

WHAT ARE HAIKU POEMS?

Traditional haiku poetry originated in Japan and involves some basic general rules such as a three line structure of 17 syllables or less in three line form

5 syllables -7 syllables -5 syllables

Good haiku poems are short, easily memorised, and yet not superficial. They can be appreciated in a brief moment and yet recalled with pleasure and fresh insight at a later date. Just as favourite photographs may be carefully preserved, and looked at over and over again, to revive fond memories, so with haiku. They have even been called 'flash bulb poems'.

Haiku are in the present tense and simple. They often contain a 'seasonal word', such as sledging, swimming or sweeping leaves and avoid the use of alliteration and simile are written in the.

Haiku are usually the result of direct observation, and describe a present reality that has generally been thought unremarkable until attention is drawn to it.

The native North Americans understood Haiku thinking:

"It's like looking back at that and saying, Well, that was simple, why in the world didn't I know that!

And you think, "Well, I knew that I just didn't know that I knew that."

Here are a few examples: from my Booklet series

HAIKU FROM 55 DEGREES NORTH

SPRING

April 5a.m.
garbage collectors
scatter birdsong

peeking out window
of ruined castle
pink snow cloud

I walk right past
my front door
lost in thankful dreams

white mountain still there
waiting to be conquered -
in my in-tray

queuing up
to get to the beach
White-capped waves

SUMMER

loose running wave
catches the oystercatcher
unawares

her first summer
of words
the sun feels 'scratchy'

dispute settled
our son arrives in them -
my missing socks

service over
in crematorium archway
swallows nest

summer afternoon
lone blue bottle flies circuits
around my bed

meal over
so thin, so plentiful
herring bones

AUTUMN

pruned tree
one leaf left
for autumn

after the autumn gale
the remains of the waves
shiver on the beach

telephone wires
abacus of swallows
counting down

autumn
at last leaf touches
its shadow

with difficulty
I hear of your mother's death
on the airport phone

night fishing
after the funeral
nothing but cold

WINTER

winter noon
white shadows
straddle the lawn

all night long
under the swing
pocket money

seamless journey
from the cradle
to the cross

even deep snow
only covers imperfections
till next spring

snowflakes on the page
become
my winter poem