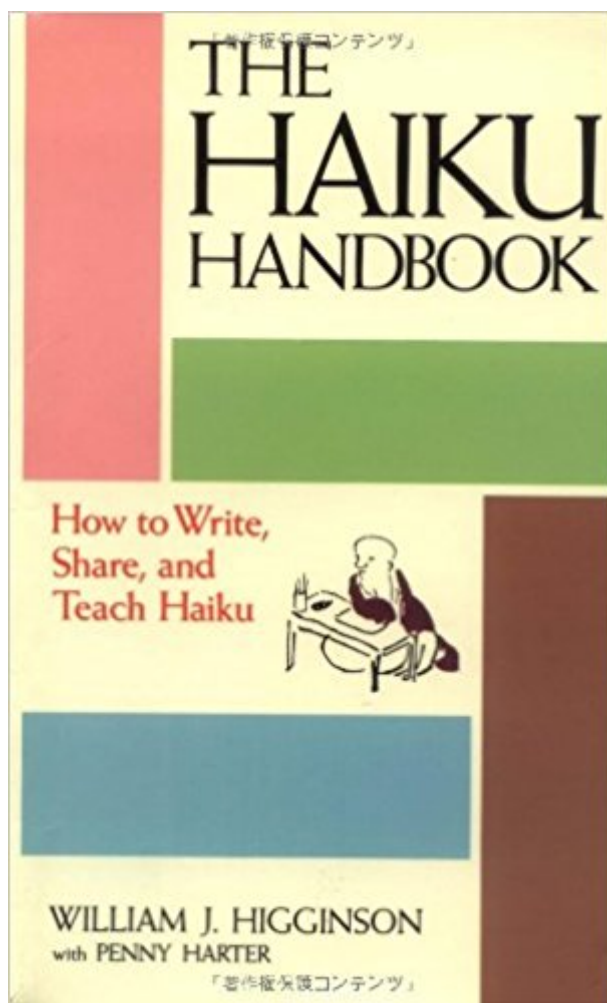


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The Haiku Handbook: How To Write, Share, And Teach Haiku



Synopsis

The Haiku Handbook is the first book to give the reader everything needed to begin writing or teaching haiku. It presents haiku poets writing in English, Spanish, French, German, and five other languages on an equal footing with Japanese poets. Not only are the four great Japanese masters of the haiku represented (Basho, Buson, Issa, and Shiki) but also several major Western authors not commonly known to have written haiku. The book presents a concise history of the Japanese haiku, including the dynamic changes throughout the twentieth century as the haiku has been adapted to suburban and industrial settings. Full chapters are offered on form, the seasons in haiku, and haiku craft, plus background on the Japanese poetic tradition, and the effect of translation on our understanding of haiku. Other unique features are the lesson plans for both elementary and secondary school use; and lists of haiku publishers and magazines (in several languages). The Handbook concludes with a full reference section of haiku-related terms, bibliography, and a comprehensive season-word list to aid in understanding and appreciating Japanese haiku.

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Customer Reviews

Unlike some books, one usually have to read towards the middle to determine whether a book is excellent or lousy. Not so with "The Haiku Handbook". It's excellent from beginning to end. Mr. Higginson has done a wonderful job in explaining the origins and grand beauty of haiku poetry. My favorite chapters were the one's on "The Four Haiku Masters", "Sharing Haiku" and "Haiku for Kids". This book is evident that Mr. Higginson has vast knowledge of the Japanese culture and language.

Not only does he discuss the haiku of Japan but also haiku from all over the world. I simply love the translations of haiku in the various languages such as french, spanish, german etc. In conclusion, for anyone considering haiku as a hobby or a professional literary career, this book is an excellent springboard.

This book really lives up to its title. This is the only book that I've seen that does a good job of teaching HOW to write English-language haiku. To help the reader learn about haiku, it has plenty of examples of modern haiku from around the world, as well as examples of historical Japanese haiku. Besides teaching about haiku, this book would be a very good book for anyone seeking a general introduction to haiku. It also has a good capsule history of haiku. You will, however, have to go to other books for greater detail on the history of haiku, or if you want greater emphasis on specifically Japanese haiku.

This is a wonderful book for the novice writer, reader AND teacher of haiku. Higginson manages to fit a decent representation of haiku (Japanese masters as well as African-American, Beat, and multi-lingual) as well as a brief history of related Japanese genres and "season word" lists. Higginson definitely whets the appetite for even more information about and examples of haiku. An indispensable addition to any haiku and haiku-related library.

"Haiku Handbook" is the standard for getting a handle on this difficult yet beautiful way of making poems. Higginson makes it clear that haiku is much more than a form; it is a positive way of experiencing poetry in the world around us. The scholarship is there but it never deceives or confuses. Harter's contribution shows that haiku is best taught in a holistic embrace of teacher, student & the creative process.

This is not for the passive haiku reader. It provides an in-depth history of haiku, samples of old masters and new. It teaches how to read, write, and teach... just like the cover says. I'd always wondered why my haiku seemed so long and filled with so much extra words even though I followed the 5-7-5 and 5-7-5-7-7 syllable format. This wonderful guide covers this and many other assumptions that we English-speaking haiku enthusiasts have about traditional haiku. My haiku has improved by writing in 3-6-3 syllables. (This book does not recommend 3-6-3, but it works for me based on the context of info provided) Anyone shocked at something other than 5-7-5 should not read this. If you enjoy reading and writing haiku and you learn what this book teaches, you will feel

like a haiku master. Some of my best haiku was written as a direct inspiration of this book.

Blyth's Haiku Seasons books and Higginson's guide to reading and writing "haiku" in English are two of the necessary books to begin to understand what haiku is all about. I have a difficult time with the idea that a tiny poem written in any of the Romance languages--esp. English-- could be called a "haiku," even though the author might include season words and even the 5/7/5 syllable count. I would much rather call them epigrams, because they simply cannot give you the effect of a Japanese haiku. Anyone who argues otherwise is simply fooling themselves, and you. Given all of that, however, Blyth and Higginson are good books to have on the shelf. Blyth, I believe, is the better writer/translator and his sense of chronology and history is stronger. In addition he gives hundreds of translated gems to admire from Basho, Issa, Buson, and others. He also doesn't try to convince you that haiku can be written in English. Higginson is the warmer writer and his generosity to the reader is apparent from the beginning, so practitioners will find him perhaps more useful than Blyth in a practical sense. I disagree with Higginson's history of English language "haiku"--there are some important people he simply leaves out, but he more than makes up for the omissions in other chapters. Both writers impart an enthusiasm for the subject to their readers. If you're building a haiku library and would like a great start, Blyth's four volume set and Higginson's Haiku Handbook are the way to go.

This book really helped me as both a reader and writer of poetry. Through the author I was able to understand the real essence of Haiku; something that I seemed to have missed when I studied it in grade-school! This book not only shows where the form came from, but how it has evolved over time and through different cultures. For anyone who wants to understand the form for themselves, either to use it, teach it or just appreciate it, I highly recommend the book. (the sections on lesson planning are both interesting and helpful, whether or not you want to teach a class!)

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