



The Heart of Haiku (Kindle Single)

By Jane Hirshfield

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In seventeenth-century Japan, the wandering poet Basho developed haiku, a seventeen-syllable poetic form now perhaps the most widely written type of poetry in the world. Haiku are practiced by poets, lovers, and schoolchildren, by “political haiku” twitterers, by anyone who has the desire to pin preception and experience into a few quick phrases. This essay offers readers unparalleled insight into the living heart of haiku—how haiku work and what they hold, and how to read through and into their images to find a full expression of human life and perceptions, sometimes profound, sometimes playful.

Jane Hirshfield is an award-winning poet and author of the now-classic *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry*, as well as an equally classic book introducing earlier Japanese poetry, *The Ink Dark Moon: Love Poems* by Komachi and Shikibu, *Women of the Ancient Japanese Court*.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

To hear Jane Hirshfield tell it, the 17th-century Japanese poetry scene was a cross between a Surrealist "exquisite corpse" session and a sake-lubed rap-battle circuit. But this is just one of the historically enlightening gems packed into her beautiful essay on Matsuo Bashō, the most famous purveyor of haiku. Packed with original translations, *The Heart of Haiku* is an elegant and reverent exploration of an itinerant artist who "wanted to renovate human vision by putting what he saw into a bare handful of mostly ordinary words, and... to renovate language by what he asked it to see." Absolutely no prior interest in poetry is necessary to take from Hirshfield's essay the inspiration to drop everything, walk out in to the wide world, open your eyes, and find out for yourself that "even the briefest form of poetry can have a wing-span of immeasurable breadth." --*Jason Kirk*

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