

Structured Poetry

Limerick, Haiku, Cinquain

Limerick:

Limericks are five lines with the rhyme scheme AABBA. The third and fourth lines (the B lines) are generally shorter than the other lines. Limericks are often humorous in content.

Examples:

There was an Old Man with a beard
Who said, "It is just as I feared!
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!"

There was a young girl on a tower,
Who looked just as fresh as a flower.
Her was like silk,
Her skin smooth as milk.
But her breath made the strongest knight cower.

Haiku:

Haiku are not rhymed and have exactly 17 syllables in 3 lines. The first and third lines have 5 syllables, and the middle line has 7. They are written in the present tense, and generally not one sentence, but instead has a fragment as the first or last line and the remaining two lines as a complete thought.

Examples:

Brave little David
who topples the Goliath
with a single stone.

Cold December night,
Moon and stars pave the sky in
pale pearls and diamonds

Yellowed maple leaf
quietly pirouetting
seeks the settling spot.

Cinquain:

Cinquains have five lines. Modern versions are based on word count rather than syllables, but each line has to have the correct number of words, usually of a certain type, expressing something specific:

Line 1 has a one word title (noun).

Line 2 has two words that describe the title (adjective).

Line 3 has three words that tell action the title can take (verb).

Line 4 has four words that express the feeling about the title (adjective).

Line 5 has one word which recalls the title, but is a different word (noun).

Examples:

Longing
Waiting, hoping
Heart slowly dying
Memories re-fueling forgotten
dreams
Yearning

Fatcat
Hairy nuisance
Sprawling over bedsheets
Crowding limited sleepspace with
Blubber.

Autumn
Gold foliage
Brilliantly surrounds me
Strolling forest's sunlit pathway
Aglow.