

Haiku Alive

Senses Awaken in
Portland Japanese Garden



Photos and poems by students in the Haiku Alive program, Joan Kvitka, and Kristin Faurest.

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An educational outreach program of Portland Japanese Garden's
International Japanese Garden Training Center

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Portland Japanese Garden's Haiku Alive program has been made possible with support from the following generous donors: Bank of America, F.A.O. Schwarz Family Foundation, The Jackson Foundation, Juan Young Charitable Trust, PGE Foundation, The Robert D. & Marcia H. Randall Charitable Trust, Storms Family Foundation, and scores of individual donors.

old pond
a frog leaps in
sound of water

— *Basho (1644-1694), the Japanese haiku master
who continues to inspire all who seek the haiku moment*





A note to teachers and parents

*A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness...
above all, it teaches entire trust.*

— Gertrude Jekyll, garden designer

Why haiku?

Haiku is a universal art form. From ancient times to the present, living in harmony with nature in Japan has centered on the changes of the seasons as a circle of life. Centuries ago, the Japanese began to capture the beauty and power of nature in poetry that eventually evolved into the three-line poems called haiku. Haiku is a contemplative, unrhymed poem recording the essence of a moment in which nature is linked to human life. Just as Japanese gardens have become an art form loved, interpreted, and adapted around the world, writers of diverse languages and backgrounds have found resonance in haiku. Haiku poems have been penned in Spanish, Estonian, Gujarati, Arabic, German, French, and countless other languages by poets both anonymous and famous. Richard Wright, author of *Native Son*, wrote 4000 haiku during the last two years of his life while in France — 800 are in the book *Haiku: The Last Poems of an American Icon*. Haiku gives poignant and powerful voice to moments — and not always just about the quiet, evanescent beauty of nature. After the 2011 tsunami

and earthquake, a Japanese newspaper published haiku poems expressing grief and sympathy that poured in from across the world. Writer Derrick Weston Brown composed haiku to capture a snapshot of the anguish and rage of Hurricane Katrina victims abandoned to fate by federal authorities. Belgrade-born filmmaker Dimitar Anakiev compiled an anthology of haiku by writers from 48 countries responding to war and other forms of violence.

In haiku, each of the three lines allows a fresh view of a simple moment in time — a word snapshot that immortalizes a distinct but fleeting instant. This simple yet incredibly complex poetic form that evolved centuries ago in Japan speaks so clearly and profoundly to people around the world today. For these reasons, it is truly difficult to imagine a more perfect learning tool to inspire and help students dig deep into nature and learn to express and articulate their own thoughts, feelings, and visions.

About Haiku Alive

Haiku Alive is a partnership between Portland Japanese Garden and Portland's Parkrose School District. Parkrose School District began as a one-room schoolhouse in 1885 in East Portland and now includes four Title I elementary schools feeding into a middle and a high school. Its rich diversity is evidenced by the estimated 68 or more languages spoken in students' homes. In 2017, Park Academy, a small independent school, also joined the program.

The program's curriculum consists of three sequenced classroom lessons and two visits to Portland Japanese Garden spread through the fall and spring. Framed around the Japanese cultural value of living in harmony with nature, the program offers a creative gateway to exploring the natural world. Encouraged by dedicated volunteer tour guides, the students move through the garden with clipboard, paper and pencil, sharing digital cameras as they go. Photographs of ephemeral nature in the Garden are paired with word snapshots, expressing what the students feel with five senses coming alive.

Classroom sessions complement the visits for an integrated educational experience that helps students deepen their understanding of Japanese culture and keep a powerful connection to nature in their daily lives – long after Haiku Alive is just a distant memory. Students find the spirit of haiku alive inside Portland Japanese Garden and inside themselves. Every step in the Garden and each line of haiku brings new discovery as students engage all five senses to translate natural beauty into words.

Haiku Alive offers a universal opportunity for building creativity and language skills for students of all backgrounds, and for finding a place for the beauty and marvel of nature in their daily lives. Since 2011, groups of students from grades 2-5 have taken part, exploring the Garden pathways to uncover patterns and textures and discover the splendor of nature and their own gifts as budding poets and photographers.

To access this publication and other Haiku Alive materials free of charge online, go to japanesegarden.org

About Portland Japanese Garden

Portland Japanese Garden sits nestled in Washington Park in Portland, Oregon overlooking the city and providing a tranquil, urban oasis for locals and travelers alike. First designed in 1963, it now encompasses 12 acres with eight separate garden styles, and includes an authentic Japanese tea house, meandering streams, intimate walkways, and a spectacular view of Mt. Hood. In 2017, the Garden unveiled its Cultural Crossing expansion project, which honors the beauty and tranquility of the five traditional gardens, and makes room to welcome the hundreds of thousands of guests from around the world who flock to the Garden to experience the essence of nature and spirit of peace. It offers new and exciting opportunities to discover the richness and wisdom of Japanese culture. The centerpiece of the expansion is its Cultural Village, designed

by world-renowned architect Kengo Kuma. The Cultural Village provides a place where visitors can immerse themselves in traditional Japanese arts through seasonal activities, performances, and demonstrations.

The Garden is a place to discard worldly thoughts and concerns and see oneself as a small but integral part of the universe. Born out of a hope that the experience of peace can contribute to a long lasting peace. Born out of a belief in the power of cultural exchange. Born out of a belief in the excellence of craft, evident in the Garden itself and the activities that come from it. Born out of a realization that all of these things are made more real and possible if we honor our connection to nature. Our mission is to bring the ideals of Portland Japanese Garden to the world: art of craft, connection to nature, experience of peace.



Poems + pictures

The following pages will let you step into the world of Haiku Alive students. These selections represent only a very few of the thousands of words and images the program has inspired over the years. We would have gladly included them all, but hope that this selection gives a sense of the remarkable artistic gifts of these students. Notice the vivid imagery, imaginative word combinations, and the elevation of tiny, nearly unnoticeable details to a close-up shot. Let these children – and your own children and students – be your gateway to a fresh and revelatory encounter with Portland Japanese Garden.

We hope that the work of these young poets and photographers will leave you inspired to capture your own connections to nature in words. We encourage you – teachers, parents, curious learners – to let this book guide you on your own haiku journey. Remember the words of one young haiku poet: “Nature is awesome! I learned to be quiet and let peace in. Nature can help you with school and with life.”

*Life is not measured by the number of breaths you take,
but by the moments that take your breath away.*

–Maya Angelou



waters splash leaves green
rocks frozen trees stretch blue sky
wind water singing

– Alex, fourth grade



rocks smooth and rough
koto lantern peaceful sounds
leaf shifting in wind

– Faith, third grade



zig zag everywhere
fish in diamond waters dart
white and orange sun

– Kohen, third grade

rain drops sunlight blooms
trio dancing cross journeys
koi swim in bubbles
— *Christian, fourth grade*

orange koi racing
red and white flash blue water
ripples in sky chase
— *Adam, fifth grade*



drip drops koi shimmer
safe under bamboo playing
hiding a secret
— *Abby, third grade*

koi fish breathing
tail paints waves on water
ghost clouds swim
— *Kaden, second grade*



heavenly falls
patience slips down bumpy rocks
path of water
– Kennedy, fourth grade



clear water floats
cranes hunt flash of small fish
air surrounds fresh
– Jenny, fourth grade



moss water blooming
red flower green rock around
plants grow sunshine
– Kaley, fourth grade

deep water reflects
koi speed orange streak through trees
round petals drip
— Tyler, third grade

two worlds
rays of light rippling
fish fading away
— Elijah, third grade





pink red flowers bloom
leaves shining green look to sun
bees into honey

— Jonathan, third grade

peaceful forest waves
trees talking, leaves blowing
heart moving in rain

— Anthony, fourth grade

flowers spread pollen
camellia shine soft smooth reach
reflecting green leaves

— Viridianna, fourth grade

wind whistling calm peace
heavenly falls mountain stream
birds silence friendship

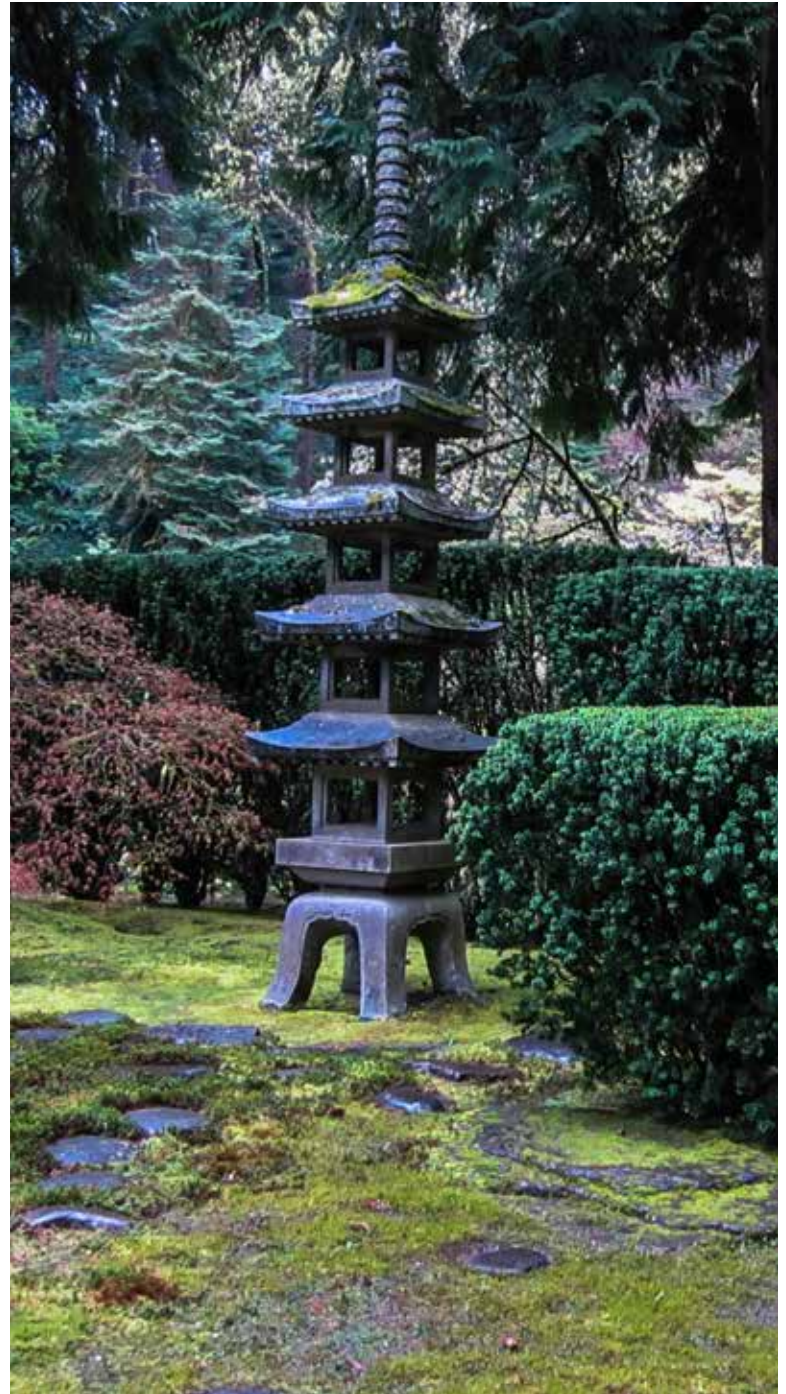
— Jocelyne, third grade

trees protect tower
symbol of Buddha's touch
lantern of light
– Antonio, third grade

water falls down down
house of stone holds king of trees
river of Japan
– Ricky, third grade

stones listen, so silent
leaves swirl sun shines peace calls
heartbeat hears
– Lily, third grade

shiny pagoda
silent moss soaks wet peace
screaming trees talk
– Kelton, fifth grade





words of japan

polka dots splatter smooth stones

green leaves push

– *Treva, fourth grade*

big trees green leaves

mystery Japanese writing

haiku stone alive

– *Serenity, third grade*

dripping clear water
bamboo drops water rings
moving edge
– Noah, second grade

giant evergreens
five senses drifting through us
green grass glimmering
– Livi, third grade





wavy red mossy rocks
reflection wiggling in water
upside down trees

– Michael, second grade

gathering of friends
water clouds floating mirror
island of koi

– Ruby, fourth grade

deep rock in water
cool water falling down
wiggling shadows

– Kaylee, fifth grade

reflecting all
mother nature pointing
rainbow of color

– Austen, third grade

rocks ripple silence
peaceful river of Zen speaks
dapples of light
– Mak, fifth grade

trees protect sand stone
rough rocks turn water smooth
white pebble ripples
– Michel, second grade





wooden zig-zag bridge
whiny orange black white fish
lily pods in pond
– Alicia, third grade



slippery bridge moves
iris grows straight spears
zig-zag! footsteps slide
– John, fifth grade

thick moist rush of wind
shiny spears of green popping
zigzag path calling
– Audrey, fifth grade



flowers grow softly
rosy white petals gleam
pollen hangs waiting
– Sofia, fourth grade

turning red opens
breathing flowers smell sweetness
night becomes white
– Rachel, fifth grade



red flower wind
rocky moss still green leaves blow
plants grow push dirt
– Bernardo, fourth grade

flores rosadas
flores lindos y el aire
lindo en el sol
– Alexia, fifth grade

peace lantern hiding
pink azaleas bees buzz
tingles inside
— *Stryder, 2nd grade*

tiny stone house
little window, mossy roof
a lantern waits
— *Kennedy, second grade*

hidden bright in shade
silence buds water fills bowl
shishi odoshi
— *Veronica, third grade*





stone water islands
white sand green trees growing
stillness flows

– Blake, fourth grade

red hidden in green
not stones, water – not moss,
islands

lantern inside red

– Eric, third grade

a bottle and cup
splish splash distant waterfall
swish swish the leaves fly

– Yefim, third grade

sun and shade stir
pink painting on bush explodes
lantern temple rests

– Jacob, third grade

hidden giant rock
ancient stone inscriptions
land of rising sun
— *Andy, fourth grade*

sweet air flowers bloom
peaceful haiku stone hiding
blending together
— *Giovani, second grade*

stone mountain shines
haiku speaks warmly of home
waves of soft trees
— *Vanessa, fifth grade*



brand new leaves open
green turns lacy fingers red
fiery maple smells
– Vanessa, fourth grade

trees water bush rocks
soft drops fall into stone bowl
red maple opening
– Max, fourth grade

calm morning
fast wind blows inside out
soft plants all around
– Shelby, second grade

maple dropping down
pagoda strong as a tree
little stone islands
– Alexis, fifth grade



water spilling – clunk
moss clinging trees turning green
run drip splash
– Rene, fourth grade

water dripping lantern
stone bowl clears thoughts wash away
flower petals wet
– Grace, fourth grade

*I am part Japanese. I know my Mexican culture
but inside the Japanese Garden I felt my
Japanese culture for the first time. I was so
happy that I cried when I got home.*
– Israel, third grade





blue waterfall
whooshing down rocky steep hill
red purple swaying
– *Michael, second grade*

calm water dropping
green soft leaves reflect deeply
safe peace inside
– *Venus, fifth grade*

pink glimmering blossom
water drops into sweet smell
pollen buds stick
– *Lily, second grade*

day reflecting night
hidden houses blending in
noisy birds chirping
– *Hugo, third grade*

heavenly falls quiet
lanterns glowing peaceful koi
shiny water reflects
– *Cooper, fourth grade*

trees reflecting water
koi swim in trees dart in pond
nature calls my name
– *Miracle, fourth grade*



water falls rushing
shadows creep sun lights trees
bright
peace surrounds me
– Amirah, fifth grade

dancing waterfall
dazzling spring waking up
future blossoms
– Anisley, third grade

stream fast falling

green moss surrounding damp rocks

waterwalkers

– *Karina, fourth grade*

golden koi dancing

rain drops dropping on orange

memories survive

– *Pani, fourth grade*

Japan koi heart

fish from land of rising sun

gentle red white breeze

– *Avram, second grade*

giant koi flowing

bug sits over orange flash

tasty bug, fish gleams

– *Alejandro, fourth grade*





steps to Japan
stone by stone I walk up
rain drops on journey
– Jacarri, fourth grade



moss growing slowly
green green looks everywhere
wet leaves smell sweet
– Allison, second grade



fresh sound waves in stone
summer lantern flowers move
curves of earth ripple
– Samson, second grade

trees growing pink
red blooming bright moss climbing
raindrops hit leaves
– Jeremiah, fifth grade

fish in sky
water whooshing trees splash green
windy reflection
– Mustafa, second grade

calm water quiet
gold and white blend in water
koi lead koi follow
– Yocelynn, fourth grade

clear water slippery rocks
shimmers reflect wiggling dancing
silent fish
– Boisey, fifth grade

orange black gray koi
friends dash dart lantern reflects
moss softens rock
– Gina, fifth grade





swimming in blue
water and trees reflect
sky catches petals

*It's not just writing. Haiku makes me feel the words.
It's the feeling that counts.*

– Sariah, second grade



My 2nd graders have benefited from using their five senses, writing haiku poetry, finding a calmness and beauty in nature, and learning about Japanese culture. Thank you for this top-notch program.

– Penny Nuño, Sacramento School

bright white ocean shine
wood rocks falling in gray stone
plop a little rock

– Oscar, third grade

sand and stone and trees
still rocks sit in sun shadows
birds chirp in silence

– Isabella, third grade

rocks stand in ocean
sand circling shadows purple
waves rushing home

– Amy, second grade





winds soft water falls
calm clouds blowing in my face
sweet wind peaceful air

– Sean, second grade

calm harmony inside
shadows shade dapples of light
gold koi waves shimmer

– Billy, fourth grade

reflections glimmer
moss above lantern below
oxygen blooming

– Lila, second grade

bamboo gate opens
reveals peace of life inside
room for more peace
– Andy, fifth grade

bumpy rocks on ground
sunlight on green trees sparkling
red on bamboo
Aleya, second grade

heavenly whispers
wind whistling quiet peace
breathe sounds of silence
– Daniel, third grade

red flowers growing
bamboo gate welcomes children
sun popping out bright
– Jannette, second grade

moss glow on lantern
leaves blowing, cold rain falling
young tree trunk bends
– Leslyette, fifth grade

rain splashing
stones in water moss in shade
haiku everywhere
– Jackson, second grade

flowers dance open
birds sing fill diamond waters
spider web glistens
– Kohen, third grade

purple white flowers
pollen growing wind blowing
green leaves bush grows
– David, third grade





black silent moon bridge
calm water flows under feet
rocks listen to koi
– Azahel, fourth grade

fresh ripples moist path
reflection shines life mirrors
pink sweet busy bloom
– Quan, fifth grade

ancient happiness
heavenly falls harmony
peaceful eternal
– Meggie, second grade

water falling hard
little bridge crossing birds fly
trees guard quiet
– Bryce, third grade

sun and moss tell time
stones and fire hidden in leaves
past remains now
– Clint, fifth grade

a big flower bush
sweet soft petals start to sing
gold pollen is cold
– Natalie, third grade

Step into haiku

A haiku is not a poem, it is not literature; it is a hand becoming, a door half-opened, a mirror wiped clean. It is a way of returning to nature, to our moon nature, our cherry blossom nature, our falling leaf nature, in short, to our Buddha nature.

— Reginald H. Blyth

Take your haiku journey further. Haiku is about the moment — catching a snapshot of an experience, the same way a photographer captures the defining moment on camera. Haiku are like a special five senses camera that zooms in and out to record what is far away, in between, and close up. Haiku can help awaken the five senses to nature. They record the patterns, rhythms, and textures of what we see, hear, taste, smell, and touch through the seasons. Haiku poems are about a single moment and happen in the present — yet they capture nature’s timelessness. They are descriptive word-pictures that draw inspiration from nature around and within us. They relate discoveries and surprises and let readers feel alive in the poet’s moment of discovery. Haiku have a special sound pattern in each of three lines that generally follow a 5-7-5 syllable pattern. Every word counts.

Begin to write your own haiku!

If someone has already done the activities in the book, or you’d like additional copies, you can download them free of charge in PDF format at japanesegarden.org.

Haiku 1:

Capture nature with five senses awake!

Journey through Portland Japanese Garden through the photos and poems in this book. Then step outside to capture nature alive with your five senses.

Use specific action words to record movement, sound, smell, taste, touch/feeling, like for example: *Leaves swirl, water gurgles, wind twists, fish flash, flowers drip, stones sit in silence, heart moves, peace calls, pollen waits, quiet flows, sweet pink blossoms.*

Take out words that do not give vivid details or specifics, like: pretty, nice, very, like, some, amazing, big, beautiful. Then dig deep to find nature within.

Brainstorm word pictures for what you:

See

Hear

Smell

Taste

Touch/Feel

Line 1: (5 syllables)

Line 2: (7 syllables)

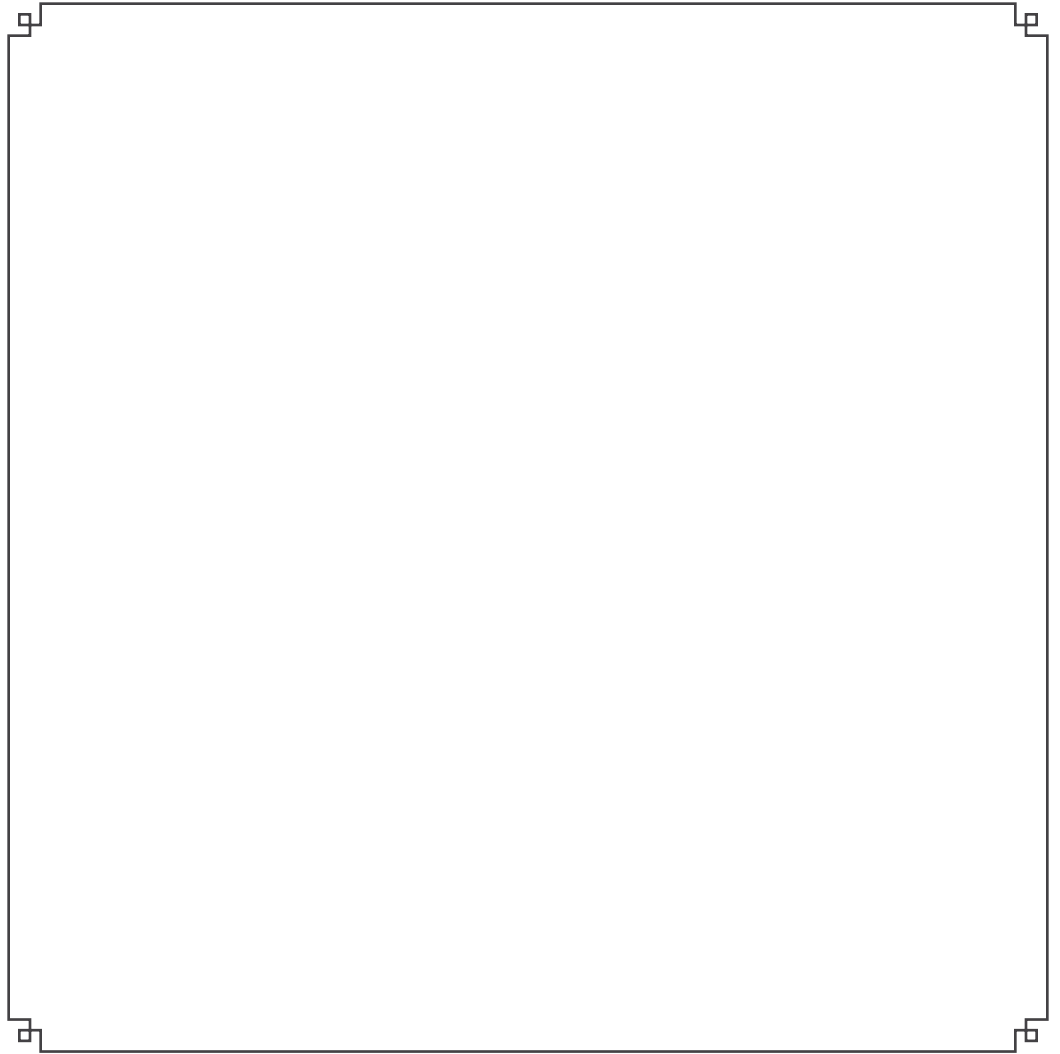
Line 3: (5 syllables)

Haiku 2:

My favorite place in nature

Use this frame for a drawing or photograph of your favorite natural place. It can be an ocean shore, a mountain path, a tree in your backyard – anyplace where you feel at home with nature.

After you've finished the picture, write a haiku about this place using the tools on the previous page. First, write down the words freely as they come to your mind. Then compose a haiku in 5-7-5 form on the lines below.



Line 1: (5 syllables)

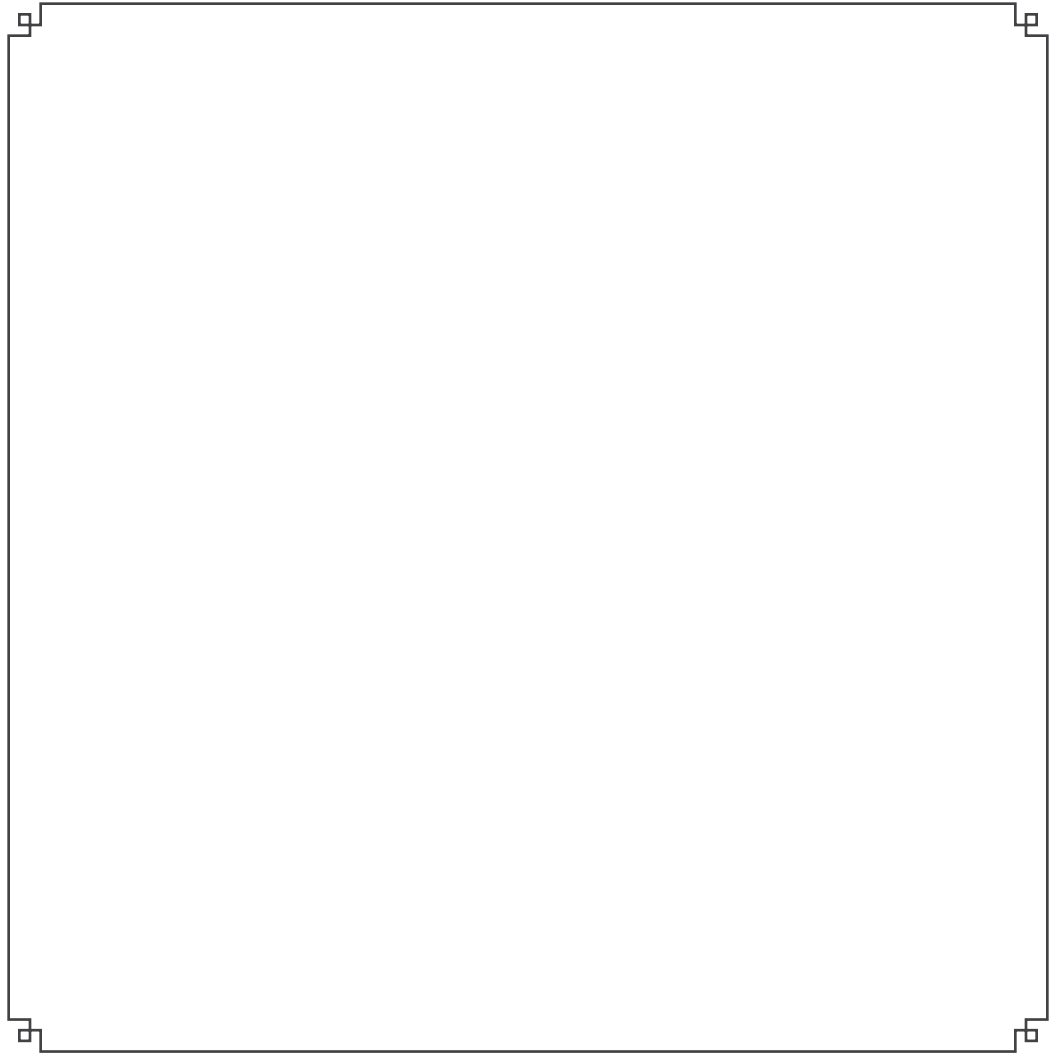
Line 2: (7 syllables)

Line 3: (5 syllables)

Haiku 3:

A poem for the season

Write a haiku about your favorite season. Don't use any words referring to temperature or weather or specific holidays – dig deeper!



Line 1: (5 syllables)

Line 2: (7 syllables)

Line 3: (5 syllables)

Acknowledgments

This richly-layered and visually engaging book is only possible because of the selfless commitment of many people who deserve our profound appreciation, including:

- » Joan Kvitka, the educational consultant who has been the driving force behind this program since its inception, putting heart and soul into nurturing and guiding it
- » The many volunteers who support the program at the Garden and in the classroom with patience, kindness, humor, and complete dedication
- » Administrators, teachers, and parents at Parkrose School District and Park Academy, who cheerfully and tirelessly invest the extra effort required to make this program continue to happen year after year
- » Portland Japanese Garden's leadership for its enduring support of this program
- » Garden Curator Emerita Diane Durston for her thoughtful and devoted work in bringing this program to fruition
- » Our tour and volunteer team for their amazing recruitment and organizational work

Finally, thank you to all of the students who have passed through this program over the years. Your presence is a lasting reminder to us that the secret to a happy life is keeping alive that sense of joy, discovery, and wonder that we see all of you experience every time you come to the Garden. May you never, ever lose that gift.







*Koko ni kite
nihon no haruhi
teru gotoshi*

Here, miles from Japan
I stand as if warmed by the
spring sunshine of home

– Mizuhara Shuoshi, poet (1892-1981),
Haiku Stone gift to the Garden

FRONT COVER  Roman Johnston
BACK COVER  David M. Cobb

Portland Japanese Garden | Portland, Oregon 97208-3847 | japanesegarden.org

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