

Snapshots of America

Writing Haikus

After our trip to America we will produce a collection of our memories in the form of haikus.

A haiku is a minimalist form of poetry. The writer has 17 syllables through which to convey an experience.

A haiku is like a written snapshot. It recreates the atmosphere of a moment in 3 lines (5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables). Modern English haikus do not always follow this rule very strictly.

The content of a haiku is typically, but not always, focused on a small but important moment in a person's everyday life. Part of writing a haiku is finding the 'awe' that is usually passed by without notice – the act of creating a haiku is the act of focusing our attention more closely than we might otherwise do. It is like a picture in close-up.

Sometimes haikus deal with important realizations (epiphanies) in a person's life. Read the following examples and try to visualize the scenes and take in the atmosphere or understand the important realization.

**midday hush
the rasp of a mallard
calling his mate**
Ray Rasmussen

**street musicians resting –
red maple leaf
lands on the keyboard**

**Tompkins Square –
an old man teaches Tai-Chi
to a crowd of pigeons**
Paul Mena

**what is that building?
cobble-stoned streets, glass canyons.
I'm tired. my feet hurt.**
Margaret Hinchcliffe

**sunrise
I forget my side
of the argument**
George Swede

**on every icicle's tip
a drop
of sunlight**
Alexey Andreyev

**second husband
painting the fence
the same green**
Carol Montgomery p.

**a supermarket
in someone's cart – beef, beer,
flowers and a child**
Alexey Andreyev

**with a flourish
the waitress leaves behind
rearranged smears**
Dee Evetts

**thundering surf
seagull cries on the
bitter winds**
Stonecrow

During our trip: Walk around with open eyes and take in all the little things that contribute to the atmosphere of a place or situation. Take mental snapshots as well as pictures of little things with your camera.

After the trip, go through your pictures and memories and choose one specific moment. Capture your impression in a haiku. Layout your haiku nicely and add your picture.

All your haikus will be collected in our book "**Snapshots of America**" and the best ones will be published in the GIBS yearbook.

More examples of haikus



What it's about

The Sunflower Project NYC started in the Spring of 2002 as a living memorial planting project to remember the people lost on September 11th, to honor their families, to thank the people everywhere who contributed to the recovery, and to make our world better, one patch at a time.

The idea is for individuals, groups and communities to create their own sunflower memorials everywhere-- to remember and honor life with living, growing symbols of renewal and hope.

☀️ A fork in my bag.
Next to my comb some wet seeds.
Armed and dangerous.

☀️ Armed with black seeds
I glance around furtively
then complete my task

☀️ Dig hole with chopstick
Make sure seed goes into hole
Mission accomplished

☀️ Look at me strangely
Wonder why I'm poking dirt
Doesn't everyone?

☀️ Watering something?
Not me, I just spilled water...
for the seventh time

☀️ Planting sunflowers.
Large Federal Agent says
"Let's see some ID".

☀️ In New York, Cher can
strut nude--no notice. Plant seeds?
People stop. What's that?

☀️ Small dog and small mind
in tow, local Tree Lady
watches me closely.