

# Haiku Quintets

## REVIEW COPY

For college teachers, bookstore managers, library staff, book club leaders, and others for your consideration for acquisition and recommendation.

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This PDF file contains the first twenty pages of the 279-page manuscript, available as paperback (7 x 10 inches) and ebook at Amazon.com and other booksellers. Formatting may differ slightly.



*Haiku Quintets* contains sunset musings on love, death, art, science, humanism, special people, and more ... in 85 syllables. These 250 tightly crafted poems present the reader with a smorgasbord of savory morsels when appetite shuns a full plate.

Dan Dana, in retirement, composes haiku quintets from his perch overlooking Florida's Sarasota Bay.

**What is a "haiku quintet?"** Like other haikuists, I strive to pack maximum potency into seventeen syllables in three unrhymed lines of 5-7-5 format in the 17th Century Japanese style. Diverging from tradition and committing other poetic heresies, I gather a quintet of haiku under a single umbrella, comprising a narrative theme. Applying the less-is-more principle, each spartan verse prompts the reader's mind to reflexively fill in the "missing" parts with personally meaningful content (think Rorschach inkblot). A photo or image decorates the finished piece. I dub this novel art form "verbal impressionism by curious wordcraft." Apologies to Basho for my unorthodoxy.

**How to read this book:**

Browse—Let your mind wander—Follow it there—Repeat

Five Palms Press—[www.dandana.us/fivepalms](http://www.dandana.us/fivepalms)

# HAIKU QUINTETS

*Browse*  
*Let your mind wander*  
*Follow it there*  
*Repeat*

**Second Edition**

*Dan Dana, PhD*

## DEDICATION

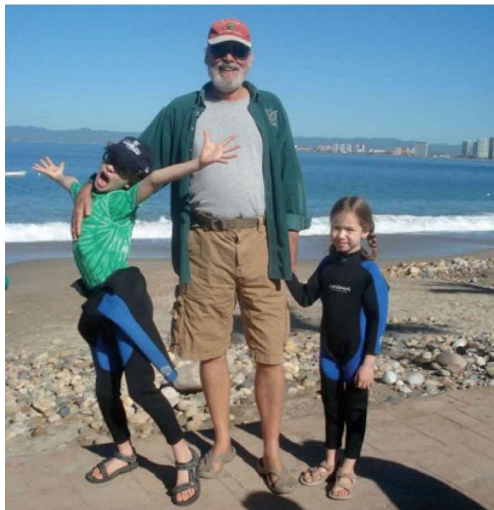
you can't comprehend  
how precious you are to me  
I was your age, once

filled with future's dreams:  
goals, adventures, loves, hatchlings(?)  
yet to be made real

Nan felt what I feel,  
reaching out, yet holding back  
her love ached, like mine

I watch from afar  
your special stars beckon you  
you're on your journey

you're Papi's vectors  
to future's remnants of me  
take these words with you



Puerto Vallarta, 2010

## WELCOME TO MY WORDS

Most evenings at sunset and in its afterglow, when not preempted by some pesky obligation, I sit at our west window watching the daily “sunset movie” (a different showing each night), headphones in place, listening to music chosen to suit my mood, a glass of decent cabernet near at hand.

Immersed in this multi-dimensional beauty, I watch my mind, curious to see where it goes and what it does, undirected by purposeful intent, often revealing what has been lurking in the shadows of my awareness.

I call this my “sweet hour of secular prayer.”

While in this altered mental state, my muse sometimes drops in for a visit. She suggests artful words to convey a simmering idea or sentiment. I focus her attention on that shiny object for a while, hoping to cultivate those seedling words and harvest them before they drift off into the waning sunset, out of my memory, lost forever. Sometimes, those words can be kneaded into the shape of a haiku quintet.

The items in this volume are products of those sunset musings.

**Haiku quintet explainer:** Like other haikuists, I strive to pack as much meaning as possible into seventeen syllables in three unrhymed lines of 5-7-5 format, adopting the 17th Century Japanese style. Intentionally ambiguous words and phrases prompt the reader to project personal idiosyncratic significance onto the verse (think Rorschach inkblot). Diverging from tradition, and committing other poetic heresies, I compose a quintet of haiku under a single umbrella idea, which, as an ensemble, comprise a narrative theme. A photo or image illustrates and completes the final product. I dub this novel art form “verbal impressionism by curious wordcraft.” Apologies to Basho for my unorthodoxy.

**About me:** I am a retired mediator, psychologist, and educator living with wife Susan in Sarasota, Florida. Born in 1945 on a family farm in Missouri, I served (reluctantly) in the U.S. Army in Vietnam (non-combat) and Panama Canal Zone (1966-1968). Holding the PhD in psychology from University of Missouri (1977), I am the author of two books on mediation, one on secular humanism, and five volumes of haiku quintets. I am the father of one and grandfather of two. Drawing upon nearly eight decades of life's adventures and misbegotten lessons, Haiku Quintets may be viewed loosely as an autobiography, of sorts. For more, see [www.dandana.us](http://www.dandana.us)

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## CONTENTS

This collection is designed to be browsed aimlessly, as you might while strolling a beach, happening upon interesting shells and colorful bits that catch your attention. Or, if your habits insist, start at the beginning and proceed to the end, as in life itself.

This is the second edition, which contains 117 haiku quintets that appeared in the original e-book-only edition plus 131 additional pieces, composed since August 2020. The world has evolved, as has this poet.

### **Love and Relationships**

#### SECOND EDITION

- I Forgot to Ask ~ ... before it was too late
- Inexpressible ~ Do you know what I mean?
- Three Magic Words ~ Harnessing the reciprocity reflex
- In Mommy's Eyes ~ Love is all there is
- Newborn ~ Love swaddles you
- Only a Mother Can Know ~ Her soul-crushing loss
- Existential Borderland ~ We're near, but not one
- A Coding Error ~ What I heard is not what you meant
- Decrypting Woman ~ What is your password?
- Be a Simp ~ Advice for boys and men

#### FIRST EDITION

- How to Make Love ~ This isn't what you think it is ... it's better
- Microeconomics of Love ~ Do lovers keep score?
- Puppies in a Box ~ The secret sauce of easy marriage
- The Bridge Between ~ This span shall stand
- Sibling Love ~ Aging siblings celebrate our lifelong bond.
- A Grandfather's Lament ~ A common malaise of grandparents?
- Surrender, Move On ~ When what should have been cannot be

## **Susan**

### **SECOND EDITION**

- Finding Her ~ His arrow struck gold
- My Valentine ~ There's something about two
- Kissing Quandary ~ No, you need your rest
- Transactional Love ~ We each think we are winning
- My Dream ~ Awakening from a nightmare
- FIRST EDITION
- Song for Susan ~ A love story
- Angel on Earth ~ The kindest person I've ever known
- Susan's Not Done Yet ~ There's a pattern here.
- Susan at Play ~ Play on, and on, and on ...
- Just You and Me ~ The bottomless depth of a mother's grief
- The Moore Sisters ~ Three moms, seven cousins, two losses
- Reunion ~ A moment to be remembered for a lifetime

## **Special People**

### **SECOND EDITION**

- Soar, Claribel, Soar! ~ Your world awaits you
- In Your Hands Now ~ Take this worn baton
- The Young Widow ~ A son's belated tribute
- Jay ~ No ordinary mensch
- Saruni ~ Our Maasai friend
- Pedicure Bobbi ~ My toes' hottest date
- Thank you, Daniel ~ About last night ...
- Bob ~ We grew each other.
- Captain Simon ~ Please do not retire!
- My Piano Teacher ~ A melody in my life (by Susan Dana)

### **FIRST EDITION**

- My Mom ~ It takes a village to raise a child. But first, a mother.
- My Dad ~ My totem
- Nurse Tarin ~ You're my hero, too.
- Edda ~ Primal playmate, oldest friend
- Remembering Lucy ~ Mender of the mind
- An Old Flame ~ I want to learn about myself.
- Adrien ~ Gender pioneer

- Mutual Muses ~ My friend and I inspire each other.
- Richard, King of Reframe ~ Discoverer of the secret of life
- Ode to Mrs. Mason ~ The Universal Teacher
- Kit ~ One classy lady
- Ambassador Bobbi ~ Appreciating our condo queen
- Richard Died Today ~ Our friend is with us no more.

### **Life and Death**

#### SECOND EDITION

- Along for the Ride ~ For as long as it lasts
- My Dad's Afterlife ~ His death and earthly afterlife
- What If? ~ What might have been?
- Staring into the Abyss ~ We had a chance to change course
- My Bucket List ~ Scratched off
- Certified Adult ~ I am what I am
- Be Here Now ~ My most ambitious non-goal
- (How To) Be Here Now ~ OK, sounds easy, but how?
- Misplaced Grief ~ I'm not the one who will grieve my death
- Five Seconds Left to Live ~ Is this how I die?
- Voice of a Nulled Child ~ A billion years of suffering averted
- Poor Man's Philanthropy ~ Most humanist bang for modest bucks
- The Joy of Nihilism ~ I will write haiku
- It Is What It Is ~ It's my damn turn

#### FIRST EDITION

- Autobiography ~ 76 years compressed to 85 syllables
- Life: The Movie ~ View from the peanut gallery
- Go gentle ~ Or rage, rage?
- Meanwhile ~ I Rest in Peace ... now
- Jim's Last Gift ~ He illuminated the road ahead
- Mack's Vision ~ When marital visions diverge
- Thin Silver Lining ~ End of young life may not be all bad
- Chicxulub Asteroid Impact ~ Our lucky day?
- On Antinatalism ~ Is life good? I mean, really, is life good?



## **Pandemic**

### SECOND EDITION

- 2020 ~ Existential year
- Bon Voyage ~ Dedication for *Songs of the Pandemic*
- Thanks you for Working ~ Express gratitude to pandemic workers
- The Crime of Killing Time ~ I sip slowly now
- I Forgot My Mask ~ Necessity is the mother of invention
- Pandemic on the Serengeti ~ Report from the Maasai by Saruni
- Quarantine Cuisine ~ Good fortune's sour taste
- This Haiku Is About You ~ Can you find yourself in it?
- Final Moments ~ So, this is how it ends
- FIRST EDITION
- My Race Against Time ~ Will I finish this before fate intervenes?
- Quarantine Coiffure ~ Paradigm shift in men's hairstyles
- Comet Covid ~ A blast from within
- Epidemiology ~ Pass the course ... or die.
- Introverts Unite! ~ What's so bad about self-quarantine?
- Invisible Enemy ~ Beware the Trojan virus.
- BC ~ Before Coronavirus, when life was simple
- The Black Swan Has Landed ~ Our surreal new normal
- Self-Quarantine Report ~ Home confinement works for me.
- Coronavirus ~ Apocalypse now?

## **The Art of Haiku**

### SECOND EDITION

- Why I Write ~ Art as antidote to existential solitude
- English Is Best for Haiku ~ We're a shameless sponge
- A Bouquet of Senses ~ How our garden grows!
- Flight of the Haiku ~ Icarus has crashed
- Bicentenary ~ Celebrating this 200th haiku quintet
- To Grow a Haiku ~ From seed to flower
- The Perils of Haiku ~ Words disturb my peace
- Haiku Hack ~ A little haiku helper from gestalt
- A Study in Metaphor ~ If you get my drift

- Molting Art ~ These words were never truly mine
- Writing Between the Lines ~ Can you read between the lines?
- Joan Didion ~ An appreciation

#### FIRST EDITION

- 85 Syllables ~ Coloring between the lines
- Who Writes This Stuff? ~ Is metaphysics at play?
- The Craft ~ What is a “good” haiku?
- Ode to Pablo Neruda’s Ode ~ On socks and poetry
- Unpoetic Poetry ~ Hmm ... I’m wondering about these haiku
- My Haiku Machine Is Broken ~ My muse is gone ... or is she?
- Lyrical Science ~ Brushing word-art’s colors on science’s canvas
- Brush Strokes in the Sky ~ Reflections on time
- Photography Art ~ Photography-as-art mic drop
- The Novel ~ A haiku whodunit
- Absurdist Haiku ~ Sometimes meaning is found in unlikely places.
- Smorgasbord of the Mind ~ A gathering of word-nerds
- Natural Art ~ All art by human hands is not made.
- For Whom the Art Trolls ~ What’s art to you? And who says so?
- Is This Art? ~ Verbal impressionism by curious wordcraft
- Sketches in Haiku ~ Boldly going where acolytes fear to tread
- Daughter of Basho ~ Imagining haiku’s bygone creator
- Haiku or Not Haiku? ~ Is Basho rolling over in his grave?

### **Science and Secularism**

#### SECOND EDITION

- Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) ~ A dedication
- Holiday Haiku ~ Be kind and have fun
- A Date in Spacetime ~ When and where shall we meet?
- Celebrating Winter Solstice ~ Longer days are here again!
- Lucky Planet Mars ~ Cancel life’s blueprint
- Our Phylum’s Caste System ~ The Golden Rule beyond humans
- Strategic Retreat ~ Only one path remains
- You Are My Afterlife ~ My stuff will go on, and on, and on ...

- Humanists ~ Good without god(s)
- Is Atheism a Faith? ~ Is not collecting stamps a hobby?
- Darwin Day ~ Nothing fails like prayer

#### FIRST EDITION

- Whence Reality? ~ Cosmology's sublime mystery
- Math = Nature? ~ Why does math describe the natural world?
- Universe ~ Blow your mind, peer into the Hubble Ultra Deep Field.
- That's the Mystery ~ Failure of imagination
- Cosmic Boundaries ~ What's on the other side?
- Edge of the Universe ~ There's nothing on the other side.
- Pondering Infinity ~ My tiny brain hurts.
- Gravity Makes Things Round ~ The shape that floats in spacetime
- Cosmic New Year ~ Who moved my galaxy?
- Saturn ~ The pearl of our solar system
- Water ~ The molecule that built us
- Supermoon ~ So near, yet so far ... so far, yet so near
- We Are Accidental People ~ If a different sperm got there first
- Life ~ Mars rover seeks proof of the obvious.
- Climate Crisis ~ Whether to postpone Earth's certain fate
- First God ~ Granddaddy Deity
- On Dying ~ An atheist's approach to death, dying, and choice
- My Nigerian Atheist Friend ~ He must hide his truth.

### **Mediation**

#### SECOND EDITION

- Peace Is Possible ~ Supporting Hungarian mediators
- Police Mediation ~ Use a softer touch.

#### FIRST EDITION

- Simple Magic ~ Mediation is a life-skill.
- Hidden Common Ground ~ Interests underlie.
- Mediation ~ A life's calling ... and its afterlife

## **Democracy**

### SECOND EDITION

- Identity Precedes Ideology ~ Let voters decide
- Watching War Begin ~ Russia attacks Ukraine
- May We Long Endure ~ Lincoln's hopeful words
- Promise Unfulfilled ~ What follows?
- Hanging by a Thread ~ Whither democracy's noble experiment?
- Elect Women to Public Office ~ Better leaders by their nature?
- Kamala ~ Identity politics might save America this time.
- Afghan Girl ~ Misogyny rules your world
- The Hill We Climb ~ From Amanda Gorman's inauguration poem
- Please Don't Read This Haiku ~ A blunt paradox
- New Year (2022) Predictions ~ Foretelling hopes and fears

### FIRST EDITION

- VOTE! ~ Democracy is on the ballot
- The Wolf and the Sheep ~ Time to get a new sheep?
- Execution by Hubris ~ Who will be his next victim?
- Shrinking City on a Molehill ~ America's lethal myth
- This Defining Moment ~ Where does this triple-threat lead?
- Refuge in Art ~ I think I'll write a haiku.
- Why vote? ~ Can you resolve this logical paradox?
- American Expat ~ An alien in my homeland?

## **Anti-racism**

### SECOND EDITION

- Lived Experience ~ What's it like to be you?
- The Swing ~ Bayfront Park, Sarasota, Florida, 9 March 2022
- No Whining on the Yacht ~ Curb your privilege
- Journey of a White Liberal ~ Racism's persistent stain
- Blacks Get Shot ~ Why?
- John Lewis ~ You changed the world

### FIRST EDITION

- I am African ~ And you are too.
- My Shrinking Island of Privilege ~ I dream Martin's dream.

- Black in America ~ Where can I breathe free?
- Right to Privilege? ~ Is empathy enough to balance the scale?
- Branches of the Human Tree ~ Name the trunk of this tree. Please.
- Woke? ~ Racism's tricky wiles

## **Places**

### SECOND EDITION

- Scribes at Brunch ~ Sarasota, Florida
- Knoxville ~ Knoxville, Missouri
- Hitchhiking ~ The highways of America
- Motorcycle Mishap ~ Nacaome, Honduras
- Helado ~ Bogotá, Colombia
- What Did Paul Believe? ~ Ephesus, Turkey
- Night Train to Kiev ~ Moscow to Kiev, USSR
- A Bridge in Cairo ~ Egypt
- Mandela ~ South Africa
- We Chose to Hike ~ Machu Picchu, Peru
- Earthquake ~ Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
- Big Guy ~ Sitka, Alaska
- My Pakistani Seatmate ~ Chicago to Istanbul
- Iceberg ~ Qaqortoq, Greenland
- The Pickpockets ~ Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Escaping Saigon ~ Seattle-Sydney cruise

### FIRST EDITION

- I Have Survived, Somehow ~ So many close calls
- Woodstock Souvenir ~ Life's a trip.
- Tet 1968 ~ Was I even there?
- Vietnam ~ This veteran's reflections
- Puerto Vallarta ~ Our Mexican home town
- Homeleaving, Homecoming ~ Two homes on two bays
- Diez Pesos ~ How much can this small coin buy?
- Malecón Buskers ~ Strollers' seaside entertainment
- Cousin Taco ~ My moral dilemma

## Whimsy

### SECOND EDITION

- This Haiku Missed the Boat ~ No worries, it's on the next sailing
- Now ~ There are no words
- GOAT or GEFN? ~ A sunset muse on ambition in my 77th year
- Bigoted Goats ~ On the Connor mini-farm
- Did You Get My Note? ~ Is this haiku about you?
- This Haiku Journey ~ What lies ahead?
- Whither Sisyphus? ~ I will write haiku
- What's That Word? ~ On the tip of your tongue
- Collective Nouns ~ All together now ...
- First Things First ~ Sharpen my axe
- Anything ~ Anything at all
- Access Denied ~ Watching my brain think thoughts
- A Spring Haiku ~ But first, a definition
- Covid Chicks ~ A hatching project
- L5-S1 ~ Ode to back pain
- Fear & Greed ~ In the marketplace of everyday life
- Six-Word Sentences ~ Is this the weirdest haiku quintet ever?
- A Matter of Scale ~ Reflections on September 11
- How To Go To Sleep ~ No drugs required
- I Rite Perdy Good ~ My secret sauce
- Haiku Pun ~ A collaboration with master punster Barry Zack

### FIRST EDITION

- Animal Friends ~ Not so different you and me, my pet
- Carpe Diem ~ Time flies, life is short, grab it.
- Time Flies ~ Could we just slow this runaway train down a bit?
- Moonset ~ What choices do we really have?
- Idealism vs. Realism ~ Inspired by Samantha Power
- Organic Haiku ~ Read it in good health.
- Superbowl 2020 ~ Your haiku sports reporter is on the beat.
- Lexophilia ~ Wordplay can be pun.
- The First Shall be Last ~ Aging and its nuisances

Acknowledgements

About the author

## **LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

## **I FORGOT TO ASK**

Grandpa, where were you  
when the First World War broke out?  
I forgot to ask

Grandma, tell me tales  
about my great-grandmother  
I forgot to ask

Dad, how did you choose  
your career, and your first wife?  
I forgot to ask

Mom, what did you like  
about Dad when you first met?  
I forgot to ask

kids, is there something  
you'd like to know about me?  
don't forget to ask



My mom on her final birthday, 2008



## **INEXPRESSIBLE**

in one precious frame,  
the three women I love most  
... I'll trace my heart's joy:

this measly haiku  
struggles to carry the freight  
of love's sundry forms

too few syllables,  
my thin thesaurus fails me  
... surely there's a way!

for want of language,  
all who burst with love's heartbeat  
wear this poet's shoes

inexpressible  
in words known to humankind  
... d'ya know what I mean?



## THREE MAGIC WORDS

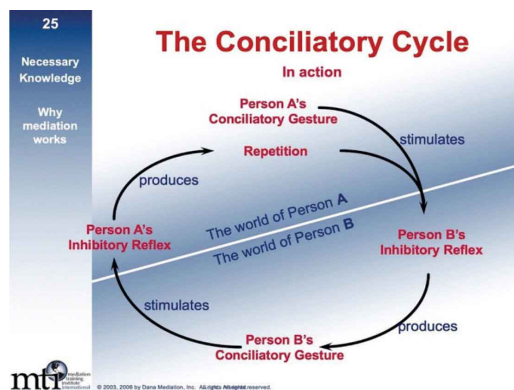
practiced life-partners  
know well I-Love-You's effect  
when sincerely voiced

triggers like response  
reciprocity's reflex  
ripens love's sweet taste

less known and practiced  
three more magic power-words  
when disputes erupt

defenses ignite  
blame, fault, anger take the wheel  
driving toward a ditch

harness that reflex  
take high road to love's repair  
asking, Tell-Me-More



PowerPoint slide from MTI's mediation training course –  
[www.mediationworks.com](http://www.mediationworks.com)

## IN MOMMY'S EYES

you are my whole world  
you have no name but Mommy  
you and I are one

I glow in your eyes  
no border separates us  
I'm still inside you

your face delights me  
I see me in your eyes' gleam  
your smile is my joy

not-me is just you  
I want nothing else but you  
you give me myself

now is eternal  
here is only you and me  
love is all there is



Jakie in love (look closely at Mommy's face reflected in his eyes).  
Photo credit: Sara Scott

## NEWBORN

welcome to the world  
held in loving arms and hearts  
you're one lucky kid

though you can't yet know  
your keen senses surely feel  
that love swaddles you

what wonders await  
what sights your wide eyes will see  
what far lands you'll know

you'll climb life's mountains  
and plumb its valleys' dark depths  
learning as you go

those who gave you life  
love you just for who you are  
not for what you'll do



Tyghe

## **ONLY A MOTHER CAN KNOW**

her soul-crushing loss  
secreted behind a veil  
of smiling good cheer

grief's smothering shroud  
cloaks her tomb of living death  
gladness cannot pierce

some few know her pain  
mothers' tear-drenched lost-child club  
woe to those who join

pin-hole views both ways:  
our sweet love and lucky life,  
her dark lonely cave

despair's icy grip  
can't endure but can't move on  
none but moms can know



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