



Welcome back to LEP.

This episode is called “Haiku in English 2” and it is the continuation of an episode I started in February this year.

I had to abandon the first part of this because of the noise of drilling and hammering from next door.

Now, the sounds of silence have returned, offering me space to come back to this zen-like topic.

Let's continue then and finish off the Haiku in English episode.

Several things to say at the start here:

1. A reminder of what I said in part 1, what haiku is, some of the things I read and what the aim of this episode is.

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2. LEPster haikus - I was amazed at the response that part 1 of this got.

I casually suggested that listeners could write in with their haikus, and some of the responses I got were incredible.

I read out most of them in episode [RAMBLEMANIA: 3+ Hours of English Listening & Learning with Luke \[976\]](#)

In this episode I am going to continue to read out some haiku by John Stevenson, following the advice of Helene Leclerc - a LEPster from Canada whose email inspired me to do this.

She writes haiku and is very inspired by the work of haiku poet John Stevenson.

John is probably the world's leading writer of haiku in English, and is a great talent. His haikus tend to focus on moments in everyday life, rather than on moments of natural beauty and changing seasons like in traditional Japanese haiku.

We will explore some more of his haiku in this episode and I will use them to teach you some English.

Amazingly enough, this afternoon I have a call scheduled with John himself, and so I thought I had to finish the haiku episode, and get it all fresh in my mind once again.

How did that happen? Helene from Canada shared my haiku episode with John, and I am glad to say that he was very gracious and positive about it, and expressed an interest in having a chat

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with me, so I took the chance to arrange a call with him, and he was happy to do that.

The call is scheduled for later this afternoon, and I'll be making a podcast with John.

I have been wondering what kinds of questions I can ask him in order to allow him to reveal his process for writing his poetry, why he chooses haiku, and perhaps to reveal the thinking and experiences behind some of his work.

That is in my mind as I record this.

Will the John Stevenson episode be published next week? Maybe. Maybe not. You know I like to keep you on your toes, so we will see.

Actually, I should know from past experience that I should not count my chickens before they hatch, and talk about podcast episodes that I haven't actually recorded yet.

Of course, there might be a problem with the call today - maybe we will have technical difficulties or something else that could make the podcast recording impossible.

So, who knows, it might not happen, but hopefully the gods of podcasting will smile upon us and, at some point, you will be able to hear my conversation with the man who wrote so many of the interesting haiku we will be reading in this episode.

Let's continue to read haiku by John Stevenson + some more.

As ever, these will give me a chance to ramble a bit, comment on the overall meaning of the haiku and I can pick out bits of vocabulary to teach you as well.

PDF available as usual.

John Stevenson haiku

29.

used bookstore
the creaking stairway
to poetry

Mariposa - May, 2009

30.

so much
of what I do
involves my body

Raw Nervz - Volume VII:3, 2001

31.

class reunion
everybody loved
my wife

The Heron's Nest - Volume 6:8, 2004

32.

one of your sighs
has stayed with me
forty years, so far

Hermitage - Volume 2, 2005

33.

trying to fit in
time for my son to practice
parallel parking

Upstate Dim Sum - 2001/I, 2001

34.

jampackedelevatoreverybuttonpushed

Frogpond - Volume XXV:2, 2002

35.

all new clothes
waiting for
the school bus

Starfish - Number 6, 2001

36.

autumn wind
the leaves are going
where I'm going

The Heron's Nest - Volume 5:10, 2003

37.

thin winter coat
so little protection
against her boyfriend

Geppo - January\February, 2000

38.

one last look
through the old apartment
a dry sponge

The Heron's Nest - Volume 5:5, 2003

39.

seeing it her way
it must have been lonely
living with me

Upstate Dim Sum - 2001/II, 2001

40.

the tethered dog
watches a guide dog
enter the deli

Upstate Dim Sum - 2001/I, 2001

41.

dad's life
just a little longer
than Napoleon's

Upstate Dim Sum - 2001/1, 2001

42.

on top of everything
rain

Frogpond - Volume XXIII:3, 2000

43.

a change in their voices . . .
children finding
a fledgling

The Heron's Nest - Volume 4:11, 2002

44.

alone again
making an event
of a sandwich

Some of the Silence, 1999

45.

between my rush to be ready
and her arrival –
a space

Modern Haiku - Volume XXIX:1, 1998

46.

tourist town
postcards of the waterfall
racked upside-down

Brady Senryu Contest, 1997

47.

nude beach
his enormous
sand castle

Brady Senryu Contest, 1996

48.

border of sleep
the sound of nearby breathing
. . . mine

Raw Nervz - Volume II:4, 1996

49.

revising poems
a third cup of tea
from the same bag

Frogpond - Volume XXI:1, 1998

And finally...

Haiku only for LEPsters

I think if you are a true LEPster, these ones will resonate with you in some way.

Let me read these, without offering any other comments. I will let you decide if they mean something to you.

Feel free to share your thoughts in the comment section.

Haiku for LEPsters

50.

**Morning earbuds in
A voice walks me through the woods
English wakes me up**

51.

**English on the bus
A joke lands half a second late
Still, I laugh out loud**

52.

**Late night listening
Words slow down my racing thoughts
Sleep learns English too**

53.

Years of quiet doubt
Then suddenly I'm speaking
English says hello

54.

Train full of strangers
I laugh at something he said
But no one knows Luke

55.

Scrolling through the feed
"Maybe today?" I wonder
There it is. I smile.

56.

Bus stops, traffic jams
Three hours suddenly shrink
Long episode saved me

57.

I nod like I'm wise
Understanding everything
Then someone else speaks

58.

Laughing on the tram
I pretend I'm on a call
Very serious call

59.

Episode finished
I check the length, relieved
Two hours. Thank you.

60.

Clear voice in my ears
But chaos in the real world
I'll stay here a bit

61.

A skeleton sits
Headphones on, still listening
Intro not done yet

And finally I thought we could end by going back to Helene from Canada.

After telling me she had plucked up the courage to write her email to me, she included these two haiku that she wrote, [in French](#) (I will translate them).

62.

je t'écris un courriel
mon ombre
joue du piano

I'm writing you an email
my shadow
plays the piano

63.

le chat
traverse le clavier
« Pp-^90sr87

The cat
crosses the keyboard
"Pp-^90sr87"

And that is the end of the introduction to this episode. An introduction to haiku, in English.

I hope you enjoyed it.

One more comment from me.

When you have finished listening to this - when the episode is done and you have turned it off, just allow yourself some moments of silence.

Don't listen to anything else.

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Just stop and allow yourself a few minutes of silence.

No input or distractions.

Just sit with yourself for a few minutes in silence and see what thoughts come to you.

They might come in English.

Just let them come and observe them.

And maybe share them in the comment section.

And to prove you listened until this point, use the word *silence* in your comment.

I'll let you decide how to do it.

Don't forget to claim your certificate, which you will find on the episode PDF.

Certificate & Medal Award



More famous Japanese haiku translated into English

<https://thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/files/original/50a61193bc1caf7a3c86b9acc96d4b44.pdf>

More John Stephenson haikus from a collection called Some of the Silence

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<https://www.thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/files/original/11a9e7e281bd3ce5fb12d5fdac90cade.pdf>

And others to pick from

<https://livinghaikuanthology.com/index-of-poets/alphabetical-listings/229-s-poets/343-stevenson,-john.html>
