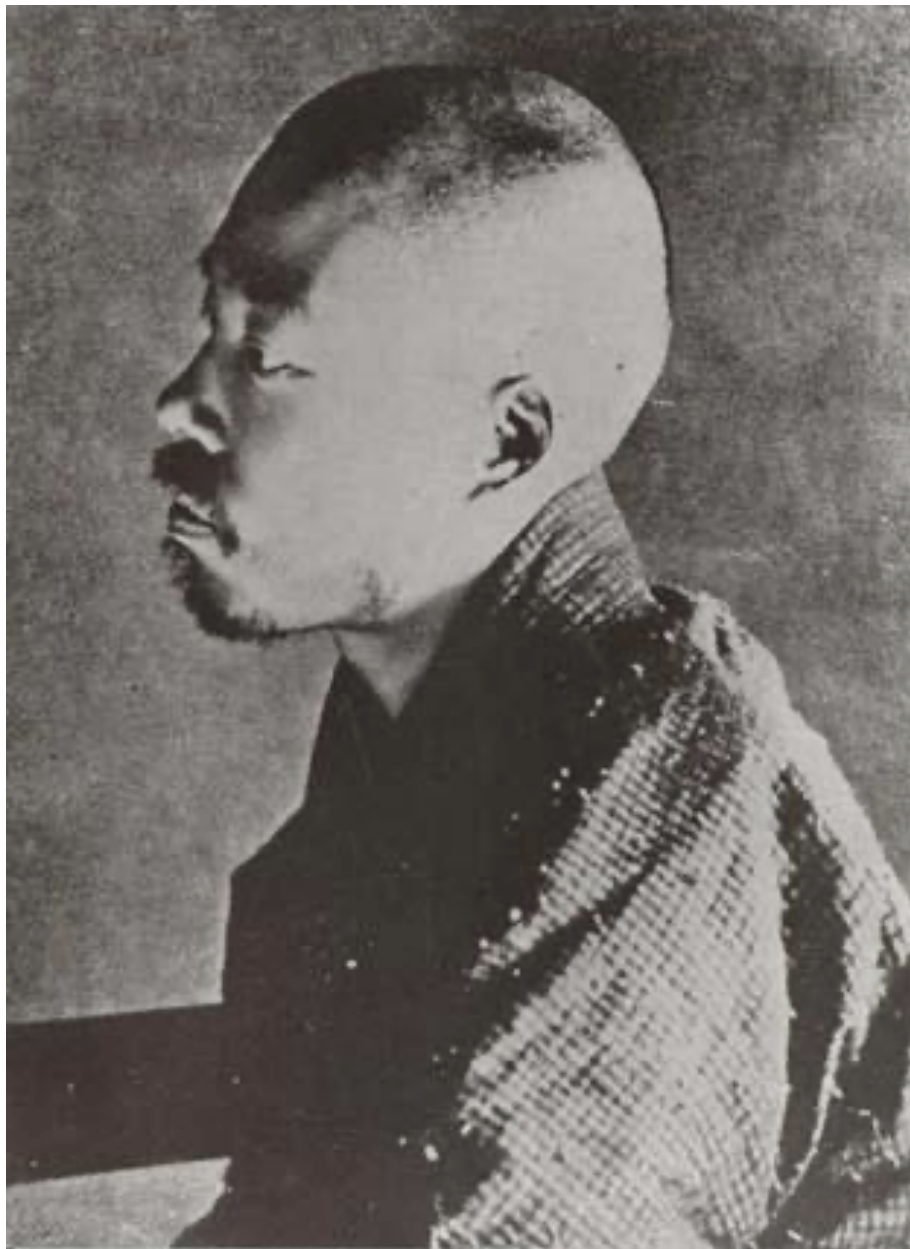


Paul Conneally

# Beyond 5/7/5



Masaoka Shiki (1867 - 1902)

# What is a haiku?

old pond ...  
a frog leaps in  
water's sound

Furuike ya  
kawazu tobikomu  
mizu no oto

Matsuo Basho (1644 –1694)

This is one of the best known poems in the Japanese language.

It's a haiku written by Matsuo Basho, probably the most famous writer of haiku ever.

A haiku poet is called a haijin in Japanese.

A haijin that reaches the highest level and has many students or disciples is called a "Haiku Master".

Basho was the first great "Haiku Master".

Other Haiku Masters include:

Yosa Buson (1716-84)

Kobayashi Issa (1762 - 1826)

Masaoka Shiki (1867 - 1902)

Takahama Kyoshi (1874 - 1959)

Let's jump right in, just like Basho's frog, and read some more haiku aloud and see if we can begin to work out and recognise what haiku are and then write some of our own!

## A Selection of haiku to read aloud (each one twice!)

<p>1.</p> <p>old pond ... a frog leaps in water's sound</p> <p>Matsuo Basho</p>	<p>2.</p> <p>a thief vanishes over the rooftops night chill!</p> <p>Yosa Buson</p>	<p>3.</p> <p>a yellow paper zig-zags to the floor bare trees</p> <p>William J Higginson</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>autumn clear-- the smoke of something goes into the sky</p> <p>Masaoka Shiki</p>	<p>5.</p> <p>the coolness ... the half-moon shifts puddles</p> <p>Kobayashi Issa</p>	<p>6.</p> <p>in the wet sand the toddlers bake little tarts till the sea eats them</p> <p>Gary Warner</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>home from hospital - spinning the bicycle wheel just for its sound</p> <p>Elizabeth St. Jacques</p>	<p>8.</p> <p>pedestrian bridge-- a man repairing shoes under the stairs</p> <p>Patrick Gallagher (GOP)</p>	<p>9.</p> <p>late for tea my daughter stares down a rabbit-hole</p> <p>Paul Conneally</p>

# The Haiku Seasons

1. church bells the weight of fresh snow on bare branches  Season:	2. a bright breeze dandelions just higher than the grass  Season:	3. sand in my slippers all these little white daisies closed-up for the night  Season:
4. nearly Mother's Day my best daffodils bent low in the constant rain  Season:	5. winter wonderland even the burnt out car looks beautiful  Season:	6. sweeping leaves too many starlings to count up  Season:
7. in the weeds one hundred and one striped caterpillars  Season:	8. dahlias still blooming in November their whiteness  Season:	9. picnic in the shade two large koi passing under a lily  Season:
10. evening shadows between standing stones and cows the hum of horse flies  Season:	11. piercing wind the chestnut seller's fingerless gloves  Season:	12. strange calligraphy in the barbed wire fence bindweed  Season:
13. Such freshness! sycamore seeds spinning in a puddle  Season:	14. longer days large white geese amongst pregnant sheep  Season:	15. frozen stars poking an empty wasps' nest with a stick  Season:

1. Haiku traditionally contain a word or phrase that makes one think of a particular season. Such words and phrases are called Kigo. Listen as your haiku sensei reads out the above haiku and write down under each poem what season you think the poem is set in.
2. How long are they? In Japanese haiku follow a strict syllable count of 5/7/5. Do these haiku follow any such syllable count?
3. Draw a star in the corner of the box that contains a haiku that you like. Think about why you like it and be ready to read it out (twice!) and say why you like it - what it made you think of etc.
4. Many haiku contain two parts - a "fragment" and a "phrase". The fragment makes one line (first or third) and the phrase is split over two lines. Underline the fragment in each haiku.

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# Ginko

## Let's go for a Walk!

Something that a short ginko (a haiku walk) can address is the "spirit of haiku" and the importance that haiku might have in allowing us time for active reflection on real experiences, events and objects from life.

Here is a quote from Basho:

***"Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine, or to the bamboo if you want to learn about the bamboo. And in doing so, you must leave your thoughts behind. Otherwise you impose yourself on the object and do not learn. Your poetry issues of its own accord when you and the object have become one - when you have plunged deep enough into the object to see something like a hidden glimmering in there"***

So seeing things as they really are and recording that - not writing down what we "think" about the objects around us. Not making judgments but showing others, through our haiku, what we have experienced and through this the reader might also even begin to feel some of what we did when we met that particular scene, lived that particular moment. We are going to walk in the Sculpture Park and on our walk record images, actions and feelings as phrases and fragments, these will become the basis for haiku to be written as we walk and when we return to base. Particularly look for images that will indicate the season that we are walking in, phrases that bring the season to mind juxtaposed with images and sensations actually observed can be used too, so for instance if it's May Day - you could say just that and root the haiku directly in time:

*May Day  
finding more weeds than flowers  
in the back border*

*Paul Conneally*

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# Writing a Haiku Outside

Find a space on your own and still yourself. Now use all your senses. Write 3 short 'phrases' – almost sentences – just saying what you can see, hear, feel, - exactly as it is. e.g. "a plastic bag is blowing down the road", 'seagulls fight over a few crisps'

Now still yourself again and quickly write down some 'fragments' – very short lines of no more than 4 words e.g. 'cold wind', 'someone is laughing', 'chewing gum'

Now use the phrases and fragments to make one haiku - the phrase split over two lines – the fragment being line 1 or line 3.

Phrase 1:

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Phrase 2:

---

Phrase 3:

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Fragments:

1 .	4 .
2 .	5 .
3 .	6 .

My Haiku:

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---

---

By:

# Haiku Outside

Phrase 1:

---

Phrase 2:

---

Phrase 3:

---

Fragments:

1 .	4 .
2 .	5 .
3 .	6 .

My Haiku:

---

---

---

By:

# Haibun (haiku prose)

The use of haiku as a trigger or tool towards extended writing is also worth exploring. Haibun are short prose pieces that are usually finished with a haiku.

Many of Basho's haiku come from his haibun - the most famous collection of Basho's haibun is "Narrow Roads to the Interior" which is a record of one of his many travels around Japan on foot, travelling with a simple satchel, much like a tramp!

Here is an example of a haibun by an 8 year old after going on a ginko with me along a stream that passes between two housing estates in Loughborough:

## Almost Sunset

*Walking along a raised bit of grass. It is very quiet. Just a minute what's this? A stick. Brendan and I pull it in half. I get the smaller half. A green stick with white through the middle. Look! You can put your finger inside it - yuck! It's kind of wet. Where are we now? Big fields and lakes. Now by a brooky river thing. Let's go down.*

*almost sunset  
red leaves and voices  
travel downstream*

*Anna (8)*

The piece comes out of her walk - the haiku and the prose link to produce the haibun. Note that the prose is in the present tense - like haiku are. We might write what we did in the past tense initially and then revise it - changing it in to the present tense - then stripping out anything not needed - concentrating on images. Experiment with shortened syntax, maybe not completing sentences - leaving them as fragments.

The haiku in haibun should link to the prose but not simply repeat what's been said already. They take the reader on somewhere else – encourage them to dream what was and might yet be.



Being in the moment - bringing the reader in there with you - showing them what it was like rather than simply telling them what happened - powerful images leading to strong emotional responses. All of these are features of good haiku and good haibun prose.

Somewhere you've been or someone you've met and what went on are good subjects for haibun - anything you've experienced really.

Paul Conneally