

HAIKU MAZE

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What it is The Haiku Maze is a permutational word device for creating 17-syllable poems by working the maze.

How to use it Start at the upper left corner. Follow the path with your pencil to the first word-space. Draw a circle around one of the four words. Leave the word-space by an unused path and continue to the next word-space. Repeat this procedure till you've reached Finish. Go back to Start and read the words you have circled on your path. It's a haiku.

Type it up in three lines with 5 syllables in the first, 7 in the second, and 5 in the third. Sign your name and send it to the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, or the *Saturday Review*, and they're bound to publish it. If they don't, don't give up! Work through the maze again and get another one to send. Because of all the different word choices, you can make exactly 763,363,328 haiku - more than all that have been published in the history of the world.

Readers of *Word Ways* may be interested in a bit of background about this verse form. The traditional Japanese haiku is an untitled, unrhymed lyric poem of 17 syllables in 3 lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. It is almost wholly restricted to natural images, and it must state or imply a season or New Year's Month. In the original Japanese, the haiku contains no punctuation. Instead, it uses *kireji* (cut-words) like *kana*, marking the end of the poem, and *ya*, dividing it into two parts that are to be equated or compared.

Some authorities believe that haiku originated in the 16th century from *hokku* (starting verse). *Hokku*, containing 3 lines each, were given to competitors in the Japanese court amusement called "verse-capping," in which the poet-competitors had to add two additional lines to form a 5-line poem called a *tanka*. Basho (1644-1694) and Buson (1715-1783) have been called "the two pillars of haiku." Issa (1762-1783), however, is regarded by some as a rebel in the haiku world. Chiyo (1703-1775), another great haiku poet, has been underrated in importance and slighted in popularity, possibly because of her sex. Many early haiku occur in works that are mainly prose, such as Basho's diaries. Others are preceded by forewords which relate the circumstances that inspired them.

In 1910, Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and fellow American poets in the Imagist movement were among the first in the West to look toward haiku for fresh ideas. By 1957 around 50 Japanese magazines published a total of almost a million haiku annually.

