

## Two Haiku

Poems by Matsuo Bashō

## Fireflies

Poem by Paul Fleischman

## Fireflies in the Garden

Poem by Robert Frost

# How do the SEASONS affect you?

### COMMON CORE

- RL 1** Cite evidence to support inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text. **RL 4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. **RL 5** Analyze how a poem's form or structure contributes to its meaning.

With shelters, cars, and climate controls of all kinds, it can sometimes be easy to overlook the dramatic changes that occur on the earth each year. But the seasons still determine the daily rhythms of our lives. As the poems you're about to read show, the changing seasons can even affect our emotions. How do the seasons make you feel?

**SURVEY** Conduct a survey of your classmates. Ask them for one or two words or phrases that they associate with each of the four seasons.

Record their answers in a graphic organizer like the one shown. Review your data when you are done. What patterns do you see?

	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>
<i>Student 1</i>				
<i>Student 2</i>				



## Meet the Authors

### ● POETIC FORM: HAIKU

**Haiku** is a form of poetry that originated hundreds of years ago in Japan. In haiku, poets seek to create a clear picture with few words. There are three key points to remember about traditional haiku.

- The entire poem consists of just 17 syllables arranged in three lines.
- The first and third lines each contain 5 syllables, and the second line has 7 syllables.
- Haiku centers on a symbol that instantly reminds its readers of a season.

The haiku by Bashō on page 596 are classics of the form.

### ● TEXT ANALYSIS: SYMBOL AND THEME

A **symbol** is a person, place, object, or activity that stands for something beyond itself. For example, the U.S. flag in your classroom is a symbol of the United States.

- Some symbols are unique to certain cultures. In Japan, for example, plum blossoms symbolize early spring.
- Some symbols are understood across cultures. For instance, in most cultures, a heart represents love.

By using symbols, poets are able to communicate rich and complex ideas quickly. As you read the poems, identify the symbols and think about the ideas and themes they express.

### ● READING STRATEGY: ASK QUESTIONS

Poets create images by using **sensory details**—words and phrases that appeal to the reader’s senses of sight, touch, taste, smell, and hearing. To help you **interpret**, or understand the meaning of, sensory details, ask yourself:

- What image or picture do the details help me “see” or imagine?
- What ideas do the details suggest?

As you read each poem, record your answers in a chart.

Poem	Sensory Details	What I “See”
	1. flickering, glimmering	1. blinking lights 2.



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

## Matsuo Bashō

1644–1694

### Japan’s Master Poet

Matsuo Bashō pursued a career as a samurai before devoting himself to the poetry that he had loved in his youth. He created a new style that raised haiku to the level of serious literature.

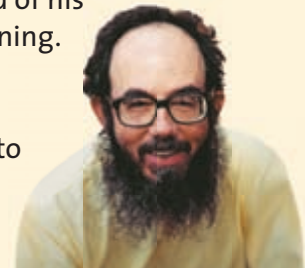


## Paul Fleischman

born 1952

### A Musician of Words

Poet Paul Fleischman gives as much attention to the sound of his words as to their meaning. Fleischman grew up playing piano with his mother and listening to his father, an author, read aloud.

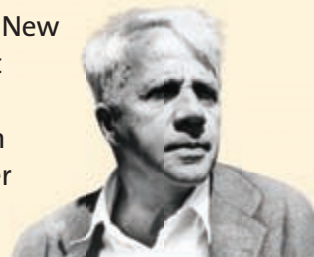


## Robert Frost

1874–1963

### A Legendary Poet

Robert Frost is one of the most beloved poets of the 20th century. As a young man, Frost ran a New Hampshire farm. The New England farmers Frost met were rich sources for his poetry. He won his first of four Pulitzer Prizes in 1924.



Authors Online

Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com). KEYWORD: HML7-595



# TWO HAIKU

Matsuo Bashō



*Plum Garden, Kameido* from *One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo* (1857), Utagawa Hiroshige. Photo © Christie's Images/Corbis.

On sweet plum blossoms<sup>1</sup>  
The sun rises suddenly.  
Look, a mountain path! **A**

A crow  
has settled on a bare branch—  
autumn evening. **B**

## **A** HAIKU

Identify at least one symbol in this poem. Also note which season the poem evokes.

## **B** SYMBOL AND THEME

What does the crow's arrival symbolize?

1. When haiku is translated from the original Japanese into English, the number of syllables per line sometimes changes slightly.



# Fireflies

Paul Fleischman

Light  
Night  
is our parchment<sup>1</sup>  
5  
fireflies  
flitting  
10 fireflies  
glimmering  
glowing  
Insect calligraphers<sup>2</sup>  
15 practicing penmanship  
Six-legged scribblers  
of vanishing messages,  
20 Fine artists in flight  
adding dabs of light  
Signing the June nights  
as if they were paintings  
25  
flickering  
fireflies  
fireflies.

Light  
is the ink we use  
Night  
We're  
fireflies  
flickering  
flashing  
fireflies  
gleaming **C**  
Insect calligraphers  
copying sentences  
Six-legged scribblers  
fleeting<sup>3</sup> graffiti  
Fine artists in flight  
bright brush strokes  
Signing the June nights  
as if they were paintings **D**  
We're  
fireflies  
flickering  
fireflies.

**C ASK QUESTIONS**

Reread lines 1–12. What words help you see the fireflies in your mind?

**D ASK QUESTIONS**

Reread lines 20–24. Notice that the fireflies are described as artists here. What kind of artists are they, and which sensory details help form this image?

1. **parchment:** fine-quality paper, usually made from the skin of goats or sheep.

2. **calligraphers** (kə-lyg'ra-fərz): creators of beautiful, elaborate handwriting.

3. **fleeting:** passing swiftly; soon gone.



# Fireflies in the Garden

Robert Frost

Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,  
And here on earth come emulating<sup>1</sup> flies,  
That though they never equal stars in size,  
(And they were never really stars at heart)  
5 Achieve at times a very star-like start.  
Only of course they can't sustain<sup>2</sup> the part. **E**

**E** **SYMBOL AND  
THEME**

Reread the poem and think about what the fireflies might symbolize.

- 
1. **emulating:** imitating.
  2. **sustain:** keep up; prolong.

## Comprehension

- 1. Recall** In the first haiku, what does the rising sun reveal? In the second haiku, where does the crow settle?
- 2. Clarify** In “Fireflies,” what is the “ink” the fireflies use?
- 3. Summarize** In what ways are the fireflies in “Fireflies in the Garden” unlike the stars they try to copy?

## Text Analysis

- 4. Ask Interpretive Questions** Look back at the list of sensory details that you made as you read each poem. Choose one of the details and explain its meaning in the poem.
- 5. Examine Haiku** Which haiku gives you a more hopeful feeling? Explain.
- 6. Evaluate Sound Devices** In “Fireflies,” Fleischman repeats many words and phrases. Which words does he repeat most often? What other example of **repetition** do you notice? Tell how this repetition reflects the subject of the poem.
- 7. Analyze Symbol and Theme** In “Fireflies in the Garden,” Robert Frost contrasts the stars in the “upper skies” with the fireflies “here on earth.” Use a chart like the one shown to explore the comparison more closely. What theme or larger idea about life might Frost be trying to express by using the fireflies as a symbol?

<i>Details About the Fireflies</i>	<i>My Thoughts</i>
<i>The flies copy the stars.</i>	
<i>The stars are in the sky, and the flies are on earth.</i>	
<i>The flies were “never really stars at heart.”</i>	
<i>The flies can shine like stars, but they “can’t sustain the part.”</i>	

### COMMON CORE

**RL 1** Cite evidence to support inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text. **RL 4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. **RL 5** Analyze how a poem’s form or structure contributes to its meaning.

## Extension and Challenge

- 8. Speaking and Listening** “Fireflies” is written for two voices. Work with a partner and prepare an oral reading of the poem. One of you should read the words in the left column while the other reads the words in the right. Perform your reading for the class. What images in the poem does reading aloud help to reinforce?

### How do the SEASONS affect you?

Write a traditional haiku about one season of the year. Express how that season affects you. (You might look back at the words and phrases you collected in the survey on page 594 for ideas.)