

10-1-1995

Haiku

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Recommended Citation

Rosamond, Frances (1995) "Haiku," *Humanistic Mathematics Network Journal*: Iss. 12, Article 14.
Available at: <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/hmnj/vol1/iss12/14>

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[3]* "The Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences", by N. J. A. Sloane and S. Plouffe, Academic Press, 1995; also online, E-mail: superseeker@research.att.com (SUPERSEEKER by N. J. A. Sloane, S. Plouffe, B. Salvy, ATT Bell Labs, Murray Hill, NJ 07974, USA).

Haiku

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National University*

A haiku is a special form of poetry having three lines, with a 5-7-5 pattern of syllables. In Japan, a haiku master is usually a very learned person who can read the various nuances and innuendos captured in the haiku.

My haiku is about my geometry class. Here are some of the thoughts embedded within the words.

- eager: my geometry students hungry for learning.
- chewing: we have a saying that if we want to think something over, we will "chew" on it. I chose "chewing" to indicate that learning is a process of activity taking place, not something static or confined. I also chose "chewing" because it implies wolves or animals. Animals are not predictable. They may nuzzle up and be willing and ready to work and think, but sometimes they have other things than school on their minds and cannot pay attention. Also, if they do not feel satisfied, they can tear you apart.
- tales: their lessons. A haiku typically includes a season: spring, summer, winter, or fall. I teach in a year-round school so that we do not start school in September, as is often usual. The word "tales" is meant to convey a sort of "old-fashioned" sense that makes the season one that stretches from ancient history to the present.
- giants: a famous mathematician said that he could accomplish much because he "stood on the shoulders of giants" (i.e., previous mathematicians' achievements).
- earth-measure: this is the definition of geometry, and one of the earliest uses to which mathematics was put.
- angles: allusion to Euclidean geometry, to Euclid, and to his predecessors.
- waves: allusion to modern geometry, which includes the study of periodic occurrences.
- pattern: allusion to the whole of mathematics, which some conceptualize as a "pattern".

HAIKU

Eagerly chewing
Tales of Giants' Earth-Measure:
Angles, Waves, Pattern.