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A Haiku (originally called hokku) is an eminent form of Japanese poetry, first appearing in Japanese literature during the Edo period (1603-1868). Haikus derived from another form of Japanese poetry that was written syllabically called renku, an oral poem much longer than haiku usually consisting of one hundred stanzas. Haiku is a short form of poetry that must contain three lines consisting of seventeen syllables, following a 5/7/5 count. Because of haiku short length they are usually read in a single breath. Haiku are descriptive and traditionally written about nature. An article from creative-writing-now.com describes haiku as a poem that “uses just a few words to capture a moment and create a picture in the reader's mind. It is like a tiny window into a scene much larger than itself”(1).

There are a handful of haiku poets that are essential in the composition of early haiku, Matsuo Basho, Yosa Buson, Kobayashi Issa, Masaoka Shiki. Matsuo Basho being the most prominent and famous haiku poet. Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) born near Ueno, Iga Province was believed to be the son of a low-ranking samurai, which guaranteed him a military career. However, during his teenage years Matsuo Basho attended to Todo Yoshitada, who admired poetry. Basho loved poetry as well, when Todo Yoshitada learned of Bashos love for poetry he shared his literally interests and knowledge of renku with him. Ultimately Basho was taught how to write poetry by a distinguished Kyoto poet named Kigin.

Basho began writing poetry and obtained recognition by the literary groups in Japan. Despite the fact that his poetry was largely praised by the litterateurs of Japan, Basho was not content. Basho was also known for his traveling which is said to be what influenced his writings. According to a Biography of Basho’s life written by thefamouspeople.com, “he shunned the social life and wandered throughout the country looking for inspiration for his writing” (1). In 1665 Basho became a published poet and in the following years published many haiku. He mostly enjoyed composing renku but nevertheless he was deemed the master of haiku writing and greatly impacted the haiku genre. Present day Basho is internationally acclaimed and in Japan his poems have been printed on landmarks and monuments.

Haiku is a form of poetry that can impact a writer as well as its readers in many ways. Haiku are typically written about nature or seasons but can also be written on a multitude of topics. Being such a short 17 syllable poem, writers must fit what they’re trying to convey in 3 short lines leaving readers with room to interpret the message of the poem. Although very simple, haiku tend to be evocative poems not only for the reader but for the poet themselves. The HuffPost published an article written by Tyler Knott Gregson entitled “Writing a Haiku Every Day Saved My Life”. In the article Gregson explains how writing haikus impacted his life. He writes,

“When I began this, I wanted to explore what I felt was the most natural force on the planet,

love. I wanted to use haiku, and the daily creation of them, as a way to pay closer

attention to what I believe to be the most dominant and vital element we have.

Doing this for a month was a challenge, to come up with something new each day.

Doing it for half a year was even more difficult… doing it for over six years is

something I could have never imagined, and the effect its had on me is the biggest

surprise of all. In short, it changed my life, and it changed absolutely everything about

the way I see the world” (Gregson, 1)

The article “Writing a Haiku Every Day Saved My Life” demonstrates just how meaningful and therapeutic haiku are.

ScoopWhoop.com defines Haiku as poems that “evoke an imagery of the nature, thus, leaving you doubly spellbound-visually and verbally. And add to it the beauty of life love and loss”(1). The topic of love can be found throughout the genre and to me are the most captivating haiku. Some examples of love haiku are:

*In the small dark hours A love so sincere   
 love explains itself gently no loss just lustful wishes   
 through outstretched fingers... only you and I   
 ~ Sue Morgan ~ Michele Langlo*

*I whispered, you heard Seduction of eyes,  
 I prayed you would find me soon beware the touch of beauty,  
 Then my heart was yours... thorns from deep within*  *~ Michele Langlo ~ Roger W Hancock*

*Dawn gifts a soft touch Letting love’s embrace   
 An invitation to love smother the pain, gone forever  
 Sweetest surrender only love remains* *~ Mia Rose ~ June O’reilly*

The main message of all these haiku example is love, but they are expressed differently. All of the haiku follow the standard 3-line, 17-syllable, 5,7,5 count. The examples are descriptive, some use metaphors to convey their message while others set a point in time. The way the poets capture the essence of love they’re trying to convey is similar mostly because of the constraints haiku put on the writer. In the haiku written by June O’reilly she speaks on letting love in. She describes love as being a force that can rid one of pain and the importance of embracing it. I can relate to this haiku the most because I believe that love is the only thing that can conquer hardships in one’s life. O’reilly’s haiku on love also demonstrates how love is freeing once you’re willing to let it in. I believe O’reilly’s haiku as well as other love haiku are important to society because of their relatability and their therapeutic nature.

Hands clammy and cold You see right through me

Shivers running down our spins With no fear of what’s to come

First glimmer of love Unconditional

-Julliette Gonzalez -Julliette Gonzalez

Eyes full of stories A breath of fresh air

Memories of seasons passed Lips that sing the sweetest song

It’s always been us Caress me with love

-Julliette Gonzalez - Julliette Gonzalez

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