# Haiku 101: Jeffrey Benson's Guide to the Art of Haiku

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry consisting of three lines: the first line has five syllables, the second has seven syllables, and the third has five syllables. Haiku typically focus on nature and the present moment, using vivid imagery and evocative language.

Jeffrey Benson is an award-winning haiku poet and the author of several books on haiku. In his book Haiku 101, Benson provides a comprehensive guide to the art of haiku, covering everything from the basics to advanced techniques.



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#### The Basics of Haiku

In the first chapter of Haiku 101, Benson introduces the basic principles of haiku. He explains the importance of syllable count, line breaks, and

season words. He also discusses the different types of haiku, including traditional haiku, modern haiku, and free verse haiku.

#### Syllable Count

The traditional haiku form has a syllable count of 5-7-5. This syllable count is not absolute, however. Benson notes that some haiku may have a few more or fewer syllables, as long as the overall rhythm of the poem is maintained.

#### Line Breaks

The line breaks in a haiku are also important. Benson explains that the line breaks can be used to create emphasis and to highlight certain words or phrases. He also notes that the line breaks can be used to create a sense of movement or action.

#### Season Words

Season words are an important part of traditional haiku. These words refer to a specific season or time of year. Benson provides a list of common season words, and he explains how to use them effectively in haiku.

#### **Advanced Techniques**

In the second chapter of Haiku 101, Benson discusses some of the more advanced techniques that haiku poets use. He covers topics such as kireji, juxtaposition, and negative space.

#### Kireji

A kireji is a cutting word. It is a word or phrase that creates a sense of separation or discontinuity. Kireji can be used to add depth and complexity

to a haiku.

#### Juxtaposition

Juxtaposition is the placement of two or more images or ideas side by side. Juxtaposition can be used to create contrast, tension, or surprise.

#### **Negative Space**

Negative space is the empty space in a haiku. This space can be used to create a sense of mystery or suspense. It can also be used to highlight the main image or idea in the poem.

#### Writing Haiku

In the third chapter of Haiku 101, Benson provides some tips on how to write haiku. He emphasizes the importance of observation and experience. He also recommends reading haiku by other poets and experimenting with different techniques.

Benson concludes Haiku 101 with a chapter on the history of haiku. He traces the development of haiku from its origins in Japanese poetry to its current popularity around the world.

Haiku 101 is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to learn more about the art of haiku. Jeffrey Benson's clear and concise explanations make this book a pleasure to read. It is a must-have for any haiku enthusiast.

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