

**Aubrie Cox. *Yay Words!*** @<http://yaywords.wordpress.com/>:  
A Blog Review.

by Jessica Tremblay, Burnaby, BC

During the month of June 2014, I really enjoyed reading the tiny haibun (or “tibun”) that Aubrie Cox published on her blog *Yay Words!*

Aubrie describes her blog as “[a] celebration of language and the written word (with a little art on the side).” Some poets might know Aubrie from the Doodleku she led on her blog for many months: she would post a drawing and ask poets to write an accompanying poem in the comments. But in June, there was a sudden shift in her blog postings as she started writing very short prose followed by a haiku.

#### Living Things

I’ve yet to visit since you moved into the mausoleum. Every poem could be my last.

Guess I’ve social anxiety even among the dead.

Sunday in the park  
butterfly shadow  
between the bells<sup>1</sup>

Her haibun reminded me of tanbun, a genre invented by Larry Kimmel, which is a combination of a short prose of 31 or less syllables followed by haiku or tanka. Aubrie replied to my comment on her blog by saying: “A little over a year ago I discovered hint fiction, which is fiction in 25 words or less. After experimenting, I started doing these haibun with prose within those confines.”

Whether her haibun are facts or fiction, they are highly effective in emotionally engaging the reader.

## White Balance

You arrive at the Star of Hope Mausoleum, only to find it locked  
in the minutes you sat in the car working up your nerve.

sun showers  
she brings hot tea  
without asking<sup>2</sup>

Aubrie occasionally adds link within the prose or haiku, adding an element of interactivity to the poem.

## Signs of Life

Tufts of fox fur litter the end of the drive. You look everywhere  
for blood before it rains.

green tomatoes  
*evolution*  
of the human face<sup>3</sup>

In this poem, the link takes you to an article explaining how the human face evolved as a result of physical violence: the tiny bones becoming more robust as a means of protection against small impacts such as that of a human fist.

The titles of Aubrie's haibun also caught my attention: they are beautiful and poetic and they can stand by themselves, almost like short poems: "Sporadic Flu Activity" (June 25), "81% of the Moon is Illuminated" (June 16), "Meteorological Summer" (June 2).

## Beyond the Limit of Astronomical Twilight

I convince myself fireflies are varying shades of yellow and  
green like vaseline glass.

That my hips don't hurt when I run.

That we're talking.

cilantro seeds—  
all my favorite  
B-side songs<sup>4</sup>

Sometimes there is some kind of association between the title and the haibun, but oftentimes there doesn't seem to be any link between the title and the piece, which adds a touch of surrealism to the haibun. When I asked her where her title ideas came from, Aubrie wrote: "One good place for titles and/or inspiration is Wunderground.com's charts and stats for your area." When I looked on the website (which is a local weather app), I did see "Sporadic Flu Activity" as one of the headlines for my area. Great title for a haibun! What a clever appropriation of weather terms for poetic purposes!

Today is Forecast to Be Nearly the Same Temperature  
As Yesterday

You rarely write about sound. You explain there are two types of pain. You wonder if there are any other stories left in you.

cool after the rain . . .  
mosquito larvae twist  
in on themselves<sup>5</sup>

Here, the image of "mosquito larvae twisting in on themselves" is surprising. We often read the same image, over and over, in haiku. It is nice to read something new and original in a poem. I said as much in a comment on her blog, and Aubrie replied: "I've been trying hard to find something new and fresh, though I've definitely caught myself sliding into some old habits here and there."

Aubrie serves as the haiga editor for the online haikai journal *A Hundred Gourds*. After graduating from Millikin University with a B.A. in English literature and writing, she completed her M.A. in English creative writing at Ball State University in 2013.

According to the *About me* section on her website, "Aubrie Cox went to university to write a novel; she came out writing haiku. It's worked out pretty well so far."<sup>6</sup>

Considering the tibun on *Yay Words!* I'd say things have worked out well, too.

## Notes

1. Aubrie Cox, "Living Things." *Yay Words!*, retrieved June 16, 2014 from <http://yaywords.wordpress.com/2014/06/16/living/things/>
2. Cox, "White Balance." *Yay Words!*, retrieved June 24, 2014 from <http://yaywords.wordpress.com/2014/06/24/white-balance/>
3. Cox, "Signs of Life." *YayWords!*, retrieved June 10, 2014 from <http://yaywords.wordpress.com/2014/06/10/signs-of-life/>
4. Cox, "Beyond the Limit of Astronomical Twilight." *Yay Words!*, retrieved June 5, 2014 from <http://yaywords.wordpress.com/2014/>
5. Cox, "Today is Forecast to Be Nearly the Same Temperature As Yesterday." *Yay Words!*, retrieved on June 11 2014 from <http://yaywords.wordpress.com/2014/06/11/today-is-forecast-to-be-nearly-the-same-temperature-as-yesterday/>
6. [www.aubriecox.com/about/](http://www.aubriecox.com/about/)



*Jessica Tremblay is the author of "Old Pond Comics" published in Frogpond and at [www.oldpondcomics.com](http://www.oldpondcomics.com). In 2013 she was the official cartoonist-in-residence at Haiku North America, Seabeck Haiku Getaway, and Haiku Hot Springs. In 2014 she received a Canada Council for the Arts Grant for Professional Writers to continue exploring the new genre of "haiku-comics."*

