

A Workshop on Haiku in English

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The following is a summary of a workshop on haiku in English given in December of 2014. The workshop was sponsored by the Institute for International Understanding at Tezukayama Gakuin University. I have left this paper in the form of a dialogue in order to give the reader a better understanding of the dynamic of a workshop; the play between structured and unstructured parts, and the interaction between the presenter and the participants.

PD:

Thank you. As you know, my name is Peter Duppenthaler (PD), and I can see that some of you were students in my adult education Haiku in English class, so I ask those people to please bear with me as I will be repeating some basic information. However, there will be plenty of time to write haiku. I believe that it's important that we write haiku and not just talk about them.

[The following two haiku were written on the blackboard.]

Tell me the street to Heaven
This? Or that? Oh, which?
What webs of streets!

By Yone Noguchi

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
Petals on a wet. Black bough .

By Ezra Pound

Please look at the first poem by Yone Noguchi which was published in 1914. According to a new publication in English, edited by Jim Kacian, entitled *Haiku in English: The First Hundred*

Years, this is the first “haiku we can be certain was composed originally in English” (Kacian, p. 310), as opposed to simply being translated from Japanese into English. If we look at this poem, we can see that there are things in this haiku that we do not see anymore or at least do not see very much in haiku today. For example, we usually do not start each line with a capital letter anymore. We usually do not use punctuation anymore either. So there are things that we can see in this haiku that have gone out of fashion.

The second poem by Ezra Pound was published in 1913. This poem is often cited in the early history of haiku in English. Pound was a member of a group of poets called the Imagist “who favored precision of imagery and clear, sharp language” (Kacian, p.311). Pound was in Paris in the winter. He is supposed to have had this kind of epiphany on the subway, and came out and wrote this poem. “IN A STATION OF THE METRO” is actually the title, but it is usually included in the poem. It is all in capitals. He then writes “The apparition” and then he puts a space, “of these faces,” another space and “in the crowd :” is written. Use of space in this way is something that we sometimes see in modern haiku, but usually do not; however, “precision of imagery and clear, sharp language” is an integral part of haiku in English today.

What can you tell me about Japanese haiku? You are all Japanese and I am sure that you’ve all studied haiku at least in school.

Female Speaker:

17 *onji*, arranged in 5-7-5.

PD:

Okay, 17 and 5-7-5. This is also the form of a “traditional” haiku in English, and this form was brought over directly from Japanese. In Japanese, we often see haiku written in one line; however in English it is very difficult to write, or should I say to print, 17 syllables in only one line, simply because the page of print in most books is not that wide. So instead of writing one-line haiku, poets usually wrote three separate lines of five syllables, seven syllables, and five syllables. So we ended up with three lines that visually are short-long-short as we can see in the haiku by Pound, although obviously he did not worry much about the syllable count. To summarize, in general, the basic form of a “traditional” haiku in English was gradually set, with very few exceptions, as: 17 syllables, written in three lines of 5-7-5 syllables, with very sparing use of punctuation and capitalization. Let us now look at some “Haiku: Dos and Don’ts.”

[Handout #1: Haiku Dos and Don'ts. The following was handed out to the participants.]

Haiku Dos and Don'ts

— worksheet —

1. DO / DON'T repeat words or ideas that give the same meaning.
同じ意味を連想させるような語句やアイデアを繰り返す / 繰り返さない。
 2. DO / DON'T write the haiku in three lines.
3行で俳句を書く / 書かない。
 3. DO / DON'T write a general statement.
一般的な事柄を書く / 書かない。
 4. DO / DON'T pick a particular place.
具体的な場所を選ぶ / 選ばない。
 5. DO / DON'T add unneeded words to fill out a strict syllabic form.
決められた音節形式に従って書く為に、不必要な語を加える / 加えない。
 6. DO / DON'T show what really happens.
実際に起こったことを書く / 書かない。
 7. DO / DON'T use whatever punctuation, capitalization and indentation you like.
好きなように、句読点、大文字、インデンテーション(最初の語を引っ込める)を使う / 使わない。
 8. DO / DON'T use noticeable rhyme
あえてわかるように韻をふむ / ふまない。
 9. DO / DON'T include nature, preferably something relating to a particular season.
自然、つまりその季節に関係する季語を取り入れる / 取り入れない。
 10. DO / DON'T write in the immediate present tense
今現在の瞬間をとらえて書く / 書かない。
 11. DO / DON'T tell how you feel about something.
あるものについてどのように感じるかを書く / 書かない。
 12. DO / DON'T always write in complete sentences.
完全な文章で書く / 書かない。
 13. DO / DON'T write in seventeen or fewer syllables.
17音節、あるいはそれより少ない音節で書く / 書かない。
 14. DO / DON'T use words like “cute,” “pretty,” and “I like.”
「かわいい」「きれい」「私は…が好き」のような語句を使う / 使わない。
-

PD:

I want you to read each of the 14 items on the paper I just handed out and decide whether it is “do” or “don’t” when you write haiku in English. For example number one says, “repeat words or ideas that give the same meaning.” Do you think you should do that or not do that? If you are not sure then just make a guess.

Male Speaker:

Don’t.

PD:

Yes, that’s right. The answer to number one is don’t, so don’t repeat words that give the same meaning. For example you would not write something like “happy happy day” or “joyously happy day.”

[the participants were given time to complete the task]

PD:

Are we finished?

Male Speaker:

Finished.

PD:

All right. What is the answer to number two?

Female Speaker:

Do.

PD:

Yes, do. Generally “do.” However, you will sometimes see one-line and two-line haiku, but the overwhelming majority of haiku in English are three lines.

Male Speaker:

Can I ask one question?

PD:

Yes.

Male Speaker:

Number one.

PD:

Uh-huh.

Male Speaker:

Don't repeat words or ideas that give the same meaning. But there are famous Japanese haiku that do repeat the same words.

PD:

If I said, "New York, New York ..."

Male Speaker:

New York.

PD:

Would it be interesting? Generally no, I mean you can do it if you want, because in haiku you can do anything. However, they are your creations. You can repeat words, even exactly the same word if you want, but general, as a general rule, don't. Remember, like the imagists, we are striving for "precision of imagery and clear, sharp language" – using as few words as possible.

All right, number three, do or don't?

Female Speaker:

Don't.

PD:

Don't. Okay. Do not make general statements. For example, "I like apples" and "apples are delicious" are general statements. Haiku are supposed to be a record of a moment in time, of what happened at a specific place at a specific point in time. A good haiku will put the reader

at that very moment in time. It will be a moment of total sensory awareness. Dull language, such as a general statement, will not have that effect on the reader. Number four?

Male Speaker:

Do.

PD:

Do. Okay, do pick a particular time. Five?

Female Speaker:

Don't.

PD:

Don't. This will only be done if you are a traditionalist and you think haiku must have exactly 17 syllables. For example "autumn sunset." That's four syllables, so if I were writing a traditional haiku, I would have to add "the" or "this" or "an" but are these words really necessary? Do they add anything to the poem? They don't help the image at all. In fact some might say that they lessen the impact of the line. So, as a general rule, don't add words just to fill out a strict syllable count, unless you join a contest and the contest says "the haiku must be 5-7-5." Number six?

Male Speaker:

Do.

PD:

Do. Okay good. Do. Seven?

Female Speaker:

Don't.

PD:

No, it's do. Do use whatever punctuation. Generally you don't use any punctuation, but you are free to use it. However, I would suggest not using any punctuation, but you are free to use whatever punctuation, even capitalization if you like; and a few people do. Number eight?

Female Speaker:

Don't.

PD:

Yes. Again, in general don't use rhyme. Once in a while you will see this, but it is something that should appear naturally if at all. For example, in many types of English poetry rhyme is expected. In fact it is mandatory; however, in haiku this is not the case. In general the use of rhyme would make a haiku seem less natural and rather stilted. Number nine?

Female Speaker:

Do.

PD:

Do. Good. Include nature. Ten?

Female Speaker:

Do.

PD:

Good. We don't write haiku in the past, "yesterday I" Number 11?

Female Speaker:

Don't.

PD:

Good. Again, don't say "I'm happy ... " Number 12?

Female Speaker:

Don't.

PD:

Don't. Good. Number 13?

Female Speaker:

Do.

Female Speaker:

Don't.

PD:

You are both right. If you are writing a traditional haiku then exactly seventeen syllables is what you want. However, if you are writing what are often called “free” haiku, and most of today’s haiku are in this style, then you will be using fewer than 17 syllables. Most of the haiku written today are between 12 to 14 syllables. So the best answer is “do.” And 14?

Female Speaker:

Don't.

PD:

Don't. Yes. 14, is for university students who just love the word “cute,” you have “cute puppies” and so on, cute anything, and of course it has a very positive image for them. However, as adults, we should be able to find better ways to express this feeling.

All right, I think it is about time we start writing.

[Handout #2: Completing a Haiku. The following was handed out to the participants.]

Completing a Haiku

Complete the following haiku. 次の俳句を完成させ。

Haiku #1

line 1 → winter morning 冬の朝
line 2 → the water in the rice paddy 田んぼの中の水
line 3 → _____

Haiku # 2

line 1 → winter afternoon 冬の午後
line 2 → the sound of ~の音
line 3 → _____

PD:

Now that you have some idea of the basics. Please look at haiku number one. As you can see, I've given you the first two lines of haiku number one. I would like you to come up with the last line. In haiku number two, I've given you the first line and part of the second line. You need to complete the second line and then write a last line to complete the haiku. You are free to write whatever you like but try and make it short.

How much time do you need? I've got my timer, so how much time? Five minutes, 10 minutes?

Male Speaker:

Five minutes

PD:

Okay. For people who have been writing haiku for some time, five minutes will be enough time. For new people it's a new experience and five minutes is probably not enough time to write, but we only have until 5 o'clock, so let's give it a try. At the end of five minutes I will ask you to read your lines for me. Five minutes, start.

[The participants were given five minutes to complete the task.]

PD:

Time is up. Let's start by listening to some of the last lines to the haiku – “winter morning / the water in the rice paddy /” and …

Female Speaker:

Me?

PD:

Sure.

Female Speaker:

I should read only the third line?

PD:

Only the third line.

Female Speaker:

Falling leaves slink along.

PD:

Falling leaves slink along, okay. Shrink or slink ... ?

Female Speaker:

Shrink. And the first word is “fallen” not “falling.”

PD:

Fallen. I see.

Female Speaker:

And the final one is “alone” not “along.”

PD:

Alone, Okay.

Female Speaker:

Does alone, make sense?

PD:

Yeah. So the last line is “fallen leaves shrink alone.” The next thing you have to think about is, are there too many words, are there not enough words, is there just the right number of words? “Shrink” sounds good and so does “alone.” We need “leaves,” but do we need “fallen?” I guess we do. So we’ll say ...

Male Speaker:

“Alone” means “single?”

PD:

I assume that it means that there’s nobody there, nobody comes to see leaves in winter. In the fall everybody goes out and looks at all the colored leaves. Okay, so far so good. The last line “fallen leaves shrink alone,” seems like a good last line. Any others?

Male Speaker:

Shall I?

PD:

Yes.

Male Speaker:

My last line is “icing.”

PD:

Icing?

Male Speaker:

Icing.

PD:

Icing ...

Male Speaker:

Yeah, I-C-I-N-G.

PD:

Icing okay, so they are freezing over in this case, okay one word, this is good, nice and short.
Any others?

Male Speaker:

Yes.

PD:

Uh-huh.

Male Speaker:

Winter morning / the water in the rice paddy / water frozen.

PD:

Water frozen. Okay, do we need all these words? No. Let's okay cut one. We know it must be the water in the rice paddy, so we can probably take out the second "water" and make it shorter. Shorter and it's also stronger when there are fewer words. I once counted the number of words and syllables in a few hundred haiku published in two famous English-language haiku publications and found that, on average, they were around nine words long and contain about 13 syllables. So, short is good. Any other last lines?

Female Speaker:

Glittering / brightly / like diamonds.

PD:

"Glittering / brightly / like diamonds," okay, can we take out any words here?

Female Speaker:

Like diamonds.

PD:

Okay "like diamonds." Usually we do not use similes or metaphors in haiku. You do not use, "as ... as," or "like" as in "like diamonds." So if we take out "like diamonds" we have "glittering brightly" which is a sharp, clear image in itself.

Okay, so far so good. So, we've got short-long-short, and what you wrote were haiku; meaning that they were nature centered as opposed to senryu which are more people centered. In the beginning of haiku in English people made no real distinction between haiku and senryu. However, nowadays, they are considered to be two separate categories. Some magazines publish them separately, some still publish them together, but there's a growing feeling that haiku are haiku and senryu are senryu; and that senryu are more people centered while haiku are more nature centered.

[The following was written on the blackboard.]

Haiku should be brief, fresh, using clear images to express the essence of haiku – the "suchness" of the moment.

This is a definition of haiku that appeared in the Haiku Society of America's Newsletter in 1989. What are the important words here? What are the key words?

Female Speaker:

Brief?

PD:

Okay, certainly they should be brief.

Female Speaker:

Fresh.

PD:

Fresh. Yes they should be fresh, but what does "fresh" mean? It means for example, you are walking along and you see some sunlight falling on a rice paddy, and you think that's very beautiful, that's "fresh," right? Or you are walking along the street that you walk along every day, every day the same way and all of a sudden, you look over and you see something you have never noticed before even though it has been there all the time. That's fresh.

Are there any other important words?

Female Speaker:

Image.

PD:

Yes, clear images. Obviously haiku need to be brief, they need to be fresh and use clear images. I don't think there's any problem with that. "The 'suchness' of the moment" is a little more difficult to understand. This is another aspect of haiku – the sort of philosophical heart of it.

I once met an English woman in Kyoto who had been writing haiku for – she was in her eighties 80 and had been writing haiku for 50 or 60 years. And of course when two haiku poets get together, they always start with, "what do you think haiku is?" And so, I ask her what she thought haiku was. She said, "I don't care anymore. I don't talk about what haiku is anymore. Haiku are just postcards? When you go on a trip, you go some place and you think oh, I'll get a postcard of that, that's pretty, that's interesting. And you send it to somebody and if they show it to you afterwards and say, 'Oh thank you for the postcard,' you see that card and you see the

little note on the back and it all comes back, right? And that's what a good haiku is like. When you read it, you are at that place again, at that moment in time, you actually relive it." And that's the "suchness of the moment."

So postcards. Whether you think haiku are postcards or some great piece of literature, when you are 80-something, you will probably think that they are postcards, but I like postcards – they are worth writing and worth keeping, and worth taking out once in a while and reliving the moment in time that they captured for you.

Okay, let's move on to technique.

[Handout #3: Time Sense Action. The following was handed out to the participants.]

Use the pattern:

1. Time
2. Sense (see, taste, touch, hear, smell)
3. Action

Use only one season word. Underline the season word.

Not more than 12 words. Write the number of words in each line. Write the total number of words.

Time → _____

Sense → _____

Action → _____

Total number of words ()

Time → _____

Sense → _____

Action → _____

Total number of words ()

PD:

The next thing I'm going to give you is this piece of paper which shows a way to organize haiku. There are many ways to do it, but we are going to try this one and then we'll try

something else later on. I'd like you to put the "time" in the first line of your haiku. Time means what time of day – morning, afternoon, evening – or what time of year – the season or some special event like New Year's Day. Something that will clearly show when the action is taking place. In the second line we will write about our "senses" – see, taste, touch, hear, and smell. And in the third line we will include "action" – the use of a verb. I'd like you to use only one season word and to underline it. "New Year's Day" counts as one season word, but "winter snowflakes" would count as two.

Let me give you an example. My first line is time and I will write "twilight." For my second line, sense, I will use the sense of smell and write "the scent of lilacs." I am sure that you have heard that haiku use "season words," something that shows the season, and in this case my season word is "lilac," so I know that it is late spring. My third line is action and I will write "fills the air." So in the end I have:

twilight
the scent of lilacs
fills the air

Time, sense, and action. I also want you to write the number of words in each line and then the total number of words, not syllables, just words, so in this case we have 1, 4 and 3 for a total of 8 words.

At the beginning of this workshop we talked about 5-7-5 syllables. Counting syllables is basically a waste of time unless you are writing for a haiku contest that says that the haiku must be exactly 17 syllables, arranged 5-7-5. A more convenient way and I think a more enjoyable way is simply to count the words. We want the words to be simple and easy to understand, and the three lines to be short-long-short. So if you write two words, three words, and two it's short-long-short. If you write one, four, and two well it's okay, it's still long-short-short.

Remember earlier that I mentioned that the average word count of the haiku I looked at in those two publications was around nine words, so I would like to limit the number of words you can write to a maximum of twelve words – don't write more than twelve words. And try to use the short-long-short pattern, so you could use a pattern of 1-2-1 or 2-3-2 or 3-4-3 or some similar combination. And lastly, try to include one and only one season word – "winter" or "snowflakes" but not "winter snowflakes" – and to underline the season word. Just for you information, "New Year's Day" would count as one season word, but "winter snowflakes" would count as two.

One of the reasons we include season words is because they have so many other associations. With only a season word, for example “strawberry” you think of color, you think of a special time of the year, of picking, or going on a trip, of a warm spring day, the last time you ate a strawberry. All those associations come up and that’s the advantage to season words. You can say a lot without saying very much. So try and use a season word. It does not have to be spring, summer, winter, or fall, but something that has a clear link to a particular time of the year.

Okay, now comes the fun part – writing haiku. Let’s try for at least one wonderful, evocative haiku. How much time? Ten minutes?

Female Speaker:

All right.

PD:

All right, 10 minutes. My timer.

Female Speaker:

Do we really need to use a season word?

PD:

If you don’t want to use a season word, don’t, but it’s highly recommended, it is not mandatory.

Female Speaker:

Do we have to write winter haiku?

PD:

Yes, let’s make it winter. We are in winter now, so winter haiku, please.

Female Speaker:

Okay. And don’t use the word “winter.”

PD:

No, you can use the word “winter,” but if you do, then that is your season word and you can’t use anything else.

Female Speaker:

I don't have much confidence.

PD:

Just give it a try. If you don't, it's like going to the swimming pool and never getting in the water.

[All the participants wrote haiku for ten minutes.]

PD:

Okay, your 10 minutes are up, any volunteers? Come on, don't be shy.

[Individuals come forward and write their haiku on the board, and as a group we critique them and then try and improve them usually by eliminating unnecessary words and trying for “brief, fresh, clear images.”]

PD:

Okay, so far we know we need, three lines of short-long-short, and nine to 12 words. We want to get rid of all the unnecessary words, and we want to try and use a season word, so we can have some associations. The next thing you have to work on is “cutting.” In Japanese you have *kigo* or “cutting words” that divide a haiku into two parts. There are no cutting words in English, so you have to rely on the natural rhythm of the poem instead. In the vast majority of cases, either the first and second lines go together and then the third, or the first line is separate, and the second and third lines go together. Some people will put a dash, to signal that this is where they want the break to be. Some people will put a colon or a comma. However, more often than not when you read your haiku out loud you will be able to hear a break, that there is a natural sense that two lines go together – they make a pair – and one line is separate from the pair. You should be able to sense that the pattern is either da da DA or DA da da. In the first case it is da da break or “cut” DA and in the second it is DA “cut” da da. It should never just be da da da or DA DA DA. So look at the haiku that you wrote, read it out loud and tell me if it is number one (the first and second lines make a pair, the da da DA pattern) or number 2 (the second and third lines make a pair, the DA da da pattern). Read your haiku out loud softly. Don't be shy, you can't do it in your head, you have to actually hear it. Read it out loud and then I want you to just tell me – I think it's number one or I think it's number two?

[Participants are given time to read their haiku out loud.]

Female Speaker:

My poem is number one.

PD:

Okay, her poem is number one. Somebody else?

Female Speaker:

Mine is number two.

PD:

Yours is number two, okay. The point is that “cutting” is something that often just naturally occurs in haiku. More often than not, a haiku just seems to naturally divide itself, so cutting is not something that you need to worry too much about. Just be aware of it because cutting creates a kind of tension between the two parts which is both pleasing and interesting. If we go back to the haiku you wrote using the time-sense-action pattern, you will find that the time-sense part often goes together, and the action, or the “active” or “noisy” part of the haiku is the separate part. In short, the pattern is our number one, da da DA.

All right, so far we’ve got short-long-short, nine to 12 words, season words, and cutting.

I want to do one more thing, one more technique that you can use to write some interesting haiku. The last thing we’re going to do today, so that you can experience writing as many haiku as possible, is to use opposites.

[Handout #4: Opposites. The following was handed out to the participants.]

Opposites

using contrast in juxtaposed* images

hot / cold

loud / quiet

large / small

up / down

near / far

hard / soft

light / dark

seen / unseen

one / many

sweet / bitter

empty / full

coming / going

smooth / rough

motion / stillness

sound / silence

open / closed

after the storm
a boy wiping the sky
from the tables

Darko Plazanin, Samobor Yugoslavia

the sound of the foghorn
doubles and redoubles
the stillness of dawn

PD

up
from behind the leaf
the moon

PD

* juxtapose: to place close together or side by side, especially for comparison or contrast.

PD:

So we've got several pairs of opposites: hot / cold, loud / quiet, and so on. And then there are three examples. What I want you to do is to pick one pair of opposites and to write some haiku using that pair. For example, the first example says "after the storm," okay, after the storm someplace, "a boy wiping the sky from the table." Okay this is probably at an outdoor café, there's been a storm and the table tops are all covered with water. And then the boy comes along, it's time to open the café, the rain has stopped, and he takes a cloth and he wipes a table off and the sky disappears. Which pair of opposites is it? In / out, up / down, hot / cold. What is the juxtaposition here? "After the storm / a boy wiping the sky / from the tables." Sky is up, table is down. Okay sky is usually up. But in this case it's just the opposite. The sky is down, and suddenly it disappears. It's an up-down pair of opposites, but it is just the reverse of the usual up-down sky-earth relationship. You've just had the rug pulled out from underneath you. And that is what makes this haiku so interesting. Your world has suddenly been turned upside down. You experience "a heightened sense of awareness" because you've been made to see the world in a different way. It's like walking up an escalator that has broken down and is no longer moving.

The second one is "up / from behind the leaf / the moon." Okay here's the leaf, here's the

moon. “Up / from behind the leaf / the moon,” what opposite is it? Anybody guess? Moon, big or small? Big. Leaf big or small? Okay, but in this case here’s the leaf and here’s the moon. Which one is small? The moon is small because this person is looking at the leaf, this is an example of big-small. Again with an interesting twist.

The last example, the sound of – do you know what a foghorn is? This is when the fog is on the ocean and the foghorn makes a sound to help warn ships of any danger, like rocks. “The sound of the foghorn / doubles and redoubles / the stillness of dawn.” The sound of the foghorn intensifies the quiet. It makes you realize that there is really no other sound at all. Every other sound has been muffled by the fog. And the pair of opposites is … ?

Female Speaker:

Loud and quiet.

PD:

Yes, loud and quiet. In this case, the sound of the foghorn makes the quite of the dawn seem even quieter. Okay those were the examples, go ahead and start writing – pick a pair of opposites and write two haiku on that pair, Okay. 10 minutes.

[After ten minutes, individuals come forward and write their haiku on the board,
and as a group we critique them and offer suggestions for improvement.]

Male Speaker:

Professor.

PD:

Yes.

Male Speaker:

I have a question.

PD:

Sure.

Male Speaker:

What is the difference between haiku and senryu?

PD:

This is a rather difficult question. The two are actually on a continuum with haiku at one end and senryu at the other. Let me try and clarify by giving you an example. Think of a landscape painting. It can be a Chinese or Japanese or Western landscape painting. If you see a person in a landscape painting, how big is that person. Big or small? The answer is small. In a landscape painting, whether it's a Western one or an Eastern one, here is the waterfall, here is something and here's the person, right. Here is the mountain and the river and here there's a little person down here. That's a kind of haiku feeling. The center of attention is the natural landscape not the person, and if there are any people they are usually very small, sometimes you can hardly see them.

In the case of senryu, you have to think that it's like a portrait. Here is the picture of the person, here is the face and the eyes. There may be some scenery in the painting but the person is at the center. Everything else is just background. If your poem is centered on people, then it's a senryu. If I write, for example, "monks walking down the street" or "holiday shoppers" It's people centered. But if I write "snow softly covers the street" the focus is nature not people. Haiku offer us a chance to get away from our normally people-centered world and back to nature. I don't mean that one is necessarily better than the other. It's just that we should make time for both, and in our day-to-day life we just don't have much time for nature.

Okay, time is almost up so let's just review a little bit. How many lines?

Male Speaker:

Three.

PD:

Three, Okay good. And they are long-long-short, short-short-long ... ?

Male Speaker:

Short-long-short.

PD:

Short-long-short. Okay, good. Nine to 12 words. I'd like to skip counting syllable. It's just too

much trouble and if you write nine to 12 words it'll be okay anyway. Season words. You can go to the Internet and type in "winter vocabulary" and you'll get hundreds, or "Christmas" and you'll get all kinds of vocabulary lists. Cutting. It's best to read your haiku out loud in order to experience this. But cutting can make the difference between a so-so and a good haiku. Five senses, make sure you use all your senses, but try to use only one sense per haiku. If you use more than one sense in a single haiku you usually end up with sensory overload. It's just too much of a good thing. Keep it short and simple. Cut all unnecessary words. So you have to go back and think is this word important, if it's not, throw it out. And last, be brief, fresh, clear, and centered on the here and now. Basho is supposed to have said that "Haiku is simply what is happening in this place at this moment."

Lastly, I would like to point out that we are all getting older and I'm sure that we would all agree that we have to keep our brains young and active. Well, writing haiku is one way to do it. Pick one season word and write ten haiku. Look at one nature picture and write 20 haiku about it. This is mental training – your mind really has to move in order to do this.

In closing, I'd like to say thank you for coming. I hope you've enjoyed our time together.

References

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