

Haiku Dojo
March 10 theme:

Across Generations
Employing Haiku to Explore Our Family Relationships,
Forward and Backward in Time

Dojo (Japanese) = “Place of the Way”

Haiku dojo uses poems to spark the group’s search for the “way”

This is an experimental design. Let’s debrief at the end of today’s meeting.

How it works:

1. Dan will read aloud the first of three to five selected haiku quintets that relate to a common theme. Each reading requires about one minute.
2. Attendees share thoughts, reflections, comments, questions evoked by that particular quintet for about ten minutes.
3. Dan reads the second selected haiku
4. Repeat discussion per step 2 above.
5. Upon completion of reading and reflecting on all haiku, we open a free-range discussion of any issues that arise of these readings.

Future haiku dojos may draw from the ever-expanding library of Dan’s haiku quintets (current count: 190). Found at www.dandana.us/poems/

Grandfather’s Lament

fruits of my daughter
precious beyond any toll
on their own way, now

their journey is launched
as teen, I once sailed their boat
they’re the captains now

yearning to know them
aching to be known by them

all granddads' lament?

but they hold no debt
I'm a busker on their street
few coins grace my hat

so, let them go now
my duty is mostly done
have a good life, kids!



Photo: With my now-college-age grandkids in Puerto Vallarta, 2007

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DISCUSS (10 minutes)

What did this evoke in you? memories – ideas – emotions

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The Young Widow

by fate's cruel hand

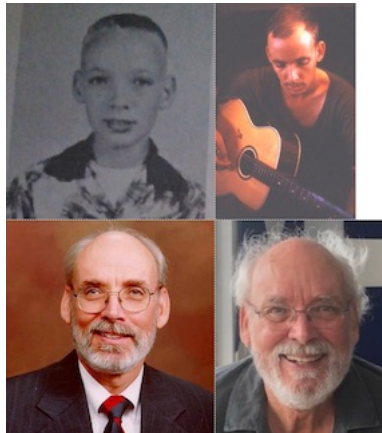
his ripe leaf fell from the branch
her burden doubled

her three charges weighed
testing daily her lone strength
her limbs bore their load

no man to heed her
young woman's natural needs
too proud to settle

she tilled her hard ground
tending we sprouts 'til harvest
her beloved yield

the boy could not know
by his age's innocence
what she did for me



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DISCUSS (10 minutes)

What did this evoke in you? memories – ideas – emotions

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14 December 2019

My Dad

14 December 1874 - 22 April 1955

late birthday salute
age one-hundred-forty-five
I'm your final child

totem of my youth
aspirational model
pedestal figure

dwindling few of us
remember your twinkling eyes
what thoughts stirred your mind?

when I reach your years
who'll recall my twinkling eyes?
some aging poet?

meanwhile, life goes on
busy living here-and-now
just like you, Old Man



J. W. Dana circa 1919

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DISCUSS (no time limit)

What did this evoke in you? memories – ideas – emotions

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DEBRIEF:

Did this dojo design work for you?

Suggestions for improvement?

If we repeat, what themes from the list below would most interest you?

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Other haiku, if time allows:

20 January 2021

Voice of a Nulled Child

I was contraceived
spared a life of misery
I'll not beget more

poor Yoruba girl
forced by husband to submit
deprived of due choice

she dreamed of freedom,
schooling, opportunity
her stolen birthright

my nulled progeny
myriad unchosen lives
preempted today

a million years hence
endless cycle averted
thank you, Pathfinder*



Image source: Africa on-line

*Pathfinder International – www.pathfinder.org – an NGO providing women’s health and contraceptive resources in poor countries around the world

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25 December 2019

My Mom
25 December 1918 – 15 September 2009

Christmas-born baby
sturdy hardscrabble farm-folk
third of six, five boys

learned love from Grandma
sacrificed past my knowing
selflessness unseen

music, prized heirloom
kindness, greatest gift of all
I sip from her depth

I claim no esteem
by genes and her example
she created me

village raises child

nature's treasures I'm bequeathed
but first, my mother



Photo circa 1919

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2 March 2020

We Are Accidental People

two million years past,
our concestor's mom conceived,
one stout sperm out-swam

bested brother-horde
every human since descends
if other won, who?

what hist'ry would be?
whole other population,
wars, leaders, prophets

that quirk's chance result:
what is now would not have been,

strange facts would be true

if alt granddad won,
I would not be writing this,
nor you reading it

Image: Our grandmother (100,000 generations ago). Fossil reconstruction from likely period of the most recent common ancestor (concestor) of all humans alive today.



Image source: Houston Museum of Natural Science (hmns.org)

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Future(?) haiku dojo themes:

- Death
- Maintaining emotional closeness in long-term partnerships
- What is art?
- Surviving and thriving in quarantine
- Cosmology (nature and history of the universe)
- Anti-natalism (is life inherently “good”?)
- Existentialism and solitude
- Trumpism
- Racism

- Mediation

Peruse Dan's haiku library for other themes: www.dandana.us/poems/