

Haiku addendum

Just a few more items here that I want to share with you.

The brevity of these poems can be deceptive. Make sure you pack the perfect idea and image into each poem. I want to add here too that most people believe that a haiku must have seventeen syllables arranged 5/7/5 in lines 1, 2, and 3. Actually, traditional Japanese haiku poets count sounds not syllables. To illustrate, here is the best known poem in Japan by Matsuo Basho (1644-1694):

old pond
a frog leaps in
water's sound



The seventeen sounds of a traditional Japanese haiku take about the same length of time to say as twelve to fifteen English syllables. That's why most North American haiku poets write haiku in English with fewer than seventeen syllables. Today many poets simply write haiku in three short lines, and city life increasingly finds its way into haiku:

red light
gasoline sloshing
in the tank

Speaking of that, here are some fun samples from Ross Venokur's book, *Haiku! Gesundheit* (get it?)

Marty picked his nose
shoved his finger so far up
it came out his ear

broken arms and legs
can be a major nuisance
when riding a horse

a vacuum cleaner
picked up Sam and said to him,
"You eat all that dirt!"

Haiku poetry.
Poetry or poet tree?
Words where buds should be.

Here is a really clever one by Ted Hipple:

The Traditional Grammarian as Poet
Haiku, you ku, he,
She, or it kus, we ku, you
Ku, they ku. Thang ku.

and by W.R. E.

Haikus show I. Q.s
High I.Q.s like haikus. Low
I.Q.s—no haikus

Students sometimes like to group several haikus together to tell a story of sorts. Here are two samples:

The Martian Diary
(sci-fi ku by Brittany Kemp)
Fall

The winds have increased
Temperatures are dropping
The Earthlings are gone
Winter

Nights are harsh and cold
Bitter winds clench my sore bones
No sign of Earthlings

Spring
Sunlight warms my face
Hibernation is over
Earthlings have returned

Summer
Unbearable heat
Has invaded our planet
I met an Earthling



Haiku by Mike Neimi

Season by season
The Earth begins to show us
The knowledge it has

Snow falls and rain pours
Firestorms rage and frost crackles
Evergreens stand tall

Pelican circles
Then swoops down to catch its prey
An old hiking boot