

*Lighting the Global Lantern: A Teacher's Guide to Writing Haiku and Related Forms* by Terry Ann Carter. Canada: Wintergreen Studios Press (2011) 178 pp. p.b. RRP: US\$25.00. ISBN: 9780986547317. Reviewed by Patricia Prime

This guide to writing haiku and related literary forms is from the internationally-renowned poet, editor and teacher, Terry Ann Carter. Carter has published four books of haiku and three collections of lyric poetry. She is committed to poetry in service to the global community.

The major categories of Japanese short forms of poetry are examined closely: haiku, tanrenga, rengay, renga/renku and linked haiku, haibun, tanka and haiga. Each genre is illustrated with examples by traditional Japanese poets and contemporary international poets. There are also articles for teaching the forms, as well as definitions and histories of the various genres, and a list of resources and useful books.

*Lighting the Global Lantern* provides one of the most comprehensive overviews of Japanese traditional poetry to be found in English. The main theory of the work, the need for a teacher's guide to the various forms, is developed in a sequence of examples and discussions.

Carter notes in her "Definition of haiku" that "A haiku is a short poem that uses imagistic language to convey the essence of an experience. It is what is happening 'now'". Examples of both traditional Japanese and contemporary haiku illustrate this section, as we see from the following examples:

cold moon –  
three stalks of bamboo  
among the withered trees

Buson

divorce  
nobody  
wants the dog

Ruth Holzer

Omitted from Carter's list of tanka, haiku, haibun and linked form magazines is the New Zealand magazine *Kokako*, of which I am co-editor. The magazine also runs a haiku and tanka contest on alternate years. Another website which may interest students and teachers is the Katikati haiku Pathway, which was instigated in New Zealand by poet Catherine Mair. Here one can see examples of haiku, from traditional to contemporary haiku, engraved on boulders. The website can be found at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/node/279>

The opportunity for students to experience writing collaborative sequences of free-verse poems with friends or overseas poets is offered through the forms of tanrenga, rengay, renga/renku and linked haiku. A useful site for those wishing to learn more about such forms is John Carley's website at [www.renkureckoner.co.uk](http://www.renkureckoner.co.uk). Garry

Gay invented the “rengay” in 1992 and some of his notes concerning this format are included under the heading “Rengay”. In his opening paragraph, Guy says: “To write a good rengay you are probably a good haiku writer. The rengay, like the haiku, relies on your ability at suggestive writing.” A fine example is given of a rengay composed by Terry Ann Carter and Richard Straw.

The definition of haibun states that “A haibun tells the story about something that you saw or did or imagined. It is important to remember that the haiku that follows the narrative should illustrate the point of your prose, or extend the prose – it does not capsule what has been written.” Several excellent haibun are incorporated into this section, one being Mike Montreuil’s “Change”:

After two months of hearing complaints from my nineteen-year-old daughter, I finally heard a *good morning* and *bye* when I left to work. It was another reason to scratch my head and wonder why her mood suddenly changed.

a tease from her brother  
she snaps a response –  
love is in the air

Websites on offer to writers of haibun are *Contemporary Haibun Online* and *Haibun Today*. *Haibun Today* is also instrumental in offering a venue for tanka prose. Many articles on haibun and tanka prose are to be found in both journals and may be of interest to students and teachers alike.

Tanka is defined as being “a highly personal and emotional poetry; in Japanese, it is written in five lines or phrases in a pattern of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables. Kozue Uzawa, editor of *Gusts: Contemporary Tanka*, explains that English tanka should come closer to 20 syllables. She invites us to write directly and express our feelings freely.” The following two examples are from Japanese traditional tanka and from contemporary tanka:

no different, really –  
a summer moth’s  
visible burning  
and this body  
transformed by love

Lady Izumi Shikibu

the cold walk,  
silence  
between us,  
the creek running  
under ice

Tom Clausen

The many tanka that Carter chooses to demonstrate her themes are moving, and worth reading.

As Carter says in her “Definition of haiga: “Haiga is a traditional art form composed of brush painting and calligraphy of haiku poetry. Today, haiga is created with drawings, paintings, photographs and digital technology – marrying image and text so that each is independent of the other, yet producing an artwork mysteriously ‘new’”. Examples are given of both traditional haiga and contemporary haiga – one a most beautiful piece by Pamela Miller Ness, featuring embroidered image and haiku on linen. Photographic images are becoming more and more popular and a section is devoted to Paul Benoit’s photos. Line drawings by Matt Cipov are also a feature of this section. Jim Kacian’s article “Haiga: Pictures and Words Together at Last” is an invitation for both students and experienced poets to “enrich ourselves with examples of art in order to inspire modern day haiga.” Kacian develops his argument from paintings and posters to Japanese practitioners of haiga using the poem/portrait. As Kacian says of the use of paintings in haiga:

Our relationship with the image is changed, because the words shift out attention from our contemplation of the image to finding some relationship between the image and these words. We know this because this image has been used for advertising purposes, and so has lost some of its power to excite the imagination purely as image.

This guide is a wonderful resource for both students and teachers. It contains insights and examples of the many forms of Japanese short poetry, as well as valuable information in the form of essays, book lists and websites. It is highly recommended to those wishing to write, teach or study the various forms.