

Yosa Buson

Here are three examples of haiku poems from Yosa Buson (1716-1784), a haiku master poet and painter:

A summer river being crossed
how pleasing
with sandals in my hands!

Light of the moon
Moves west, flowers' shadows
Creep eastward.

In the moonlight,
The color and scent of the wisteria
Seems far away.

Kobayashi Issa

Here are three examples of haiku from Kobayashi Issa (1763-1828), a renowned haiku poet:

O snail
Climb Mount Fuji,
But slowly, slowly!

Trusting the Buddha, good and bad,
I bid farewell
To the departing year.

Everything I touch
with tenderness, alas,
pricks like a bramble.

Masaoka Shiki

Here are seven examples of haiku poems from Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902), credited with reviving the haiku and developing its modern format:

I want to sleep
Swat the flies
Softly, please.

After killing
a spider, how lonely I feel
in the cold of night!

For love and for hate
I swat a fly and offer it
to an ant.

A mountain village
under the piled-up snow
the sound of water.

Night; and once again,
the while I wait for you, cold wind
turns into rain.

The summer river:
although there is a bridge, my horse
goes through the water.

A lightning flash:
between the forest trees
I have seen water.

Natsume Soseki

[Natsume Soseki](#) (1867-1916) was a widely respected novelist who also had many fairy tales and haiku published. Here are three examples of his haikus:

The lamp once out
Cool stars enter
The window frame.

Plum flower temple:
Voices rise
From the foothills

The crow has flown away:
swaying in the evening sun,
a leafless tree.

Modern Haiku

Many modern western poets do not subscribe to the 5-7-5 pattern. The [Academy of American Poets](#) recognizes this evolution, but maintains that several core principles remain woven into the tapestry of modern haiku. That is, a haiku still focuses on one brief moment in time, employs provocative, colorful imagery, and provides a sudden moment of illumination.

Here are seven examples of 20th-century haiku poems:

From across the lake,
Past the black winter trees,
Faint sounds of a flute.
- Richard Wright

Lily:
out of the water
out of itself
- Nick Virgilio

ground squirrel
balancing its tomato
on the garden fence
- Don Eulert

Nightfall,
Too dark to read the page
Too cold.
- Jack Kerouac

Just friends:
he watches my gauze dress
blowing on the line.
- Alexis Rotella

A little boy sings
on a terrace, eyes aglow.
Ridge spills upward.
- Robert Yehling

meteor shower
a gentle wave
wets our sandals
- Michael Dylan Welch