



<https://doi.org/10.53032/tvcr/2025.v7n2.04>

Research Article

## The Allure of InstaPoetry: A Stylistic and Thematic Study of Nikita Gill's Poem "For Her"

**Amvi Mishra**

Assistant Professor,

English, D E Society's Kirti M Doongursee College of Arts Science & Commerce,  
University of Mumbai, India

Email: [amvi.2000@gmail.com](mailto:amvi.2000@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The study is undertaken to outline the advent of a new form of expression called 'instapoetry' (poetry published on the social media app Instagram) and trace the evolution of poetry in the digital age whilst demonstrating the power of social media as an outlet for writing and publication for modern-day poets. The research introduces Nikita Gill, published author and instapoet, to make the case in point. Furthermore, Gill's poem titled, *For Her* is investigated on the various linguistic levels, namely phonological, graphical, morphological, syntactic, and semantic, to analyse the same stylistically. Lastly, the study also incorporates a thematic understanding of the poem to elaborate on the merits of instapoetry and seeks to conclude that instapoetry is well-deserving of its popularity despite its shortcomings.

**Keywords:** Instapoetry, Instapoet, Nikita Gill, For Her, Poetry, Instagram, Social media

### 1. Introduction

Social media has revolutionised the way people engage with and consume art. In this digital age, the popularity and ease of access to social media apps like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have helped give birth to a milieu of poets who began their poetic careers by publishing their verses on these multimodal platforms in hopes of finding an audience for their words. Social media has since amplified the voices of these poets and helped them establish a loyal fan base of virtual readers who are hooked to the words of these Instagram poets due to the enhanced audio-visual experience of interacting with literature in the digital era. This study aims to highlight the appeal of Instagram poetry through a stylistic and thematic analysis of the poem *For Her* by Instapoet Nikita Gill, published online on the poet's Instagram account.

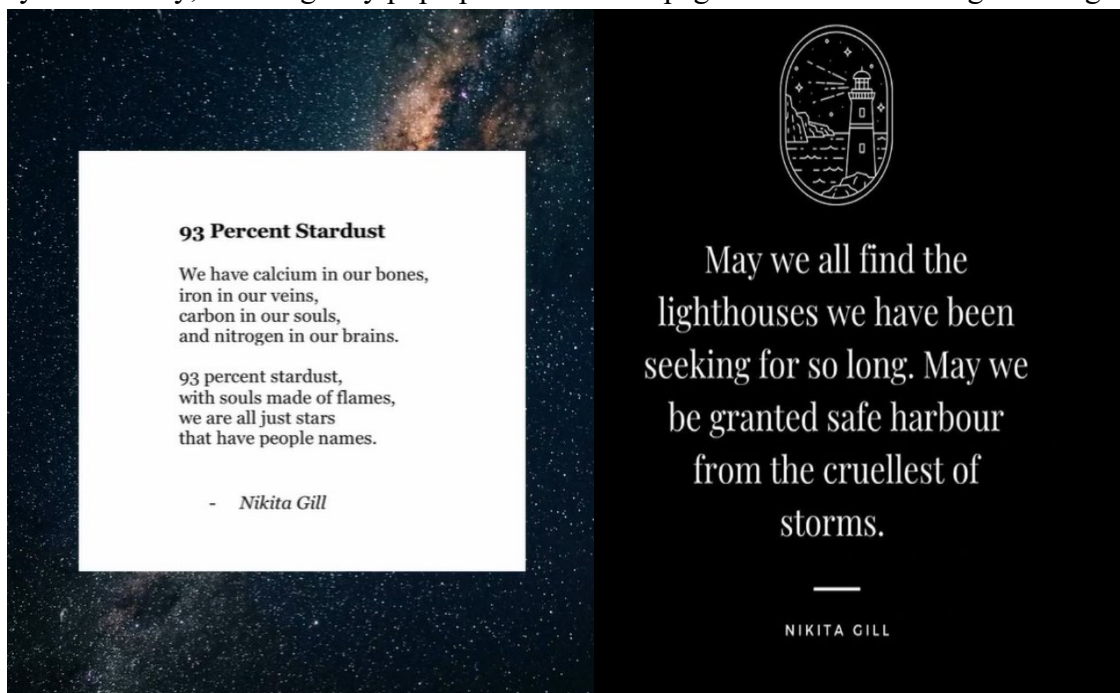
# The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 7 & Issue 2 (April 2025)

## 2. Poetry in the Digital Age

With the dominance of smartphones in this techno-centric world, the creation, consumption, and appreciation of poetry have long left the rooms of physical poetry clubs and literary circles and instead moved online. Writing and publishing poetry in a square of 1080x1080 pixels has led to the formation of multiple online communities of poetry enthusiasts whose engagement with literature has taken a new shape in the form of likes, shares, and saves on Instagram and other social media platforms. For the unversed, instapoetry, a portmanteau of ‘Instagram’ and ‘poetry,’ is a contemporary form of pop poetry or ‘microlyric’ known for its brevity, use of simple language, and audio-visual appeal, often exploring themes that are unseen in print media. The renowned Instapoet, Nikita Gill, has defined instapoetry as— “I would call it ‘confessionalist bite-sized poetry’ which exists to cause a reaction, a thought, a feeling.”

Instapoetry is published as an Instagram post, thus becoming a part of the poet's cohesive feed on the social media app. Instagram allows its users to add multiple images in a single post, also referred to as a 'carousel,' to increase engagement. Poets often make use of the said option by inserting different images and illustrations in tandem with the piece of poetry. It is worth noting that in recent years, Instagram has begun prioritising video content, in turn boosting the audio-visual charm of instapoetry published as a reel due to the highly captivating nature of the format. Additionally, users can add captions to their posts and reels, which act as side notes to the poem itself. This is also the place where instapoets add relevant hashtags to maximize reach. In the world of instapoetry, hashtags do the work of keywords; they categorise the posts systematically, ensuring they pop up in the ‘search pages’ of the correct target demographic.



Figures 1 and 2: Instapoems shared by Nikita Gill on her Instagram account (Gill 2024)

# The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 7 & Issue 2 (April 2025)

## Wolf and Woman

Some days  
I am more wolf  
than woman  
and I am still learning  
how to stop apologising  
for my wild

- Nikita Gill

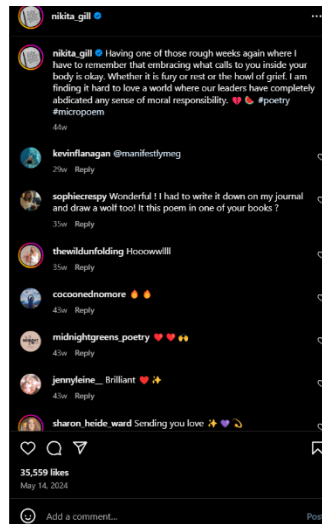


Figure 3: Poets use captions and hashtags that align with their poems for outreach (Gill 2024) The audience too is empowered with certain tools to upgrade the hyperreal reading of instapoetry online. Firstly, the audience can react to the post by ‘double tapping’ upon it to indicate liking the post. Secondly, the platform provides an immersive experience to the readers by giving them the freedom to leave comments on the posts of the instapoets. This feature allows the fans of this pop culture phenomenon to exchange their thoughts and opinions and leave a few words of appreciation for the poet, consequently bridging the gap between the poet and their readers by facilitating an instant connection between the two parties.

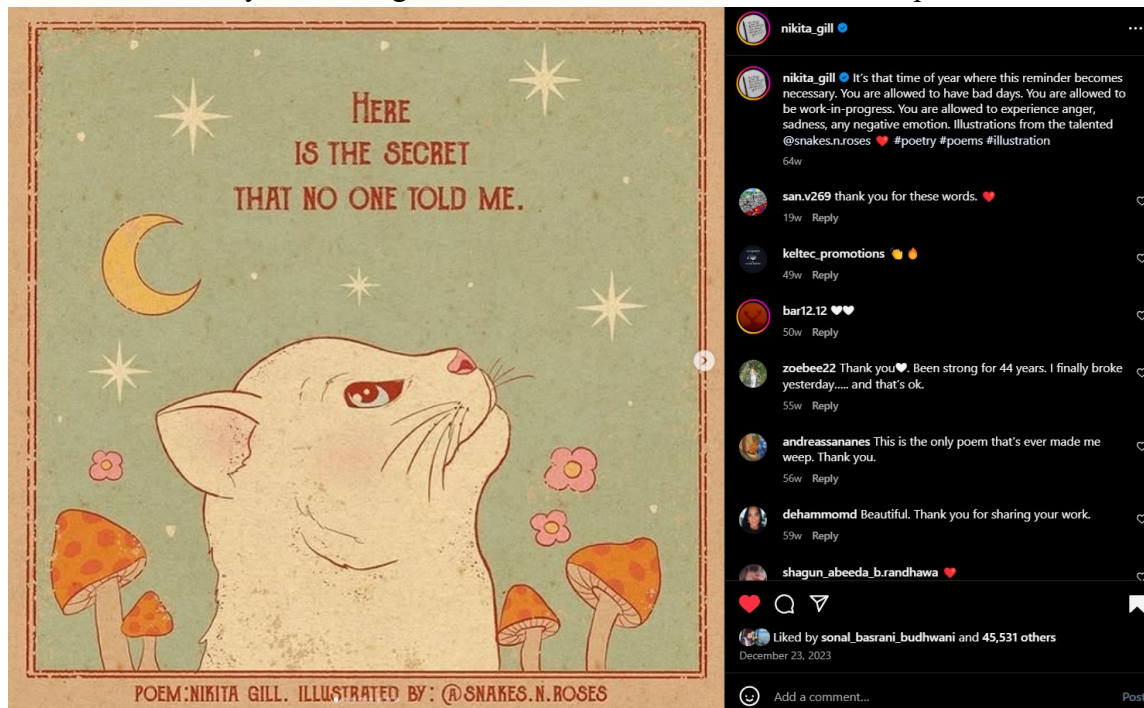


Figure 4: Audience members can like, comment, share and save Instagram posts (Gill 2023) Perhaps the most defining feature of instapoetry is its conciseness and simplicity. Most of the Instapoems consist of a few short lines or a paragraph, emphasizing its conversational style of

# *The Voice of Creative Research*

Vol. 7 & Issue 2 (April 2025)

writing and its readiness for mass consumption. These poems make use of direct and lucid language and, more often than not, use visual imagery in the form of photographs and freehand drawings to complement the words penned by the poet. The combination of words and images strengthens the genre's suitability for a platform like Instagram, which is hyperfocused on immersing its users in sensory experiences. Apart from its perspicuity, instapoetry also boasts of eschewing traditional poetic norms. Written in a non-rhyming free verse, it forgoes adherence to any set pattern of metre or rhyme.

Moreover, the instapoetry movement has proven to be a powerful way of starting online conversations about controversial topics, allowing poets to experiment with different themes and formats. Instapoets often showcase emotional vulnerability, with most of the works focusing on ideas of self-love, mental health, love and loss, trauma, social injustice, rebellion, feminism, and personal experiences. This democratization of poetry has played a major role in pushing this genre to new heights.

Another unifying characteristic of instapoetry is its accessibility to a wide range of audiences. The internet has helped poets to self-publish their works online, thus inviting eyeballs from a plethora of social media users. Along with hashtags and keywords, the dominance of reels as a prominent format of content creation on Instagram has ensured that readers across the world have a high chance of discovering new poets, enabling the conglomeration of large followings. "Social media is also a very different realm than paper. You're fostering a community there. Thoughts, ideas, friendships—also, there is close interaction with your audience which you don't get with a book. I have always said that the community in the comments section is the most magnetic thing about posting your work, unfiltered, online" (Gill).

The emergence and fast-growing popularity of instapoetry has also disrupted academia, forcing traditionalists to acknowledge this subgenre of poetry as a powerful tool that fosters a safe space for the voices of the marginalized groups of society to be acknowledged and heard aloud, thus bookmarking it as a genre worthy of its fame.

### **3. Poet of the Millennials**

Nikita Gill is a celebrated Irish-Indian poet, writer, playwright, illustrator, and editor for a poetry anthology titled SLAM! She has played a pivotal role in establishing instapoetry as a poetic genre of the 21st century. Gill has an army of eight lakh followers to her credit, attesting to her stardom, especially among the younger demographic of Instagram users. The poet is known for her empathetic and relatable style of writing on a wide breadth of human experiences, offering solace and resonance to her readers. Her words dwell on subjects of love, loneliness, heartbreak, anxiety, rage, healing, and women's empowerment. Her poetic reflections also address complex socio-political issues of sexism, body-shaming, and other forms of oppression, catalyzing a wave of activism and change.

For the purpose of this study, two poems of Gill have been selected to undergo a stylistic and thematic analysis.

# The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 7 & Issue 2 (April 2025)

## 4. Stylistic and Thematic Analysis of Nikita Gill's Poem *For Her*

The poem is a deeply confessional piece of writing wherein Gill has used minimalistic yet impactful linguistic techniques as enlisted in the research. A screenshot of the poem is attached below for the purpose of the study:

### For Her

Every day  
I thank the girl in me  
that believed life could still be  
something beautiful  
even when  
the cruelty of the world  
was enough to chew her up,  
and spit her out  
even when the ledge  
was close enough for her  
to end it all.

She still chose life.  
And I owe it to her  
to make something  
good and kind of myself.

On the days I succeed  
I put my hand on my heart  
and whisper to her  
"This is for you."

- Nikita Gill

Figure 5: Instapoem by Nikita Gill, titled *For her* (Gill 2024)

### 4.1. Phonological Level:

At this level, a close reading of the poem reveals that it carries certain sound patterns, as mentioned below:

#### I. Alliteration

The lines that display alliteration are as follows:

- a) That believed life could still be
- b) She still chose life.
- c) And I owe it to her
- d) I put my hand on my heart

#### II. Rhyme

The poem is written in free verse to foreground the emotional complexity of the subject matter. It contains nineteen lines with no strict metrical pattern to mirror natural speech and elevate relevancy.

# The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 7 & Issue 2 (April 2025)

## 4.2. Graphological Level:

### I. Line Breaks

The poem is divided into short lines, which can be read in a single breath. The use of brief, staccato sentences by the poet lends a sense of nostalgia and personal reflection to her words.

### II. Capitalization & Punctuation

The poem lacks excessive punctuation, giving it a spontaneous and intimate feel, as if the speaker in the poem was thinking out loud. The insertion of double inverted commas in the last line emphasizes the element of personal dialogue between the speaker and her younger self.

## 4.3. Morphological Level:

### I. Morphemes & Syllables

The poem incorporates simple, everyday morphemes, and the words are either monosyllabic or disyllabic to furnish the directness of the message.

## 4.4. Lexical Level:

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Pronoun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Adverb</i>
Day	Her	Beautiful	Thank	Still
Girl	I	Enough	Believed	Even
Life	Me	Close	Be	Enough
Cruelty	Something	Good	Was	
World	It	Kind	Chew	
Ledge	All		Spit	
Days	She		End	
Hand	Myself		Chose	
Heart	You		Owe	
	This		Make	
			Succeed	
			Put	
			Whisper	
			Is	

## 4.5. Syntactic Level:

### I. Fragmented Sentences

The breaks in the verses underpin the meditative undercurrents in the work.

### II. Repetition

The phrase “even when” is used multiple times throughout the work to shed light on the emotional quotient of the poem, weighing on the poet’s suffering and perseverance.

## 4.6. Semantic Level:

### I. Personification

The poem personifies the 'world' as an oppressive force, hinting at past trauma.

# The Voice of Creative Research

Vol. 7 & Issue 2 (April 2025)

## II. Symbolism

The word ledge can be interpreted as a symbol for social thoughts, indicating the speaker might have been on the brink of giving up her life.

## III. Imagery

Several phrases in the poem manifest violent imagery, suggesting the pain and rejection faced during the speaker's formative years, as listed below:

- a) Chew her up, and spit her out
- b) Hand on my heart
- c) The ledge was close enough

### 4.7. Themes in the poem:

Nikita Gill weaves a beautiful tapestry of hope and resilience through her words in this poem, evoking themes of survival, self-love, and gratitude towards life. It speaks to the survivors of trauma, spotlighting the strength and courage it takes to continue living life after enduring constant hardship and despair. It opens up meaningful dialogue on the subject of mental health. In the closing lines, the narrative takes on a more pleasant tone where the speaker expresses self-compassion and recognises the path to healing. The final act of whispering, “This is for you,” to her younger self is a touching moment of self-love and personal growth.

## 5. Conclusion

Instapoetry has emerged as a touchstone in the field of pop poetry, and Gill's work is a paragon of example. The burgeoning clique of Instapoets has lent literary merit to this subgenre by producing work that successfully captures the attention of contemporary readers and poetry aficionados around the globe. It is not far from the truth to acknowledge that this modern format might have saved poetry from becoming obsolete due to the competition that print media faces in the present times. However, instapoetry can be critiqued on grounds of prioritizing virality over quality, overshadowing niche voices, and perpetuating echo chambers due to the workings of a skewed algorithm. This may botch the literary meritocracy of certain works and poets. Nevertheless, it seems that the genre is here to stay for a long period of time.

### Works Cited

1. Gill, N. (2018). Interview with Instapoet Nikita Gill. In *Hachette India*.
2. Gill, N. (2021). For Her. *Instagram*.

### References

1. Large, E. (2022). Is “Insta-Poetry” Real Poetry? A Study of Rupi Kaur’s Poetry in the Age of Consumerism. *Wayzgoose Magazine*. Wayzgoose. Org, Wayzgoose.
2. Roje, R. (2023). INSTAPOETRY: CHARACTERISTICS, THEMES and CRITICISMS a Review of Recent Scholarship. *RIThink*, 13, 63–71.
3. Soelseth, C. H. (2025). *Instapoetry as a Post-Digital Phenomenon: The Infrastructural Effects of Platformization on Contemporary Pop Poetry*. Doctoral Thesis.
4. Gallon, L. (2021). *Instagram: Carving Out a Space for ‘Minority’ Voices / Instapoetry and Hypercapitalism*. British Association for American Studies.

---

# *The Voice of Creative Research*

Vol. 7 & Issue 2 (April 2025)

---

5. Sharma, L. (2019). What to Consider While Executing a Stylistic Analysis of a Poem. *American Research Journal of Humanities Social Science*.
6. Waegemans, N. (2021). NEOLIBERAL CHICKS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NEOLIBERAL ASPECTS OF CHICK- LIT AND FEMINIST INSTAPOETRY. [https://libstore.ugent.be/fulltxt/RUG01/003/007/407/RUG01-003007407\\_2021\\_0001\\_AC.pdf](https://libstore.ugent.be/fulltxt/RUG01/003/007/407/RUG01-003007407_2021_0001_AC.pdf)
7. Instagram [Instagram photo]. (n.d.-a). Retrieved 21 March 2025, from Instagram website: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7WrXbGs3jO/>.
8. Instagram [Instagram photo]. (n.d.-b). Retrieved 21 March 2025, from Instagram website: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C6tfNQksagU/>.
9. Instagram [Instagram photo]. (n.d.-c). Retrieved 21 March 2025, from Instagram website: [https://www.instagram.com/p/C687WxYsx\\_s/](https://www.instagram.com/p/C687WxYsx_s/).
10. Instagram [Instagram photo]. (n.d.-d). Retrieved 21 March 2025, from Instagram website: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7WrXbGs3jO/>.
11. Instagram [Instagram photo]. (n.d.-e). Retrieved 21 March 2025, from Instagram website: [https://www.instagram.com/p/DA8jQu7M11\\_/](https://www.instagram.com/p/DA8jQu7M11_/).