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Pools of Water: An Exposition of Traditional and American-Style Haiku

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Haiku is a Japanese form of poetry that traditionally contains 17 syllables, ordinarily arranged in three line-phrases of 5-7-5 syllables. The intention of each haiku is to demonstrate the similarity between disparate entities, where the similarity is not completely obvious, or stand in juxtaposition. The poems are focused on nature and the natural world. The language used in each poem is concise and imagery-dense. An American form of haiku has emerged that attempts to distill the use of language to 11 syllables delivered in three line phrases of 3-5-3 syllables with brevity of articles. Alternatively, American-style haiku accepts a relaxation of the 11-syllable requirement providing that an intense imagery is formed in the phrase. The following collection of ten original poems demonstrates those features with the motivating observations each taking place in Southwestern Michigan.

owls in night
resonant woodland
resident voice

rain falls silently
soft mist becoming droplets
mocha-skin glistens
a domestic drake
among green-headed mallards
unable to fly

grass florettes
undulating green
see the wind!

lucky find
blue ocean treasure
sand dollar

empty nest
no choice in fledging
crow’s black beak
small painted-turtle
wandered too far from water
not knowing the risk

cirrus clouds
september blue sky
queen anne’s lace

a tropical storm
that was born in Africa
rains on Michigan

firefly
starlight on the lawn
mating dance