

## 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](http://www.haikucanada.org)  
[www.vcbf.ca](http://www.vcbf.ca)  
[www.haikunorthwest.org](http://www.haikunorthwest.org)  
[www.graceguts.com](http://www.graceguts.com)  
[www.nahaiwrimo.com](http://www.nahaiwrimo.com)  
[www.thehaikufoundation.org](http://www.thehaikufoundation.org)  
[www.hsa-haiku.org](http://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*

## GROUPS IN THE PACIFI-KANA REGION

Haiku Arbutus (Victoria)  
*Dan Curtis: [dancurtis8@gmail.com](mailto:dancurtis8@gmail.com)*

Vancouver Haiku Group  
*Julie Emerson:*  
*[Vancouverhaikugroup@outlook.com](mailto:Vancouverhaikugroup@outlook.com)*

Solstice Haiku (Whitehorse)  
*Kathy Munro: [kjm.1560@gmail.com](mailto:kjm.1560@gmail.com)*

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**pacifi-kana is the BC & Territories region  
of Haiku Canada  
email: [pacifi-kana@haikucanada.org](mailto:pacifi-kana@haikucanada.org)**

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

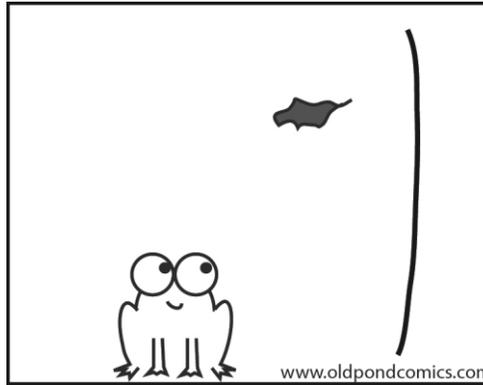
A haiku conveys an experience of the here and now.

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