

A BIRTHDAY CARD FOR JOHN CAGE ON HIS
100TH

a sudden rustling –
the alantnus drops a leaf
just before sunrise
tiny prayer flags lift
in the slightest passing breeze –
late summer crickets
what's this soft tapping?
downy woodpecker testing
October cornstalk
is it a bird's call?
someone walking in the dark
with one squeaky shoe

Probably Not Haiku



David P. Miller

December blizzard –
icicles multiplying
beneath orange street light
blue winter moonlight
paints the trees' tangled shadows
on our neighbor's snow

as snow piles higher
she stands in the parking lot
holding a shovel

So, are seventeen syllables a fetish or essential to the form? What about English syllables ("through" for example) being more complicated, heavier, chewier than Japanese? How do you know if you've nailed the seasonal reference? And is it ineffable enough?

Or, if you write three short lines recording some micro-observation, do you therefore have haiku? One line with seventeen syllables or fewer?

Or, if you say something funny in seventeen syllables, do you, *voilà*, have a funny haiku?

above corn stubble
solo goose honks, heading south
swallows wheel and call

scores of dry brown leaves
racing before us down the
cemetery road

low morning sunlight
across the suburban lawn
eleven turkeys

August morning chill
Blue jay cracks seed on a branch
I sip hot coffee

FIFTEEN SHORT POEMS

post tropical storm:
felt blanket dries in the sun
white winged seed drifts by

retaining wall stones
cradle tropical storm pools –
leaves twigs grass sunlight

single dry cornstalk
still standing in a patch of
muddy tractor prints

tiny rivulet
cleaving a straight way between
banks of dry cornstalks

young alantnus leaves
glow yellow-green at nighttime
beside the streetlight

we gaze from the bus
hovering above sidewalks
dogwood clouds blossom

fading lilac bush
its heavy fragrance raises
my eyes from the road

after weeks of rain
rain this July evening
drowsy with rain sounds

