

## PUNCTUATION & 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 (Easter, Mount Fuji).

moss-hung trees  
a deer moves into  
the hunter's silence  
– Winona Baker

first snow . . .  
the children's hangers  
clatter in the closet  
– Michael Dylan Welch

spring memorial  
the dampness  
in a handful of soil  
– Alice Frampton

a length of rope  
knotted with seaweed—  
pull of the tide  
– Susan Constable



## HAIKU WEBSITES

[www.vcbf.ca](http://www.vcbf.ca)  
[www.theheronsnest.com](http://www.theheronsnest.com)  
[www.haikuhabit.com](http://www.haikuhabit.com)  
[www.simplyhaiku.com](http://www.simplyhaiku.com)  
[www.hsa-haiku.org](http://www.hsa-haiku.org) (award collections)  
[www.ahapoetry.com](http://www.ahapoetry.com)  
[www.worldhaikuclub.org](http://www.worldhaikuclub.org)

## BOOKS

*The Haiku Handbook*  
by William J. Higginson  
*How to Haiku*  
by Bruce Ross  
*Haiku Moment*  
edited by Bruce Ross  
*The Haiku Anthology*  
edited by Cor van den Heuvel  
*Haiku—One Breath Poetry*  
by Naomi Beth Wakan  
*Haiku: A Poet's Guide*  
by Lee Gurga

## JOURNALS

*Acorn, Blithe Spirit, Bottle Rockets, Frogpond, Haiku Canada Review, Heron's Nest, Modern Haiku, Moonset, and more*

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pacifi-kana is a network of haiku poets, affiliated with the BC & Territories region of Haiku Canada ([www.haikucanada.org](http://www.haikucanada.org))  
Contact the regional coordinator at [vmccullough@telus.net](mailto:vmccullough@telus.net)

pacifi-kana



HOW TO HAIKU

## WHAT IS A HAIKU?

An unrhymed Japanese poem that records the essence of a keenly perceived or “aha!” moment. Haiku link nature with human nature. Haiku express awe or insight.

## FORM

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

## CONCRETE IMAGES

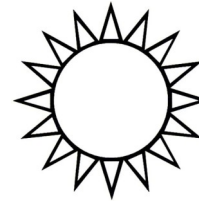
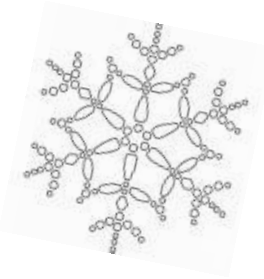
Haiku use language that is concrete, common and natural. Avoid words that are judgmental (e.g., beautiful, cute). Haiku use an economy of words to create an emotion. Show what caused the emotion rather than naming the emotion.

## PRESENT TENSE

Haiku should be happening right here, right now.

the heron  
striking its own reflection  
shallow water

– Naomi Beth Wakan



## SEASON WORDS

Haiku usually contain a season word (*kigo*):  
spring *or* blossoms, returning geese, crocus . . .  
summer *or* fireflies, swimming, fan . . .  
autumn *or* falling leaves, mushrooms . . .  
winter *or* icicles, withered plants, pine . . .

## THE SENSES

Something you can smell (skunk, roses, smoke); taste (blackberries, honey cake, tears); hear (frogs, rushing water, bells); touch/feel (sand, peach fuzz, cat’s fur); see (waves, skyscraper, rainbow).

wild pears—  
yellow jackets push  
under the skin

– Carole MacRury



## WHAT · WHERE · WHEN

A haiku conveys *what* has captured your attention, and *where* and *when* your attention was captured.

## JUXTAPOSITION

Put two images together to create harmony or contrast, emotion and expansion of ideas. (Do not use simile or metaphor; just present concrete ‘facts.’)

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

There should be a pause at the end of either the first or the second line, but not both.

dawn stars  
still twinkling . . .  
the whiteness of daisies  
– elehna de sousa

An empty beach . . .  
the moon lights a pathway  
to itself  
– Edward Zuk

in the fog  
a dog noses maple leaves  
—winter election  
– Vicki McCullough