

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

we gaze from the bus  
hovering above sidewalks  
dogwood clouds blossom

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

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

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

