

RHYMES & POETRY

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More Haiku Poems.

Most people think haiku are easy to write. You just need to have three lines, one with 5 syllables, one with 7, and one with 5. Traditional haiku aren't quite that simple. There are also two critical rules for content. First, the haiku should include a word, called the *kigo*, to establish it in time. This is commonly done with a reference to nature and the seasons. Second, a haiku is actually divided into two parts, often denoted in English with a semicolon or dash. They are different but complimentary. For instance, here is a translation of one of Basho's poems:

An old pond!
A frog jumps in-
The sound of water.

We have our seasonal reference, our *kigo*, in the frog. It is summer, when you find frogs hanging out on the edge of ponds. And, we have the two parts of the haiku, one describing something visual, the pond and the frog, and the second describing a sound, the splash of water. Each of them enhances the other. When you are judging a haiku, count syllables of course. But also make sure the *kigo* is in there, the two parts have the proper distinction, and that it performs the role of a haiku: to crystalize one moment, one feeling, one thought, like a jewel.

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Other examples of Haiku:

Chums

A shower in spring,
And there in lively talk,
A raincoat and umbrella walk!

- Buson (1716-1783). Japan. Haiku.

Breezes

When the spring breezes rise,
They play all sorts of merry games
With birds and butterflies.

- Japan. Haiku.

Daffodils

In spite of cold and chills
That usher in the early spring,
We have the daffodils.

- Japan. Haiku.

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Cloud Shadows

The clouds on spring winds borne,
Cast swiftly moving shadows o'er
The waving fields of corn.

- Japan. Haiku.

Daybreak In The Summer

A lovely morn! The summer night is gone;
How hushed and still is all the world
In wonder at the dawn.

- Japan. Haiku.

The Sunflower

A rainy day in June, yet see, -
The sunflower turns its face
Toward the spot where the sun should be.

- Japan. Haiku.

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A Carpet

The storm last night has laid
A coverlet of maple leaves,
As gay as red brocade.

- Japan. Haiku.

Sunset

The crimson sunset glow
Is on the mountain, on the mist,
And on the sea below.

- Japan. Haiku.

The Moon's Reflection In The Sea

The moon reflected in the sea,
Though washed by waves that rise and fall,
Is still as lovely as can be.

- Tukayabu (900-930). Japan. Haiku.

Chrysanthemums And Butterflies

Chrysanthemums in bloom today
Colors like a paint dish gay,
Come butterflies, come here and play!

- Ransetsu (1654-1707). Japan. Haiku.

Plum Blossoms

(Three Poems. Little Pictures Of Japan.)

Far across hill and dale,
The blossoms of the plum have cast
A delicate pink veil.

- Basho, Matsuo (1643-1694). Japan. Haiku.

So sweet the plum trees smell!
Would that the brush that paints the flower
Could paint the scent as well.

- Japan, Haiku.

I can look, and lo,
The plum tree petals scatter down
A fall of purest snow.

- Ranko (1728-1799). Japan. Haiku.

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Lilies

I thought

I saw white clouds, but no! -

Bending across the fence,

White lilies in a row!

- Shiko (1665-1731). Japan. Haiku.

Crocuses

The sunrise tints the dew,

The yellow crocuses are out,

And I must pick a few.

- Japan, Haiku.

The Morning Glory

So soon I shall be gone, -

I'm but a morning glory,

A fleeting face-at-dawn.

- Moritake (1472-1549). Japan, Haiku.