

Who Understands Beauty, but Me?

They tell me I'm ugly, so I am undesirable
They tell me I'm fat, so I lose the extra pounds
They make fun of my nose, I get it fixed
They say that I'm pale, so I burn my skin
They see my thin lips, I fill them with gunk
They see my stress, so I conceal the bags
They stare at my wrinkles, so I inject them until they won't move
Who understands why this defines beauty, but Me?
Who understands why there are benefits to having Beauty?
What are these benefits?
Finding love,
Finding fame,
Finding friends?
Who understands beauty when they've been beautiful their whole life?
Who understands what true beauty is, but Me?

I cannot live with my new face
I cannot live with my new body
I can live with who I am internally
I hated myself-
My face,
My body,
I learned that beauty was right
And I was wrong
The idea of beauty anchored me down-
And so I learned to swim back up
When the judgements continued
I looked deep into my heart,
Pulled the old me back out
Many times I thought the rope would break
And I would fall back into that hole
But I eventually found myself
And embraced it like an old friend
And protected it from something as big as a wave that would tear us apart
And loved it because I could not lose that part of myself again
We never stopped holding onto each other
Who recognizes what true beauty is, but Me?

One of the style choices that I mimicked from Jimmy Santiago Baca was the cause and effect lines that he uses in the first stanza. We both put first what “they” tell us to do, and the effect is what we do about it. The cause and effect system in the first stanzas represent repetition, because I repeat the two words “They see” and “They tell” two times in the poem. In Jimmy Santiago Baca’s poem, he repeats “They take” to emphasize that he has lost important things to him to the takers. We both repeat the word ‘so’ many times on the effect side. The word choice sets up the attitude towards the poem. This is not parallelism, though, because parallelism focuses more on the structure part of the poem. For instance, in both poems, we state the cannots first, and the cans after.

The second style choice that I used to mimic his poem was the use of his rhetorical questions. He ties them into his title and theme, and I also do that with my poem. The message provokes the feeling that nobody understands something that is important to you but you. In both poems, the rhetorical questions come after the causes and effects. That is because both Baca and I want to emphasize the fact that whoever ‘they’ was, they just do not understand what we understand. Although I use more rhetorical questions in my first stanza, I also repeat ‘Who understands...’, just like Baca does in his poem.

The last style choice that I used was personifying the thing that we understand. Baca’s was himself, and mine was beauty. We both stated in the second stanza that we had lost that part of ourselves. It brought an almost peaceful conclusion to the poem. We personified the importance of ourselves as friends that we had lost contact with over a long period of time. We used to have that part when we first came into this world, but as the obstacles and road bumps continued to grow, we started to shrink. That part of ourselves eventually shrunk into nothing, and we had to figure out how to pull it back. The ending of both poems is us embracing our ‘friends’. We put the last line as our rhetorical question/title/theme to conclude that we have those parts of ourselves back.