

Keys to Renku

Key One: form

5-7-5-7-7, linked poetry

Connect to the poet before you (first poet: 5-7-5, next poet 7-7, then 5-7-5 again)

Cherry blossoms, love, and the moon are referenced in specified verses

Key Two: word choice

Choose sight, sound, smell, taste or movement words.

Key Three: “Kigo” word

....a season word, a nature word, a weather word

....a word that gives a *hint or a clue* to the season

(In a 36-verse *renku*, seasons change approximately every 8-9 verses.)

Key Four: present tense

Write from real experience or memory of the moment.

Key Five: *Show* the feeling, but do not tell or explain.

Key Six: Surprise! An “ah!” moment that wakes us up.

(In a 36-verse *renku*, the first 6 verses are calm. The next 24 verses can have change, humor, or unexpected turns, and the last 6 gradually fade and mute in terms of imagery)

Key Seven: Compassion toward nature.

Adapted from “Seven Keys to Writing Haiku” in:

Donegan, Patricia. *Haiku: Asian Arts & Crafts for Creative Kids*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing. 2003.