

PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION

Many haiku contain no punctuation.

Haiku poets use punctuation if the poem doesn't make sense without it.

Haiku poets sometimes use punctuation to accentuate the pause between the two juxtaposed parts (often a dash, a colon or an ellipsis).

Most haiku poets use all lowercase letters in their poems, unless a word is the proper name of a person, place or thing (e.g., Terry Fox, Tofino, Thanksgiving).

a crow's nest–
the wind drops
white blossoms

– *Julie Emerson*

first star . . .
a seashell held
to my baby's ear

– *Michael Dylan Welch*

sparrows shelter
under the 7-11 sign
October wind

– *Jacqueline Pearce*

northern lights
just beyond the reach
of my walking stick

– *kjmunro*

HAIKU WEBSITES

www.haikucanada.org
www.vcbf.ca
www.haikunorthwest.org
www.graceguts.com
www.nahaiwrimo.com
www.thehaikufoundation.org
www.hsa-haiku.org

BOOKS

The Haiku Handbook – WJ Higginson
Haiku: A Poet's Guide – L Gurga
The Haiku Anthology – C van den Heuvel (ed)
Haiku in English – J Kacian et al (eds)
The Way of Haiku – NB Wakan
Lighting the Global Lantern – TA Carter

JOURNALS

*Acorn, Bottle Rockets, Cattails, Frogpond,
Haiku Canada Review, Heron's Nest,
Mariposa, Mayfly, Modern Haiku, Presence*

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pacifi-kana



HOW TO HAIKU

WHAT IS A HAIKU?

A short unrhymed poem that records the essence of a keenly perceived or “aha!” moment. Haiku express awe or insight, often linking nature with human nature.

FORM

In Japanese, haiku consist of 17 *on* (sound beats) written in one line. In English, haiku usually have fewer than 17 syllables and are written in three lines. Haiku are about one breath long.

CONCRETE IMAGES

Haiku language is concrete, common and natural. Avoid words that are judgmental (e.g., beautiful, sad). Use an economy of words to create an emotion: don't name the emotion; show what evoked it.

PRESENT TENSE

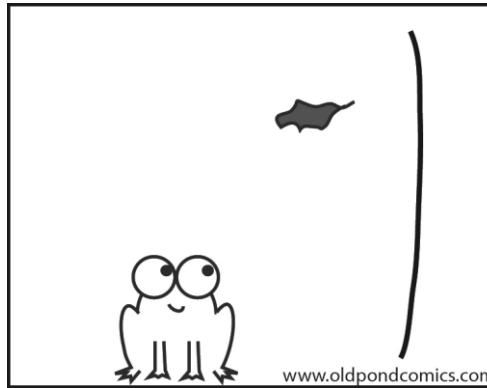
A haiku conveys an experience of the here and now.

first strawberry
I divide it evenly
for dessert

– Naomi Beth Wakan

underground parking
no space
for the moon

– Terry Ann Carter



– Jessica Tremblay, haiku comics creator

SEASON WORDS

Haiku usually contain a season word, or *kigo*:

Spring: blossoms, returning geese, kite

Summer: mosquito, swimming, fan

Autumn: red leaves, salmon, Halloween

Winter: icicles, mittens, porridge

THE SENSES

Haiku focus on the senses:

Smell: skunk, roses, beeswax

Taste: blackberries, honey cake, tears

Hear: frogs, rushing water, bells

Touch: sand, jello, cat fur

See: waves, skyscraper, red

heat wave—
the horse blinks away
a gnat's life

– Carole MacRury

WHAT • WHERE • WHEN

A haiku conveys *what* captures your attention, and *where* and *when* your attention is captured.

JUXTAPOSITION

Most haiku have two parts. Put two images together to create harmony or contrast, emotion and expansion of ideas.

One image can appear on one line; the other image in two lines (either the first two lines or the last two).

There is usually a pause, or *kireji*, at the end of either the first or the second line.

cheeping birds
from time to time
a bicycle bell

– Angela J Naccarato

trickster wind
a beach ball
travels the coast

– Lynne Jambor

autumn sun
through the café window
my eggs over easy

– Vicki McCullough