

Citrus Haiku

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

Natty Mark Samuels

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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 17th century Japanese poet

and to

Richard Wright

the 20th 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 vermillion
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 9th 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 tangarine - as a national gift.

83

Tucuman is the main citrus growing region in Argentina.

118

Nicholas Culpeper was a 17th century English herbalist and astrologer.