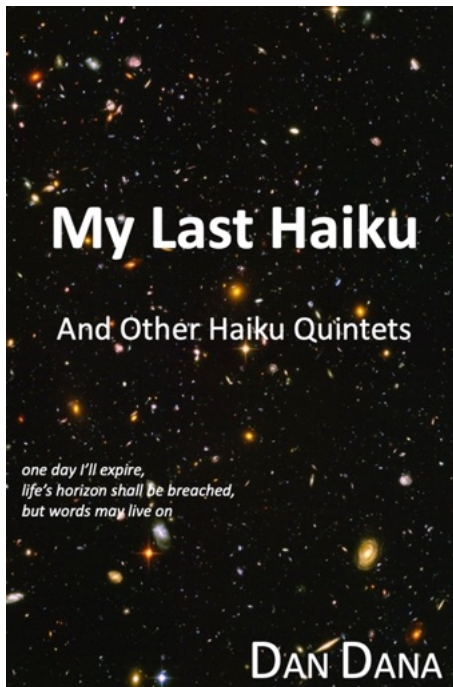


Cover mock-up



My Last Haiku *and Other Haiku Quintets*

I strive to pack maximum meaning into seventeen syllables in three unrhymed lines in 5-7-5 format, adopting the 17th Century Japanese style. 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 finished piece. I dub this novel art form "poetic impressionism by curious wordcraft."



Inspired by Hemingway's iceberg theory, I aim for potent minimalism. The visible tip leaves the bulk of these poems unwritten, unspoken, untold for your personal discovery — the image in your mind's eye, the tug at your heart, the punch to your gut. As you read and think, their fuller meaning emerges Rorschach-like from your own rich underworld, beneath the surface of your mind, unnoticed until this moment, untold until you tell it.

Five Palms Press
dandana.us/fivepalms

Introduction

This poetic trail of crumbs picks up where *A Life Mostly Lived*, my previous memoir in verse, left off in 2022. These new poems are similarly constructed, each one a set of five (yes, a quintet) of haiku. But this time the haiku quintets proceed from the present, 2025, and travel back through the intervening years.

Some poems are life-snippets describing actual events, often referring to contemporary newsworthy matters the reader may recall from the headlines. Others address ideas, emotions, and musings occurring solely within the confines of my skull. Collectively, they represent life as I've lived it up to May 2025.

Inspired by Hemingway's iceberg theory, I aim for potent minimalism. The visible tip leaves the bulk of these poems unwritten, unspoken, untold, awaiting your discovery and completion by the image in your mind's eye, the tug at your heart, the punch to your gut. As you read and reflect, their fuller meaning emerges Rorschach-like from your own personal underworld, beneath the surface of your mind, unnoticed until this moment.

Some haiku quintets are lighthearted, perhaps entertaining. Others invite deeper reflection about life and its meanings. In each, the choice is yours.

A definition will be useful here:

Haiku Quintets: I strive to pack maximum meaning into the 17 syllables of the classical Japanese haiku form developed 400 years ago—a poem of three lines divided into 5, 7, and 5 syllables. But diverging from tradition, and perhaps committing other poetic heresies as well, my poems each consist of five haiku—thus a “haiku quintet”—comprising a single narrative theme and amounting to 85 syllables. A photo or image illustrates and completes the finished piece. I dub this novel art form “poetic impressionism by curious wordcraft.” Apologies to Basho for my unorthodoxy.

A memoir can be more than a reporting of events. I wish I knew my forebears' thoughts, beliefs, pursuits, and personal contemplations. Those gossamer threads comprising the fabric of their lives escaped being recorded in any satisfying depth, now lost forever. I have experienced a rich mental life, crumbs of which map the trail found on these pages. I invite you to peek into my private world along the way.

I'm eighty. Given the uncertain timing of my ultimate demise, this volume may be my final effort to gather scraps of this life I've mostly lived into a readable package. If I discover that I'm still breathing a few more orbits around our star, I may produce more. Dunno. Meanwhile, here is my harvest for this autumnal season.

Browse
Let your mind wander
Follow it there
Repeat

Excepting some images, AI is not used in the creation of these haiku quintets.

Preface

Legacy

hundreds of haiku,
roadkill along life's highway
these rich eighty years:

~ how to make love work,
~ facing death eyes wide open,
~ how and why we're here

what worth is writing
if these nuggets die with me,
to serve none but one?

one day I'll expire,
life's horizon shall be breached,
but words may live on ...

... in readers' lived lives
—to no greater legacy
could I dare aspire



My Last Haiku

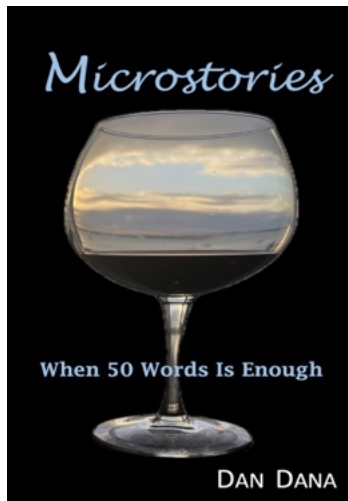
oh, my fickle muse,
you've found another lover
for your affections

we've had six good years
flitting from this whim to that,
producing offspring

your new partner's charms,
those magical fifty words,
tops my tired quintet

you seem to prefer
microstory's slender form,
prose poem's figure

carry on, my dear,
I will read your spawn with her
through haikuist tears



I began writing microstories in November 2024, which gradually replaced haiku quintets as my preferred form. A volume will be published in 2026.

22 May 2025