
Haiku Expo

Arizona Inspired Japanese Poetry



Arizona Matsuri: A Festival of Japan

Selection of 2024 Haiku

Overview

Haiku Expo



In the spirit of raising awareness of the arts and culture of Japan to the people of Arizona, we challenged residents of Arizona to write their own Arizona-inspired haiku poem for the 40th annual Arizona Matsuri festival held on February 24th and 25th, 2023.

Haiku is an ancient unrhymed Japanese verse form. Generally written in three short lines containing a total of 10 to 17 syllables to convey a vivid message, Haiku typically contain a reference to nature.

Haiku uses simple concrete images of things we can see, smell, taste, touch, or feel. The best haiku poems reveal the essence of a thing so clearly that the reader can experience the momentary scene or insight that inspired the author.

One of the greatest Haiku poets was the Samurai, Basho (1644-94). Basho's father was also a Samurai from the Iga province. To become a Samurai, Basho served a local lord who was fond of writing. Basho learned the style of writing Haiku and wrote under the name Sobo.

During those years, Basho traveled throughout Japan writing and further developing the Haiku style.

Haiku poems contain a sentence fragment (one line) and a phrase (two lines that complete a thought). The fragment can be either the first line or the third line. Often, haiku are written in past tense and do not make use of capitalization, punctuation, or titles.

Each traditional Haiku should contain a reference to a season, which indicates what season of the year the Haiku is set. For example, blossoms would indicate spring, snow would give the idea of winter and mosquitos would imply summertime. The seasonal word is not always that obvious, you might need to consider the theme of the poem to find it.

English-language haiku have generally followed the form of five syllables used in the first line, followed by seven syllables for the middle line and five syllables for the third. However, English- language haiku no longer adhere to this syllable count, and are therefore as brief as the poem needs to be while keeping to the fragment-phrase structure. In English language haiku, the middle line is typically longer than the first or third lines.

The Arizona Matsuri and its Haiku Expo committee initiated this event in late 2014 by inviting participants from the general public, statewide universities, community colleges, high schools, culture and language clubs and public libraries. The theme for this event was for participants to submit up to three of their own original Arizona inspired haiku. This booklet is the collection of selected haiku poems which we feel deserve Honorable mention and Outstanding recognition which we would like to share with the general public. Thank you to all participants, organizations and individuals who helped support this event. We hope you enjoy this wonderful collection.

2024 Outstanding and Honorable Mention

Grades K-3 Haiku



Full of lush green grass
The roots of the tree are tough,
The tall trees gives shade

Rex M., Grade 3
Outstanding Haiku

roots hidden in grass
the tree's huge and squiggly
reaching to the sky

Adam B., 3rd Grade
Outstanding Haiku

Wood weaves together,
small round green leaves form clusters.
Thick green goo inside

Leo A., 3rd Grade
Outstanding Haiku

they're always chirping
they're fast blue streaks in the sky
narrow bands on head

Che A., 3rd Grade
Outstanding Haiku

2024 Outstanding and Honorable Mention

Grades 4-6 Haiku



miniature buddy
with his swift rigid scales
crawling across sand

Ella N., 4th Grade
Outstanding Haiku

roadrunners dart west
saguaro cacti remain
cereus bloom soon

Brielle F., 6th Grade
Outstanding Haiku

the scorching wind blew
on the baking Saguaro
yet it still stood proud

Ty T., 6th Grade
Outstanding Haiku

the sun takes a nap
the sky is painted yellow
tumbleweed drifts by

Achilles K., 6th Grade
Outstanding Haiku

Gila woodpecker
lands on a Saguaro
youngsters whine for mom

Maddie S., 6th Grade
Outstanding Haiku

the coyote howls
the rain water fills the pond
from the monsoon rain

Achilles K., 6th Grade
Honorable Mention

Mt. Lemmon day trip
up to the winter snow cap
cacti change to pine

Maddie S., 6th Grade
Honorable Mention

the small cactus wren
sits on the prickly cholla
the horizon red

Diego D., 6th Grade
Honorable Mention

2024 Outstanding and Honorable Mention

Grades 7-8 Haiku



tumbleweed running
leaving not a trace behind
cactus standing by

*Frida G., 8th Grade
Outstanding Haiku*

sunrise form the east
cactus flowers start to bloom
newborn snake eggs hatch

Mikaela L., 8th Grade
Outstanding Haiku

above all the fears
where views reign amongst the ground
river with no sound

Jaziel B., 7th Grade
Outstanding Haiku

dry winds whisper tales
underneath a starry dome
nature's canvas glows

Harold W., 7th Grade
Outstanding Haiku

walking the desert
scared me because of the snakes
so I walked faster

*Yailin S. V., 8th Grade
Honorable Mention*

months between eating
carnivore gila monsters
distinctive patterns

*Abigail T., 7th Grade
Honorable Mention*



2024 Outstanding and Honorable Mention

High School Haiku



Feet skitter on ground
Then, a slither follows it
Who will win this race?

*Jared B., High School
Outstanding Haiku*

Bright sun blazes down
Take cover, wee woodpecker!
Cacti, your savior!

*Gabrielle R., High School
Outstanding Haiku*

A scorpion strikes
The great battle begins with
a coyote yelp.

*Gabrielle R., High School
Outstanding Haiku*

Warm champurrado,
cooking on the stove and boiling
in cold Arizona.

*Marlen P., High School
Outstanding Haiku*

A hummingbird stops
Its emerald feathers shine
Admired by flowers

*Catalina C. High School
Outstanding Haiku*

One day it is hot
The next is cold; I await
For a day just right

Chaithra Y., 9th Grade
Honorable Mention

Sand flew everywhere
Cacti covered in the dust
Tumbleweeds rolling

Teryn B. 10th Grade
Honorable Mention

Climbing in summer
Plummeting down from the tree
I am no ringtail

Alaya A. 9th Grade
Honorable Mention

When turning on the
A/C is not enough to
stop the inferno.

Bibian U. 9th Grade
Honorable Mention

2024 Outstanding and Honorable Mention

Adult Haiku



barren cactus trunk
stiff skeletal spines exposed
still pointing upward

Scott Shields, Mesa
Outstanding Haiku

in star-lit darkness
we hear them from the mountains
the drums of heaven

Carl Welsh, Chandler
Outstanding Haiku

dry streambeds giggle
as winter water flows and
tickles them awake

Debra VanDeventer, Oro Valley
Outstanding Haiku

Rarest desert sight
saguaro laden with snow
strange garb for cactus

Rhonda Brown, Mesa
Outstanding Haiku

in the bright of day
the moon gathers up her light
for the desert night

Carl Welsh, Chandler
Outstanding Haiku

Light skips on mountain
holding red day's end behind
her skirt 'til morning

Roberta Gale, Tucson
Outstanding Haiku

The world in her cart
Teetering down East Broadway
Towards the dumpster

Michael Marcanti, Mesa
Honorable Mention

broken pottery
exposed in the arroyo
memories of feasts

Michele Worthington, Tucson
Honorable Mention

corn planted deep
listens through brown earth
whispers of rain

Michele Worthington, Tucson
Honorable Mention

Saguaro in bloom,
the kiss of the woodpecker
has left you singing.

Jacqueline Balderrama, Tempe
Honorable Mention

last sounds of summer
the lone cicada deafens
approaching autumn

John Fedyna, Prescott Valley
Honorable Mention

Green sprout hides in sand
its tiny spines reach for sun.
One day, Saguaro.

Roberta Gale, Tucson
Honorable Mention

mountain magician
lifts his cloudy handkerchief--
snow-covered summit

Karen Admussen, Tucson
Honorable Mention

a non-soon season
branches snapped; dry dust escapes
profound thirst abounds

Rebecca Selman, Surprise/Waddell
Honorable Mention

2024 Outstanding and Honorable Mention

Japanese Language

Haiku



黒いくも
山にかくれて
寝ましたか

Black cloud
Hides in the mountains
Was it sleeping?

Christina N., Scottsdale
Outstanding Haiku

雪ぼうし
冬のさぼてん
めずらしい

Snow cap
Winter cactus
Curious

Hana M., Tucson
Outstanding Haiku

冬のかぜ
何を持って来る
花のふく

Winter wind
What does it bring?
Blowing flowers

Kira S., Phoenix
Outstanding Haiku

コヨーテの目
ずるくてきびん
睨んでる

Coyote's eye
Sneaky and clever
Glares intently

*Andie N., Scottsdale
Outstanding Haiku*

砂の蛇
尻尾ガタガタ
危なそう

Sand serpent
Tail rattles
Danger

*Zoe S., Scottsdale
Outstanding Haiku*

外は雨
サボテン泳ぎ
せが高い

Outside rain
Cactus swims
Tall

*Marek M., Scottsdale
Honorable Mention*

十二月
花火をあげる
一月だ

December
Launch fireworks
January

*Emi M., Tucson
Honorable Mention*