

Haiku, (HI-coo):

- Haiku is a poetic form and a type of poetry from the Japanese culture. Haiku combines form, content, and language in a meaningful, yet compact form. Haiku poets, which you will soon be, write about everyday things. Many themes include nature, feelings, or experiences. Usually they use simple words and grammar. The most common form for Haiku is three short lines. The first line usually contains five (5) syllables, the second line seven (7) syllables, and the third line contains five (5) syllables. Haiku doesn't rhyme. A Haiku must "paint" a mental image in the reader's mind. This is the challenge of Haiku - to put the poem's meaning and imagery in the reader's mind in ONLY 17 syllables over just three (3) lines of poetry! Check out some Haiku at Haiku Salon (see Lesson 2 for the link).
- HAIKU EXAMPLES

A Rainbow, by Donna Brock

Curving up, then down

Meeting blue sky and green earth

Melding sun and rain.

Acrostic:

The word acrostic is formed from the Greek word **acros** (outermost) and **stichos** (line of poetry). You can even find acrostic in the Bible in a book called the Psalms. The acrostic is a poem where the first letter of each line form a word when you read them looking downward. A very complicated acrostic would have the last letter of each line forming a separate word as you read downward, also.

Limericks:

A limerick is a five-line poem written with one couplet and one triplet. If a couplet is a two-line rhymed poem, then a triplet would be a three-line rhymed poem. The rhyme pattern is a a b b a with lines 1, 2 and 5 containing 3 beats and rhyming, and lines 3 and 4 having two beats and rhyming. Some people say that the limerick was invented by soldiers returning from France to the Irish town of Limerick in the 1700's.

Limericks are meant to be funny. They often contain hyperbole, onomatopoeia, idioms, puns, and other figurative devices. The last line of a good limerick contains the PUNCH LINE or "heart of the joke." As you work with limericks, remember to have pun, I mean FUN! Say the following limericks out loud and clap to the rhythm.

A flea and a fly in a flue

Were caught, so what could they do?

Said the fly, "Let us flee."

"Let us fly," said the flea.

So they flew through a flaw in the flue.

-Anonymous

COUPLET (CUP- let):

You know a couple means two. So a couplet is a pair of lines of poetry that are usually rhymed. We think the idea of the couplet came from the French and English. There are lots of ways to write different types of couplets. Couplets can also be used to "build" other poems, but we'll get to that later!

We are going to use a couplet for a "play on words," or a word game. This type of couplet is called a "terse verse." Here's the way you play,

"If turkeys gobble,

Do Pilgrims squabble?"

"If cars go zoom,

exhaust smoke will plume!"

"If the phone rings,

hope then still clings."

QUATRAIN (KWOT-rain):

HEY!! Does anybody have a quarter? What's a quarter have to do with this type of poetry? Well, a quarter is 1/4 of a dollar. The word quatrain comes from Latin and French words meaning "four." See the connection? The quatrain is a poem or stanza of four lines. It is a very popular form of poetry. Famous poets like William Blake and T. S. Eliot used quatrains. Read these examples:

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright

In the forests of the night,

What immortal hand or eye

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

-From William Blake's "The Tyger"

The Mountain

Donna Brock

The mountain frames the sky (a)

As a shadow of an eagle flies by. (a)

With clouds hanging at its edge (b)

A climber proves his courage on its rocky ledge. (b)

Did you notice that a quatrain is formed by two rhyming couplets? Easy! This pattern is called a a b b. The first line rhymes with the second (sky and by) and the third line rhymes with the fourth line (edge and ledge). Other quatrain patterns are a b a b,

a b b a, and a b c b.

FREE VERSE:

Free verse is just what it says it is - poetry that is written without proper rules about form, rhyme, rhythm, meter, etc. The greatest American writer of free verse is probably Walt

Whitman. His great collection of free verse was titled Leaves of Grass and it was published in 1855.

In free verse the writer makes his/her own rules. The writer decides how the poem should look, feel, and sound. Henry David Thoreau, a great philosopher, explained it this way, ". . . perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." It may take you a while to "hear your own drummer," but free verse can be a great way to "get things off your chest" and express what you really feel.

Here are some examples:

Winter Poem

Nikki Giovanni

once a snowflake fell
on my brow and i loved
it so much and i kissed
it and it was happy and called its cousins
and brothers and a web
of snow engulfed me then
i reached to love them all
and i squeezed them and they became
a spring rain and i stood perfectly
still and was a flower