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Basho, Japan's best known haiku poet said, "In writing, do not let a hair's breath separate yourself from the subject." He also stated, "You can learn about the pine only from the pine, and about the bamboo from the bamboo."

An old pond...
a frog leaps in,
the sound of water.

Basho

In the spring rain:
talking to each other
go raincoat and umbrella.

Buson

Autumn mosquitoes
buzz me, bite me...see, I am
long prepared for death.

Shiki

On the temple bell
a butterfly has settled
and is sleeping.

Buson

On a bare branch
a crow has settled...
autumn evening.

Basho

As the festival dancing dies,
the sound of the wind in the pine trees
and the insects' voices.

Sogetsu

Above the noise
of the gale in the pine-trees
the voices of the frogs.

Joso

In the spring rain:
talking to each other
go raincoat and umbrella.

Buson

Come
orphan sparrow
and play with me.

Issa

The mud-snail
crawls two or three feet,—
and the day is over.

Gomei

Calm and serene,
the frog gazes
at the mountains.

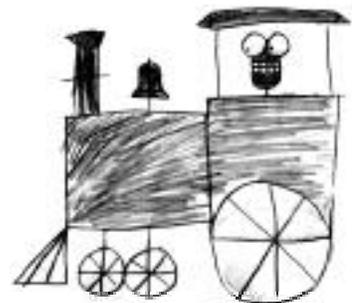
Issa

Now making friends
now scared of people,—
the baby sparrow.

Onitsura

Little sparrow
mind, mind out of the way,
Mr. Horse is
coming.

Issa



Mice in their nest
squeak in response
to the young sparrows.

Basho

The returning wild geese
mingle
with the pilgrims.

Ransetsu

Behind a line of warehouses,
where the swallows
fly up and down.

Boncho

The pheasant scratches
its beautiful face
with its spurs.

Kikaku

The man who says,
“My children are a burden,”—
there are no flowers for him.

Basho

Smoke from cooking rice
towers above the hamlet:
the voice of the hototogisu!

Issa

The fawn
shakes off the butterfly,
and sleeps again.

Issa

The butterfly,
even when pursued,
never appears in a hurry.

Garaku

Japanese haiku usually has a seasonal word or some reference to nature in them. To build understanding, everyone—students and teachers—could do a haiku every day from something they see or do during the day. They could share them with each other, and/or post them in the room and around the school.

A beautiful kite
rose from
the beggar’s hovel.

Issa

Falling to earth,
the kite had
no soul.

Kubonta

The old man
hoeing the field,
has his head-gear on crooked.

Kito

The man
hoeing in the field,
seems motionless.

Kyorai

The rice-seedling bed;
a small snake crosses
in the evening sunshine.

Oemaru

The crows of the wood
are gazing down
at the rice-seedling field.

Shiko

The man in the field;
all day long
the uguisu were far away.

Buson

The uguisu walked
in the garden,
a realm uninhabited by man.

Shoha

