

# Citrus Haiku

**Celebrating citrus fruits  
using the ancient form of Japanese poetry**

**Natty Mark Samuels**

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using the ancient form of Japanese poetry**

# Introduction

I first came across haiku poetry in my early twenties, while reading the writings of Kerouac, Ginsberg and Snyder, who mentioned and referenced Basho and other haiku masters, in their writings and interviews.

Basho is seen as the greatest exponent of haiku. A seventeenth century figure, his writings continue to thrill and captivate me.

This ancient form of Japanese poetry is based around a format of three lines; of five, seven and five syllables consecutively. Haiku pays homage to the natural world; so I have used it here to celebrate the members of the Rutaceae family: the citrus fruits.

My renditions focus more on educational content, rather than poetic brilliance: a writer of classical haiku I am not! But just like another medium I use – plays for voices – after reading 'Under Milkwood' by Dylan Thomas, its another channel of creativity with which to inform, to educate, encouraging more use of citrus: accepting the generosity they offer.

Number sixty is about my father, who lives in Cambridge near Montego Bay, growing grapefruit and oranges – ortaniques – amongst the other fruit and vegetables he cultivates.

The inspiration to use this form of writing for this collection, which I've used here and there over the years, came from reading the compilation of haikus of the African-American novelist, Richard Wright, published as 'Haiku: The Last Poems of an American Icon.'

# Dedication

to

**Matsuo Basho**

the 17<sup>th</sup> century Japanese poet

and to

**Richard Wright**

the 20<sup>th</sup> century American novelist.

# Citrus Haiku

1

God said let there be  
Vitamins and minerals  
So gave us citrus

2

Like a sacred bell  
Or the fullness of large breasts  
The citron hangs there

3

Dreamt a dream of lime  
I gave to everyone  
Wishing for world health

4

The fairy tale man  
Enchanted by citrus groves  
Paused in Paradise

5

Rising from the bed  
Blessings of lime and water  
The daily ritual

6

Green Tea with Lemon  
For the one who's hungover  
Commencing detox

7

A priest called Clement  
Working alongside orphans  
Birthed a citrus child

**8**

Catching the lemon  
She then throws it back to him  
Dream of love begins

**9**

The Calamansi  
Treasure of the Phillipines  
Enrichment for all

**10**

In Guinea Bissau  
I will fight the cholera  
I'm the friend called lime

**11**

Lime juice and honey  
Little one's stomach problem  
He's yearning to play

**12**

Let there be salad  
Mango and Avocado  
A dressing of lime

**13**

Cursing the pysillid  
The ferryman of disease  
No lemons today

**14**

In Hormozgan and in Fars  
The traditions of Iran  
Pickling of citrons

**15**

The one with ear locks  
Amongst *citrus medica*  
In Calabria

**16**

Take me to Belize  
A Hibiscus Lemonade  
Sorell water lime

**16**

Bring some fresh ginger  
As well as the juice of lime  
Sprinkle cardoman

**17**

Do you like sherbet  
Mixing the lime and ginger  
As in India

**18**

Towards the temple  
With gift of a Buddhas Hand  
The yellow prayer

**19**

Although I am small  
I am big with medicine  
Healer called kumquat

**20**

Try a marmalade  
Limequat and Calamondin  
Dream topping of toast

**21**

One day I will hold  
Some treasures of Amalfi  
Lucent in my hand

**22**

To the one who's sad  
Take this gift of lemon juice  
With elderflower

**23**

Take me to Belize  
A Hibiscus Lemonade  
Sorell water lime

**24**

Salmons and oysters  
I am their embellishment  
Known as finger lime

**25**

If there is the lime,  
Let there be blueberry too  
Partners in a pie

**26**

On Ica River  
Aroma to entrance you  
Where satsumas grow

**27**

Abaco Islands  
The time to reap the grapefruit  
A tall glass with ice

**28**

Goombay drummers play  
Water with lime and cane juice  
Bahamas bounty

**29**

I'll drink a tea there  
Lemon cinnamon and cloves  
Indonesia

**30**

A picker of leaves  
Lime soursop lemongrass  
A bush tea tonic

**31**

Green Lentil Salad  
Sprinkled with some lemon juice  
Lake Tana picnic

**32**

Stint in Paraguay  
And a bread of tangarine  
Warm from the oven

**33**

Winter Solstice time  
Young and old bathe with yuzu  
Best wishes for one and all



**34**

Theophrastus knew  
Of the goodness of citron  
For the parts inflamed

**35**

Tunisia calls  
Roasted peppers with feta  
Lemons and capers.

**36**

Almond cake request,  
Zest of orange and lemon  
A sunshade cafe

**37**

In the Lone Star State  
It is the official fruit  
The grapefruit called Red.

**38**

After all the years  
The old still cherishes  
Lemonade with shade

**39**

When making the jam  
There will be nuts and honey  
With a grapefruit base

**40**

If that's what you want  
Pineapple grapefruit orange  
A salad of fruit

**41**

Season of sampling  
Try a lemonade of lime  
Thai chilli and mint

**42**

Isle of Grenada  
Patrick Delves is one who knows  
Juice and leaf of lime

**43**

Great Ayurveda  
Ancient knowledge of citrus  
Fighters of fever

**44**

Herbal tea intake  
Must try a cup of Earl Grey  
Due to bergamot

**45**

A herb-infused oil  
From the *citrus maxima*  
Delighting the skin

**46**

Fridge of red and white  
From the Food Bank donations  
Grapefruit oil for all

**47**

Ionian Sea  
Come sing of Albania  
Song of Mandarin

**48**

Under waterfall  
After the use of towel  
Lemon oil dousing

**49**

Said she needs a mask  
Of strawberry and honey  
With a lemon boon

**50**

Mother of grapefruit  
A citrus ancestor  
Grandma Pomelo

**51**

Between the three seas  
*Citrus bergamia* blooms  
For perfume and tea

**52**

Far as the eye sees  
Green upon green upon green  
Lime in Mexico

**53**

Black eyes busted lips  
Tradition of Ivrea  
War of oranges

**54**

Monk went to a lake  
Built there a monastery  
Grew the first lemons

**55**

An orange sunset  
In a small lemon orchard  
The two lovers lay

**56**

Threw him a lemon  
Snuggled on the green sofa  
Night of engagement

**57**

They call me Ugli  
What I give is beautiful  
Give to one and all

**58**

Sleep well Eliza  
California gives thanks  
For gift of orange

**59**

Saluting Frank Meyer  
Those lemons seen in Beijing  
Bear his name today.

**60**

Coconut oil choice  
With the peel of clementine  
Then the time to steep

**61**

Citrus foreparents  
Either end of the glasshouse  
Two mandarin trees

**62**

Old man ancient soil  
In a village near Mo Bay  
His grapefruit garden

**63**

Eucalyptus hedge  
Of bamboo and pine also  
Defending citrus

**64**

The chinotto fruit  
Orange table tennis balls  
Ping pong in your mouth

**66**

The time of slicing  
Ready for all the requests  
Barman and lemons

**67**

Yellow saves the town  
Landslide cannot make progress  
The lemon tree roots

**68**

Those who pray in mosques  
Left offerings of citrus  
Blessing Sicily

**69**

It used to bring death  
Then suffering went away  
Citrus antidote

**70**

Indian River calls  
Invite to the lime groves there  
Of course I accept

**71**

Hats of white netting  
Hands enclosed in gloves of white  
Sorting of the limes

**72**

Whisk me to Greece now  
To satisfy my sweet tooth  
Orange Filo Cake

**73**

Atop a ladder  
A large bag around his waist  
Harvest of orange

**74**

The one called "the Great"  
First citrus into Europe  
Greece and the citron

**75**

Brought a sacred book  
And gems orange and yellow  
The Word and citrus

**76**

Release the lever  
Sweet avalanche of yellow  
Washing of lemons

**77**

Visiting Japan  
First stop at Hiroshima  
Walk the lemon groves

**78**

I am a Sumo  
Of mandarin and orange  
The sweetest wrestler

**79**

Bring vermilion  
Of kumquat with mandarin  
The Mandarinquat

**80**

Happy little one  
With her beloved grandad  
Orange lime smoothie

**81**

Ras Tafari came  
Land of those who bear his name  
Gift of ortanique

**82**

Let death not come now  
His last culinary wish  
Of rice and lemon

**83**

The boy loves lemons  
Picked today by mum and dad  
A Tucuman farm

**84**

Heard someone mention  
Some Coconut Curried Eggs  
Spoons of lemon juice

**85**

The song and the dance  
Lemon tree waltz in the wind  
Let me sit awhile

**86**

While here in England  
Interaction with Brazil  
Orange juice breakfast

**87**

What the old man grows  
His wife of decades uses  
Making lemon oil

**89**

Beehives in orchard  
Makes Orange Blossom Honey  
Gift for your Sweetheart

**90**

Warm air and cold air  
Dream of the microclimate  
A citrus milieu

**91**

Song of Satsuma  
From the anthem of citrus  
Echoes through the grove

**92**

Boy chases the girl  
Through the orchard of grapefruit  
Towards the first kiss

**93**

Gretel feels hungry  
Lemon Souffle reverie  
Cafe Vienna

**94**

What choice for dessert  
Orange and lemon pudding  
The rind and the juice

**95**

Let there be peace now  
Let citrus be its symbol  
So bright and beneficial

**96**

A drink of green juice  
Grapefruit orange and apple  
Input from green tea

**97**

Emperor Nero  
Fearful of being poisoned  
Drank *citrus limon*

**98**

I've sat in it twice  
Patio of Oranges  
Mosque of Cordoba

**99**

Daydream Morocco  
With cups of spiced lemon tea  
Cinnamon and cloves

**100**

Caress of orange  
As it embraces the toast  
Blessings from Seville

**101**

The ageing father  
Now passes onto his son  
The lime orchard skills

**102**

And they knew back then  
In Mesopotamia  
Lemon medicine

**103**

Grapefruit orange lime  
With the black teas of Asia  
A blend from Russia

**104**

Little grandmother  
A legend in Corsica  
Her cakes of citron

**105**

Begin the tempting  
Blood orange juice in a glass  
Scarlet elixir

**106**

Wish I was a drone  
Flying above the orchards  
Photographing lime

**107**

Their disembarking  
With bags and headwear for sun  
Time to pick lemons



**108**

One day Florida  
I'll walk through your citrus groves  
Footsteps of the priests

**109**

Blue-apparelled man  
A picker of mandarins  
Blue amongst orange

**110**

Excited schoolboy  
Brings baking powder and eggs  
Lemon orange cake

**111**

A pause from surfing  
For a Tahiti lime juice  
Return to the sea

**112**

Let's shower Sweetheart  
Then I shall dry you after  
Bless you with lime oil

**113**

So tell me Basho  
Master poet of Haiku  
Citron or orange

**114**

Candlelit dinner  
A lemon espalier  
The talk and laughter

**115**

Morning of lemon  
Afternoon of white grapefruit  
Evening of orange

**116**

Let me bolster you  
Turmeric and Lemon Tea  
The time to repair

**117**

Yes Culpeper knew  
That for the heart and stomach  
Citron and lemon

**118**

I give thanks Matisse  
For your lemon eulogies  
Still life in yellow

**119**

Take me Lime River  
To the haven of citrus  
That island of peace

**120**

Don't be lonely now  
The mandarins are waiting  
Aroma of hope

**121**

Cries herself to sleep  
But when she wakes tomorrow  
Drink of lime water

**122**

He's on a mission  
To heal the world with citrus  
Yellow orange green

# Sources

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# Notes

**4**

"The fairy tale man" is Hans Christian Anderson, who travelled in Italy in 1833 and 1834.

**8**

During the Timkat celebrations in Ethiopia, young male admirers throw lemons at young woman they're attracted to, hoping they'll be caught and returned, as a signal to go forward.

**13**

The Asian citrus psyllid is an insect which is a vector (carrier) of disease, which infects and kills citrus trees.

**21**

Amalfi is a coastal region in Italy, famous for its lemon production.

**23**

Representatives of the international Hasidic communities, verge on Calabria in southern Italy, to harvest citron for the Feast of Tabernacles, otherwise known as Sukkot.

**25**

Father Clement, a French priest working in an Algerian orphanage, is recognised as the originator of clementines.

**26**

Ica River is in Peru.

**27**

The Abaco Islands are part of The Bahamas.

**31**

Lake Tana is in Ethiopia, source of the Blue Nile.

**33**

They bathe with the yuzu fruit in Japan, in public hot baths or hot springs.

**34**

Theophrastus, a Greek philosopher, is known as the "Father of Botany"

**37**

The Lone Star State is Texas

**43**

Ayurveda is the ancient and contemporary form of medicine in India.

**45**

*Citrus maxima* is the botanical name for the pomelo, the largest of the citrus fruits.

**51**

*Citrus bergamia* is the botanical term for bergamot, mainly grown in Calabria, Italy.

**53**

Ivrea is a town in northern Italy, where there is an annual three day battle of oranges, commemorating the victory over a medieval tyrant.

**54**

Lake Garda in Italy

**57**

Ugli was first known in Jamaica.

**58**

Eliza Tibbetts was the pioneering figure of orange cultivation in California

**59**

Meyer lemons are named after the botanist, Frank Meyer, who brought cuttings back to America, after travel in China.

**63**

Defence from the strong winds

**64**

The Chinotto is most associated with the Liguria region in Italy.

**68**

Arabs bought lemons and sour oranges to Sicily, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

**69**

Citrus – lemons and lime – conquered scurvy.

**70**

Indian River in Florida.

**75**

The Catholic missionaries – Franciscan and Jesuit – were the ones who first brought citrus into California, Florida and Arizona.

**81**

When Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie) went to Jamaica in 1966, the government gave him an ortanique – of orange and tangerine - as a national gift.

**83**

Tucuman is the main citrus growing region in Argentina.

**118**

Nicholas Culpeper was a 17<sup>th</sup> century English herbalist and astrologer.