japan following the romance of our main characters Yui Sakura (Cherry), a young haiku writer, and Yuki (Smile) a social media star. The focus is more on Cherry's haikus even though he's not the only haiku writer in the film, like his haiku master Mr. Fujiyama. Cherry has trouble expressing his emotions verbally so instead of the movie having him talk about his feelings they use his different haiku that he writes in scenes to express how he is feeling. I wanted to share a more modern take in the appreciation of haiku, and also a lovely movie that deserves to be talked about.

apartments
with fresh ivy
we're in number 305

The first sentence of the movie, first scene. Spray painted, on the side of the main character, Cherry's, apartment building by Beaver, his friend. It reads the haiku out loud with a black screen until the last line is read, then it shows Cherry's apartment with ivy climbing up the side. It starts to paint a visual image with haiku, introducing the art of haiku to the audience. It puts you into the first scene of the movie before the animation starts.

there are so many
looking down below
summer has arrived

Also spray painted by Beaver, instead it is on the side of the Oda Nouvelle Mall. Cherry is filling in for his mother at her job at a welfare facility while she recovers from an injury. Cherry and Ms. Miyuki take some of the residents into the mall to get inspiration for their haikus. This is the first haiku shown in the beginning credits and introduces us to Mr. Fujiyama, a deaf resident that yells haikus at Cherry holding an empty jacket for a record.

This haiku is used to paint another scene in the movie, the second main setting the mall. This is occurring in July, when children are on their summer break. Cherry often does visual or observational haiku instead of writing about feelings and emotions at first.

the shopping mall

melts in

the evening sun

Cherry, while sitting on the mall roof top with Beaver and Japan watching the evening sun set go down behind the mall. He creates a part of the haiku and finishes it during the haiku mall walk with Ms. Miyuki and the elderly residents. Ms. Miyuki reads each person's haikus out loud, kukai style, except for Cherry. She makes him stand and read his own to the group, trying to pull him out of his shell. He then says that haiku is a written art form and it doesn't need to be read out loud.

Since Cherry only writes haiku from an observational stand point, he thinks it doesn't need the emotion of reading out poetry out loud to an audience. Cherry isn't new to writing haiku, but he still doesn't see the benefit of "turning" a written art form into a spoken one. Although written and spoken art go hand in hand and can give new meaning to each line

lights in the summer night

make a false start

in the evening sunset

Cherry makes this haiku on the spot when working home with Smile. She asks him to make one after talking about how much he liked to express himself through haiku. They stop over a bridge, while in panic mode Cherry looks behind Smile and sees the street behind them. As it gets closer to night time the street lines turn on, inspiring him. It's the first haiku he reads out loud without stuttering or going bright red. Smile then asks him the meaning behind it, calls Cherry's voice cute. It's the first haiku to be liked on social media by Smile, the only one outside of his mom and friends to like it.

This is my favorite haiku of Cherry's in the whole movie, not just because it the first one he read out loud. I love the visional of the lights being compared to the stars in the night sky. He got the middle line of the haiku from the baby race in the mall, one of the babies took off before the race started. The announcer yelled to start over because it was a false start to the race. His use of taking phrases and putting them into his haiku is a good way to show the process of how many of

us write. It shows that you don't have to be this deeply artistic person to be able to get into poetry of any kind.

the one with the voice,
that's hard to hear,
is looking for summer

Also, a haiku spray painted by Beaver on an empty billboard by the road. This is the beginning of the music montage showing the evolution of Cherry's feelings towards Smile and some events, like Smile getting hired at Cherry's work place.

This is the first haiku that Cherry writes about himself. He shows that even though he's shy and has some auditory sensory issues, he's still looking for the enjoyment in summer. I think his introduction to Smile made him want to spend the summer with her, instead of about moving in August. It gives him a reason to live his summer to the fullest instead of just working and packing up his room the whole time.

in my
seventeenth July,
I met you

This is when he starts to write haiku about Smile. He wants her to read them, so he posts a new one every day and waits for her to like it. It's how he starts to express his feelings towards her indirectly. This is the beginning of the sequence of haikus that he writes for Smile in order to get her attention.

I love the thought process of this haiku and the other feelings it holds in it. When I read this haiku, I got confused because they didn't meet on the 17th of July which is what I thought it was originally about. Then I realized that Cherry is 17, he's lived through 17 Julys and in this particular one he met Smile. 17 Julys doesn't sound like a lot but that's 17 years of someone's life of becoming a full-fledged person. He's been through 17 Julys already but this one is special just because I was able to meet you.

hey sunflower,
I asked my dictionary
the definition of "cute"

Beaver spray painted this one on the side of a broken fence. It refers to Smile calling his haiku and his voice cute. He can't get the thought of being cute out of his head. Not only is he calling her bright, sunflowers in the language of flowers means deep love and admiration.

This haiku is my other favorite, maybe it's because I love the language of flowers used in poetry. He is still fixated on why Smile called him cute, he doesn't know if he fits the definition of cute. I really like the imagery of him using his dictionary that he uses every day to try and work out his feelings. Lack of understanding of social situations and feelings is nice to watch, the innocence in him is almost cute itself.

shady summer leaves

all I want to know

is why

(originally named 'shady teeth' by Beaver)

When writing out this haiku, Beaver mixes up the word leaves with teeth since they are so close to each other in Japanese. Cherry didn't originally write it about Smile's teeth but it inspires him to use this play on words in the future.

He saw her braces the first time meeting her, he doesn't quite understand why she is so insecure about it. Summer leave are bright and vibrate, covered by the shade of teenage insecurity. I like that is structured like an observation. He can see something beautiful being cover on purpose and he can't understand why. Why would anything like this need to be covered up?

words

bubble up

like soda pop

He takes a sip of his soda sitting in Beavers hideout. He is referring to his feelings towards Smile that he can't tell her, especially the part about him moving away soon.

The feelings he wants to express are bubbling to the top but they aren't coming out. He keeps trying to tell her that he's moving but he can't seem to disappoint her. Before he met her, he really didn't seem to mind that he was moving away. Now he has developed feelings for her he feels like he can't move away now, let alone tell her that he is. He won't even be able to go see the fireworks with her like she wanted because he moves on that day.

Yamazakura,

I like the leaves
that you've hidden

While Cherry is packing, he finds one of his haiku books in-between his desk and table. It says yamazakura leaves grow before its cherry blossoms, so people with buck teeth are referred to as “yamazakura”. He uses the play on words between leaves and teeth to make it about Smile. Beaver writes it on the passing street signs as Cherry is leaving. He runs back to find Smile, and performs his haiku for Smile in front of the festival.

This was one of the most beautiful scenes in the whole movie, brought almost everyone I've shown it to, to tears. The raw emotion that Cherry got from reading all his haikus he wrote about Smile is what he was missing from only writing them. The emotion added depth to the haikus, their meaning finally reacted the person they depicted.

Work Cited

<https://wordlikesoda.fandom.com/wiki/Cherry>