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INTRODUCTION

Editorial: #Instapoetry's vibrancy and ambivalence

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This issue on Global Instapoetry confronts issues that scholars in departments of English and other philologies deal with every day as they design new course-work, communicate with students, and let the world know about their own research. How does one address the vibrancy, immediacy, and pertinence of digital media communication and art, and do so in a way that does not reproduce traditionalist, class-based tendencies to denigrate whatever is new and popular? Recall that when English novels started becoming bestsellers at the beginning of the eighteenth century, critics worried that reading them would lead young men to break off their apprenticeships and become thieves, and young women to disobey their parents, be seduced by men, and end up as prostitutes. How can print-based scholars translate their training in linguistics-based methods into contextualising digitally based multimodal communica-tions that jump off the platforms they are first posted on, spread to t-shirts and ever new visual-verbal adaptations, and onto city walls?

The editors of this issue, JuEunhae Knox, James Mackay, and Anna Nacher, give short shrift to earlier, simplistic criticisms of Instapoems for allegedly being too sentimental, overwhelmingly derivative, and somehow not poetic enough. I use "earlier" with irony, as the networking service Instagram, and the genre of Instapoetry it has lent a name to, are just 13 years old. Instead, the editors and the contributors to this issue forcibly take studies of Instapoetry beyond what is negatively called the Anglosphere, to demonstrate that the overwhelming major-ity of Instapoems are now produced and posted in languages other than English. Thereby, the canon of English poetry is questioned, expanded on, and relativised, while earlier forms and motifs from that very canon, such as confessionalism and visual poetry aesthetics, meet us in Instapoems in new iterations.

The issue addresses areas of ambivalence connected with the rapidly devel-oping, cross-platform, popular genre of Instapoetry with nuance. This includes the verbal-visual posts being understood as sites of resistance, intimate con-nection, and shared vulnerability for voices that were previously kept out of High Art spaces. Nonetheless, Instapoetry remains embedded in a profit-driven, narrowly controlled system of production and consumption that thrives on

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visual advertising. Because Instapoets generally post their original content free of charge and encourage others to reuse and refashion that content as much as they wish in a process many view as branding, static notions about authorship, dissemination, and profit are called into question. The text that concludes this issue, Yasamin Rezai's email interview with the Iranian Instagram group **@bar-khi_az_honarmandan**, encourages us to consider Instapoetry's centrality in resistance movements while remembering its economic embedding and its being subject to censorship. **@barkhi_az_honarmandan** understand their posts to be protest: "We do not sell poetry – we whisper the rhyme of poetry collection of people's resistance."

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