

Professor Shapiro's Talk/Poetry Session  
Feedback from students

1. This is my first time participating in a remote discussion online with a speaker abroad, it's a very exciting experience. Although I did not understand some of the English, I still felt the deep, philosophical thinking emanating from the speaker's speech and manners. (translated)
2. I am very happy to have the opportunity to meet this well-known, international professor and author online, and to read poems face-to-face, interact with, and discuss issues related to life, death, and cancer. This was the first time that I could actually discuss the meaning of the poetry with the writer of the poem. Professor Shapiro repeatedly emphasized that there were no right answers, and continued to bring up questions to guide students to speak up and discuss. Through these interactions, I could simultaneously hear the responses from individuals from different age groups, backgrounds, and experiences. In particular, I am most impressed by the poem "The Transformation of Water". The fluid crystal form of water is like the flow of human emotions. Some classmates suggested that doctors should pay attention to the patient's emotions and psychological state, rather than being blindly obsessed with "curing the cancer". However, Professor Shapiro raised the perspective that in reality, what every cancer patient really wants is to be cured even if they know that cancer could hardly be fully cured. However, the patients still held out hope and anticipate miracles to happen. I was deeply touched when Professor Shapiro said "facing my own death". After reading several of the poems from the speaker, I can find that the poems continue to convey positive and optimistic concepts to us. We can face all the twists and turns of life calmly by grasping the time and cherishing everything! (translated)
3. My literary attainment/accomplishment is not very good, but after this lecture, which included the talk and feedback from the speaker and other classmates, I feel I have a little more sense of how to grasp the key points and interpretation of the text. (translated)
4. Today's class was an online talk. I felt the difference in the way in which class is conducted in different cultures. It was really fantastic to be able to actually converse with the speaker in the class! This made me love this class even more. This week, I was particularly impressed by the content and discussion of Professor Shapiro's *The Mother without Breasts*, which made me understand that every individuals' various life experiences and observations can become the point of discussion through poetry. (translated)
5. I think Professor Shapiro's teaching (talk) was really excellent. (translated)
6. This lecture made me feel the importance of empathy that a doctor should possess. (translated)
7. Professor Shapiro encouraged us to ask more questions and express our thoughts actively, especially about the imagery of the poems she wrote. Some poems with deep meanings, through the question and answer, I found out the

emotions and medical humanities that the poems wanted to convey to the readers. (translated)

8. I really enjoy this lecture and I really enjoying understanding the reason why writers want to interpret their feeling through those words. It is so amazing to see that word can be translate in so many ways !! Just like the word tyrant using in the last poem !! I really like the metaphor ; Namely , to show us fact and fate is so pitiless 😊.also I really love the poem that mention the water mood theory !! It is so interesting !! (original comment from student, written in English)
9. Today's lecture was very enriching. Through the speaker's sharing of some experiences, the emotions expressed in the poems, such as sorrow, sadness, and helplessness, brought the feeling of emotions to a higher level in the form of poetry. For the first question: "Why write?", my classmates' responses and the speaker's explanation made me feel the same way as what they expressed.

I am very happy that Professor Lu invited Professor. Shapiro to give us this lecture. From the speaker's talk and manners, I felt that Professor Shapiro is a very wise and gentle person. In fact, when I first received Professor Shapiro's work, the poem *Carpe Diem* immediately grabbed my attention, and I couldn't help but think of the movie "*Dead Poet Society*", which I have watched before. In the movie, "Carpe Diem" appeared in the form of a declaration for grasping youth and for living in the moment. On the contrary, looking back at Professor Shapiro's works, this phrase was relatively heavy and seemed to be a symbol of the countdown to life. The gap between these mentalities were actually quite big. All in all, it was a very special experience to be able to have the author to give us the lecture in person, or even recite poems by herself.

Professor Shapiro's lecture was really touching, especially after I learned that most of the poems she wrote were based on her own experience, the poems were even more impactful to me. This lecture also reminded me of the process my relative went through in face of cancer diagnosis, and the fear of death and thinking of the tug-o-war with life. I could resonate very well from Professor Shapiro's poems, and it also made me truly feel the healing brought by literature. (translated)

10. Dear Professor Shapiro, Thank you for sparing your nighttime with us in poem reading. Despite such a limited time allowed, I feel like I was welcomed into the world of poems with kindness and friendliness. (I would call myself a regular reader and book lover, but seldom do I read poems, to be frank.) Therefore, I feel more than lucky to have a poet citing her poems, ushering me into the door. As a freshman in poems, I must have neglected so much in reading yours, but I do find them genuine and intimate, which is one of the reasons that bring me to literature in the first place; they are beautiful. At the beginning of the lecture, we were asked what literature means to us, and why we chose this class despite our major. I didn't dare to speak up then because I was too timid to be the first few. I figure I would keep them here. I have always loved literature; it has been the most natural way of art for me to relate to and engage in. I often feel the strong urge to write, but most of the time I

am incapable of taking action. Literature, or the written words in any form, is such divine that I dare not to violate. My words are plain, with little or no depth. Therefore, I quench my desire with lots of reading and absorbing, with the hope of one day coming up with my own voice. Seeing you today is such a privilege of mine since both you and our professor Lu have embodied the ideal; you seem calm, tender, and beautiful. If I must grow up, I wish to become the type of grownup like you. Best wishes, Evelyn (original comment written in English by student)

11. To Dr. Johanna F. Shapiro, I am a third grade student majoring in biology. There are two reasons why I chose the subject of Medical & Literature in this term, and two questions about STS(Science, technology and society). First, most of the members in my family suffer from cancer, so I was wondering why they have to take treatments which show a lack of empathy and patience in tough times. To the patients, it's full of suffering and deeply silent, and takes a long time to deal with the diseases alone from the hospital to home. I tried to do something to release my fear from death. When the uncertainty pop up, I usually search information on the Internet, watch TV drama and read relative illness related lectures about the cure and care to understand how the medical system works. I also desire to express my personal feelings and social opinions with the text, but it is hard to describe and share ill situations in normal time. Second, I am curious about the multiple cultures of death in the world, and seek a more eco-friendly and painless way to die in euthanasia issues. Finally, My question is can all of us including patients, primary caregiver, doctor, writer and readers share painful and ugly stories without cynicism and discriminations? For example, Covid-19 causes serious epidemics and anti-Asian racism. Or should we ignore these merciless conditions and keep silent in the criticized medical administrative procedures? \*References:(all in traditional Chinese translation) 1. Regarding the Pain of Others(2003), *Illness as Metaphor*(1988) by Susan Sontag. 2. *The Logic of Care: Active patients and the limits of choice* by Annemarie Mol. From Cherilyn Ou 2022.05.04 (original comment written in English by student)
12. In today's class, it is an honor to connect with Professor Shapiro online and hear her share her poetry. Literature has always been magical to me. It allows us to break through the constraints of time and space so that we are not limited to a single perspective of reality, but are able to see things from multiple perspectives. Medical literature allows us to examine the complex medical field through different ways; to look at the illness itself, the relationship between doctors and patients, the psychological state; and to conduct in-depth analysis of these perspectives. Today, Professor Shapiro's works have such magic power. I have never thought about the mother-daughter relationship of breast cancer patients, the image of despair and hope in death, the connection between water, emotions and words, etc., and this lecture led me to enter into a whole new field, enabling me to know that I can learn medicine, analyze diseases and life and death in this way. Thanks to Professor Shapiro for sharing, and I hope that literature can become an outlet for my emotions and a way to enrich my insights in the future. (translated)

13. It was a rare opportunity today to have a simultaneous video lecture from a well-known writer in California. The poet led us to understand the relationship between medicine and humanities with a few short poems. Even though I had to listen very attentively throughout the whole time, and the talk was all in English (it's a bit tiring), but I had gained a lot from this class because I could understand the meaning she wanted to convey through these penetrating poems. (translated)
  
14. The opportunity for the first (almost) full English class, is just like the usual. However, in short, I felt very lucky to hear the author, Professor Shapiro, present and explain her work herself, and to think about the close relationship between medicine, illness, treatment, life, and death to oneself and the state of being a human. I learned about the feedback on the perception of self and others across different perspectives and situations (we are all human, in short, the commonality of literature and emotions is universal and from reading medical literature, we can further give ourselves the opportunity to practice reflecting on one's own response to the world from different aspects and getting the world's feedback from it). (translated)