

# THE PIKU

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The word-length pi mnemonic has been around for some time; a classic example, said to have been composed by physicist Sir James Jeans, is:

*How I need a drink, alcoholic in nature, after the heavy lectures  
involving quantum mechanics!*

In this sentence, the number of letters in each successive word "spells out" the initial digits of the irrational number pi, whose value begins 3.141592653589793238462643383...

In this article we introduce the doubly-constrained writing form which I call the piku: a standard haiku (with three lines of 5-7-5 syllables) that also obeys the pi word-length constraint. Here are a few examples, ranging in style from traditional to modern:

Bud, a stem, a bloom  
sheltered by Basho's great oak.  
Large protects smallness.

For a week I sweat  
threshing my field's wheat and chaff  
Dualists' nightmare.

Man, I know, I sense,  
struggles to deduce life's end.  
Silly endeavor.

Fog, a mist, a cloud  
enshrouds an island hotel.  
God-awful furlough.

See a fist, a shake--  
Beethoven so defies death.  
The Fifth Symphony.

Now I take a break  
strolling on Stokes Beach for hours.  
Glorious nighttime.

It's a bird, a plane,  
appearing in cloudy skies--  
It's brave Superman!

Yes, I call a bluff  
 unfolding my strait flush now.  
 Poker champion.

Egg, a beer, a steak  
 decorates my shower floor.  
 I've drunk overmuch.

We next offer an homage to Alfred Hitchcock's movie *The Birds* in four piku stanzas. This was inspired by observing that in English the names of the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter) are all six letters long! Thus the four stanzas, each representing a season (the title is also a pi mnemonic):

#### IT'S A BIRD, O ALFIE HITCHCOCK

Dew, a mist, a steam  
 ascending in spring azure;  
 the skies overcast.

Now I view a scene  
 (Hitchcock, in summer movie):  
 "The Birds" permeate.

See a bird, a flock  
 gathering in autumn skies;  
 the panic persists.

For a time I stand  
 listening to winter winds;  
 the peril subsides.

And finally, a single-stanza summary of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven":

Now a thud, a knock  
 unsettles my window panes;  
 The Raven intrudes.