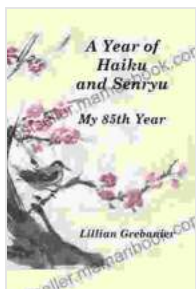


A Journey into the Heart of Haiku and Senryu: Exploring the Year of Japanese Verse

In the realm of literature, haiku and senryu stand as two distinct yet captivating forms of Japanese poetry that have garnered global recognition for their brevity, simplicity, and profound impact. The year 2023 has been officially declared as the Year of Haiku and Senryu by the Japan Foundation, marking a momentous occasion to celebrate and explore the essence of these literary gems.

Haiku, a traditional form of Japanese poetry, encapsulates a fleeting moment in nature, emotion, or experience using only 17 syllables arranged in three lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables, respectively. Its origins can be traced back to the Edo period (1603-1868), where it evolved from a form of comic verse called "haikai no renga."

One of the key characteristics of haiku is its emphasis on "kireji" (cutting word), a word or phrase that creates a pause or sense of division within the poem. This division helps to highlight a specific aspect or moment, often providing a subtle shift in perspective.



A Year of Haiku and Senryu: My 85th Year

by Pedro Calderón de la Barca

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Another defining feature of haiku is "kigo" (seasonal word), which refers to a word or phrase that evokes a particular season of the year. The inclusion of kigo helps to ground the poem in a specific time and place, adding depth and context to the haiku.

Haiku by Matsuo Bashō

古池や 蛙飛び込む 水の音

English Translation

Old pond. A frog jumps in. The sound of water.

This famous haiku by Matsuo Bashō, one of the greatest masters of the form, beautifully captures the tranquility of a secluded pond disrupted by the sudden leap of a frog. The kireji "ya" (used in this case as an exclamation) serves to separate the tranquil setting from the unexpected action, while the kigo "furuike" (old pond) evokes a sense of history and nostalgia.

Senryu, also known as "comic haiku," shares many similarities with haiku in terms of its structure and form, but it differs in its subject matter. While haiku typically focuses on nature and the seasons, senryu often deals with human nature, social satire, and everyday life.

One of the key differences between haiku and senryu is the use of "hokku" (a verse consisting of the first three lines of a haiku) as a point of departure.

Senryu often incorporates a hokku as the first part of the poem, then adds a fourth line (7 syllables) to create a humorous or satirical twist.

Senryu by Karai Senryū

夫婦喧嘩 茶碗が一つ 二つに割れる

English Translation

Husband and wife quarrel. A teacup Breaks into two.

This senryu by Karai Senryū, the master of the form, humorously depicts the aftermath of a marital dispute, where a teacup becomes the victim of the couple's anger. The use of the hokku "fufu kenka" (husband and wife quarrel) as a starting point adds to the poem's comedic effect.

Haiku and senryu have had a profound impact on world literature, inspiring countless poets and writers across different cultures. Their brevity and simplicity have made them an accessible form of poetry, allowing readers to appreciate the beauty of language and the nuances of human experience.

In the West, haiku and senryu have gained popularity since the early 20th century, particularly among modernist poets such as Ezra Pound and Imagists like Amy Lowell. These poets were drawn to the form's conciseness and its ability to capture the essence of a moment.

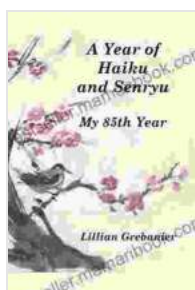
The designation of 2023 as the Year of Haiku and Senryu provides a unique opportunity to delve deeper into these captivating poetic forms. Numerous events, workshops, and exhibitions are being organized around

the world to promote haiku and senryu, providing an opportunity for both enthusiasts and newcomers to engage with these literary gems.

One of the highlights of the Year of Haiku and Senryu is the 5th Annual Haiku and Senryu International Festival, which will be held in Tokyo in November 2023. The festival will feature readings, workshops, and performances by renowned haiku and senryu poets from around the world.

The Year of Haiku and Senryu marks a significant moment in the literary world, offering an opportunity to celebrate and explore the enduring beauty and depth of these Japanese poetic forms. From the evocative simplicity of haiku to the humorous wit of senryu, these verses provide a unique lens through which we can appreciate the world around us.

Whether you are a seasoned aficionado or a first-time reader, let the Year of Haiku and Senryu inspire you to discover the captivating world of these literary gems. Embrace their brevity, contemplate their insights, and enjoy the profound impact they can have on your imagination and understanding of human experience.



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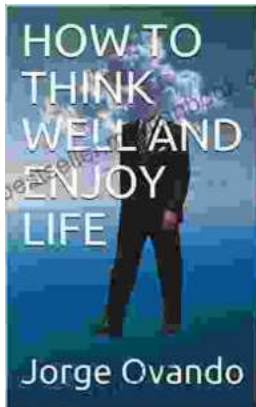
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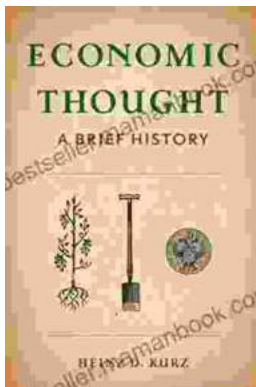
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