

POETRY CORNER

The Dream of What Is Possible

By Robin Hooker James • rhookerjames@gmail.com

Nothing is as heady
As the dream of what is possible.
It can fill your waking hours
Until nothing seems impossible.

Just the thought of the possible
Can intoxicate our imagination.
Lifting our hearts and souls
Ignoring all attempts at stagnation.

Such hope the possible gives us
Leaving no room for despair.
Enthralling the depths of our senses
Igniting our passions, so very rare.

What a dream to have
What a dream to hold dear.
For when anything is possible
There is nothing to fear.

When it was time to retire, I wanted a place that was less congested, where I could enjoy the beauty and wonder of our country. The beauty of the Applegate Valley caught my attention in 2016 and that's where I decided to plant my roots. I've traveled all over the world and it's still one of the most beautiful places I've been. It's inspirational and serene and speaks to my soul. —Robin James

Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to *Applegater* poetry editor Paul Tipton at ptipton4u2c@gmail.com.



Voices of the Applegate seeks singers

Our community choir, Voices of The Applegate, is back in the swing again with successful seasons last fall and spring. We are looking forward to another great season this coming fall.

We will be rehearsing in the Jacksonville Library every Tuesday evening from 7-8:30 pm, beginning September 3. Our concerts will be on November 22 in Jacksonville and on November 24 in Applegate.

We are looking for more singers to join our choir! If you are interested in spending 90 minutes a week in joyous music with a group of happy people, then come to our first rehearsal on September 3 or call me for more information.

We hope to see you in the fall!

Joan Peterson • 541-846-6988 • joanpete5317@gmail.com

Jacksaphine

September 21st - 29th Applegate Valley

COUNT(R)Y WEEK

Join us for a week of events that celebrate the beauty, flavors, and diversity of the Applegate Valley shared by Jackson & Josephine Counties

Music | Markets | Food | Libations | Art | Recreation | Community

Kick-off on Sept. 21st with Live Music Eight Dollar Mountain & more at Yale Creek Ranch

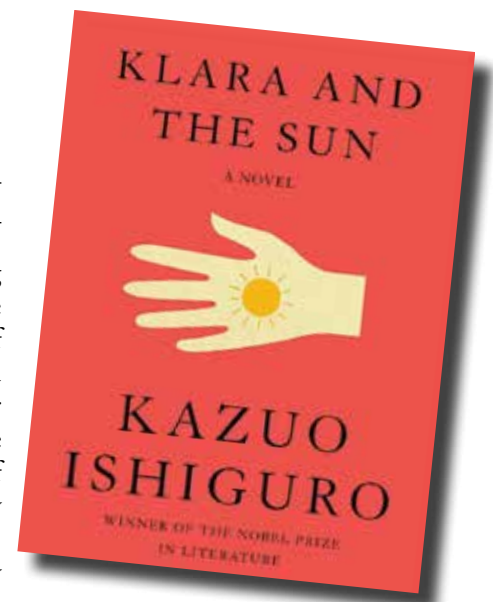
Scan QR code for a complete schedule
Learn more: www.agreaterapplegate.org

BOOK REVIEW

Klara and the Sun

Kazuo Ishiguro
Alfred A. Knopf, 2021

BY CHRISTIN LORE WEBER



AI (artificial intelligence) is spreading fast. It's not easy to ignore. Some of us love it. One of my neighbors loves the ease of composing a coherent recommendation to a government office. I, on the other hand, am not so keen on the icon at the top of my screen that is asking for a list of words it could use to compose this review of *Klara and the Sun*.

I heard of AI in 1985 when I met my 16-year-old stepson for the first time. The two of us were getting to know each other, and I asked about his interests. Without hesitation he said, "AI." I was stumped. "What's *that*?" So, he explained, and I commented that such a technology couldn't possibly develop until far into the future. He just laughed.

I remembered that experience when I picked up the 2021 novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. You may recognize the title of his *Remains of the Day* or of his chilling *Never Let Me Go*. It is always safe to assume that Ishiguro will take his reader into the depth of the human psyche where the characters' choices emerge from the sharp and inexplicable nature of the human condition itself. The situations are so subtle and tenuous that while reading we begin to wonder whether the human species has developed the wisdom, courage, and love required to make a choice at all.

The narrator of this novel is Klara herself, an AF or Artificial Friend. Actual human children are, by the time of this story, being "lifted," meaning that many of their brains are implanted with an intelligence chip that gives them immediate access to any bit of data they desire or require. Not all children, though, react well to the implant. Some become ill and even die. A robot model, the AF, is developed to befriend especially those children who have trouble adapting. Klara is purchased by such a family whose first daughter had died from the results of being "lifted," and their second daughter, Josie, is not well. The companionship of an AF might be of help to get her past the dangers to the human mind and body because of implantation's side effects.

After she is purchased, Klara's AI expands with every experience. Her world becomes larger. Her ability to synthesize her experience increases. Since Klara is narrating, the point of view is

hers. And this is where I got hooked. I began to relate to Klara herself as a person with thoughts, feelings, and the inner responsibility of choice. Klara's process, though, was different from what a human being typically experiences. The way she sees a room and walks through a room, for example, is different from the way you and I do that. I think that what Klara describes is pixilation. She sees her surroundings as tiny boxes that take time to fit together to create whatever object is in front of her: a face or a path. Fascinating!

In the beginning the narration is simple, a child's narration, but as Klara synthesizes her input, the tension in the written text and in what Klara understands of herself and her humans increases. She begins to "feel," but without prejudice. "I tried to imagine how I would feel if Rosa [her store companion AF] and I, a long time from now, long after we'd found our different homes, saw each other again by chance on a street. Would I then feel, as Manager had put it, pain alongside my happiness?" (p. 30).

The contrast between Klara's perspective and that of the other characters, both natural humans and lifted humans, becomes conflictual for the reader. The intensity increases. The author, Ishiguro, begins to show his characters, the whole cast, in that cultural trap and psychological/emotional seduction that leads to a person's desires to claim another's life for their personal gain. Ishiguro, in his various books, opens vastly different cultures and situations to us, and there's always that fundamental trap and the question: Who is really the human being here? Who has discovered how to love another?

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