

Poetry is Alive

SPRING HAIKU MEETING + WORKSHOP • TILBURG UNIVERSITY
FOREST

Welcome to the forest. Haiku is a practice of radical presence—a brief, intense observation of the natural world that captures a "breath-length" of time. Today, we focus on the ephemeral beauty of blossoms.

I. PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

ON (Sound Beats) Haiku traditionally uses 17 sounds. In English, we aim for a 5-7-5 syllable rhythm.	KIGO (The Season) A seasonal reference is essential. Today, we look for <i>blossoms, warm breeze, or buds</i> .	KIREJI (The Cut) The "cutting word" or pause (— or :) creates a spark between two different images.
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II. MASTERWORKS OF THE SEASON

<i>In the blossom's shade there's no such thing as a stranger.</i> — Kobayashi Issa	<i>The light of a candle is transferred to another— spring twilight.</i> — Yosa Buson
<i>An old silent pond... A frog jumps into the pond, splash! Silence again.</i> — Matsuo Bashō	<i>Coolness of the wall against my feet: afternoon nap.</i> — Masaoka Shiki

III. DEEP NOTICING: SENSORY MAP

Find a tree in bloom. Sit. Record your raw data before the poem begins.	
Vision: (Petal colors, shadows)	Sound: (Wind, birds, steps)
Feel/Smell: (Sun, damp earth)	Kigo: (Your spring word)

IV. SCAFFOLDING THE POEM

Exercise 1: The Persona of the Tree

Pick a tree. If it could describe the forest in exactly three words, what would they be?

Exercise 2: The Falling Petal (5-7-5)

Write a draft focusing on one specific movement or detail of the blossoms.

V. CREATIVE EXPANSION

Exercise 3: The Negative Space Challenge

Write a haiku about what is NOT there (the silence between birdsong, or the space between branches).

Exercise 4: Collaborative Renga

Write a 7-syllable "spark." Pass this paper to a neighbor; they will finish the haiku with a 5-7-5 response.

Your 7-Syllable Spark:

Neighbor's 5-7-5 Response:

