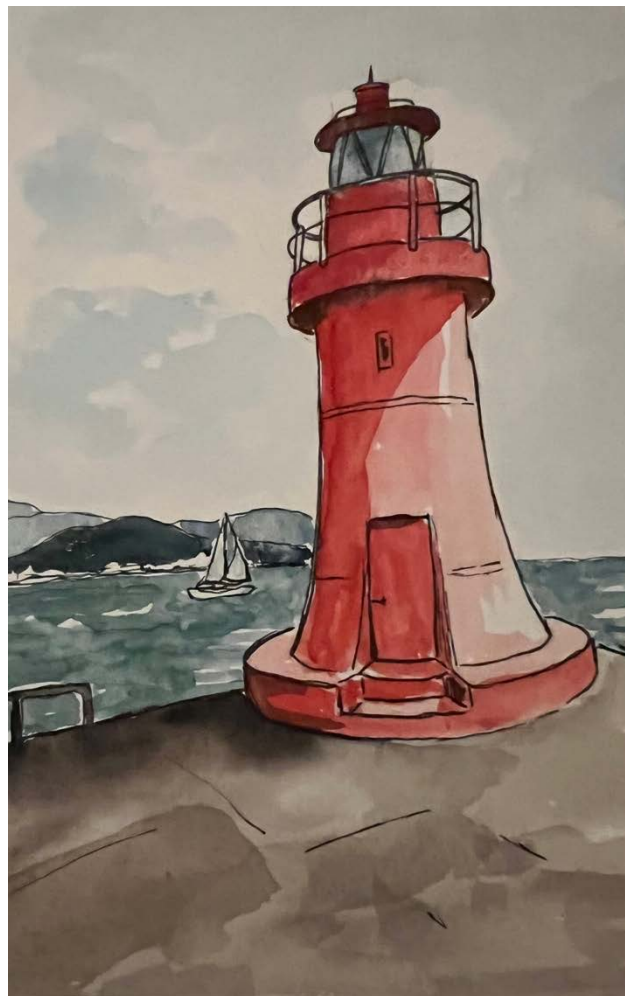


HAIKU FROM THE REGIONS OF LIGURIA AND TUSCANY IN HYBRID METAMORPHOSES

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INTRODUCTION

In this work, we present selected aspects of research conducted as part of the CAPHE project, focusing on mindfulness in an environment full of external diversity. Our goal was to capture moments that particularly caught our attention—ranging from observations of nature to interpersonal interactions and objects or events significant from the perspective of our research. These moments became the inspiration for creating poetic images in the form of haiku, enriched with introductory commentaries that help readers better understand the context of each reflection.

Our observations focused on the regions of Liguria and Tuscany in Italy. We found inspiration in the cities of La Spezia, Fezzano, and Florence, which served as our base for a deeper understanding of local culture and daily life. Valuable inspiration was also drawn from weekend trips to cities such as Pisa, Siena, and Carrara, where the unique atmosphere of these places enriched our experiences and contributed to the poetic records of the moment. Each haiku is accompanied by an introductory commentary that serves as an introduction to the image and thought, offering a broader understanding of the background and context of each moment.

Autoethnography was our primary research method, allowing us not only to observe the external world but also to reflect on our own experiences, emotions, and reactions. The haiku we created combine external observation with conscious introspection, revealing not only what we saw but also what moved us and held significance in the context of our research. The autoethnographic perspective allowed us to adopt a more holistic approach, integrating subjective experiences with objective analysis. This form of work enables a deeper understanding of the studied reality while acknowledging personal feelings, which are equally important in the cognitive process.

We have added visual images to our haiku, created using the DALL-E program. When generating the illustrations, we requested the watercolor painting technique, as watercolors perfectly convey the subtlety and transience of the moments we aimed to capture in our haiku. This technique allowed us to achieve a delicacy of colors and lightness that harmonize with the poetic form of our verses, emphasizing their ephemeral nature. These images serve as an artistic complement to the poetic content, together forming a coherent and multidimensional representation of our research. This work merges scientific precision with artistic expression, offering the reader both a reflective message and an aesthetic experience.

One of the key aspects of our research is its educational value. We believe that the combination of poetry, autoethnography, and visual representations can inspire both researchers and students to explore new forms of reflection and creative expression of their observations of the world. The introductory commentaries serve as an additional didactic tool, facilitating a better understanding of the context and meaning of the haiku, enriching the interpretation process. Through this work, we aim to promote an interdisciplinary approach to research, combining scientific and artistic elements to expand the possibilities of documenting and understanding reality.

We hope that our fusion of science and art will inspire others to seek new, creative ways of documenting their observations of the world and to reflect on their own experiences within the research context. We encourage the use of our poems, illustrations, and commentaries as starting points for discussion and creative explorations that may lead to the discovery of new, unexpected dimensions of reality.

PART I LIGURIA REGION



Fig. Liguria Region, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

In this part of the work, we focus on the region of Liguria, which has captivated us with its richness of nature, culture, and history. Liguria, located on the northwestern coast of Italy, is a land full of contrasts – from steep cliffs and mountain trails to charming seaside towns and bays. This region, a blend of natural beauty and cultural influences, has become a perfect setting for our haikus and visual explorations.

In the chapters dedicated to Liguria, we present haikus that emerged because of our experiences in this unique place. Every walk through La Spezia, every exploration of Fezzano, as well as visits to renowned places such as Cinque Terre and Porto Venere, served as a source of inspiration for us. Thanks to these experiences, we were able to capture in poetic form both the majestic landscapes and fleeting, delicate moments.

We invite you to join us on a journey through Liguria, where poetry meets imagery, and moments captured in words and watercolor come together to create a cohesive story of this extraordinary land. We hope that our poems and illustrations will help readers better understand and feel the beauty of this region – its diversity, its history, and the fleeting moments that leave an indelible impression.

Chapter 1 Liguria – A Mosaic of Nature, History, and Culture

Introduction

Liguria is a picturesque region located in northwestern Italy. It is a land rich in history and diverse culture. For centuries, it has captivated not only with its landscapes but also with its architecture and traditions, making it an excellent subject of literary and artistic studies. In this chapter, we will present the characteristics of this region, based on available literary sources, to provide a fuller understanding of its context for haiku poetry.

Geography and Nature of Liguria

Liguria stretches along the coast of the Ligurian Sea, from the border with France in the west to Tuscany in the east. The region is known for its mountainous terrain, with the highest peaks belonging to the Ligurian Alps and the Apennines (Capponi et al., 2006). Liguria's cliff-lined coastline, known as the Riviera, is divided into two main areas: the Riviera di Ponente (Western Riviera) and the Riviera di Levante (Eastern Riviera).

The climate of Liguria is Mediterranean, with several microclimates. According to Köppen's classification (Köppen, W., 1936), the coastal belt has a hot temperate climate, the southern part of the Alpine-Apennine Mountain chain has a moderate sub-marine climate, while the northern part features a moderate sub-continental climate (Fратиanni, 2017). Mountain areas higher than 1000 m above sea level are classified as having a cool temperate climate.

Liguria is characterized by exceptional biological diversity, encompassing species typical of Mediterranean areas as well as endemic plants and animals. National parks, such as the Cinque Terre National Park, testify to the natural richness of the region and play a key role in its conservation.

History of Liguria

In Italy, for over 25 years, scientific interest in topics related to geoheritage has been growing (Ferrando et al., 2021), and the history of Liguria dates back to prehistoric times when the area was inhabited by ancient Ligurian tribes. During the Roman period, Liguria became a strategically important region, as evidenced by numerous archaeological remains. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Liguria came under the influence of Byzantium, and later the Lombards.

The Middle Ages brought economic and cultural flourishing to Liguria, mainly due to the Republic of Genoa, which became a maritime power. Genoa, the capital of Liguria, was one of the most important trading ports in the Mediterranean and a financial center.

The historical significance of Liguria is evident in studies of human remains from the ancient necropolises of Sparacello and others (2021), as well as the potential role of Neanderthals in the region (Riel-Salvatore et al., 2022).

Culture, Traditions, and Literature of Liguria

The culture of Liguria is the result of its rich history and diverse influences. Ligurian cuisine, known for its fresh ingredients and aromatic herbs, exemplifies the region's culinary traditions. Dishes such as pesto alla genovese, focaccia, and truffles with walnut sauce reflect local flavors and culinary techniques.

Liguria is also renowned for its artistic craftsmanship, particularly in lacemaking and ceramics. Traditional festivals, such as the Festa della Focaccia in Recco, attract both locals and tourists, celebrating the region's heritage and culture.

Literature dedicated to Liguria is rich and diverse, encompassing both historical works and fiction. Writers like Italo Calvino, who spent his childhood in Sanremo, drew inspiration from the Ligurian landscape and culture. In his works, Calvino often referred to local myths, legends, and social realities, contributing to the popularization of Liguria in literature.

Contemporary literary studies also focus on the uniqueness of Liguria, analyzing its influence on the works of artists and writers. This helps us to better understand how this region has shaped and continues to shape the imagination of creators.

Chapter 2 Haiku by Elżbieta Perzycka-Borowska

2.1. The red lantern / Czerwona latarnia

*the red lantern
in La Spezia proudly stands
guardian of the sea of dreams*

*czerwona latarnia
w La Spezia dumnie stoi
strażnik morza snów*



Fig. The Red Lantern / Czerwona latarnia, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku transports us to the coastal city of La Spezia, where a red lantern stands as a steadfast guardian, watching over the “sea of dreams.”

The first line – “*the red lantern*” – immediately presents a vivid, almost painterly image, drawing the eye and setting the tone of quiet mystery. Red, the color of fire and passion, embodies both a warning and a promise of safety, creating a subtle tension between apprehension and reassurance. It is a beacon in the night, an unwavering light guiding those at sea.

The second line – “*in La Spezia proudly stands*” – anchors the haiku in a specific location, placing us at the gateway to the Ligurian Sea. The word “proudly” emphasizes the lighthouse’s enduring presence, underscoring its role as both a literal and symbolic guide. It has witnessed countless voyages, silently leading sailors home, yet it also takes on a broader meaning—representing guidance in life’s uncertain journeys, where all of us are, in some way, lost sailors seeking direction.

The final line – “*guardian of the sea of dreams*” – elevates the poem beyond the physical world, giving the lantern an almost mythical presence. It is no longer just a navigational aid but a protector of aspirations, a keeper of dreams. The “*sea of dreams*” evokes adventure, longing, and the vast unknown—a space where hope and uncertainty merge, mirroring the inner journey of every traveler.

This haiku seamlessly weaves a real-world landmark with universal human emotions, blending place and metaphor into a reflection on guidance, longing, and trust in the light that leads us forward. The red lantern, standing in the heart of the port, serves as a reminder of our own paths—of the guiding forces that help us find our way through the darkness. In its brief form, this haiku captures both the silent vastness of the sea and the energy of human dreams, inviting us to trust in the light that leads us toward safe shores.

2.2. On the windowsill / Na parapecie

*on the windowsill
two pigeons have perched
moment, last long*

*na parapecie
dwa gołębie usiadły
chwilo, trwaj długo*



Fig. On the windowsill / Na parapecie, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku captures a fleeting moment of stillness and connection, using a simple, everyday image as a gateway to deeper reflection on time and presence. Two pigeons perch on a windowsill, their sudden arrival creating a brief silence that unexpectedly resonates amid the rush of daily life.

The first line – “*on the windowsill*” – places us in an intimate, domestic space, which also serves as a threshold between the interior and the outside world. This seemingly insignificant architectural element becomes a symbolic meeting point—where the private and the shared, the human and the natural, subtly intertwine.

The second line – “*two pigeons have perched*” – introduces life and stillness at once. Pigeons, ever-present in urban landscapes, are often associated with companionship, peace, and even messages from afar. Their brief pause on the windowsill takes on a symbolic weight—it becomes a suspended moment in the ceaseless movement of the world, a metaphor for respite amidst the hurried pace of life. The fact that there are two birds rather than one emphasizes presence, harmony, and the quiet significance of shared experience.

The final line – “*moment, last long*” – is a direct, almost wistful plea to time itself, a recognition of transience and the desire to prolong that which soothes and reassures. This simple yet profound request underscores the fundamental human longing to hold onto serenity before it inevitably slips away. The brevity of haiku as a form heightens this effect—capturing, in just a few words, an entire meditation on the ephemeral nature of time.

Ultimately, this image of two pigeons on a windowsill becomes a contemplation of the value of brief moments of peace. The haiku reminds us that the most precious experiences are often found in the seemingly ordinary—if only we pause to notice them before they vanish, leaving behind only the soft echo of wings in flight.

2.3. The horizon in the distance / Horyzont w dali

*the horizon in the distance
a thin line between
separates worlds*

*horyzont w dali
pomiędzy cienka linia
rozdziela światy*



Fig. The horizon in the distance / Horyzont w dali, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku paints a delicate poetic image of a boundary that simultaneously divides and connects. The distant horizon, seemingly ordinary at first glance, carries something more—a quiet invitation to exploration. In just a few words, it captures the tension between what is known and what remains a mystery.

The first line – “*the horizon in the distance*” – evokes a vast landscape where land (or sea) meets the sky. The horizon itself is an illusion: the closer we move toward it, the farther it recedes, emphasizing the fluidity and elusiveness of our perceptions. This impermanence suggests that the transition between what is visible and what lies beyond is dynamic and ambiguous, constantly shifting with our perspective.

The second line – “*a thin line between*” – highlights the fragility of this boundary, while also implying how easily it can dissolve upon closer observation. It hints at the relativity of divisions—how what seems like a solid, undeniable separation may, in reality, be more fluid. This reflects our human tendency to organize and categorize the world, to draw borders where, in truth, existence remains interconnected and continuous.

The final line – “*separates worlds*” – powerfully reinforces the poem’s central idea. These worlds can be interpreted in many ways: as the division between sky and earth, between the familiar and the unknown, or even between physical and metaphysical realms. Assigning the horizon the role of a boundary underscores our inclination to define and classify reality. Yet, it also leaves an open-ended question—are these worlds truly separate, or does the horizon simply remind us of the illusory nature of all divisions?

Ultimately, this haiku transforms a simple observation of the distant line into a reflection on perspective, boundaries, and the very act of dividing the world into distinct spheres. It evokes the feeling of a quiet enigma waiting just beyond the horizon, encouraging contemplation of where reality ends and the unknown begins.

2.4. Mosquitoes above / W górze komary

*mosquitoes above
nervous movements of people
signal trouble ahead*

*w górze komary
nerwowe ruchy ludzi
zwiastują kłopot*



Fig. Mosquitoes above / W górze komary, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

At first glance, this scene appears simple mosquitoes hovering above and people reacting nervously to their presence. Yet, within this everyday moment lies something more profound. A subtle interplay between insects and humans reveals the tension that exists in the smallest, almost imperceptible interactions. How often do we succumb to unease, even when the threat remains only a possibility?

The first line – “*mosquitoes above*” – establishes an atmosphere of subtle danger. Though tiny, mosquitoes symbolize irritation, discomfort, and even risk—whether from disease or the mere annoyance of an itchy bite. The fact that they hover above suggests they have not yet attacked, intensifying the sense of anticipation and inevitability.

The second line – “*nervous movements of people*” – focuses on human reaction. Twitching, swatting, and abrupt hand gestures reflect the instinctive unease triggered by even the slightest discomfort. This seemingly minor scene reveals how easily human sensitivity can escalate into a heightened state of alertness. The contrast between the determined swarm of mosquitoes and people’s anxious, defensive gestures highlights how the smallest disturbances can set off powerful reflexes.

The final line – “*signal trouble ahead*” – reinforces the poem’s deeper meaning. While the subject remains mosquitoes, the phrase “trouble ahead” broadens the scope, suggesting that minor nuisances can foreshadow greater issues. It subtly warns against disregarding small warning signs, which—left unchecked—may evolve into real threats.

Ultimately, this haiku turns a seemingly mundane experience—mosquitoes and human reactions—into a reflection on perception and instinct. It serves as a reminder that paying attention to small disturbances can help prevent larger problems in the future.

2.5. Olives smell sweet / Pachną oliwki

*olives smell sweet
harvested before noon
with a glass of wine*

*pachną oliwki
zebrane przed południem
przy lampce wina*



Fig. Olives smell sweet / Pachną oliwki, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku paints a serene portrait of a Ligurian morning—filled with the scent of olives, warm sunlight, and the harmony of daily rituals. It captures the essence of this Mediterranean region, where nature and tradition intertwine in the gentle rhythm of life. The scene of olive harvesting and the moment of relaxation with wine emphasize both the simplicity and richness of existence in Liguria—a land of sun, sea, and unhurried pleasures.

The first line – “*olives smell sweet*” – opens the poem with a vivid sensory experience. The aroma of ripe, sun-drenched olives evokes the warm climate and leisurely pace of the day. This scent is the first invitation into a rich landscape where olive groves stretch across rolling hills, their fragrance weaving into everyday life.

The second line – “*harvested before noon*” – highlights the morning ritual of gathering olives, a practice deeply rooted in the traditions of the region. In Liguria, olives are picked at just the right time to preserve their freshness and aroma, a process dictated by both experience and respect for nature. The early harvest reflects the natural rhythm of work and rest, where life moves in harmony with the land and the sun.

The final line – “*with a glass of wine*” – shifts the focus to a moment of pause and celebration. In Liguria, meals and flavors are not merely sustenance but a ritual—an opportunity to share moments with loved ones or to enjoy a solitary respite. Wine, a symbol of the region’s cultural and agricultural heritage, adds an air of ease and appreciation for life’s simple joys.

This haiku does more than depict Liguria’s landscape; it conveys a way of life—one that honors nature, finds delight in simple pleasures, and embraces daily traditions with reverence. The poem invites us to slow down and recognize the beauty in ordinary moments, where the true essence of Mediterranean harmony can be found.

2.6. With the sound of the sea waves / Z szumem morskich fal

with the sound of the sea waves

Lord Byron's cave

invites the brave

z szumem morskich fal

grota Lorda Byrona

zaprasza śmiałków



Fig. With the sound of the sea waves / Z szumem morskich fal, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku captures the essence of a dramatic coastal landscape where nature and literary history intertwine. The rhythmic sound of the sea, the legendary grotto associated with Lord Byron, and the call to the bold all create an atmosphere of adventure and introspection. This is not just a place of natural beauty but one that invites those seeking both physical and inner exploration. The first line – “*with the sound of the sea waves*” – immerses the reader in the coastal environment, where the endless motion of waves dominates the senses. The sound of the sea is both soothing and powerful, a constant force shaping the cliffs and the imagination of those who stand before it. It evokes a timeless setting, one that has inspired travelers, poets, and seekers of solitude for generations.

The second line – “*Lord Byron’s cave*” – introduces a literary connection that deepens the significance of the scene. The reference to Lord Byron, the famous Romantic poet known for his adventurous spirit and love of the sea, transforms the grotto from a mere natural formation into a symbolic space of passion, freedom, and artistic inspiration. In Byron’s time, nature was often seen as a mirror of human emotions, and the cave, set against the crashing waves, becomes a place of contemplation and self-discovery.

The final line – “*invites the brave*” – shifts the focus from nature and history to a personal challenge. The grotto is not just an object of admiration but a call to action—whether for physical exploration, personal reflection, or embracing the unknown. The idea of bravery adds an element of mystery and anticipation, suggesting that only those with a daring heart can truly experience what lies beyond the threshold of the cave.

This haiku encapsulates the Romantic ideal of nature as both a source of beauty and a test of courage. It reminds us that landscapes are more than just scenery; they hold stories, myths, and emotions that continue to shape those who encounter them. Like Byron himself, who sought meaning in wild and untamed places, the reader is encouraged to listen to the waves, step into the unknown, and embrace the adventure that awaits.

2.7. In the silver morning / W srebrny poranek

*in the silver morning
bird cries awaken dreams
in cold La Spezia*

*w srebrny poranek
krzyki ptaków budzą sen
w zimnej La Spezia*



Fig. In the silver morning / W srebrny poranek, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku captures a quiet yet striking moment in La Spezia, a city often associated with the sun-drenched landscapes of Liguria. However, instead of warm hues and vibrant colors, the poem presents a different, more ethereal vision—one wrapped in silver light, crisp air, and the sharp cries of birds heralding the transition between dreams and reality.

The first line – “*in the silver morning*” – immediately establishes a tone of quiet luminosity. The use of “silver” instead of “golden” suggests an early dawn, when the world is still hushed, and the sky is pale with the lingering presence of night. This choice of imagery gives the morning a metallic, almost otherworldly quality, emphasizing both its delicacy and its cold, reflective beauty. It sets up a scene that feels introspective and slightly detached, inviting the reader to step into a moment of contemplation.

The second line – “*bird cries awaken dreams*” – introduces an auditory element that disrupts the silence. The cries of birds act as a bridge between sleep and wakefulness, serving both as a literal wake-up call and a metaphorical stirrer of memories, emotions, and thoughts that linger from the dream world. The phrase “*awaken dreams*” suggests a paradox—dreams are typically something we leave behind upon waking, yet here they are brought to the surface, perhaps even more vividly than before. This evokes a sense of longing, nostalgia, or introspection, as if the natural world is calling the dreamer to consciousness, but the dreams refuse to fade completely. The final line – “*in cold La Spezia*” – firmly grounds the poem in place, yet does so with an unexpected twist. La Spezia, a port city known for its Mediterranean charm, is typically imagined as warm and sunlit. Yet here, it is cold, offering a different perspective—one that reveals another side of the city’s identity. The cool air of morning gives the scene a certain rawness, an unpolished beauty that contrasts with the more conventional images of La Spezia as a summer haven. This coldness, combined with the pale morning light and the sharp bird calls, enhances the introspective nature of the poem, making it a moment of stillness and quiet revelation.

Ultimately, this haiku paints a portrait of a city waking up, but not in a hurried or chaotic way. Instead, it highlights the subtle, poetic tension between past and present, sleep and wakefulness, warmth and cold. The atmosphere is gentle yet filled with contrasts, reminding us that beauty can be found in the quieter, more ephemeral moments of transition. Through this lens, La Spezia becomes not just a place, but a feeling—one that lingers like the last traces of a dream.

2.8. The slopes of Fezzano / Zbocza Fezzano

*the slopes of Fezzano
hide a seagull's nest
in the company of cats*

*zbocza Fezzano
skrywają gniazdo mewy
w sąsiedztwie kotów*



Fig. The slopes of Fezzano / Zbocza Fezzano, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku captures a moment of quiet coexistence in Fezzano, a small, picturesque village where the natural world and human presence blend seamlessly. The poem's strength lies in its ability to reveal hidden interactions—those that often go unnoticed in the flow of everyday life. It paints a scene that, at first glance, appears peaceful, yet upon closer reflection, hints at a delicate balance of tension and adaptation.

The first line – *"the slopes of Fezzano"* – immediately situates us in a specific landscape. Fezzano, nestled along the Ligurian coast, is known for its terraced hillsides, winding paths, and proximity to the sea. The mention of "slopes" suggests a layered, dynamic setting where different elements—stone walls, vegetation, and quiet alcoves—create spaces of shelter and hidden life. This opening line not only grounds the reader in a tangible place but also sets the stage for discovery.

The second line – *"hide a seagull's nest"* – introduces an unexpected detail. While seagulls are often associated with open skies and coastal waters, here one has chosen an unusual refuge. The word "hide" suggests secrecy, emphasizing that nature finds ways to adapt, even in human-altered spaces. The image of a seagull nesting on the hills rather than the more predictable cliffs or harbors adds an air of quiet resilience. This also speaks to the way wildlife integrates into places shaped by people, making their own unseen niches amid human activity.

The final line – *"in the company of cats"* – shifts the perspective, adding a new dimension of curiosity and subtle tension. Cats, commonly found in Mediterranean villages, roam freely through narrow alleys and terraces, creating a presence that is both familiar and enigmatic. The phrase "in the company of" suggests that the cats and the nesting seagull share a space, but the nature of their relationship remains undefined. Are they indifferent neighbors, cautious observers, or engaged in an unspoken, instinctive rivalry? This ambiguity invites reflection on the coexistence of species—how boundaries are drawn, how risks are measured, and how moments of peace emerge even where tension lingers.

This haiku ultimately reflects the quiet complexity of everyday life in a place like Fezzano. It is a poem about hidden worlds—those that exist just beyond our perception, where nature finds unexpected solutions, and where different creatures navigate their own relationships, unbothered by human observation. The interplay between stillness and anticipation, presence and concealment, makes this brief moment linger, much like the coastal breeze that rustles through the terraces of Fezzano.

2.9. A labyrinth of stairs / Labirynt schodów

*a labyrinth of stairs
instead of streets in Fezzano
garlands of flowers*

*labirynt schodów
zamiast ulic w Fezzano
girlandy kwiatów*



Fig. A labyrinth of stairs / Labirynt schodów, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku captures the essence of Fezzano’s charm, where human ingenuity and nature intertwine to create an atmosphere of quiet beauty. Through three simple yet evocative lines, the poem invites us to wander through a unique landscape that defies conventional urban structure.

The first line – “*a labyrinth of stairs*” – immediately sets the tone for a place that is both intricate and intimate. The word “labyrinth” suggests not only complexity but also an element of discovery, where each twist and turn reveals something new. Unlike a typical street grid, these stairs form a web of pathways that shape the rhythm of daily life. They guide movement in a way that feels organic, adapting to the rugged terrain rather than imposing rigid order.

The second line – “*instead of streets in Fezzano*” – grounds the haiku in a specific place, reinforcing the uniqueness of its urban structure. Fezzano, like many Ligurian villages, has embraced the challenges of its steep slopes, creating an environment that is deeply connected to both the land and its history. The absence of traditional streets speaks to a slower, more deliberate way of life, where walking is not just a means of transport but an experience in itself. The third line – “*garlands of flowers*” – softens the scene with a burst of color and life. These garlands, draped along railings, balconies, and facades, contrast with the stonework of the stairs, bringing warmth and vibrancy to the space. Flowers are more than decoration—they are a testament to the care and pride that residents take in their surroundings. They symbolize resilience and the ability to thrive in sometimes unforgiving conditions, just as the village itself has done for centuries.

This haiku does more than depict a picturesque setting; it encapsulates a way of life where movement, nature, and human presence coexist in harmony. The stairways of Fezzano become a metaphor for the winding paths we navigate in life, full of unexpected turns but always adorned with moments of beauty. Through its imagery, the poem celebrates the simple yet profound elegance of a place where architecture adapts to nature rather than conquering it.

2.10. Along the mountain slope / Po zboczu góry

*along the mountain slope
an elderly lady walks
every morning*

*po zboczu góry
wędruje starsza pani
codziennie rano*



Fig. Along the mountain slope / Po zboczu góry, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku captures the quiet perseverance of an elderly woman walking along the mountain slope each morning, portraying her movement as an act of resilience, connection to nature, and a testament to the power of routine. Within its simplicity lies a profound meditation on time, strength, and the human spirit.

The first line – “*along the mountain slope*” – immediately sets the scene in a rugged, picturesque landscape. The choice of words evokes an image of Ligurian hills, where winding paths lead through olive groves and vineyards, and the terrain demands patience and effort from those who traverse it. The slope suggests both a physical challenge and a metaphorical journey—one that requires endurance and acceptance of the natural world’s rhythm.

The second line – “*an elderly lady walks*” – shifts focus to the solitary figure who, despite her age, continues to climb these paths each day. Her presence radiates quiet strength; she is neither rushing nor struggling but moving with a sense of purpose and harmony. The act of walking becomes more than mere movement—it is a ritual of persistence, of staying engaged with the world around her. She is a silent observer of the changing seasons, a part of the landscape just as much as the ancient trees and weathered stones.

The third line – “*every morning*” – adds a sense of continuity, emphasizing that this is not a fleeting action but a part of her daily existence. The repetition of her routine gives the poem a cyclical quality, much like nature itself. Her steps echo those of countless others who have walked similar paths before her, making her journey feel both deeply personal and universally human.

This haiku transcends its immediate imagery, inviting reflection on how small, consistent acts shape our lives. The woman’s walk is not only an act of physical movement but one of discipline, reflection, and quiet defiance against time. In a world where everything rushes forward, she moves at her own pace, embracing each step with patience and grace. The poem ultimately reminds us that true strength is not always found in grand gestures, but in the quiet determination to continue moving forward, day after day, no matter the incline.

2.11. They were there together / Byli tam razem

*they were there together
holding hands tightly
gazing into the future*

*byli tam razem
trzymając się za ręce
patrzyli w przyszłość*



Fig. They were there together / Byli tam razem, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

This haiku captures a moment of closeness—simple, yet full of meaning. Two people stand side by side, sharing silence and a mutual gaze toward the future. The poem conveys the strength of this gesture, suggesting that holding hands can express more than words ever could.

Already in the first line – “*they were there together*” – the poet establishes the presence of a couple standing shoulder to shoulder. This phrasing highlights the conscious choice to be beside one another, both physically and emotionally. The word “together” sets the tone, emphasizing unity and the hope that arises from shared presence.

The second line – “*holding hands tightly*” – deepens this feeling, highlighting touch as a symbol of intimacy and support. What seems like an ordinary gesture carries an emotional weight, expressing trust, devotion, and the readiness to face whatever the future may hold. The closeness of their hands suggests an unspoken bond, a quiet reassurance that neither stands alone.

The final line – “*gazing into the future*” – completes the image, shifting the focus toward what lies ahead. Their shared gaze symbolizes hope, determination, and a willingness to embrace the unknown. The poem does not specify the challenges or dreams before them, leaving space for the reader’s imagination. It is not about certainty but about the act of facing forward—together. This haiku invites reflection on the power of relationships and the significance of mutual support. Being together is not just about physical presence but about a daily choice. Holding hands, though simple, conveys security, closeness, and commitment. Their gaze into the future suggests that shared life is not only about moments of joy but also about standing side by side through uncertainty, challenges, and aspirations. The poem reminds us that connection is not solely built on words but on gestures and the silent, invisible force that creates a sense of unity. In a world full of uncertainties, to stand beside someone, to hold hands, and to look ahead is a quiet yet profound declaration of faith in tomorrow—a testament to the enduring value of everyday gestures that, over time, become the most meaningful.

2.12. The oyster festival / Festiwal ostryg

*the oyster festival
has its Tower of Babel
in the port of La Spezia*

*festiwal ostryg
ma swoja wieżę Babel
w porcie La Spezia*



Fig. The oyster festival / Festiwal ostryg, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The Oyster Festival in La Spezia is a time when the port fills with conversations, the aroma of seafood delicacies, and the atmosphere of joyful gatherings. The comparison to the “Tower of Babel” humorously highlights the multilingual buzz of the event, illustrating how diverse cultures and traditions intertwine into one vibrant whole.

The first line – “*the oyster festival*” – points to the main theme of the poem, serving as the key to the entire scene: a celebration of this coastal delicacy. The mere mention of oysters evokes the taste of salty water, the lively chatter at stalls filled with regional specialties, and the energy of a crowd eager to experience local traditions. This culinary heritage becomes the starting point for a multicultural encounter.

The second line – “*has its Tower of Babel*” – adds a broader, metaphorical dimension to the scene. In the Bible, the Tower of Babel symbolizes linguistic chaos, but here, the phrase takes on a positive meaning – different languages merge into a unified rhythm of conversations and laughter. Unlike the biblical story, where linguistic division led to human dispersion, here, linguistic diversity becomes a unifying element.

The final line – “*in the port of La Spezia*” – situates this intercultural spectacle in a specific, picturesque setting. La Spezia, a city with a rich maritime history, transforms into a gathering place for people from all over the world during the Oyster Festival. Here, by the water, not only do flavors and scents mix, but also human stories, weaving together into a single, polyphonic landscape.

The poem presents the festival as something more than just a culinary event. Oysters become a pretext for feasting, while the diversity of languages and cultures becomes a force that does not divide but unites. Regardless of where the participants come from, for a moment, they become part of the same community – bonded by the joy of sharing flavors, stories, and the celebration itself. Amid laughter and multilingual chatter, everyone finds their place – not through uniformity, but through the acceptance of diversity.

2.13. A container ship / Kontenerowiec

*a container ship
docked today at the port
China in Europe*

*kontenerowiec
przybił dzisiaj do portu
Chiny w Europie*



Fig. A container ship / Kontenerowiec, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku captures a moment that reflects the global nature of modern trade and the constant flow of people and goods. The image of a “container ship” docked in a European port, juxtaposed with the phrase “China in Europe”, emphasizes the scale and pace of economic exchange as well as the interweaving of distant worlds.

The first line – “*a container ship*” – immediately directs the reader’s attention to the massive vessel, a symbol of the efficiency and vast reach of global trade. Container ships are an inseparable element of modern supply chains – silently transporting countless goods, shaping local markets, and influencing daily consumer habits. Their presence connects distant countries into a single, cohesive economic system.

The second line – “*docked today at the port*” – reinforces the sense of globalization’s direct impact on everyday life. The word “*today*” highlights the immediacy and ongoing nature of this process – the docking of ships becomes a quiet, routine occurrence on which the availability of products in markets and stores depends. What may seem like an ordinary port event is part of an immense network of goods and resource exchange.

The final line – “*China in Europe*” – serves as a striking and concise conclusion, underscoring the scale of modern interdependencies. “*China*” is not only an economic powerhouse but also a bearer of cultural and political contexts, while “*Europe*” appears here as a recipient, partner, and participant in this ceaseless flow of goods and ideas. This line highlights how the borders between nations and continents blur in the era of globalization.

The image of a docked ship, seemingly mundane at first glance, becomes a symbol of distant realities merging into our daily lives. In a single place and moment, complex economic, cultural, and social networks intertwine – often unnoticed, yet crucial to the functioning of the modern world. The haiku serves as a reminder that every object that reaches our hands has a story inseparably linked to distant journeys and the global rhythm of exchange.

2.14. A crouching cat / Przyczajony kot

*a crouching cat
threatens the chick
of a silver tern*

*przyczajony kot
zagraża pisklęciu
rybitwy srebrnej*



Fig. A crouching cat / Przyczajony kot, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem captures a dramatic confrontation in the natural world – a moment when a silver tern chick faces a deadly threat. The crouching cat, poised to strike, contrasts with the fragility of its prey, emphasizing the harsh laws of nature. Within these few lines lies a tension that conveys both the beauty and the inevitable brutality of the surrounding world.

The first line – “*a crouching cat*” – evokes the image of an animal in full readiness to pounce. Tensed muscles, a focused gaze, and a motionless stance foretell an imminent move that could change the chick’s fate in an instant. This snapshot of silence and suspense serves as a prelude to the inevitable confrontation.

The second line – “*threatens the chick*” – gives the scene an emotional weight. The chick, fragile and defenseless, elicits compassion, highlighting the imbalance of this encounter. It is a classic contrast of strength and weakness, where the natural order appears relentless, yet awakens in humans a desire to protect the vulnerable.

The final line – “*of a silver tern*” – specifies the creature at the heart of the struggle. The tern, a symbol of flight and freedom, is here shown in the context of the dangers of life on land. Its silvery feathers might evoke an image of fleeting light – much like the chick’s fate, teetering on the edge of life and death.

The haiku captures this suspended moment, where anything can happen. It is not just a portrayal of the food chain but also a reminder of how closely beauty and cruelty coexist in nature. The poem prompts reflection on the fragility of life and how often the dramas of the wild unfold right beside us – silent, yet inevitable.

2.15. La Spezia tempts / Kusi La Spezia

*La Spezia tempts
with Puccini's opera
on a Thursday evening*

*kusi La Spezia
operą Pucciniego
w czwartkowy wieczór*



Fig. La Spezia tempts / Kusi La Spezia, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku announces the cultural attractions of La Spezia – a city that, beyond its picturesque bay and port, also offers a rich artistic life. This time, it does not captivate with its landscape but subtly entices with music and operatic tradition. In just a few lines, the poem reminds us that the beauty of a place is not only in its sights but also in its sounds, emotions, and the art that is part of everyday life.

The first line – “*La Spezia tempts*” – draws us into the atmosphere of a city that attracts not only with its mild climate but also with its culture. The verb “tempts” emphasizes a gentle allure – not an aggressive advertisement, but a subtle promise of experiences ready to capture attention and immerse the listener in their world.

The second line – “*with Puccini's opera*” – introduces the central element of the poem: the music of the Italian opera master, whose works continue to stir great emotions. Puccini, a symbol of melodic expression and drama, made his native musical scene famous worldwide. The mention of his name makes La Spezia appear as a city where art is not merely an addition to tourist attractions but a living element of the urban landscape.

The final line – “*on a Thursday evening*” – situates this event within the rhythm of everyday life. It is not a grand gala or a festive occasion but part of the city’s regular cultural offerings. This is where its uniqueness lies: opera is not a luxury reserved for special events but a natural feature of the city’s calendar, accessible to both residents and tourists in the middle of the week. The poem presents La Spezia as a city where art intertwines with daily life. In a world where culture is often treated as something reserved for special occasions, the poem reminds us that true beauty lies in what is available every day. Puccini’s music resonating on an ordinary Thursday is proof that art not only enriches life but makes it more intense, filled with emotion and depth – even in the most ordinary moments.

2.16. Under the umbrella / Pod parasolem

*under the umbrella
sits a little ladybug
both will soon fly away*

*pod parasolem
siedzi mała biedronka
odfruną obie*



Fig. Under the umbrella / Pod parasolem, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The scene depicted in the haiku captures a moment of respite in the natural world. A small ladybug has settled under a dandelion, as if seeking shelter beneath it. For a brief moment, the insect and the plant share the same space before a gust of wind scatters the seeds and the ladybug takes flight.

The first line – *“under the umbrella”* – evokes the image of a delicate canopy that, for a moment, provides shade and shelter. In this case, the *“umbrella”* is not an everyday object but a dandelion – a plant as fleeting and fragile as the ladybug’s moment of rest. This natural parasol highlights the lightness and transience of the scene.

The second line – *“sits a little ladybug”* – directs attention to the poem’s tiny protagonist. Ladybugs inspire affection, symbolizing delicacy and good fortune, and here, one pauses in stillness, as if waiting for the right moment to continue its journey. Its presence under the dandelion is a small, chance encounter that will soon come to an end.

The final line – *“both will soon fly away”* – emphasizes the movement and impermanence of nature. The ladybug will take off on its wings, while the dandelion releases its seeds to be carried away by the wind. Their paths briefly intertwine before each follows its own course – one by its own flight, the other at the mercy of the elements.

The haiku invites reflection on the fleeting nature of encounters – both in the natural world and in human life. The ladybug and the dandelion coexist for a moment but soon part ways in the inevitable rhythm of nature. It is a reminder that everything lasts only for a while before inevitably changing.

2.17. A cricket plays the violin / Świerszcz na skrzypcach gra

*a cricket plays the violin
in the evening at dinner
with the company of stars*

*świerszcz na skrzypcach gra
wieczorem przy kolacji
w towarzystwie gwiazd*



Fig. A cricket plays the violin / Świerszcz na skrzypcach gra, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku creates a warm, almost fairy-tale-like atmosphere, where the natural world intertwines with everyday human rituals. The evening chirping of a cricket and a dinner under the stars merge into one harmonious scene, highlighting the unity between life's simple pleasures and the magic of nature.

The first line – “*a cricket plays the violin*” – immediately sparks the imagination, transforming the insect's characteristic chirping into the sound of a violin. This metaphor assigns the cricket the role of a tiny musician, whose concert completes the evening's ambiance. Nature is not just a backdrop here; it actively participates in shaping the mood of the moment.

The second line – “*in the evening at dinner*” – introduces the setting of a human gathering. It is a time of rest, conversation, and enjoying food, made even more special by the sounds of nature. Placing the cricket within this context shows how seamlessly and delicately nature weaves into everyday moments, enriching them with subtle beauty.

The final line – “*with the company of stars*” – breaks the typical association of company as something exclusively human. Here, the companions are not people but stars – silent, eternal witnesses to the dinner and the cricket's concert. Their glow lends the scene a peaceful, almost metaphysical dimension, suggesting that even the most ordinary moments can hold a touch of the extraordinary. The evening meal, the music of nature, and the surrounding universe all come together in one harmonious whole.

The poem encourages an appreciation of beauty in simple moments – in the evening song of an insect, the warm atmosphere of a shared meal, and the stars illuminating the night. The haiku reminds us that daily life and nature are not separate – on the contrary, their coexistence is what makes each moment feel more complete. The company of stars is silent but not indifferent – it serves as a reminder of the greater order of the world, where every gesture and every sound merge into a single, unique melody.

2.18. Warmed by the sun / Ogrzany w słońcu

*warmed by the sun
on the steps of Fezzano
a green lizard*

*ogrzany w słońcu
na schodach Fezzano
zielony jaszczur*

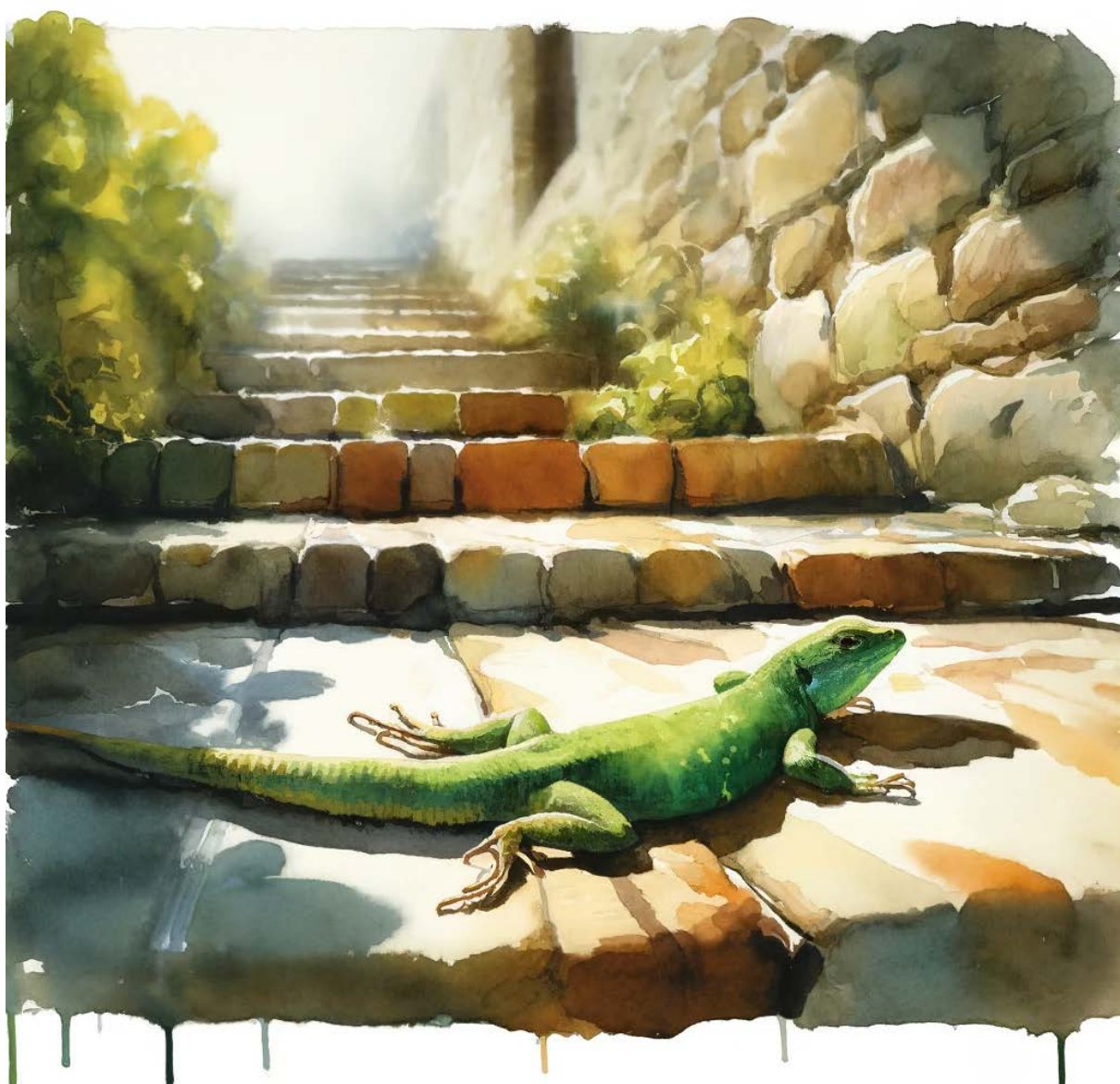


Fig. Warmed by the sun / Ogrzany w słońcu, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

In Fezzano, among the stone steps and Mediterranean sunlight, a simple yet charming scene unfolds. The warmth of the sun on the stones and the presence of a lizard imbue the moment with a sense of tranquility, characteristic of a seaside town. The poem captures this fleeting instant, where nature subtly intertwines with everyday life.

The first line – “*warmed by the sun*” – creates a feeling of warmth and carefree stillness. The sun’s rays envelop both people and animals, momentarily suspending time – an echo of the slow rhythm of life along the Italian coast.

The second line – “*on the steps of Fezzano*” – situates the scene within the distinct setting of stone alleys and terraced pathways. The steps, an everyday part of human activity, momentarily become a refuge for the lizard, showing how nature quietly infiltrates urban spaces.

The final line – “*a green lizard*” – draws attention to the protagonist of this brief moment. The lizard, perfectly suited to the Mediterranean landscape, symbolizes adaptation and natural harmony. Its vivid green hue contrasts with the stone backdrop of Fezzano, capturing the observer’s gaze.

The lizard basking on the warm steps is an image of nature finding its place in the human world – not through resistance, but through quiet, instinctive adaptation. This scene can symbolize the ability to carve out space for oneself in an ever-changing environment, an acceptance of the inevitable. The haiku presents a moment in which something as small as a lizard grants a new perspective to an ordinary place – reminding us that what often seems like mere background has its own rightful existence.

2.19. Porto Venere / Porto Venere

Porto Venere
invites with an open bay
through a window in the wall

Porto Venere
zaprasza otwarta zatoka
przez okno w murze



Fig. Porto Venere / Porto Venere, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem transports us to Porto Venere – a coastal gem of Liguria, where history intertwines with natural beauty. The “open bay” seen “through a window in the wall” becomes a symbolic passage between what is enclosed and what is boundless. The haiku captures a moment in which architecture and the sea create a landscape full of contrasts and harmony.

The first line – “*Porto Venere*” – evokes the image of a port city, surrounded by rugged cliffs and defensive walls that have protected its inhabitants for centuries. The name itself conjures associations with maritime journeys and discoveries, recalling both legends and romantic tales linked to this place.

The second line – “*invites with an open bay*” – emphasizes the welcoming nature of this space. Unlike the fortifications of the past, the sea does not close off but invites – calling in ships, travelers, and wandering gazes. The bay is both a place of rest and a gateway to new adventures, revealing the dual essence of Porto Venere – once a stronghold against outsiders, now an open haven for visitors.

The final line – “*through a window in the wall*” – highlights a particular way of perceiving this landscape – framed by architecture that both limits and reveals. A window in the imposing walls provides a sense of security yet also encourages one to look beyond. It introduces a feeling of distance, a controlled gaze upon the vastness beyond, symbolizing the boundary between the familiar and the unknown.

The haiku presents Porto Venere as a space balancing between closure and openness. The walls, though built for protection, are not merely barriers – sometimes, they become gateways through which the outside world seeps in. The “*window*” not only frames the view but also serves as a reminder that boundaries do not have to mean isolation – they can be places where curiosity and beauty meet.

2.20. Majestically / Majestatycznie

majestically
like the Leaning Tower of Pisa
guarding the port

majestatycznie
jak krzywa wieża w Pizie
na straży w porcie



Fig. Majestically / Majestatycznie, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku juxtaposes port architecture – perhaps a lighthouse or another structure – with the legendary, leaning tower of Pisa. This comparison grants the port’s guardian a majestic yet slightly whimsical character. The poem emphasizes that even structures far from perfection can become recognizable symbols of a place.

The first line – “*majestically*” – presents the structure in all its grandeur. It towers over its surroundings, commanding respect and providing a sense of security. One can imagine it perched on a rocky promontory or near the harbor, standing watch over ships arriving at the port.

The second line – “*like the Leaning Tower of Pisa*” – introduces a playful association, referencing one of Italy’s most famous landmarks. This subtle comparison suggests that even if the port’s guardian is not perfectly straight or possesses unique characteristics, these very features can lend it a distinctive charm. Its tilt, rather than being a flaw, becomes a defining trait that attracts attention and endears it to observers.

The final line – “*guarding the port*” – restores the structure’s practical significance. Regardless of its shape, it fulfills its role – guiding sailors, providing protection, and serving as a symbol of the location. Even if its lines are not perfectly vertical, this does not diminish its importance – on the contrary, it may become a source of pride and local identity.

The poem blends the functionality of port architecture with Italian heritage and subtle humor. It reminds us that what deviates from the norm often becomes the most iconic – the uniqueness of a place lies not in its perfection but in the distinctive details that give it identity.

Chapter 3 Haiku by Aneta Witosz

3.1. In the red of the lantern / W czerwieni latarni

*In the red of the lantern
it is an ornament by the sea
the rosy moon*

*w czerwieni latarni
ozdobą jest nadmorską
rumiany księżyc*



Fig. In the red of the lantern / W czerwieni latarni, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The coastal landscape is illuminated by two sources of light – the red glow of the lantern and the blush of the moon. Artificial and natural, though distinct, they coexist harmoniously, giving the scene both a practical and aesthetic dimension. The poem reveals how the light created by humans intertwines with the light that has illuminated the night sky for centuries.

The first line – *“In the red of the lantern”* – evokes the intense glow of a navigational signal. Red, often used in warning signs, symbolizes safety while also adding warmth and vividness to the scene. The lighthouse not only guides ships but also shapes the atmosphere of the nocturnal seascape.

The second line – *“it is an ornament by the sea”* – emphasizes that the lighthouse’s light, though functional, also holds aesthetic value. It becomes a part of the coastal identity, an element that not only serves sailors but also enhances the shoreline, creating a mood of tranquility and security.

The third line – *“the rosy moon”* – draws attention with its unusual description. The adjective *“rosy”* evokes warmth, closeness, an almost human quality – like a blushing face or the reflection of a sunset on the horizon. In this depiction, the moon is not a cold, distant light but something more tangible, almost within reach. Its hue corresponds with the red of the lantern, forming a cohesive, painterly image of the nighttime coast.

Though simple, the scene portrays the subtle complementarity of two lights – one human-made, the other natural. Their coexistence in the night landscape is a reminder that artificial light does not have to compete with the light given by nature. The red lantern and the rosy moon merge into a harmonious whole, illuminating the night not through rivalry, but through shared presence.

3.2. Hidden within / Ukrytej wewnątrz

hidden within
notes of the deep sea's abyss
an oyster defends

ukrytej wewnątrz
nuty podmorskiej głębi
ostryga broni

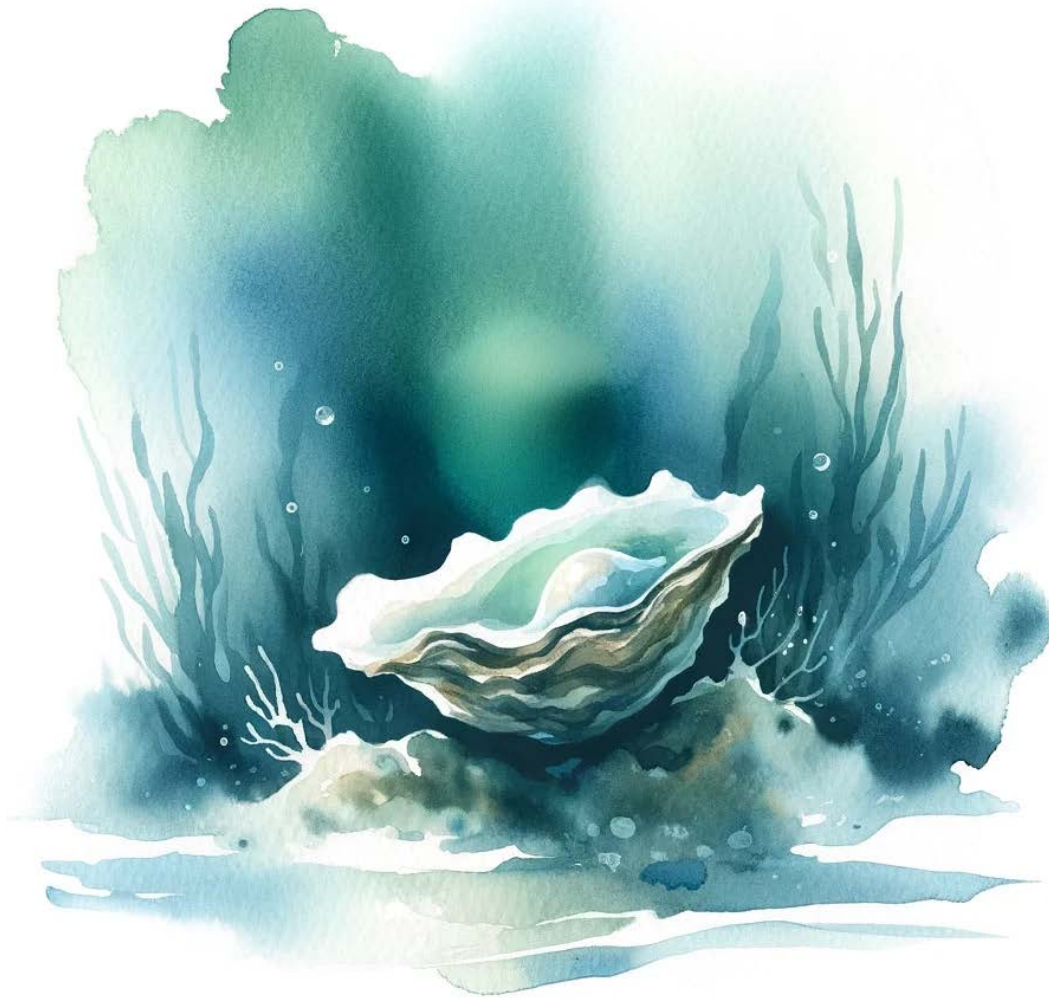


Fig. Hidden within / Ukrytej wewnątrz, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

Beneath the ocean's surface, life unfolds in secrecy, following the subtle rhythms of nature. Among these mysteries, the oyster—small and unassuming—becomes a symbol of something precious, enclosed and guarded from the world. The poem captures a moment where delicacy and strength converge within a single existence.

The first line – “*hidden within*” – introduces a sense of mystery, something concealed from sight. It could be a pearl, but just as easily something intangible— a value that requires patience and time to uncover. These words direct attention to what lies beneath the surface, beyond easy reach.

The second line – “*notes of the deep sea's abyss*” – gives this hidden space an almost musical quality. The ocean is not silent—it is filled with vibrations, waves, and subtle sounds that compose the rhythm of marine life. The word “*notes*” emphasizes the harmony of this realm, suggesting that even in isolation, there is a part of a greater melody.

The final line – “*an oyster defends*” – presents the poem's protagonist as a being that protects its inner world. The oyster is not a fierce predator—its defense is closure, persistence, and waiting. In this way, it becomes a metaphor for safeguarding what is fragile yet valuable.

The poem suggests that in nature, as in life, true worth is often not immediately visible. The oyster, hidden within its hard shell, reveals that what is delicate is not always defenseless, and that strength can manifest in the ability to endure and preserve one's essence despite external threats.

3.3. With a pure resonance / Czystym współbrzmieniem

*with a pure resonance
it announces another day
the city's instrument*

*czystym współbrzmieniem
obwieszcza kolejny dzień
miejski instrument*



Fig. With a pure resonance / Czystym współbrzmieniem, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The city awakens to the rhythm of a sound that echoes between buildings each morning, marking the beginning of a new day. Its tone is not random – it is a signal woven into the daily lives of residents for years, an inseparable part of the urban landscape. The poem captures a moment in which an ordinary sound becomes a shared experience, almost unnoticed, yet essential to city life.

The first line – “*with a pure resonance*” – draws attention to the quality of the sound itself. “*Resonance*” evokes harmony and a pleasant tone, while “*pure*” highlights its clarity. This is not chaotic noise but a signal that carries order and tranquility.

The second line – “*it announces another day*” – emphasizes the function of this sound – it signifies the beginning of daily activity. It may be the morning chime of church bells, the call from a town hall tower, or another recognizable signal that synchronizes the rhythm of the city. It is a sound that structures daily life, uniting residents in a shared tempo.

The final line – “*the city’s instrument*” – underscores its significance within the urban fabric. It is not merely a functional signal but also holds symbolic and cultural meaning. The term “*instrument*” suggests that this sound is part of the city’s melody, an element that shapes its identity and character.

The poem brings awareness to the sounds that often escape notice, even though they accompany us every day. It reminds us that amidst the noise of daily life, there are signals that do more than measure time – they create a sense of community, linking people in an invisible harmony. “*The city’s instrument*” is not just a tool – it is the subtle music of the city, its pulse and memory.

3.4. Through the evening noise / Przez wieczorny gwar

*through the evening noise
the lantern's light breaks through shutters
gently pushing in*

*przez wieczorny gwar
przedziera okiennice
światło latarni*



Fig. Through the evening noise / Przez wieczorny gwar, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem paints an evening scene where the soft glow of a lantern subtly pierces through the bustle of the day. The juxtaposition of human activity with the steady yet gentle light highlights the contrast between what is noisy and fleeting and what is quiet yet enduring.

The first line – “*through the evening noise*” – evokes the atmosphere of an Italian town where, after sunset, life spills into the streets and squares. Residents gather in cafés, engage in conversations, and stroll along promenades – a moment when the city pulses with the sounds of laughter, the clinking of dishes, and footsteps on cobblestones. In this vibrant setting, silence seems distant, almost unattainable.

The second line – “*the lantern’s light breaks through shutters*” – introduces the image of light filtering through tightly closed wooden blinds. The verb “*breaks through*” suggests a certain persistence, but not forceful intrusion – rather, a subtle determination with which light finds its way into spaces that seem secluded from the outside world.

The final line – “*gently pushing in*” – reveals the source of this quiet yet unwavering presence. The lantern, a symbol of safety and guidance, illuminates not just the street but also the homes and thoughts of its residents. It serves as a reminder that even amidst the noise of everyday life, there is always room for a moment of stillness and comfort.

The haiku highlights the profound power of small rays of light amidst urban clamor. Sometimes, a single quiet glow is enough to break through the chaos and remind us of a space of tranquility that is always waiting somewhere – even if it reaches us only through a sliver of an opening.

3.5. Fisherman on shore / Rybak na brzegu

*fisherman on shore
beside him the shrimp grow silent
torn from their home*

*rybak na brzegu
obok milkną krewetki
wyrwane z domu*



Fig. Fisherman on shore / Rybak na brzegu, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The shoreline is a place where two worlds intersect – the human and the marine. The fisherman pulls the shrimp from the water, performing a gesture embedded in the daily rhythm of coastal life. In the background, silence lingers, raising questions about the boundary between necessity and loss, between the natural rhythm and its disruption.

The first line – *“fisherman on shore”* – presents a man standing at the meeting point of elements. The shore is not only a boundary between water and land but also a space where human needs converge with nature’s resources. The fisherman, though part of a long-standing tradition and everyday coastal life, also symbolizes the imbalance in the relationship between humans and the natural world.

The second line – *“beside him the shrimp grow silent”* – introduces the perspective of the marine creatures. The phrase *“grow silent”* suggests the moment when their natural movement and sound abruptly cease. The transition from the underwater world to the air above signifies an immediate, irreversible change – a silence that evokes the end of existence.

The final line – *“torn from their home”* – emphasizes the brutality of the act. In the depths of the sea, shrimp move and exist in accordance with their nature, yet in an instant, they are taken from it. The word “home” adds an emotional dimension, implying that their habitat is not just a space but something fundamental that has now been taken away.

The poem highlights the tension between the ritual of fishing and the perspective of those who have no voice in the process. The fisherman carries out his daily work, likely without contemplating its consequences, but the haiku urges reflection on the fate of beings entirely dependent on human actions. It is a reminder that within seemingly ordinary gestures lie untold stories – stories of those for whom each cast of the net marks the end of a world.

3.6. Ribbons of Italy / Wstęgi Italii

*ribbons of Italy
in creamy velvet they rest
a miracle on the plate*

*wstęgi Italii
w kremowym aksamicie
cud na talerzu*



Fig. Ribbons of Italy / Wstęgi Italii, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

Italian cuisine is an art of simplicity, where tradition meets the perfection of flavor. The poem paints an image of a plate filled with long ribbons of pasta, embraced by a creamy sauce. It conveys admiration for the harmony of ingredients and the culinary philosophy that the best dishes arise from simple yet refined elements.

The first line – “*ribbons of Italy*” – invites us to envision long, flowing strands of pasta, such as tagliatelle or fettuccine, which have been a symbol of Italy’s culinary heritage for centuries. The word “*ribbons*” is intentional – beyond its visual reference to pasta’s shape, it evokes something fluid, light, almost dance-like. Ribbons can also symbolize unity and continuity, much like Italian cuisine, passed down from generation to generation. The pasta, twirling around a fork, creates a dynamic, almost painterly image of movement and flavor.

The second line – “*in creamy velvet they rest*” – highlights the texture of the sauce, which coats the pasta in a smooth, delicate embrace. The word “*velvet*” suggests both a tactile pleasure and a refined elegance. It is an invitation to savor not only the taste but also the texture of the dish, which melts into a harmonious whole.

The final line – “*a miracle on the plate*” – expresses awe at the final result. It is a reminder that while the ingredients may be simple, their combination can lead to culinary delight. The word “*miracle*” suggests that a well-prepared dish holds something beyond technique – a touch of magic born from quality, passion, and tradition.

The poem reveals that Italian cuisine is not just about food, but also about culture, emotions, and heritage. From the “*ribbons*” of pasta to the velvety sauce, every detail reflects a philosophy of cooking rooted in simplicity and authenticity. “*A miracle on the plate*” reminds us that food is not just about taste but also a journey into the heart of Italian soul – expressed through aroma, texture, and the joy of sharing a meal.

3.7. Unwanted treasures / Niechciane skarby

*unwanted treasures
whisper softly beneath the hall
seeking a home*

*niechciane skarby
pod halą szepczą cicho
domu szukają*



Fig. Unwanted treasures / Niechciane skarby, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku draws attention to small, forgotten objects—described as “*unwanted treasures*”—that remain in silence beneath the hall. In this space of discarded things, there is a subtle reflection on value, impermanence, and the possibility of a new beginning. The poem evokes a scene where objects, though abandoned, seem to linger in anticipation of their next story.

The first line – “*unwanted treasures*” – highlights the paradox of perceived worth. The word “*treasures*” suggests something valuable, yet here it refers to discarded, unnecessary items. What has lost meaning for one person may become a discovery or a revived detail for another. One can imagine old books, fragments of furniture, lost toys—objects that once held significance but now sit forgotten. The poem encourages a view of things not just through their utility but through the history and emotions they may carry.

The second line – “*whisper softly beneath the hall*” – creates an atmosphere of concealment and quietude. The “whispers” suggest an almost metaphysical presence, as if these objects still have something to say, even though no one is listening. The space beneath the hall symbolizes a place on the margins of daily life, where forgotten things wait—perhaps for a new owner, or perhaps to fade into oblivion. These may be items from a flea market, failed purchases, or remnants of things left to be reclaimed—objects that linger between use and obsolescence.

The final line – “*seeking a home*” – gives the objects an almost human quality. It suggests that even things can have a destiny, and that not everything abandoned is meant to be lost forever. In this brief image, there is a quiet longing for a place where they can once again be needed. Objects left behind may seem worthless, but their survival—even in neglect—raises questions about what truly makes something valuable.

The poem paints a portrait of the quiet world of forgotten things—those that once had meaning and may yet regain it. Like people, objects carry traces of history, and sometimes a single glance is enough to restore their significance. Perhaps someone will recognize their potential, take them in, and give them a second life—or perhaps they will remain where they are, slowly fading into the shadows beneath the hall.

3.8. In the valleys – homes / W dolinach domki

*in the valleys - homes
between steep and narrow stairs
the sea's glow afar*

*w dolinach domki
pomiędzy strome schody
blask morza w dali*



Fig. In the valleys – homes / W dolinach domki, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku evokes the distinctive landscape of Liguria—a region where steep hills descend toward the sea, and human settlements blend into the terrain. Small houses are scattered in the valleys, narrow and steep stairways wind between them, and in the distance, the Ligurian Sea shimmers. The poem captures the daily life of this extraordinary place, where nature and architecture exist in harmony, and life unfolds between heights and the vastness of the sea.

The first line – “*in the valleys - homes*” – paints a picture of picturesque villages nestled between the hills. Many Ligurian towns were built on slopes, sheltered from strong winds but still close to the sea. The houses, often in pastel colors, form irregular clusters, clinging to the rocks and adapting to the rugged terrain. The word “*valleys*” suggests both shelter and tranquility while also emphasizing the vertical structure of this landscape, where settlements are arranged at varying elevations.

The second line – “*between steep and narrow stairs*” – captures the essence of Ligurian towns, where streets are often long, stone stairways connecting different levels of the settlements. Their steepness and narrowness make daily walks feel like a climb, yet they offer breathtaking views. These stairways are not just practical features but an integral part of Ligurian identity—a sign of the region’s organic adaptation to its dramatic landscape.

The final line – “*the sea’s glow afar*” – opens up the scene and introduces a sense of lightness. In Liguria, even from the highest peaks, one can always glimpse the shimmering waters of the Ligurian Sea. The sea is a constant reference point—a symbol of openness, travel, and infinity, contrasting with the closed, vertical structure of the town. Its glow in the distance is a reminder that, despite life unfolding on rocky slopes, it always leads toward space and horizon.

The poem presents Liguria as a place suspended between land and water—a space where steep stairways and small homes merge with a dramatic yet harmonious landscape. Though human settlements may seem confined and nestled within valleys, they always open toward the sea, which serves as both a backdrop and a promise of boundless possibility.

3.9. Coastal breeze stirs / Nadmorska bryza

*coastal breeze stirs
a blue-hued awe within me
your presence lingers*

*nadmorska bryza
błękitny zachwyt wzbudza
twoja obecność*



Fig. Coastal breeze stirs / Nadmorska bryza, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poet draws the reader into a moment where nature intertwines with personal experience, evoking both wonder and a deep connection to someone dear. The coastal breeze, blue, and the presence of another person merge into a fleeting yet intensely felt image, where memories and the present blend into one.

The first line – “*coastal breeze stirs*” – opens a scene filled with movement and freshness. The air, saturated with salt and moisture, not only soothes but also awakens the senses, carrying both memories and new sensations. The breeze is something transient and impermanent, yet distinctly felt on the skin—it touches, envelops, and leaves a trace, much like the memory of someone important, which does not fade but lingers in the smallest moments of everyday life.

The second line – “*a blue-hued awe within me*” – emphasizes the visual and emotional aspects of this scene. Blue evokes the serenity of the sea and sky but also the depth of emotions, oscillating between joy and nostalgia. The “awe” described is more than a passing admiration—it is a form of inner stirring, triggered by the beauty of the surrounding world and by a subtle sense of connection to someone whose presence, even if only in spirit, still resonates.

The final line – “*your presence lingers*” – gives the poem a deeply personal, almost intimate tone. This brief statement may refer to someone physically accompanying the speaker or to someone who exists only in memory, yet still leaves an imprint in moments of wonder and reflection. Their presence does not need to be tangible—it can be felt through places, shared memories, the whisper of the wind, the color of the sky.

The moment captured in the poem reveals how nature can become a space for reunion—whether real or symbolic—with someone dear. The coastal breeze carries more than just refreshment; it brings remembrance, emotion, and an awareness of connections that do not fade with time. It is a subtle reminder that the beauty of a moment is not only in what we see but also in what we feel and with whom we share it—even if that person remains unseen.

3.10. Italian coastline / Włoskie wybrzeże

*Italian coastline
with a long sun-filled day
tempts the tourists*

*włoskie wybrzeże
dniem długim pełnym słońca
kusi turystów*



Fig. Italian coastline / Włoskie wybrzeże, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The sunlit rhythm of the Italian coastline captures the gaze and awakens a longing for rest. In the warm glow of the day, the sea shimmers on the horizon, and the air is filled with the scent of salt and citrus. The poem conveys the atmosphere of a place where time flows differently—slower, more leisurely, more sensuous—as if every moment carried the taste of summer.

The first line – “*Italian coastline*” – opens a landscape full of Mediterranean charm. One can picture the rugged cliffs of Cinque Terre, the golden beaches of Amalfi, the citrus groves of Calabria, or the elegant seaside promenades. This is a place where the sea has shaped life for centuries, influencing traditions, cuisine, and local culture. The Italian coastline is not merely a tourist destination but a space deeply entwined with history and the identity of those who have lived in harmony with the water for generations.

The second line – “*with a long sun-filled day*” – emphasizes the region’s climate and its impact on the pace of life. The sun, which gently warms the Italian coast for most of the year, makes the days feel longer and more conducive to savoring life. Here, life unfolds unhurriedly—siestas in the shade of vineyards, late dinners on terraces, the scent of fresh fruit drifting through the air. This line evokes an atmosphere that not only encourages relaxation but embodies the essence of the Italian way of life—*dolce far niente*, the art of enjoying the moment with no rush or worry.

The final line – “*tempts the tourists*” – reveals how these elements draw people from all over the world. It is not just a vacation spot but an invitation to immerse oneself in Mediterranean culture. The word “tempts” suggests not only the destination’s appeal but also its almost hypnotic pull—calling visitors to stay, to slow down, to experience the true joy of life.

The poem paints the Italian coastline as a place where nature’s harmony, a gentle climate, and cultural richness blend into a seamless whole—creating a destination that is difficult to leave without a sense of longing. It is not just a landscape but a way of life, one that lingers in memory long after departing from its sun-drenched shores.

3.11. Moored in the shadows / Przycumowane

*moored
in the shadows of the turbulent deep sea
the world's wealth awaits*

*przycumowane
w cieniu wzburzonej głębi
bogactwo świata*



Fig. Moored in the shadows / Przycumowane, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem paints a picture of luxury against the backdrop of untamed nature. Moored yachts, symbols of wealth and prestige, linger at the threshold of two worlds—the stability of the harbor and the restless depths of the sea. The gleam of their elegant hulls contrasts with the dark waters, where the promise of adventure and exclusivity intertwines with the raw force of the surrounding elements.

The first line – “*moored*” – suggests a temporary pause, a state of suspension. Yachts, though grand and refined, remain at the mercy of conditions that can change at any moment. Their stay in the harbor is not permanent—they are ready to set sail toward the next luxurious destination, yet for now, they remain still, enveloped in an illusion of calm.

The second line – “*in the shadows of the turbulent deep sea*” – emphasizes the contrast between the controlled, opulent world of luxury and the wild, unpredictable power of the ocean. Yachts symbolize comfort and prestige, yet their proximity to the churning waters serves as a reminder that no fortune grants absolute control over nature. A single storm is enough to challenge the illusion of security.

The final line – “*the world’s wealth awaits*” – alludes to the grandeur and prestige surrounding these vessels. The sea becomes both a stage for splendor and a reminder of the limits of human dominance. Yachts represent success, but their presence in the harbor is merely a fleeting moment in their journey—nothing here is truly tamed, and nothing lasts forever.

The poem intertwines the theme of luxury with the ongoing dialogue between humanity and the sea. Yachts may stand as emblems of prestige, but their value and power pale in comparison to the vastness of the ocean. Even the wealthiest remain mere guests upon the waters, which abide by their own laws, beyond human control.

3.12. With a bottle of wine / Butelką wina

*with a bottle of wine
lively streets
triumph over the night*

*butelką wina
ożywione ulice
triumfują noc*



Fig. With a bottle of wine / Butelką wina, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

In the narrow alleyways of port towns along the Italian coastline, conversations echo, the lights of cafés shimmer on the cobblestones, and the warm sea breeze blends with the aroma of evening meals. The poem captures a night in Liguria—not one of silence, but of joy and movement, where laughter and music illuminate the darkness.

The first line – “*with a bottle of wine*” – immediately sets the scene of an Italian evening, where a glass of local wine becomes the perfect excuse for long conversations and the celebration of life. Wine in Liguria—whether the crisp white Vermentino or the full-bodied Pigato—is more than just a drink; it is an integral part of the Mediterranean tradition of shared meals and lingering moments.

The second line – “*lively streets*” – evokes the image of coastal towns like La Spezia or Porto Venere, where life does not fade after sunset. Instead, narrow stone alleyways remain filled with conversation, cheerful chaos, and lights reflecting off the sea. Even late into the night, Liguria's trattorias hum with laughter, music spills into the squares, and people stroll leisurely along the waterfront.

The final line – “*triumph over the night*” – highlights how darkness is not synonymous with silence or the end of the day but rather a stage for celebration. The night does not conquer the city—rather, the city, with its lights, laughter, and energy, reshapes the night into something vibrant and alive. In Liguria, the evening is a time for gatherings, conversations, and an intoxicating sense of freedom that makes the night feel endless.

The poem not only captures the essence of nocturnal festivity but also emphasizes Liguria’s unique charm—a place where life unfolds by the sea, guided not just by the rhythm of the waves but also by the presence of people. The tradition of communal dining, the warmth of its inhabitants, and the breathtaking landscapes make every night here part of a larger story—one written by both locals and travelers who fall under the irresistible spell of the coastline.

3.13. Bastione square / Placyk Bastione

*Bastione square -
in the middle, a lonely clown
vivid in sorrow*

*placyk Bastione-
pośrodku samotny kłown
jaskrawy smutkiem*



Fig. Bastione square / Placyk Bastione, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

Bastione Square becomes the stage for an unexpected scene—amid the city’s daily life, among passersby or in the quiet emptiness of the evening, stands a solitary clown. The haiku highlights the contrast between his bright costume and the emotional weight that seems to accompany him. The square, evoking thoughts of fortifications and history, suddenly transforms into the backdrop of a personal spectacle where joy and melancholy intertwine into a single image.

The first line – “*Bastione Square*” – points to a specific location, one that might suggest both urban activity and an intimate corner for reflection. The name itself brings to mind fortifications, defensive walls, and traces of the past, adding another layer of meaning to the scene—it is a space with history, now serving as the setting for another, more personal drama.

The second line – “*in the middle, a lonely clown*” – emphasizes the strangeness of the moment. A clown, usually surrounded by an audience, is here alone, highlighting the contrast between his bright costume and the absence of spectators. Is this just a break between performances? Or is he a figure no longer playing a role, merely lingering in the theater of daily life, invisible to others? His presence becomes a symbol of alienation—paradoxically, the very thing that makes him stand out even more.

The final line – “*vivid in sorrow*” – deepens this contrast, suggesting that what is typically associated with laughter might conceal something entirely different. The brightness of his colors does not serve to entertain but instead draws out an emotional intensity. The clown’s sorrow, hidden beneath paint and costume, seems even more visible—almost glowing with its own light, exposing the paradox of concealed despair in a world full of color.

The poem subtly reveals that Liguria is not only a place of breathtaking landscapes and coastal serenity but also a space where life unfolds in all its complexity—filled with light and shadow, encounters and solitude, appearances and genuine emotions. Bastione Square, though open and public, in this moment becomes an enclosed stage of inner experiences, where the solitary clown reminds us of the hidden stories lying just beneath the surface of everyday life.

3.14. Music of silence / Muzykę ciszy

*music of silence
is crafted by crystals
in a duet with the piano*

*muzykę ciszy
tworzą kryształy
w duecie z fortepianem*



Fig. Music of silence / Muzykę ciszy, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem creates a space filled with fleeting sensations, where delicate sounds intertwine with the classical strength of the piano. It captures a moment where music emerges from what is almost inaudible, forming an extraordinary symphony of subtlety and depth.

The first line – “*music of silence*” – introduces an apparent paradox: silence here is not the absence of sound but its delicate complement. The space between the notes becomes just as significant as the notes themselves, and music arises precisely from this fragile balance between sound and stillness.

The second line – “*is crafted by crystals*” – evokes a sense of lightness and transparency in sound. Crystals may symbolize both purity and ephemerality, a delicacy that can easily be shattered. They bring to mind shimmering fragments of ice, glass, or gemstones, which, in the context of sound, suggest bright, luminous tones that seem to tremble in the air. A chandelier, with its glistening elements scattering light, does not merely reflect brightness but also seems to “sing” under the faintest movement of air, emitting a soft, almost musical sound. Its presence enhances the atmosphere of a place where light and sound complement each other.

The final line – “*in a duet with the piano*” – merges the visual brilliance of the crystal chandelier with the resonant tones of the piano. The piano, often associated with depth and strength, is paired with the ethereal lightness of the shimmering crystals, suggesting a harmonious interplay between two distinct yet perfectly attuned elements. This is more than just music; it is a full sensory experience—a concert for both the ears and the eyes.

The poem reveals an elegant setting where light and sound form a cohesive whole, lending the space an almost magical quality. The chandelier’s crystals and the piano symbolize harmony, where beauty manifests not only in the fleeting sounds of music but also in the luminous reflections dancing along the walls and ceiling. The haiku invites us to recognize the subtle connections between different forms of art and sensory experiences—ephemeral yet powerful enough to momentarily suspend time.

3.15. They unite as one / W jedność się łączą

*they unite as one
Prosecco with orange twist
the sea and the sky*

*w jedność się łączą
Prosecco z pomarańczą
morze i niebo*



Fig. They unite as one / W jedność się łączą, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku evokes two kinds of unity: the blending of Prosecco with orange and the natural fusion of the sea with the sky. These pairings capture both the joy of everyday pleasures and the timeless harmony of nature. The poem illustrates how contrasting elements can intertwine, forming a whole in which contrast does not imply opposition but rather completion.

The first line – *“they unite as one”* – opens the poem with the theme of union, without immediately revealing what is being joined. This creates a sense of intrigue, emphasizing that harmony can take many forms, whether in nature or human experience. The elements that come together do not lose their distinctiveness—instead, their coexistence brings out new meanings. The second line – *“Prosecco with orange twist”* – transports us into a world of taste and sensory pleasure. The combination of delicately sparkling wine with a citrus accent is a classic Italian pairing—Aperol Spritz—evoking summer evenings, carefree moments, and the joy of simple indulgences. Two distinct ingredients merge to create something new, much like in human relationships or culinary artistry, where harmony often arises from contrast.

The final line – *“the sea and the sky”* – broadens the perspective to the natural world, introducing an image that has inspired awe and reflection for centuries. The horizon, where the sea blends into the sky, symbolizes infinity and constant transformation. Like Prosecco and orange, these two elements remain distinct, yet their union appears natural and inevitable.

The poetic imagery highlights that unity can take many forms—from the fleeting fusion of flavors in a glass to the enduring, primal coexistence of natural forces. This reflective miniature invites us to recognize harmony in both ephemeral pleasures and grand, immutable aspects of nature, revealing that beauty lies in the fusion of diverse elements that together create something greater than the sum of their parts.

3.16. An Italian tune / Włoska melodia

*an Italian tune
floats around the corner's bend
the aroma of coffee*

*włoska melodia
unosì się za rogiem
aromat kawy*



Fig. An Italian tune / Włoska melodia, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem transports us to an Italian street, where sounds and scents intertwine into a fleeting yet immersive experience. In just three lines, it captures a moment that defies clear interpretation—something drifts around the corner, but is it a melody or the aroma of coffee? Or perhaps both, blending into the unmistakable rhythm of the city?

The first line – “*an Italian tune*” – opens the poem with sound, though its source remains undefined. It could be the song of a street musician, music drifting from a café radio, or simply the clinking of cups and the hum of conversations flowing over small tables. The word “*tune*” suggests more than just music—it may symbolize the pulse of the city, its natural harmony, where everyday life blends seamlessly with the atmosphere of the place.

The second line – “*floats around the corner’s bend*” – conveys a sense of motion and impermanence. What exactly lingers beyond the turn—melody or scent? In Italian towns, with their narrow streets and dense architecture, sounds and aromas move in unpredictable ways, leading a passerby like a subtle invitation to something worth discovering.

The final line – “*the aroma of coffee*” – introduces a new sensory dimension. The scent of freshly ground beans, ever-present in Italian cities, may be the answer to what “*floats around the corner*”—but is it really? Or perhaps coffee itself is part of the “*tune*”—a quiet accompaniment that is inseparable from the Italian way of life?

The poem evokes a world where sounds and scents do not exist separately but blend into a single, harmonious experience. Every detail of daily life—a note of music, a sip of espresso, background conversations—becomes part of the city’s ephemeral symphony. In this moment, the boundaries between the senses blur, and reality merges with perception into one seamless, melodic impression.

3.17. Fragrant nature / Wonna natura

*fragrant nature
in the strong embrace of vines
conquers the city*

*wonna natura
w silnym uścisku pnączy
miasto zdobywa*



Fig. Fragrant nature / Wonna natura, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku captures the subtle yet relentless process in which nature reclaims space once dominated by humans. This is not an abrupt confrontation but a gradual, almost imperceptible shift of boundaries—where the city once seemed permanent and unyielding, creeping vines and fragrant plants quietly take hold.

The first line – “*fragrant nature*” – draws attention to how nature engages the senses. It is not just the sight of greenery but its scent permeating the urban space, asserting its presence. The aroma of flowers, damp leaves, or wild herbs reminds us that nature is more than a decorative element—it has the power to infiltrate, evoke memories, and subtly shape its surroundings.

The second line – “*in the strong embrace of vines*” – conveys a sense of movement and persistence. The “*strong embrace*” suggests that plants do not merely surround buildings or fences but intertwine with them, creeping through cracks, wrapping around structures, and seizing every available space. This is an image of nature that refuses to be constrained by human boundaries—it seeks every possible way to grow, regardless of obstacles.

The final line – “*conquers the city*” – reverses the conventional idea of urban space as resistant to nature. Typically, it is humans who “*conquer*” land, paving over it, constructing buildings, and imposing order upon it. Yet here, it is nature that gradually, yet inevitably, reclaims its place. The image calls to mind roots splitting sidewalks, leaves sprouting from walls, and vines completely covering the facades of buildings.

The poem suggests that while humans may temporarily tame nature, it never ceases to find its way back. Even in the heart of a city, nature is not merely a backdrop for human activity—it is a living, persistent force that always seeks to flourish.

3.18. The breeze embraces / Przytula bryza

*the breeze embraces
mountains asleep in the sun
with the bay's soft song*

*przytula bryza
uśpione góry w słońcu
śpiewem zatoki*



Fig. The breeze embraces / Przytula bryza, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem presents a landscape where all the elements seem to work in perfect harmony—the breeze cradles, the mountains sleep in the sun, and the bay sings. This is not just a description of nature, but a subtle symphony of movement, warmth, and sound, where each element of the landscape takes on almost human qualities.

The first line – “*the breeze embraces*” – gives the wind the qualities of touch and intimacy. Instead of a raw force, we have a delicate, tender embrace that brings comfort and gently surrounds its surroundings. It is air that does more than stir the landscape; it engages with it, becoming a presence that can almost be felt on the skin.

The second line – “*mountains asleep in the sun*” – assigns the mountains the qualities of a living organism, surrendering to the rhythm of the day. The mountains, typically hard and unchanging, here seem almost alive—peacefully nestled in the warm light of the sun, like figures sleeping under a blanket of rays. Their stillness harmonizes with the movement of the breeze, creating a gentle balance between tranquility and dynamism.

The final line – “*with the bay’s soft song*” – reinforces the sense that nature communicates in its own subtle language. The water is not merely a reflective surface; it is active, producing sounds, expressing emotions, and bringing a musical rhythm to the landscape. It is the murmur of waves, a gentle lapping, perhaps an echo from the depths—the song that closes the scene in sonic harmony.

The haiku does not just describe a landscape; it makes it almost alive, making each element of nature feel human. The wind watches over and embraces, the mountains rest, and the sea fills the space with melody. Personifying all these elements turns the world into something more than just a backdrop—it becomes a space full of presence and emotion. The poem emphasizes that nature is not a passive landscape, but a living being with which one can form a relationship by listening to its subtle rhythm.

3.19. Basil in pesto / Bazylia w pesto

*basil in pesto –
in a grand symphony of sense
plays the leading role*

*bazylia w pesto –
w wielkiej symfonii zmysłów
gra pierwsze skrzypce*



Fig. Basil in pesto / Bazylia w pesto, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku celebrates basil as the key ingredient in pesto, making it the soloist in a flavorful symphony. The poem not only describes the richness of the aromas but also portrays the art of cooking as a craft where one bold element can dominate and set the tone for the entire experience.

The first line – “*basil in pesto*” – immediately transports the reader to the world of Italian cuisine, where fresh, fragrant basil leaves play a pivotal role in the classic sauce. It is the foundation of this flavor composition, bringing intensity and a characteristic freshness. There is no need to mention the other ingredients – basil speaks for itself.

The second line – “*in a grand symphony of sense*” – expands the culinary context by introducing a musical metaphor. Just as each instrument in an orchestra contributes its unique tone, the ingredients of pesto come together in a harmonious whole, affecting various senses—taste, smell, texture, and color. This emphasizes that cooking is not only about proportions but also about the skill of drawing out the most important notes and creating a coherent composition.

The final line – “*plays the leading role*” – highlights basil’s role as the main protagonist in this symphony. Among all the ingredients, it is basil that defines the sauce’s character—its intensity is undeniable, and it leads the way, not allowing the other elements to overshadow it. The musical metaphor perfectly conveys the dynamics of this composition—while other ingredients may be present in the background, basil sets the tone and rhythm for the entire flavor experience.

The poem portrays pesto as a culinary masterpiece, in which a single ingredient can play a decisive role, much like a soloist in an orchestra. The haiku reminds us that cooking is an art of building harmony, where the most important element not only binds the others together but also stands out, giving the entire creation its distinctive character.

3.20. Hills bow gently down / Wzgórza się chylą

*hills bow gently down
toward the whispering bay
breathing the sea's breath*

*wzgórza się chylą
ku szepcącej zatoce
morza oddechu*



Fig. Hills bow gently down / Wzgórza się chylą, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

At first glance, this haiku presents a simple scene—the hills bowing toward the whispering bay and the breath of the sea—but it takes on a pastoral, yet profound, dimension. This brief image reveals a subtle conversation between the earth and the water, as if they were living beings, inclined to gesture toward and respond to each other.

The first line – “*hills bow gently down*” – emphasizes the personification of the landscape: the hills, rather than being a static form of land, seem to consciously “*bow*” toward the bay. This personification introduces the sense that nature is making a gesture of humility or tenderness toward the approaching waves, giving the entire landscape an intimate character. From a human perspective, this can be compared to small gestures of closeness—a tilt of the head toward a conversational partner or a spontaneous act of affection, both signaling closeness between two entities.

The second line – “*toward the whispering bay*” – enhances this closeness, portraying the bay as a being that speaks in its own voice. The word “*whispering*” suggests the subtle sound of the waves and makes the sea appear as a partner in the dialogue, capable of sharing stories or memories, rather than just an impersonal force of nature. Just as in human relationships, the whisper of the bay represents quiet conversations, small words, and unspoken feelings that build bonds and mutual understanding.

The final line – “*breathing the sea’s breath*” – further personifies the sea by comparing the tides and waves to “*breath*.” This gives the sea the attribute of a living organism, adding even more depth to the scene: its cyclical rhythm serves as a reminder of the constant, uninterrupted pulse of nature. In a broader context, the sea’s breath could symbolize the rhythm of life, its steadiness, and perpetual changes—a reminder that everything in both human and natural worlds is subject to a certain harmony, where ups and downs are inevitable but also necessary. This scene emphasizes the mutual relationship between the seemingly immobile hills and the ever-living sea. The use of personification encourages the reader to see the landscape as more than just a static image—it becomes a witness to a quiet conversation between two beings coexisting in harmony and balance. It also serves as a metaphor for human relationships, where sometimes it’s enough to be present, with a small gesture or glance, to convey the depth of emotion. The haiku reminds us that in nature, we can find not only the beauty of forms but also hidden poetry—much like the subtle moments of closeness between people.

PART II TUSCAN REGION



Fig. Tuscan region, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

In the second part of this work, we invite you to Tuscany – a region that has captivated us with its harmony of nature, art, and history. Tuscany is a place where the beauty of the landscape meets a rich cultural heritage, creating a unique atmosphere that inspires reflection and creativity. Rolling hills covered with vineyards, medieval cities like Florence and Siena, and the warm hues of Tuscan fields form a landscape that continually fascinates and invites contemplation.

Our haikus, created in Tuscany, strive to capture this unique atmosphere of the region – from dawn over the lavender fields to evening walks through narrow streets steeped in history. As we wandered through cities and smaller towns, we experienced the richness of culture and art that shape this place – from Renaissance architecture to local traditions that still hold the magic of the past.

In this part of the work, we wish to share with readers our poetic impressions of Tuscany, enriched with illustrations created in watercolor technique. We hope that the combination of imagery and words will allow for a fuller experience of what moved us so deeply in this land – its colors, sounds, and emotions, all hidden in every moment captured in our haikus.

Chapter 1: Tuscany – The Harmony of Nature, Art, and History

Introduction

Tuscany, a region located in central Italy, is renowned for its picturesque landscapes, rich history, and influential culture. For centuries, it has attracted not only travelers but also numerous artists, serving as an endless source of inspiration. To better understand how the region's landscapes and culture became the backdrop and inspiration for our haiku, in this chapter, we will introduce the characteristics of Tuscany.

Geography and Nature of Tuscany

Tuscany stretches from the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Apennine Mountain ranges, offering diverse landscapes that include both green hills and scenic beaches. The most famous Tuscan cities, such as Florence, Siena, and Pisa, are true architectural and cultural gems (Piras et al., 2021). This region is known for its rolling hills, olive groves, and vineyards, which together create the characteristic Tuscan landscape (Agnoletti and Santoro, 2018).

Tuscany's climate is typical of Mediterranean regions, with warm summers and mild winters. The diversity of microclimates, from coastal to mountainous, influences the local flora and fauna, which includes unique species of plants and animals (Magny et al., 2006). Tuscan national parks, such as the Tuscan Archipelago National Park, protect these natural treasures and stand as a testament to the region's biological diversity (Foggi et al., 2014).

History of Tuscany

The history of Tuscany is inseparable from its ancient roots. The Etruscans, who inhabited central Tuscany and northern Lazio, created a rich archaeological heritage that continues to intrigue researchers (Leonardi et al., 2018).

During the Roman period, Tuscany became an important administrative and economic center, further influencing its cultural development. The region's history has been shaped by the influences of various powers, including the Lombards and the Franks, after the fall of the Roman Empire (Leonardi et al., 2018).

During the Renaissance, Tuscany experienced significant cultural and artistic growth, largely due to the patronage of the Medici family. Florence, the heart of Tuscany, became the cradle of the Renaissance, attracting artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Dante

Alighieri. The historical wealth of the region is evident in its numerous monuments, museums, and works of art (Leonardi et al., 2018).

Cultural Heritage of Tuscany

This region is a cradle of various forms of art, literature, music, craftsmanship, and traditions, all deeply rooted in the daily life of its inhabitants. Monuments such as the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral or the Uffizi Gallery showcase the works of the greatest artists. It is also worth mentioning Siena, Pisa, and Lucca, cities that also display splendid examples of medieval and Renaissance art and architecture (Simons, 2012; Cornelison, 2006).

For centuries, the region has played an important role in the world of music, especially opera. In the 16th century, early forms of opera emerged in Florence, which later evolved into sophisticated performances. Many famous composers from Tuscany, including Giacomo Puccini, made significant contributions to the development of Italian opera (Georgieva et al., 2022).

Tuscany also boasts a rich literary tradition, being the birthplace of Italian literature thanks to great figures such as Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Boccaccio, and Niccolò Machiavelli. Their works, which often referred to local myths, legends, and social realities, helped popularize Tuscany in literature. The landscapes, cities, and everyday life of Tuscany have long inspired many writers and poets, further strengthening the region's cultural significance (Simons, 2012). Artisanal craftsmanship is an integral part of Tuscany's heritage. The traditional art of leatherwork combines conventional techniques with contemporary designs, resulting in unique and highly regarded products worldwide (Scott, 1997).

Culinary experiences play a significant role in tourists' choice of travel destinations. Tuscan cuisine, known for its simple yet refined dishes based on fresh, local ingredients, has gained worldwide recognition (Roman, 2024).

Numerous festivals held across the region provide a vivid example of local traditions and customs, further enriching the cultural image of the region. These festivals also serve to preserve and pass on the cultural heritage to future generations (Wood, 2024).

Chapter 2 Haiku by Elżbieta Perzycka-Borowska

2.1. A child on the train / dziecko w pociągu

*a child on the train
glide past the window
sceneries of Italy*

*dziecko w pociągu
przemykają za oknem
krajobrazy z Włoch.*



Fig. A child on the train / dziecko w pociągu, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

A child's gaze is filled with wonder—it notices details that often go unnoticed by adults. The poetic image captures a moment of travel, where the landscapes of Italy pass by behind the window. Each scene is fleeting, changing in the blink of an eye, but it is precisely this transience that keeps the child's curiosity alive.

The first line – “*a child on the train*” – immediately evokes the image of a young traveler, mesmerized by the world beyond the glass. The train, as a symbol of movement and change, becomes not just a means of transport but also a metaphor for discovering the world. It stirs associations with childlike curiosity, eagerly absorbing everything new, unfamiliar, and shifting at the speed of the journey.

The second line – “*glide past the window*” – introduces a sense of impermanence and dynamism. The landscapes change with every moment, remaining in sight for only a few seconds. This motion reflects the nature of memories: some images linger, while others fade before we can fully grasp them. It also serves as a reflection on the pace of life – where for a child, every moment is a new discovery, whereas for an adult, travel often becomes routine, with views blending into a repetitive backdrop.

The final line – “*sceneries of Italy*” – grounds the scene in a specific place, emphasizing the visual richness and diversity of the Italian landscape. For the child gazing through the window, Italy might appear as a colorful mosaic: rolling green hills, narrow town streets, the deep blue of the sea, and bright facades of houses gliding by one after another. Though real, this landscape takes on an almost dreamlike quality in poetry – as if the entire world were a moving picture, one that the child tries to capture with their eyes.

The poem as a whole portrays not only the journey itself but also the way we perceive the world. The child's gaze from the train symbolizes curiosity, openness to the new, and the ability to marvel – qualities that often fade in adulthood. It serves as a reminder that every journey, both physical and metaphorical, can be an opportunity for discovery, if only we allow ourselves to see the world through the eyes of a child.

2.2. A sparrow chirps / Ćwierka wróbelek

*a sparrow chirps
beneath the Duomo of Firenze
people crowd together*

*ćwierka wróbelek
pod Duomo di Firenze
tłoczą się ludzie*



Fig. A sparrow chirps / Ćwierka wróbelek, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

In a bustling city where history and daily life intertwine along narrow streets, the sounds of nature can unexpectedly break through the urban noise. Poetry captures this fleeting moment—a meeting of two worlds, where grandeur and the subtle presence of nature exist side by side.

The first line – “*a sparrow chirps*” – introduces the image of a humble bird whose delicate sound fills the space. The sparrow, often associated with everyday life and the unnoticed background of the city, gains special significance in this context. Its song is a small yet integral part of the urban landscape—a reminder that even in the heart of great cities, nature persists.

The second line – “*beneath the Duomo of Firenze*” – transports us to the heart of Florence, to the monumental cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore. This masterpiece of architecture, a testament to human genius and ambition, becomes the backdrop for a fragile bird. The contrast between these two scales—the tiny sparrow and Brunelleschi’s vast dome—illustrates the coexistence of the fleeting and the eternal, the simple and the grand.

The final line – “*people crowd together*” – brings dynamism and the daily rhythm of the city. Florence is a place that constantly draws in crowds, an essential part of its character. The flow of tourists and locals may be overwhelming, yet despite the noise and movement, the sparrow’s delicate chirping still finds a space to be heard.

The poem as a whole highlights the unique character of Florence—a city where the greatness of history and art does not exclude the presence of small, everyday wonders. The sparrow, so unassuming next to the grand cathedral, serves as a reminder that beauty is not found only in the monumental. Poetry sensitizes us to fleeting moments that often escape in the rush of the city—one only needs to pause for a moment to notice them.

2.3. Doors adorned / Drzwi ozdobione

*doors adorned
with frescoes from the past
worn by the rain*

*drzwi ozdobione
freskami z przeszłości
zniszczone deszczem*



Fig. Doors adorned / Drzwi ozdobione, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

In the haiku, *doors adorned with ancient paintings* take on a nostalgic and reflective dimension. The theme of the past enters into dialogue with the inevitable forces of nature, emphasizing the fragility of history hidden in the everyday details of architecture.

The first line – “*doors adorned*” – evokes the image of an ornate entrance that may once have symbolized hospitality, prestige, or the spiritual significance of a place. The colorful decorations or intricate details hint at bygone times, sparking imagination about the people who once passed through them.

The second line – “*with frescoes from the past*” – introduces a clear reference to art and tradition. Frescoes are associated with the craftsmanship of past masters, requiring skill, patience, and knowledge. Their presence on the doors lends a unique aura, as if passersby could reach out and touch the atmosphere of a different era, feeling the echoes of history.

The final line – “*worn by the rain*” – illustrates both the relentless power of nature and the passage of time. Rain becomes a symbol of time itself, gradually erasing colors and shapes, leaving its mark on what was once carefully crafted by human hands. Yet beneath the layers of wear, the remnants of the past still linger, inviting reflection on the impermanence of all artistic and cultural expressions.

This scene highlights a profound dialogue between history and the present, as well as between human artistry and the forces of nature. The haiku serves as a reminder that even the grandest works are subject to the effects of time and the elements, standing as both testimonies to past eras and lessons on the inevitability of change.

2.4. In the open gate / W otwartej bramie

*in the open gate
stands a marble statue –
the treasures of Florence*

*w otwartej bramie
stoi posąg z marmuru –
skarby Florencji*



Fig. In the open gate / W otwartej bramie, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

In the poetic snapshot, Florence emerges as a space where history, etched into architecture, intertwines with the relentless passage of time. The haiku captures a fleeting moment in which art and the elements meet, revealing how traces of the past slowly fade under the influence of nature.

The first line – “*in the open gate*” – introduces the image of an entrance that once symbolized prestige, spirituality, or artistic craftsmanship. Florence, a city of Renaissance masterpieces, is filled with such details—ornate portals that not only led into grand interiors but also invited passersby into the world of past epochs.

The second line – “*stands a marble statue*” – emphasizes the presence of historical art, remnants of which still adorn the city's walls, doors, and façades. The statue, once pristine and full of expressive detail, now bears the subtle marks of time. It serves as a reminder of the sculptors who shaped it and the generations who admired it.

The final line – “*the treasures of Florence*” – highlights the city's wealth of artistic and cultural heritage. However, it also suggests that these treasures are not immune to time. Just as rain erodes frescoes and statues lose their sharpness, the past is gradually transformed. Yet, these very signs of aging make them even more valuable—not just as artworks but as silent witnesses of history.

Florence is a city where past and present merge at every turn. The haiku encapsulates this delicate interplay between history and time, between art and the elements. The open gate and the marble statue, though touched by years and weather, remain integral parts of the Florentine landscape—as if the city itself is teaching us that even what fades and erodes continues to tell its story.

2.5. The voices of tourists / Głosy turystów

*the voices of tourists
bridge the river's two shores
goldsmiths' shops*

*głosy turystów
łączą dwa brzegi rzeki
sklepy złotników*



Fig. The voices of tourists / Głosy turystów, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The scene captured in this haiku presents a moment where art meets everyday life. An open gate and a marble statue suggest that Florence is a city where beauty is not confined to museums but is an integral part of the urban landscape. It serves as a subtle reminder that in this place, history does not stand still—it remains present, always ready for new explorers.

The first line – “*the voices of tourists*” – introduces a multilingual murmur animating the scene. It conveys not only spoken words but also the excitement of discovering a new environment, the thrill of travel, and the desire to capture beauty in photographs.

The second line – “*bridge the river’s two shores*” – emphasizes both a physical and symbolic act of connection. The river is not just a geographical divide but a metaphorical one, where cultural differences can be bridged through shared experiences and mutual curiosity. The voices of tourists create an audible thread linking two sides of the city, forming a bridge of impressions.

The final line – “*goldsmiths’ shops*” – introduces an element of tradition and craftsmanship. In Florence, these small jewelry workshops, often located on bridges, reflect the city's fusion of art, commerce, and vibrant social life.

This haiku highlights Florence not just as a city preserving remnants of past eras but as a place where art remains accessible and tangible. The open gate symbolizes the city's willingness to share its heritage, while the statue standing at its threshold serves as a guardian of this extraordinary tradition. It is a reminder that walking through Florence is like traveling through an open-air gallery, where history and beauty are within reach at every turn.

2.6. You can't catch him / Nie da się złapać

*you can't catch him,
on the restaurant table
the nimble sparrow*

*nie da się złapać,
na stole w restauracji
zwinny wróbelek*



Fig. You can't catch him / Nie da się złapać, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

In the poetic image, a bird on a restaurant table becomes a symbol of spontaneity, elusiveness, and the subtle presence of nature in human daily life. This brief scene serves as a reminder that even in the structured world of people, nature can unexpectedly appear, bringing an element of lightness and freedom.

The first line – “*you can’t catch him*” – introduces movement and a sense of transience. The sparrow is not a creature that can be easily held—it remains elusive, its quick reactions seemingly mocking humanity’s desire for control. This serves as a subtle metaphor for the fact that not everything in life can be grasped or molded to fit human expectations.

The second line – “*on the restaurant table*” – places the bird in a distinctly urban setting, a space generally considered reserved for people. A restaurant table, usually associated with comfort, order, and routine, suddenly becomes the stage for an unexpected encounter. This small intrusion of nature into human reality can provoke amusement, surprise, or even mild discomfort—an implicit reminder that the world does not belong solely to people.

The final line – “*the nimble sparrow*” – emphasizes the character of this fleeting visitor. Though small and unassuming, the sparrow embodies energy, agility, and independence. Its presence is brief, its movement swift, yet in that one second, it brings a touch of the wild into the urban scene, a reminder that nature cannot be entirely excluded from human spaces.

The haiku contrasts the predictable, structured world of humans with the freedom and unpredictability of nature. The sparrow serves as a gentle reminder that not everything can be framed or controlled and that even in city life, there is room for fleeting, unexpected encounters with the natural world. This lesson, drawn from observing a tiny bird, invites reflection on how many spontaneous moments slip past us as we chase routine and control.

2.7. They confess their love / Miłość wyznają

*they confess their love
the gentleman and the lady coo
it doesn't matter where*

*miłość wyznają
pan i pani gruchają
nie jest ważne - gdzie*



Fig. They confess their love / Miłość wyznają, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

In this haiku, a seemingly ordinary moment—a pair of doves expressing affection—reveals symbolic depth upon closer inspection. The brief image reminds us that love can blossom anywhere, unmoved by circumstances or setting.

The first line – “*they confess their love*” – immediately draws us into an intimate moment. It is not just a meeting between birds but a symbolic reference to the power of emotions, which, when genuine, require neither special circumstances nor witnesses. The very act of “*confessing*” emphasizes the emotional depth of this scene, suggesting that love can be expressed in a simple, instinctive way, without ceremony.

The second line – “*the gentleman and the lady coo*” – introduces a lighthearted, almost playful tone, personifying the birds as a couple whose behavior can be easily translated into human experiences. “Cooing” is their natural form of communication, but in this context, it becomes a synonym for a romantic exchange. In colloquial speech, people in love are often said to “coo” at each other, reinforcing the analogy between the doves’ behavior and human relationships. This reference makes the scene feel familiar and endearing.

The final line – “*it doesn’t matter where*” – serves as the key point of reflection. Love does not require an extravagant setting—it thrives just as easily on a park bench, in the hidden corners of a bustling city, or on the ledge of an old building. Pairs of doves often choose unremarkable locations, yet for them, only the presence of the other truly matters. This observation seamlessly translates into human relationships: it is not the place that defines love, but the closeness and bond shared between two beings.

The scene painted in this haiku portrays love as something natural, independent of circumstances, and unconcerned with its surroundings. It serves as a reminder that true affection does not need an extraordinary setting or validation—only the presence of another (or, in this case, another dove) to make the moment meaningful. It is a subtle yet profound reflection on what truly matters in relationships: the presence of another soul for whom only “*here and now*” is important.

2.8. Touched by time / Dotknięta czasem

*touched by time
a greenhouse stands among trees
birdsong all around*

*dotknięta czasem
szklarnia stoi wśród drzew
śpiew ptaków wokół*



Fig. Touched by time / Dotknięta czasem, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The image of an old greenhouse among trees evokes a sense of tranquility and a natural order where traces of the past coexist with the continuous rhythm of nature. The poem subtly portrays a harmonious transformation in which what was once created by humans gradually returns to the embrace of the natural world.

The first line – “*touched by time*” – conveys the gentle yet inevitable effect of passing years. The greenhouse is no longer new and pristine—perhaps its glass panes are covered in a patina of moisture, its paint is peeling, and its metal framework is rusting. It serves as a quiet yet poignant reminder that human-made structures, though built to last, are not immune to the relentless march of history and nature.

The second line – “*a greenhouse stands among trees*” – emphasizes its setting. Once part of a carefully maintained garden, the greenhouse is now surrounded by wild vegetation, gradually being reclaimed by nature. Though originally designed to control and nurture plant life, it now finds itself embraced by the very forces it sought to contain. It no longer stands as a separate entity but merges seamlessly with its surroundings, surrendering to the slow, inevitable process of nature’s reclamation.

The final line – “*birdsong all around*” – adds an element of vitality and movement to the nostalgic scene. The birds, unaware of the greenhouse’s history, treat it as just another part of their world, filling the air with their calls. This detail highlights nature’s ceaseless continuity—new life thrives even where time has left its mark.

The scene as a whole is a gentle reminder that nature and human creations are constantly intertwined. The greenhouse—once a symbol of human care and intervention—now coexists with nature in a new way. It is no longer a focal point but a quiet part of a larger landscape, where the passage of time meets the cycle of life. The haiku invites reflection on the beauty found in aging, on continuity, and on the ways in which things take on new forms of existence.

2.9. Tall walls / Wysokie mury

*tall walls
separate the gardens
from ordinary people*

*wysokie mury
oddzielają ogrody
od zwykłych ludzi*



Fig. Tall walls / Wysokie mury, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The image of tall walls enclosing Florence's gardens invites reflection on the relationship between public and private space, as well as the boundaries of access to beauty. The poem subtly emphasizes the contrast between the hidden, exclusive world within the walls and the everyday reality of those left outside, able only to imagine what lies behind the stone barriers.

The first line – "*tall walls*" – introduces the theme of enclosure and separation. Walls have always served a protective function, but they also symbolize exclusion. Their height suggests that what lies beyond is not meant for everyone. They create both a physical and symbolic boundary, dividing two worlds—prosperity and daily life, luxury and ordinariness.

The second line – "*separate the gardens*" – highlights that the space behind the walls is more than just private property. A garden, often associated with harmony and tranquility, becomes something inaccessible—something that cannot be touched or experienced unless one belongs to the closed circle. It may inspire admiration, but it also evokes a sense of exclusion, reminding us of the deep-rooted inequalities in society.

The final line – "*from ordinary people*" – sharply underscores the social divide. This phrase carries a certain melancholy—perhaps an ironic reminder that beauty, which could bring joy to all, becomes the privilege of a select few. In this context, the walls not only protect but also reinforce the boundary between a world of opportunity and one that remains out of reach.

The haiku presents Florence as a city where art and aesthetics intertwine with a history of divisions. Beauty, though ever-present, is not always within grasp—sometimes, one must remain on the other side of the wall, left only to imagine the world hidden behind it.

2.10. Lavender scents the air / Pachnie lawenda

*lavender scents the air
olive oil in barrels rests
at the feet of Tuscany's hills*

*pachnie lawenda
oliwa w beczkach u stóp
zboczy Toskanii*



Fig. Lavender scents the air / Pachnie lawenda, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem transports us to the heart of the Tuscan landscape, where the air is filled with the scent of lavender, and barrels hold golden olive oil. This subtle scene not only captures the idyllic rhythm of daily life but also highlights the deep harmony between humans and nature, rooted in the traditions of the region.

The first line – *“lavender scents the air”* – immediately engages the senses, evoking the intense, soothing fragrance that is one of the most distinctive elements of southern Europe. Lavender not only enriches the landscape but also symbolizes tranquility, a life moving at an unhurried pace among rolling hills and open fields.

The second line – *“olive oil in barrels rests”* – introduces the theme of tradition, bringing to mind the careful pressing of olives and their preservation in wooden barrels. Olive oil, often called Tuscany’s liquid gold, is an essential part of local culture—the fruit of the land and generations of labor, shaping the region’s flavors and daily life.

The final line – *“at the feet of Tuscany’s hills”* – completes the landscape, placing the scene within the picturesque setting of gentle slopes. These hills define the region’s unique character, where groves, vineyards, and farms coexist in harmony with nature.

The pairing of lavender and olive oil in this haiku captures the essence of the Tuscan way of life—simplicity, authenticity, and a profound connection to the land. The image not only conveys the region’s atmosphere but also invites reflection on how scents, flavors, and landscapes shape our identity and sense of belonging. Tuscany is not just seen; it is deeply felt through the senses, creating lasting, unforgettable memories.

2.11. The aroma of coffee / Aromat kawy

*the aroma of coffee
in the square by the Cathedral
slows the walk*

*aromat kawy
na placu przy Katedrze
spowalnia spacer*



Fig. The aroma of coffee / Aromat kawy, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poetic image of coffee's aroma drifting through the square by the cathedral intertwines with the rhythm of the city, giving everyday moments a special significance. This scene captures the essence of the Italian coffee ritual, where simple pleasures naturally become part of urban life.

The first line – “*the aroma of coffee*” – appeals to the sense of smell, evoking warmth and relaxation. The distinct scent of freshly brewed coffee accompanies both locals and tourists, creating a moment of peace amid the city's vibrant energy. In Italian culture, drinking coffee is more than just a daily habit—it is a moment to pause and immerse oneself in the present.

The second line – “*in the square by the Cathedral*” – places us in the heart of the city, highlighting how the scent of coffee coexists with the grandeur of architecture. Here, history and daily life merge, as the majesty of the cathedral mingles with the delicate, fleeting aroma of the drink. Coffee, though a small detail in the urban landscape, becomes an inseparable part of it, shifting attention from towering monuments to the pleasures of the moment.

The final line – “*slows the walk*” – sets the pace for the entire scene, suggesting that sensory experiences have the power to influence the rhythm of life. Italian squares are places where time moves differently—walking is not just about getting from one place to another but about savoring the surroundings. The scent of coffee becomes an invitation to pause, to take a break, and to embrace a slower, more mindful perspective.

This haiku highlights how small sensory details—scents, flavors, architecture—create a place's unique atmosphere. The poem reminds us that even in the presence of grand historical landmarks and the bustle of the city, it is these moments of stillness, filled with the fragrance of coffee and sunlight, that form the most treasured memories.

2.12. Tuscan beer / Toskańskie piwo

*tuscan beer
quenched the thirst
pizza on the table*

*toskańskie piwo
uwolniło pragnienie
pizza na stole*



Fig. Tuscan beer / Toskańskie piwo, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem transports us to a warm Tuscan setting, where the taste of local specialties becomes part of a moment of carefree relaxation. Savoring Tuscan beer alongside pizza is not just about quenching thirst but also a symbol of the simple joys that emerge from everyday pleasures.

The first line – “*Tuscan beer*” – draws attention to the regional character of the scene. Tuscany is primarily known for its wine, making the presence of local beer a unique and slightly unexpected choice. This detail highlights the evolving nature of Italian culinary traditions, offering a rich variety of flavors beyond the expected.

The second line – “*quenched the thirst*” – focuses on the moment of relief and refreshment. After a day filled with experiences, a sip of cold beer brings instant pleasure, offering a brief escape from the heat and the city's hustle. The word “*quenched*” adds a sense of lightness and spontaneity, evoking the carefree nature of vacation indulgences.

The final line – “*pizza on the table*” – completes the scene with an image of a simple yet satisfying meal. Pizza, a quintessential symbol of Italian cuisine, requires no formal celebration—it is a social dish, served in a relaxed atmosphere, bringing people together at the table and inviting unhurried conversations.

This haiku highlights how moments of joy are often found in life's simplest experiences. Flavors, scents, and the ambiance of a summer evening create a landscape where daily concerns give way to lightness and ease. The poem serves as a reminder that authentic pleasure often lies in fleeting moments—over a glass of cold beer and a slice of pizza, where time slows down, and enjoyment takes center stage.

2.13. A magical city / Bajeczne miasto

*a magical city
a cup on the table
and scoops of ice cream*

*bajeczne miasto
filiżanka na stole
i galki lodów*



Fig. A magical city / Bajeczne miasto, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku transports us to a city filled with charm, where even the simplest moments take on a special significance. The image of a cup on the table and scoops of ice cream creates an atmosphere of leisurely enjoyment, typical of moments spent savoring one's surroundings. It is an invitation to pause and experience the magic of a place where everyday life intertwines with a sense of wonder.

The first line – “*a magical city*” – opens up a space of beauty and inspiration. It could be a picturesque Italian alley bathed in sunlight, a lively square, or architecture that captivates with its colors and details. This is not just a specific location but also a state of mind—the city becomes *magical* not only through its appearance but through the way we perceive it in a given moment.

The second line – “*a cup on the table*” – introduces an element of rest and the celebration of the present. A cup of coffee or tea, enjoyed in a scenic setting, takes on a different flavor, symbolizing a pause to absorb the atmosphere. This is an ordinary act, yet in this context, it becomes part of an extraordinary experience.

The final line – “*and scoops of ice cream*” – completes the image with a touch of spontaneous, holiday-like joy. Ice cream evokes a sense of carefree indulgence and appreciation for simple pleasures. Its presence alongside a cup of coffee or tea creates a contrast of temperatures and flavors, emphasizing the relaxed, lighthearted nature of the moment—a reminder that simplicity itself can be a source of genuine delight.

This haiku illustrates how the atmosphere of a place shapes our perception of even the smallest pleasures. Whether we are tourists discovering a new city or locals rediscovering its charm, it is mindfulness and the ability to find joy in small things that make our surroundings feel magical. The poem highlights that beauty is often found not in grand events but in moments that allow us to fully experience the present.

2.14. Macchiato coffee / Kawa macchiato

*macchiato coffee
tastes better in the bar
under the umbrella*

*kawa macchiato
w barze pod parasolem
smakuje lepiej*



Fig. Macchiato coffee / Kawa macchiato, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poetic image of macchiato coffee enjoyed in a bar under an umbrella takes on a special significance—not just as a moment of rest, but as the essence of travel, where taste and surroundings merge into a harmonious experience. The haiku evokes the atmosphere of Italian cafés, where savoring coffee is more than a daily ritual—it is part of the culture, a way to relax, and a means of embracing the present moment.

The first line – “*macchiato coffee*” – refers to the distinct Italian drink, whose name comes from the word *macchiato*, meaning “stained” or “marked.” In this context, it refers to the delicate touch of milk added to espresso, subtly altering its texture and flavor. This idea of balance is symbolic: just as a small detail can transform a simple drink into something special, travel gives new depth to everyday experiences.

The second line – “*in the bar under the umbrella*” – paints the scene of a classic Italian café, where life unfolds outdoors, and umbrellas offer shelter from both the sun and passing rain. It is in places like these that travelers can pause, observe the rhythm of the city, listen to the conversations of locals, and truly absorb the essence of their surroundings. This aspect of travel is essential—not just seeing a place, but immersing oneself in its everyday reality.

The final line – “*tastes better*” – emphasizes that it is not just the coffee itself, but the setting in which it is enjoyed that enhances the experience. Whether it is the warmth of the Italian sun, the mingling aromas in the air, or the leisurely pace of Tuscany, macchiato seems richer and more memorable. Travel has the power to make even familiar things—like coffee—feel more vivid, turning them into cherished moments of discovery.

This haiku serves as a reminder that travel is not merely about moving from one place to another—it is also about rediscovering the familiar in a new light, seeing the ordinary from a fresh perspective. Sometimes, all it takes is a simple moment—a sip of coffee in the right setting—to experience a sense of completeness and harmony.

2.15. Smells from the oven / Zapachy z pieca

*smells from the oven
have stirred up the hunger
pizza or pasta?*

*zapachy z pieca
rozbudziły łaknienie
pizza czy pasta?*



Fig. Smells from the oven / Zapachy z pieca, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem focuses on the aromas rising from the oven, immediately evoking associations with Italy's rich culinary tradition. It captures a moment of intense sensory experience, where scents awaken hunger and the joy of eating, emphasizing how powerfully the sense of smell influences our emotions and choices.

The first line – “*smells from the oven*” – sets the scene with warmth and a sense of home. The oven symbolizes tradition, craftsmanship, and hospitality. Even before food reaches the plate, its aroma can stir desire, trigger memories, and heighten anticipation. It could be the scent of pizza, freshly baked focaccia, or lasagna—the essence of Italian cuisine, which has drawn food lovers from around the world for centuries.

The second line – “*have stirred up the hunger*” – highlights that these aromas are impossible to ignore—they work instantly, sparking an instinctive reaction. Hunger here is more than just a physical need; it is a craving for pleasure, a longing for shared meals and celebration. This reflects the essence of Italian food culture, where meals are not just sustenance but a ritual infused with passion and joy.

The final line – “*pizza or pasta?*” – presents a moment of decision, a playful dilemma that many food lovers can relate to. It is an unmistakably Italian choice, where both options are equally tempting and deeply rooted in the country's culinary heritage. The question itself carries a sense of excitement and indulgence, capturing the simple joy of choosing between two beloved dishes.

This haiku highlights how simple pleasures—aroma, taste, the anticipation of a meal—play a significant role in daily life. Italian cuisine is more than just food; it is a way of living that brings people together and awakens the senses. The poem serves as a reminder that moments spent around the table, surrounded by irresistible scents, are not just culinary experiences but also opportunities for joy, tradition, and sharing the best that life has to offer.

2.16. The sun at its zenith / Słońce w zenicie

*the sun at its zenith
Arno flows peacefully
the Goldsmiths' Bridge shines*

*słońce w zenicie
Arno płynie spokojnie
łśni most złotników*



Fig. The sun at its zenith / Słońce w zenicie, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku captures a midday scene in Florence, where the forces of nature and human craftsmanship intertwine in a single moment. The sun, the river, and the bridge form a harmonious composition, where light, tranquility, and artistic mastery merge, reflecting the essence of this extraordinary city.

The first line – “*the sun at its zenith*” – immediately evokes a sense of heat and the intensity of the day. The peak position of the sun suggests the noon hour, when the city is bathed in sharp light, shadows fade, and the golden hues of Florence’s stone facades are fully illuminated. The sun at its highest point symbolizes not only warmth but also a sense of culmination—the day has reached its peak, just as Florence itself represents a pinnacle of culture and architecture.

The second line – “*Arno flows peacefully*” – balances the sun’s intensity with a sense of calm. The river, whose steady rhythm has remained unchanged for centuries, serves as a silent witness to Florence’s daily life—passing boats, reflections of bridges, and the slowed pace of locals seeking relief along its banks. The tranquil flow of the Arno contrasts with the heat, suggesting that even under the scorching sun, the city moves to its own measured rhythm.

The final line – “*the Goldsmiths' Bridge shines*” – shifts attention to the iconic Ponte Vecchio, a bridge that has long served not only as a passageway but also as a symbol of Florence’s enduring craftsmanship. The golden jewelry shops, a legacy of the city’s artisanal heritage, shimmer both metaphorically—as a historic treasure—and literally, reflecting the sun’s rays. The shine could refer to the precious goods displayed in shop windows, the sunlight dancing on the water, or simply the bridge’s unmistakable atmosphere, where history and Renaissance magic blend seamlessly.

This scene encapsulates the spirit of Florence—a city where nature and human artistry create a space of beauty and harmony. The sun, the river, and the bridge not only form a picturesque image but also embody the unique rhythm of Tuscany’s capital—a moment of intense brightness, gentle tranquility, and timeless craftsmanship that continues to captivate. The haiku invites the reader to pause and see Florence at its most characteristic, where every element of the landscape plays its part in perfect balance.

2.17. Proudly under the clouds / Dumnie pod chmurką

*proudly under the clouds
white statues stand tall
the history of art*

*dumnie pod chmurką
białe posągi stoją
historia sztuki*



Fig. Proudly under the clouds / Dumnie pod chmurką, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The poem transports us to a place where art and urban space merge into an inseparable whole. Towering marble statues rise above the city or square, acting as silent guardians of the past, constantly reminding us of the richness of history and art. In this brief scene, the poem highlights both their proud presence and their relationship with time and the surrounding world. The first line – “*proudly under the clouds*” – conveys the statues' sense of grandeur, as if they stand above everyday life. The word “proudly” suggests that these sculptures exude dignity and remain unfazed by changing weather conditions. Their presence under the open sky makes them not just part of the cityscape but also a part of nature—they endure regardless of the whims of the elements, as if their strength lies not only in the material they are made of but also in the symbolism they carry.

The second line – “*white statues stand tall*” – draws attention to the classical image of sculptures carved from bright marble. This material has long been associated with the pursuit of perfection, characteristic of Greek and Renaissance masterpieces. These figures might evoke iconic works such as Michelangelo's *David*, and their static presence symbolizes the endurance of human thought and craftsmanship.

The final line – “*the history of art*” – serves as a powerful conclusion, emphasizing the significance of these statues. They are not merely decorative elements but embodiments of an entire narrative—stories of past eras, artists, and ideas that have shaped our perception of beauty over centuries. What now stands in public squares and courtyards is more than just stone—it is a living legacy that continues to inspire and ignite the imagination of contemporary viewers.

This haiku does more than depict a Florentine scene; it invites reflection on the timelessness of art against the passage of time. Though immobile and cold, sculptures have the power to speak to people, carrying within them the memory of great masters and their visions. In the rush of daily life, it is easy to overlook their presence, but when we pause for a moment, we can see in them not just remnants of the past but also its vibrant pulse, still alive in our surroundings.

2.18. The sky is blue / Niebo błękitne

*the sky is blue
by Neptune's fountain
a pigeon lands*

*niebo błękitne
przy fontannie Neptuna
ląduje gołąb*



Fig. The sky is blue / Niebo błękitne, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

The haiku transports us to the heart of Florence, a city where history and daily life coexist in a unique harmony. The grandeur of past epochs meets fleeting moments of the present, as a space filled with monuments continues to pulse with the movement of residents, tourists, and unexpected visitors—like a pigeon landing at the edge of a fountain. The poem captures this delicate balance between the magnificence of art and the subtle, unassuming gestures of nature that quietly become part of the city's landscape.

The first line – “*the sky is blue*” – paints the setting of a sunlit Florence, where warm light enhances the colors of the stone and reflects off the water’s surface. The vast, cloudless sky evokes a sense of openness and freedom, so characteristic of the Tuscan atmosphere. Its deep blue contrasts with the weight of the architecture, providing a natural backdrop for the scene unfolding below.

The second line – “*by Neptune’s fountain*” – situates us in one of Florence’s most iconic locations, Piazza della Signoria, where the grand Renaissance statue of Neptune towers over the square. A symbol of the city’s power and pride, the fountain carries the legacy of Florence’s maritime dominance and trade history. Surrounded by tourists and locals alike, it remains a living space where the past continues to breathe amid the bustling energy of daily life.

The final line – “*a pigeon lands*” – introduces movement and a touch of simplicity to this solemn and historic setting. The pigeon, a symbol of urban life and ordinariness, unknowingly enters the realm of monumental art, subtly shifting its meaning. This small act—the bird perching on an ancient fountain—highlights that even in a place rich with historical grandeur, everyday moments unfold, adding layers of life to the city.

This scene captures the essence of Florence—not merely an open-air museum, but a vibrant space where history and the present intertwine in the most unexpected ways. The haiku reminds us that Florence is more than its marble statues and grand artistic achievements; it is a city where life continues in the here and now—beneath the Renaissance masterpieces, under the open blue sky, where even an ordinary pigeon finds its place in the centuries-old story of the city.

2.17. The tall tower / Wysoka wieża

*the tall tower
has leaned for centuries
tourists all around*

*wysoka wieża
pochylona stoi od wieków
wokół turyści*



Fig. The tall tower / Wysoka wieża, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

Pisa is a place where history and unexpected beauty converge in one of the world's most recognizable landmarks—the Leaning Tower. The haiku captures its distinctive tilt, which has drawn crowds of travelers for centuries, becoming a symbol of both imperfection and remarkable resilience. The scene highlights the contrast between the tower's unchanging presence and the constant movement of visitors who arrive each day to witness it firsthand.

The first line – “*the tall tower*” – emphasizes its monumental stature and unique place in the city's skyline. While many towers rise perfectly upright toward the sky, this one has defied architectural norms for centuries, yet remains a proud part of the landscape. Its presence inspires admiration not only as an engineering feat but also as a fascinating anomaly that has withstood the test of time.

The second line – “*has leaned for centuries*” – invites reflection on the tower's unexpected strength. What seemed destined to collapse has instead endured, standing as a metaphor that not everything deviating from the norm is doomed to failure. In fact, its famous tilt has made it one of Italy's greatest attractions, with generations of engineers working tirelessly to preserve its unique character.

The final line – “*tourists all around*” – introduces an element of daily life and contrast. Despite its long history, the tower is not a silent relic—it is a place full of energy, visited by people from all over the world. Tourists come not only to marvel at the leaning structure but also to capture it in the playful, iconic poses of photos. Through them, the tower continues to exist in millions of new memories and images, extending its presence far beyond its stone walls.

This haiku underscores the role of chance in shaping cultural symbols. What could have been seen as an architectural mistake has become a source of pride and Pisa's defining landmark. The poem suggests that imperfection has its own value and, sometimes, it is precisely the flaws that make something unforgettable.

2.18. Siena on the hill/ Siena na wzgórzu

Siena on the hill
Horses gallop through vineyards
In the pocket of a pine tree

Siena na wzgórzu
konie mkną przez winnice
w kieszeni pinii



Fig. Siena on the hill/ Siena na wzgórzu, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening commentary

Tuscany has long fascinated travelers with its breathtaking landscapes, where historic towns, vineyards, and slender pine trees create a unique harmony. This haiku captures the picturesque scenery of Siena, perched on a hill, and the dynamic movement of galloping horses, evoking both the beauty of nature and the region's deep-rooted traditions.

The first line – “*Siena on the hill*” – immediately conjures an image of the medieval city rising proudly above the surrounding countryside. Known for its red brick buildings and winding streets, Siena is not just a historic landmark but a symbol of Italy's heritage and the enduring power of the past. Its hilltop location underscores both its strategic importance and the breathtaking views that have captivated locals and visitors for centuries.

The second line – “*Horses gallop through vineyards*” – introduces motion, contrasting the city's stability with the energy of the horses. These animals, associated with freedom, strength, and passion, may allude to the famous *Palio di Siena*, the legendary horse race held in Piazza del Campo. The image of horses rushing through rows of grapevines adds a sense of excitement and vitality, reminding us that Tuscany is not just a place of tranquil beauty but also one of rich traditions and dynamic life.

The final line – “*In the pocket of a pine tree*” – presents a poetic metaphor, suggesting the natural shelter provided by the tall, slender *pini* (stone pines). These iconic trees often form shaded avenues and groves, offering refuge from the sun. The idea of a "pocket" symbolizes a safe, hidden retreat within nature—a peaceful sanctuary where one can pause and experience harmony with the landscape.

This haiku invites reflection on the diversity and charm of the Tuscan countryside, where majestic towns, lush vineyards, and towering pine trees weave together a timeless story. It reminds us that in Tuscany, history, nature, and human activity blend seamlessly, creating an atmosphere that lingers in the memory long after the journey has ended.

Chapter 4 Haiku by Aneta Witosz

3.1. Boiling green / Kipiąca zieleń

*boiling green
whispers of ancient trees
guarded by thick walls*

*kipiąca zieleń
podszepców pradawnych drzew
strzeże gruby mur*



Fig. Boiling green / Kipiąca zieleń, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

In the haiku, lush greenery and ancient trees hidden behind Florence's thick walls create a scene where history and nature intertwine inseparably. This brief moment evokes a sense of mystery, an almost enclosed space—gardens, courtyards, and monastic cloisters that hold not only beauty but also the memories of past ages.

The first line – “*boiling green*” – suggests that nature is not merely a background but an active force, surging and thriving, pushing against the boundaries of architecture. Its vitality contrasts with the structured order of the historic city, creating an impression of wild, pulsing life hidden within. Though Florence is known for its stone-paved streets and Renaissance facades, it conceals enclaves of untamed greenery that continuously reclaim their space.

The second line – “*whispers of ancient trees*” – introduces a subtle theme of memory embedded in place. Towering cypresses, old oaks, and sprawling plane trees, standing for centuries, serve as silent witnesses to history—from the everyday lives of past residents to grand events unfolding in the shadows of these walls. “*Whispers*” imply that the trees still carry echoes of long-forgotten conversations, footsteps, and thoughts of those who once walked beneath them.

The final line – “*guarded by thick walls*” – reinforces the sense of isolation and secrecy. The tall stone walls enclosing the gardens and courtyards of Florentine palaces and monasteries serve as guardians of the past, separating these hidden spaces from the bustling modern city. Yet, the walls are not absolute barriers—overhanging branches and creeping vines symbolize the continual blending of nature into human-crafted spaces.

This scene does more than depict the hidden gardens of Florence—it invites reflection on how nature and history coexist in this timeless city. The haiku reminds us that behind monumental facades and cobbled streets, there are sanctuaries of quiet, where nature tells its own story, standing unshaken alongside the masterpieces of art and architecture.

3.2. Bathed in golden light / W złocie skąpane

*bathed in golden light
ancient olive groves stand still
the sun at its peak*

*w złocie skąpane
stare gaje oliwne
słońce w zenicie*



Fig. Bathed in golden light / W złocie skąpane, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The poetic snapshot captures the essence of a sun-drenched summer, where ancient olive groves stand motionless beneath the midday glow. The sun at its zenith underscores the unchanging rhythm of nature and the timeless harmony between the land and those who cultivate it. This brief image evokes the essence of the Tuscan landscape—rugged yet serene, filled with golden warmth and quiet endurance.

The first line – “*bathed in golden light*” – immediately transports us into a world of brilliance and heat. The golden hue not only emphasizes the intensity of the midday sun but also conveys a sense of stillness and permanence. It is a moment in which everything seems suspended in the glow, the landscape taking on an almost sacred presence.

The second line – “*ancient olive groves stand still*” – alludes to the centuries-old tradition of olive cultivation in Tuscany. Olive trees, symbols of longevity and resilience, remain steadfast despite the passage of time and generations. Their gnarled and twisted trunks seem to hold the memory of the past, reminding us of the deep, enduring bond between humans and the land they cultivate.

The final line – “*the sun at its peak*” – marks the height of the day, when the heat is most intense and the landscape is bathed in an unfiltered brilliance. It is a moment of nature’s absolute presence—a quiet, breathless pause where people seek shade, and the world surrenders to the sun’s dominance, continuing its eternal cycle.

This scene captures Tuscany in its most characteristic summer state—blazing sunlight, rolling hills, and olive groves standing undisturbed in an unchanging landscape. The haiku serves as a reminder of the striking beauty and severity of the southern climate, which has shaped both nature and human life for generations. In this tranquil golden light, we find both the symbolic richness of the region and a timeless narrative of balance between land and those who call it home.

3.3. Under the master's hand / Pod ręką mistrza

*under the master's hand
crafted on the bridge's span
Florentine gold shines*

*pod ręką mistrza
na moście wyrabiane
floreńskie złoto*



Fig. Under the master's hand / Pod ręką mistrza, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The haiku transports us to a Florentine bridge, where beneath the shadow of historic walls, goldsmiths continue their craft. The image of an artisan shaping precious metal is more than a simple depiction of daily work—it is a symbol of centuries-old tradition and mastery that defines the city’s unique identity.

The first line – “*under the master’s hand*” – immediately draws attention to the figure of the goldsmith. It is his skilled hands, trained in precise movements, that determine the shape and value of the gold. The word “*master*” emphasizes the continuity of tradition, passed down through generations of Florentine jewelers. This is more than craftsmanship—it is an art form, admired for its detail and perfection for centuries.

The second line – “*crafted on the bridge’s span*” – places us at the heart of Florence, on *Ponte Vecchio*, the legendary bridge where jewelry has been made and sold for centuries. This open-air workshop, suspended above the Arno River, blends the atmosphere of a bustling market with an extraordinary artisanal heritage. The bridge is more than just a location—it is a living monument to Florentine ingenuity.

The final line – “*Florentine gold shines*” – highlights both the literal and symbolic value of the craft. The gold forged on this bridge is not just a precious metal—it represents heritage, artistry, and prestige, illuminating the history of the city. Its glow is reflected in the waters of the Arno, just as the skill of the artisans continues to reflect the spirit of Florence, where tradition and innovation merge seamlessly.

This scene portrays not just the daily labor of the goldsmiths but also the deeper rhythm of Florence—a city that has remained faithful to its artistic soul for centuries. The haiku serves as a reminder that true beauty lies not only in the finished masterpiece but also in the process of its creation—the movement of hands, the patient shaping of metal, and the tradition that has withstood the test of time.

3.4. Bridges over Arno / Mosty nad Arno

*bridges over Arno
the dome in golden light shines
a great legacy*

*mosty nad Arno
kopuła w blasku złota
wielkie dziedzictwo*



Fig. Bridges over Arno / Mosty nad Arno, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The haiku unfolds a panoramic view of Florence—a city where architecture and history merge in perfect harmony. The bridges stretching across the Arno and the glowing dome of the Duomo are more than just elements of the landscape; they are symbols of a legacy that endures through the centuries. Within this brief image lies the grandeur of a place that continuously inspires with its unparalleled beauty and the spirit of past ages.

The first line – “*bridges over Arno*” – highlights the essential role these structures play in the fabric of Florence. For centuries, the bridges have connected both sides of the river, serving not only as practical passageways but also as metaphors for unity—between past and present, between different districts and traditions that together form the mosaic of Florentine identity.

The second line – “*the dome in golden light shines*” – transports us to the heart of the city, where one of its most defining symbols stands—the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore. Brunelleschi’s monumental masterpiece, towering over the rooftops, takes on an almost divine presence when bathed in sunlight. Its golden glow serves as a reminder of the enduring brilliance of the Renaissance, capturing the gaze of both travelers and locals alike.

The final line – “*a great legacy*” – elevates the scene beyond a simple visual composition, turning it into a testament to historical grandeur. Florence, the cradle of the Renaissance, has gifted the world an immeasurable artistic and intellectual heritage. This phrase emphasizes that its bridges, domes, and architectural splendor are not merely material structures but living expressions of human creativity, ambition, and a legacy that continues to thrive.

This haiku invites reflection on the phenomenon of Florence as a place where every building, every bridge, and every ray of sunlight reflecting off the Arno contributes to a greater whole. It reminds us that a city is more than just a physical space—it is also an idea, a symbol of genius that has withstood the test of time and still inspires those fortunate enough to walk its historic streets.

3.5. In modest facades / W skromnych fasadach

*in modest facades
the Medici's opulence
does not tempt the eyes*

*w skromnych fasadach
przepych Medyceuszy
oczku nie kusi*



Fig. In modest facades / W skromnych fasadach, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The haiku presents a paradox woven into the fabric of Florence—modest facades that conceal the history of one of Europe’s most powerful dynasties. In this brief scene, architectural restraint is not an accident but a deliberate mask for the power, influence, and opulence that shaped the city.

The first line – “*in modest facades*” – draws attention to the understated exteriors of Florentine buildings, which may surprise with their simplicity. Unlike the lavishly adorned residences of other European dynasties, Florence’s palaces often display an austere dignity, suggesting a strength that does not need ostentatious expression.

The second line – “*the Medici’s opulence*” – reveals the hidden grandeur behind these walls. As patrons of the arts and architects of political power, the Medici family-built Florence’s legacy through investment in culture, science, and civic development. The contrast between the restrained exterior and the sumptuous interiors reflects their pragmatism and their mastery of influence—power that did not demand flamboyant displays.

The final line – “*does not tempt the eyes*” – reinforces the idea that true authority does not need excessive ornamentation. Wealth, unseen at first glance, gains an aura of mystery, strengthening its impact rather than diminishing it. This echoes the Medici’s discretion—despite their immense influence, they wielded power with calculated subtlety.

This scene not only captures the essence of Florentine architecture but also highlights a philosophy of governance and prestige-building. The haiku reminds us that in Florence, history is etched into the very walls—not always obvious, yet always present, waiting for those who can see beyond the facades.

3.6. The art of detail / Sztuka detalu

*the art of detail
shining in subtle forms,
Carrara marble*

*sztuka detalu
lśniący w subtelnych kształtach
marmur z Carrary*



Fig. The art of detail / Sztuka detalu, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

Carrara marble has long been a symbol of perfection and artistic genius. This haiku transports us to the heart of Tuscany, where raw stone transforms into a canvas for sculptors, and the precision of their chisels gives it both subtlety and life.

The first line – “*the art of detail*” – draws attention to the extraordinary precision that distinguishes a true masterpiece from mere stonework. In sculpture, so deeply rooted in Tuscany’s artistic tradition, it is the smallest details that give form its expression and emotional depth. Every line, every delicate incision in the marble, stands as a testament to the master’s hand and generations of craftsmanship.

The second line – “*shining in subtle forms*” – highlights the remarkable quality of Carrara marble, renowned for its fine texture and ability to reflect light. Sculpted figures seem almost to breathe, while sunlight plays upon the surface, revealing delicate variations in color and structure. This interplay between stone and light gives marble its ethereal, almost living presence.

The final line – “*Carrara marble*” – firmly establishes the origin of this extraordinary material. The hills of Tuscany have supplied the world’s greatest sculptors for centuries, and the stone itself has become an integral part of the region’s artistic heritage. Michelangelo personally selected blocks from these quarries, believing that within them lay masterpieces, waiting to be revealed through the sculptor’s touch.

This haiku serves as a reminder of Tuscany’s inseparable connection to art and craftsmanship. It portrays marble not as a cold, lifeless material but as a vessel of ideas and history—one whose brilliance has endured through the centuries.

3.7. They glide / Prześlizgują się

*they glide
across the temple's vault
whispers of prayer*

*prześlizgują się
po sklepieniu świątyni
szmery modlitwy*



Fig. They glide / Prześlizgują się, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

In the haiku, whispered prayers drifting beneath a temple's vault take on a contemplative, almost mystical character. This image captures a moment of stillness, allowing us to perceive the ephemeral beauty of sound as it fills sacred spaces. Here, architecture and reverence merge, deepening the spiritual atmosphere of the scene.

The first line – “*they glide*” – gives prayer an intangible, almost weightless quality. These are not resounding voices or choral hymns but gentle whispers that float in the air, nearly imperceptible yet ever-present. This subtle movement of sound is reminiscent of a breeze brushing through the nave or the flicker of candlelight in the dim sanctuary—something that exists but is difficult to grasp. Prayer is not depicted as a grand declaration of faith but as a quiet dialogue with the divine, an intimate expression of personal spirituality.

The second line – “*across the temple's vault*” – emphasizes the architectural setting that shapes this experience. The soaring, often ornately decorated vaults of Gothic or Baroque churches enhance the way sound travels, allowing whispers to rise and blend into an ethereal symphony. The temple is not merely a backdrop; its very structure participates in the scene, ensuring that voices do not disappear but instead linger, circling the columns and ascending toward the heavens. This can be seen as a metaphor for the spiritual journey—human voices reaching toward the divine, just as the grand architecture lifts the gaze skyward.

The final line – “*whispers of prayer*” – reinforces both the communal and deeply personal nature of this moment. Each worshiper prays individually, yet together they form a quiet, living presence—a collective murmur of devotion. Prayer does not need to be loud to be powerful. On the contrary, in its softness lies a profound intensity. The whisper of prayer is more than sound; it is a symbol of spiritual presence, a moment suspended between the earthly and the divine.

This haiku portrays the temple as a place where sound and architecture intertwine, creating a unique spiritual experience. It reminds us that the sacred does not always reveal itself in grand gestures or solemn proclamations—sometimes, the quietest murmurs, resonating through sacred spaces, best capture the depth of human faith. It is a meditation on the power of stillness and the way moments of silent reflection allow us to truly experience the presence of the divine in everyday life.

3.8. Rays of sunlight / Promienie światła

*rays of sunlight
filtered through the stained glass panes
fade into the space*

*promienie światła
przesączone przez witraż
nikną w przestrzeni*

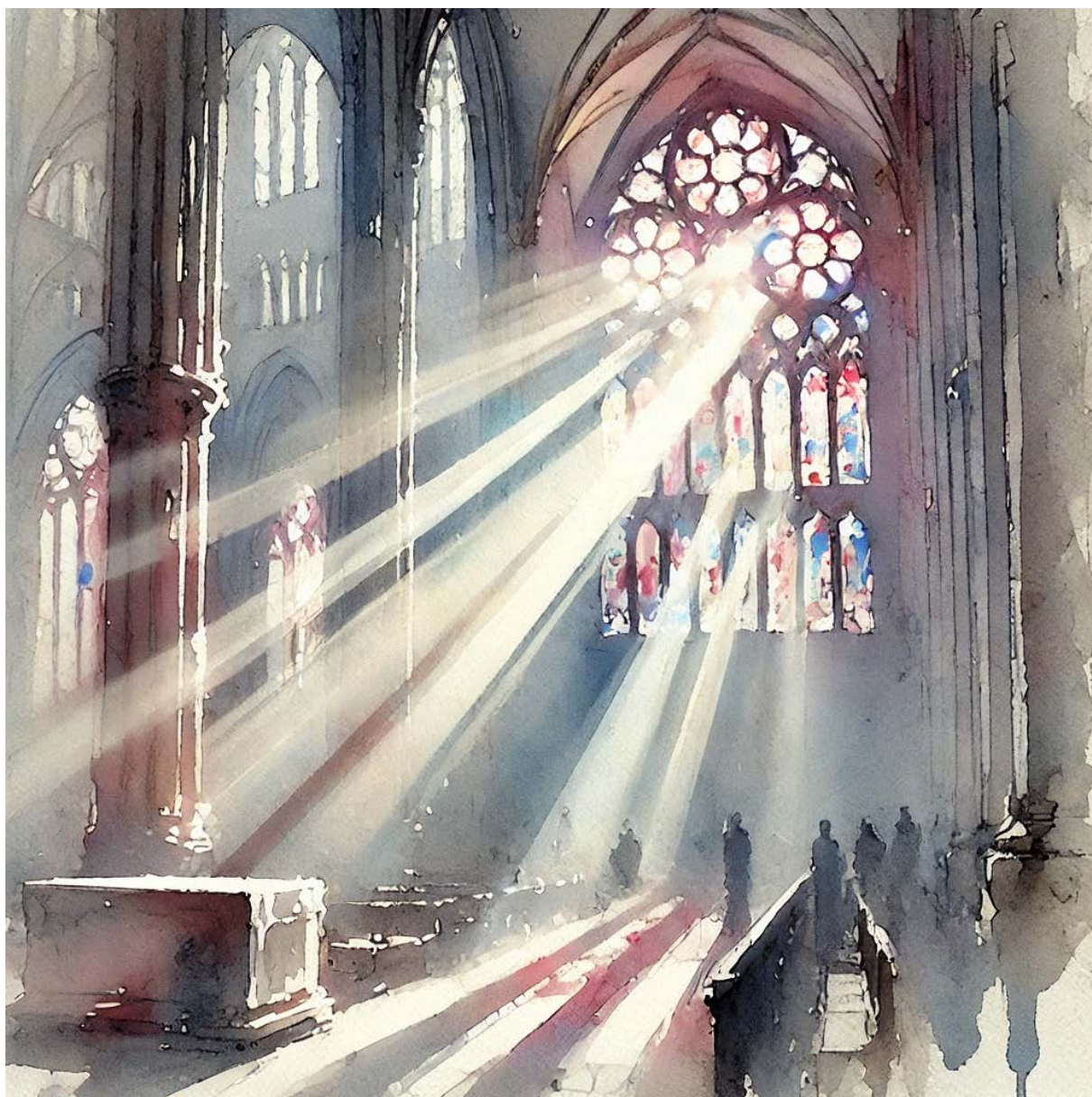


Fig. Rays of sunlight / Promienie światła, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

In this poetic miniature, rays of sunlight streaming through stained glass take on an almost mystical quality. Light, usually associated with simple brightness, is here transformed by the colorful mosaic of glass, scattering into vivid patterns that momentarily animate the sacred space. The haiku captures this fleeting spectacle, emphasizing the delicate beauty of light as it briefly brings the interior to life.

The first line – “*rays of sunlight*” – directs attention to the original source of this phenomenon. The sun, an eternal symbol of power and energy, introduces warmth and vitality into the space. However, this is not ordinary daylight—in the context of a temple, it assumes a sacred dimension, evoking divine presence, spiritual illumination, and guidance. Across cultures, light has long served as both a literal and metaphorical beacon, leading the way toward understanding and transcendence.

The second line – “*filtered through the stained glass panes*” – highlights the transformation that pure light undergoes as it passes through the intricate designs of stained glass. More than just decoration, stained glass serves as a medium that shapes light into color and form. The resulting reflections on the walls and floors seem to take on a life of their own, shifting in hue and intensity depending on the angle of the sun. This moment also serves as a metaphor for spiritual change—just as the glass alters light, so too can sacred experiences transform the human soul.

The final line – “*fade into the space*” – underscores the ephemeral nature of this moment. Though the rays momentarily create a breathtaking display, they ultimately dissolve into the shadows and darker recesses of the temple. In this way, the haiku touches on the themes of impermanence and transience—beauty that exists only for an instant yet is all the more profound because of its fleeting nature. It invites reflection on the passage of time and how even the most delicate occurrences can leave a lasting impression on our consciousness.

This scene captures a harmonious interplay between nature, art, and spirituality. The haiku reminds us that even everyday phenomena—such as the play of light in a sacred space—can become a source of contemplation and wonder. It conveys a subtle message about the beauty hidden in details and the paradox of impermanence: the fleeting nature of these moments is precisely what makes them so meaningful.

3.9. David in marble / Dawid w marmurze

*David in marble
a thousand eyes gaze upon him
there is no peace*

*Dawid w marmurze
tysiące oczu patrzy
spokoju nie ma*



Fig. David in marble / Dawid w marmurze, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

In this haiku, the marble statue of *David* stands frozen under the gaze of thousands, never knowing solitude despite its immobility. Though monumental and unyielding, the sculpture is caught in a paradox—forever still, yet never at peace. Watched each day by crowds of visitors, it remains in the relentless spotlight, like a figure condemned to eternal presence.

The first line – “*David in marble*” – immediately calls to mind one of the most celebrated masterpieces of the Renaissance, a symbol of artistic perfection and the idealized human form. Carved from pristine white marble, Michelangelo’s *David* captures a moment of tension—just before battle, his body taut with anticipation. Though lifeless stone, the sculpture emanates both strength and unease, as if poised to move at any moment.

The second line – “*a thousand eyes gaze upon him*” – highlights the fact that *David* never stands alone. Every day, he is surrounded by a sea of admirers—captivated tourists, clicking cameras, and art scholars analyzing every chiseled detail. The haiku imbues the statue with an almost human quality—not merely as an object of art, but as a figure unable to escape the constant scrutiny of its audience. This image creates an underlying tension: Michelangelo’s masterpiece is both revered and trapped in a cycle of perpetual observation.

The final line – “*there is no peace*” – delivers a stark, poignant conclusion. Here, the absence of peace is not just about the surrounding noise and movement but about the nature of being a masterpiece. Created to inspire awe, *David* can never recede into obscurity—his fate is to remain on display, to receive endless stares and flashes of cameras, as if he has long lost the possibility of being unseen.

This haiku invites reflection on the fate of great works of art—created to withstand centuries, yet never belonging to themselves. Forever admired, reinterpreted, and scrutinized, they exist in a constant dialogue with the world. The poem highlights this paradox: the immortality of art is also its inescapable captivity, an existence in perpetual exposure beyond the control of the artist or the work itself.

3.10. A coffee sponge cake / Kawowy biszkopt

*a coffee sponge cake
nestled in Mascarpone
a classic delight*

*kawowy biszkopt
wtulony w Mascarpone
klasyk gatunku*



Fig. A coffee sponge cake / Kawowy biszkopt, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

In this haiku, layers of coffee sponge cake and creamy mascarpone transport us into a world of indulgence, capturing the essence of Italian pastry craftsmanship. The brief scene does more than describe a dessert—it evokes its irresistible nature, where taste, texture, and aroma merge into perfect harmony.

The first line – “*a coffee sponge cake*” – immediately brings to mind the deep, rich aroma of espresso soaking into the moist cake, infusing it with bold and complex flavors. Here, coffee is more than just an ingredient—it is an experience, recalling quiet moments with a cappuccino or the lively atmosphere of an Italian café, where sweet treats complement the rhythm of daily life.

The second line – “*nestled in Mascarpone*” – emphasizes the contrast in textures. The airy sponge, enveloped in velvety mascarpone cream, creates a balance of softness and depth that melts on the palate. The word “*nestled*” gives the dessert an almost intimate, comforting quality, as if the layers fit together effortlessly in a seamless embrace. Mascarpone, a hallmark of Italian culinary mastery, adds a smooth and delicate richness that tempers the boldness of the coffee.

The final line – “*a classic delight*” – speaks to the timeless appeal of this dessert. Italian cuisine is renowned for its simple yet meticulously crafted recipes, and this treat—whether in the form of tiramisù or another variation—remains a gold standard of indulgence. It is more than just a sweet dish; it is a bite of tradition, a taste that transports one straight to the heart of Italian culture.

The image presented in this haiku reminds us that culinary masterpieces do not require complexity—sometimes, the perfect fusion of a few simple elements creates something unforgettable. The dessert becomes a metaphor for the art of cooking, where flavors and textures must complement one another to achieve balance. The haiku not only celebrates sensory pleasure but also captures the Italian way of life, where the enjoyment of food is as meaningful as the dish itself. It is a story of taste, simplicity, and artistry—three qualities that define the heart of Italian cuisine.

3.11. Summer gazes out / Lato spogląda

*summer gazes out
from amidst the green leaves,
a juicy citrus*

*lato spogląda
spośród zielonych liści
soczysty cytrus*



Fig. Summer gazes out / Lato spogląda, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The image of green leaves sheltering a ripening fruit creates a scene brimming with life and light. Nature is captured at the height of its abundance, while the maturing citrus becomes a symbol of summer's fullness and energy. Observing this seemingly simple moment allows us to grasp the dynamism of growth and the ripening process, unfolding in harmony with the rhythm of the seasons.

The first line – “*summer gazes out*” – gives the scene a personified dimension. Summer is not merely a season; it is something watchful, actively present, permeating the space with warmth and light. This *gaze* may be a metaphor for the summer sun peeking through the leaves, or it may symbolize the hidden energy inherent in this time of year. It introduces a subtle tension—something is ripening, yet it has not been fully revealed.

The second line – “*from amidst the green leaves*” – highlights the lushness of the foliage while also creating a sense of mystery. The leaves may protect the fruit, shielding it from the sun, or they may be gradually unveiling it to light and sight. The color green symbolizes vitality, growth, and renewal, and in combination with the summer sun, it forms an image of juicy, vibrant harmony.

The final line – “*a juicy citrus*” – brings forth an intense sensory experience, rich with taste and texture. Citrus fruits have long been emblematic of summer freshness, the Mediterranean climate, and the golden rays of the sun that grant them their juiciness and sweetness. In contrast to the preceding lines, this moment conveys anticipation—the fruit is still ripening, yet its flavor and refreshing energy already seem palpable.

Light, greenery, and taste merge into a single, sun-drenched composition. The scene evokes not only the landscapes of Italy but also a sense of harmony with nature and its cycles. Growth, ripening, and the readiness for revelation—all unfold both in the natural world and in human life, where waiting for the right moment becomes an essential part of the journey.

3.12. The lofty cathedra / Wzniosła katedra

*the lofty cathedral
seeks attention in vain
in the shadow of the leaning tower*

*wzniosła katedra
próżno uwagi szuka
w cieniu krzywej wieży*



Fig. The lofty cathedra / Wzniosła katedra, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The grand cathedral stands beside Pisa's famous leaning tower, its magnificence overshadowed by a monument that has captured the world's fascination. This haiku explores how the hierarchy of tourist fame can relegate even the most historically significant structures to the background, unnoticed by the crowds drawn to a singular spectacle.

The first line – "*the lofty cathedral*" – evokes the image of a towering, richly adorned church, a masterpiece of architecture and devotion. Its *loftiness* is not only a measure of physical height but also a reflection of its artistic and spiritual grandeur. In any other setting, it would be an undisputed gem, yet here, it must share its space with a more famous neighbor.

The second line – "*seeks attention in vain*" – personifies the cathedral, suggesting an air of quiet dignity yet an unavoidable sense of being overlooked. Despite its imposing structure and historical significance, it remains in the periphery of visitors' focus, as most arrive in Pisa with only one landmark in mind. This line subtly critiques the nature of tourism, where popularity often overshadows intrinsic value.

The final line – "*in the shadow of the leaning tower*" – reinforces who the true attraction is. The Leaning Tower, with its gravity-defying tilt, has become the global symbol of Pisa, while the cathedral—despite its beauty—serves merely as a backdrop. This contrast highlights the selectivity of human attention, where one anomaly can eclipse an entire architectural complex, no matter how grand.

This haiku prompts reflection on how historical landmarks are perceived in the modern world. It reminds us that fame is fleeting and often arbitrary, favoring the unusual over the truly remarkable. Beyond architecture, it can be seen as a metaphor for life—where individuals of quiet brilliance often stand in the shadows of those who are more flamboyant or attention-grabbing. In a society drawn to spectacle, subtler beauty and deeper significance are easily overlooked. The poem serves as a quiet reminder to look beyond the obvious, to appreciate what stands steadfast even in the shadow of greater renown.

3.13. Under the arcades / Pod arkadami

*under the arcades
Florence in the sun's bright glow
art endures forever*

*pod arkadami
Florencja w blasku słońca
sztuka wiecznie trwa*

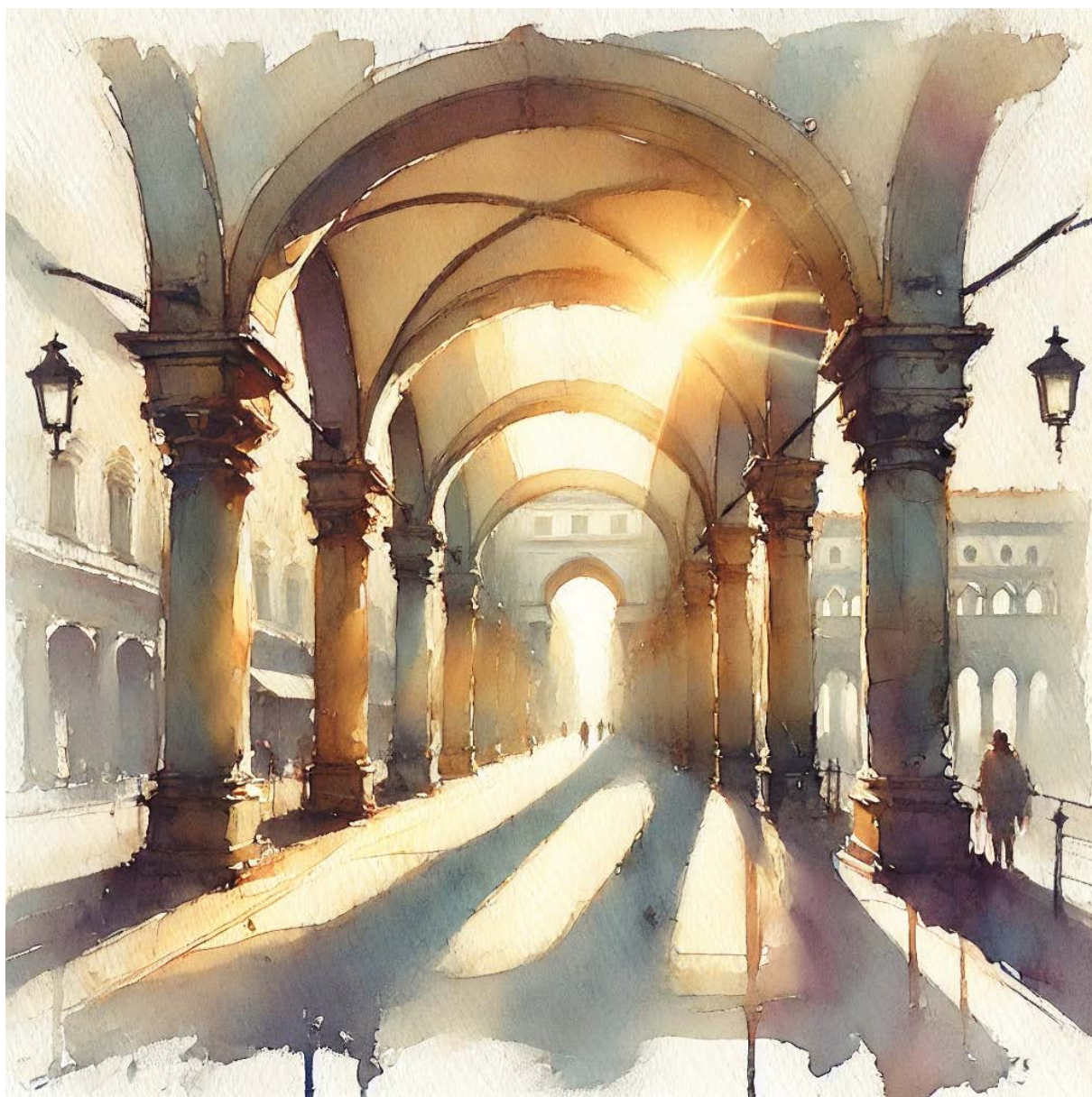


Fig. Under the arcades / Pod arkadami, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The scene of sunlit arcades captures the unique rhythm of Florence, where monumental architecture is not merely a relic of the past but a living part of the city's daily life. This haiku preserves a moment in which light breathes life into stone, revealing its texture and intricate details while inviting us to pause and see the city from a different perspective.

The first line – “*under the arcades*” – evokes the shaded walkways that have long been an integral part of Florence’s urban fabric. These arcades provide shelter from the sun and serve as places where people meet, converse, and momentarily pause to take in their surroundings. Here, past and present converge—modern-day passersby tread the same worn stones that bore witness to the city's Renaissance splendor.

The second line – “*Florence in the sun’s bright glow*” – highlights the transformative role of light, which brings warmth to the city’s facades and accentuates the delicate ornamentation of its architecture. Sunlight filters through narrow streets and open squares, casting shifting patterns of light and shadow that add depth and movement to the cityscape. This light not only shapes the physical space but also defines the atmosphere of Florence, illuminating its artistic spirit in both a literal and symbolic sense.

The final line – “*art endures forever*” – serves as a quiet affirmation of Florence’s timeless essence. Here, art is not confined to museum walls or grand masterpieces but is embedded within the very structure of the city itself—in its bridges, streets, arcades, and plazas. Though the world changes, Florence remains a place where the past and present coexist, where the enduring legacy of art continues to inspire new generations.

This haiku gently reminds us that Florence is not merely a destination to be admired from a guidebook but a city that invites engagement and reflection. Just as the arcades welcome pedestrians to pause in their shade, Florence as a whole encourages us to slow down and notice the beauty in the details that often go unnoticed. It is an invitation to step into the rhythm of a place where art is not just preserved—it is alive, woven into the very fabric of the city.

3.14. Art in the shadow of walls / Sztuka w cieniu ścian

*art in the shadow of walls
shouts with a woman's voice
demanding equality*

*sztuka w cieniu ścian
kobięcym głosem krzyczy
żąda równości*



Fig. Art in the shadow of walls / Sztuka w cieniu ścian, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The haiku presents art hidden behind walls as a form of protest and a call for change. It depicts creativity not only as an act of expression but also as a tool for demanding recognition and visibility. The voice of a woman, breaking through the urban landscape, symbolizes the pursuit of equality and the dismantling of societal barriers.

The first line – “*art in the shadow of walls*” – refers to works that remain on the margins of the official canon or lack proper recognition. The *shadow* may represent obscurity but also a space where art operates beyond mainstream conventions, forging an alternative narrative. Often, the most revolutionary ideas emerge from these overlooked spaces.

The second line – “*shouts with a woman's voice*” – emphasizes that it is the voices of women driving this artistic expression. “*Cries*” can signify both resistance against marginalization and an urgent need for self-expression. The haiku suggests that female creativity—long neglected or dismissed—is now taking center stage, offering new perspectives that reshape culture and society.

The final line – “*demanding equality*” – solidifies the poem’s meaning, asserting that art is not merely an aesthetic endeavor but also a medium for social advocacy. Equality, in this context, is not just an aspiration but a tangible goal, pursued with resilience and determination in the fight for justice and recognition.

This haiku serves as a reminder that art has always been an agent of change—not only within museums and academia but also in the streets, behind walls, and in spaces that seem resistant to new voices. Subtle yet resolute, the poem underscores that women's creativity is no longer an afterthought in a male-dominated narrative; it is an essential force shaping the future of cultural discourse.

In the context of Florence, the city of the Renaissance, this reflection carries even greater weight. Despite being home to some of the world’s most celebrated masterpieces, its museums overwhelmingly feature male artists, while the works of women often remain in the shadows. The haiku calls attention to this imbalance, urging a broader recognition of the artistic contributions of women—past, present, and future.

3.15. A glass in hand / Kieliszek w dłoni

*a glass in hand
the fruit tempts with sweetness
the scent of memories*

*kieliszek w dłoni
owoc kusi słodyczą
aromat wspomnień*



Fig. A glass in hand / Kieliszek w dłoni, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The image of a glass in hand and ripe fruit awakens the senses, offering a delicate reflection on moments of pleasure and the fleeting nature of time. Wine and fruit, intertwined in a single moment, symbolize both the taste of the present and the echoes of past experiences, resurfacing through sensory memory. In the setting of Tuscany, this scene takes on an even more authentic character, evoking the Italian philosophy of celebrating life through simple pleasures.

The first line – “*a glass in hand*” – highlights the ritual of wine tasting, an inseparable part of Tuscan culture. Wine is not merely a drink here—it is a symbol of the region’s history, its traditions, and the generations of vintners who have crafted its distinctive flavors. The simple act of holding a glass invites a shift in awareness—away from the rush of everyday life and toward a mindful savoring of the moment.

The second line – “*the fruit tempts with sweetness*” – adds a sensual layer to the experience. The fruit’s ripeness, its juiciness, and natural sweetness create a moment of indulgence—simple yet profound. Whether it is a grape, a fig, or a peach, it embodies the Mediterranean abundance and the richness of flavors that have been part of life’s small joys for centuries. Like wine, fruit is tied to nature’s rhythm—the cycle of ripening and passing—blending seamlessly into the Tuscan landscape of vineyards and orchards.

The final line – “*the scent of memories*” – connects taste to nostalgia. Smell and taste are the senses most deeply linked to memory—one aroma can transport us back to childhood, a distant journey, or an evening spent in good company. In this context, the glass of wine and the fruit are not merely tangible objects; they become keys to the past, unlocking moments that, though gone, remain alive within us.

This scene reminds us of how deeply our experiences are rooted in the senses. The haiku does more than depict a moment of relaxation—it suggests that in the simplest, most sensory encounters, there is something more: a trace of past emotions, places, and connections. In the context of Tuscany, where wine, food, and the art of slow living are integral to daily existence, the poem highlights that tasting is not just an act of consumption but a journey through time, a way of pausing, and a means of reconnecting with memory.

3.16. A melodic voice / Melodyjny głos

*a melodic voice
in the walls of an old castle
fades into twilight*

*melodyjny głos
w murach starego zamku
cichnie w półmroku*



Fig. A melodic voice / Melodyjny głos, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The sound drifting through the castle walls, only to fade into the twilight, creates an atmosphere of mystery and transience. This scene captures the delicate intersection of human presence with the stark, stone architecture of an ancient stronghold—a place that has witnessed countless stories over the centuries. In the castle’s cool air, among thick walls and narrow corridors, the voice gains depth and resonance, yet ultimately dissolves into the shadows, leaving only an echo behind.

The first line – “*a melodic voice*” – introduces the element of sound, which takes on a unique character within these walls. It may be a song, a whisper, or a conversation—something that momentarily breathes life into a space otherwise dominated by silence. The word “*melodic*” suggests both harmony and gentleness, yet it also contrasts with the cold, stone interior of the castle. In such a setting, sound does not immediately vanish—it lingers, reverberates off the walls, and fills the space with an almost magical presence.

The second line – “*in the walls of an old castle*” – grounds the reader in a specific location: one of Tuscany’s many medieval fortresses, where history is etched into the very stone. These castles, built for defense as well as for the nobility, have endured for centuries, remaining silent witnesses to time’s passage. Within this context, a human voice feels ephemeral—existing for only a moment before vanishing into the vastness of history. Yet, it is precisely this fleeting presence that brings the castle to life, making it feel less abandoned, if only for an instant.

The final line – “*fades into twilight*” – does not necessarily refer to the sunset outside, but rather to the dim light that fills the castle’s interior. Even during the day, thick walls and narrow windows allow only thin streams of sunlight to filter through, casting long shadows and keeping the space in a perpetual state of twilight. The voice, once vibrant, gradually diminishes into this semi-darkness, dispersing until only silence remains. This is the moment where sound and space intertwine, then slowly separate—the voice disappears, but its echo lingers somewhere within the ancient stone.

This scene highlights the impermanence of human presence in contrast to the enduring solidity of stone. The haiku underscores the contrast between the delicacy of sound and the raw permanence of castle walls, reminding us that even in places seemingly frozen in time, something alive can resonate—if only briefly. The voice that fills the castle’s twilight is like an echo of the past—appearing and vanishing, yet momentarily transforming the space with its fleeting presence.

3.17. Clouds over Arno/ Chmury nad Arno

*clouds over Arno
shining adorned by the rain
narrow alleyways*

*chmury nad Arno
łśnią deszczem ozdobione
wąskie uliczki*



Fig. Clouds over Arno/ Chmury nad Arno, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The haiku captures a moment where city and nature merge, playing with reflections, light, and rain. This scene reflects the atmosphere of Tuscany, where the monumental architecture of Florence and the flowing Arno create a harmonious whole. Rain does not merely wet the streets and façades—it deepens the landscape, briefly turning the city into a mirror that reflects the sky and its shifting clouds.

The first line – “*clouds over Arno*” – introduces a sense of movement and impermanence. The drifting clouds above the river may foreshadow rain or be remnants of a passing storm, lingering over the water and adding a painterly, dynamic quality to the scene. The Arno, like a sheet of glass, mirrors the sky, blurring the boundary between above and below. This fleeting phenomenon highlights how nature seamlessly integrates into the urban landscape, bringing an element of transience to the city’s solidity.

The second line – “*shining adorned by the rain*” – emphasizes the transformative effect of rain on Florence. Typically seen as dreary, rain here is an embellishment, adding a delicate luster to the city’s surfaces. Droplets cling to walls, cobblestones, and windows, creating a glistening effect that makes everything feel renewed and alive. Associating rain with elegance and ornamentation gives the poem an ephemeral yet striking quality, making the city appear momentarily enhanced by the elements.

The final line – “*narrow alleyways*” – contrasts with the openness of the river and the vastness of the sky. Florence, like many Tuscan cities, is a maze of narrow, stone-paved alleys that, in the rain, become even more mysterious and evocative. These passages lead to hidden corners—a tucked-away café, a quiet artisan’s workshop, or a secluded courtyard where the city’s past lingers as vividly as its present. Here, beauty is not in grand avenues but in the details: the textures of dampened stone, the play of light in puddles, and the softened edges of shadow and glow.

This haiku does more than depict Florence after the rain—it captures the fleeting nature of moments and the shifting ways we perceive the world around us. It reminds us that poetry exists in every corner of the city: in the reflections on wet pavement, the scent of rain-soaked streets, and the rhythm of a place that weaves together history and the continuous movement of everyday life. Florence, as seen through this moment, is not just an open-air museum but a living, breathing work of art.

3.18. Urban giardino / Miejskie giardino

*urban giardino
amid the hustle brings calm,
nature's deep breath*

*miejskie giardino
wśród zgiełku spokój daje
oddech natury*



Fig. Urban giardino / Miejskie giardino, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

The city is a space of contrasts—vibrant and fast-paced, yet still harboring pockets of tranquility. This haiku captures a fleeting moment of peace within an urban landscape, showing how nature continues to carve out its place among stone and concrete.

The first line – “*urban giardino*” – introduces the image of a hidden green sanctuary within the cityscape. In Tuscany, gardens are often concealed behind high monastery walls or nestled within the courtyards of old palaces, offering secluded retreats. Even in the most urbanized settings, these small patches of greenery serve as vital sanctuaries, preserving a sense of harmony between architecture and the natural world.

The second line – “*amid the hustle brings calm*” – highlights the contrast between the bustling city and the serenity of the garden. Green spaces become places of refuge, where one can pause, breathe, and escape the noise of everyday life. The presence of trees, plants, and flowers acts as a natural buffer, softening the overwhelming pace of urban existence and inviting moments of stillness and contemplation.

The final line – “*nature’s deep breath*” – suggests that a garden is more than a decorative feature—it is a necessary space of renewal. It is where people can reconnect with the rhythms of nature, finding balance and peace amidst the towering buildings. Even in densely built environments, such places remind us that life persists beyond the stone facades, breathing at its own quiet pace.

This haiku underscores that urban gardens are not just luxuries; they are essential elements of city life. The blending of architecture with nature does not merely enhance aesthetics—it has a profound impact on well-being, offering residents a place to step away from the relentless rush of modern life and immerse themselves in the restorative presence of greenery. It is a reminder that, even in the heart of the city, nature still whispers, inviting us to slow down and listen.

3.19. Against azure sky / Na błękitu tle

*against azure sky
spread across the rolling hills,
pine trees in the sun*

*na błękitu tle
rozłożone na wzgórzach
sosnowe drzewa*



Fig. Against azure sky / Na błękitu tle, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

This haiku captures the quiet majesty of the Tuscan landscape, where rolling hills adorned with pine trees have shaped the region's identity for centuries. The image of trees scattered across the undulating terrain against a vast blue sky evokes a sense of serenity and harmony, intrinsic to the Mediterranean scenery. In this setting, time appears to slow down, and nature reveals itself as a timeless force, sculpting the land independently of human influence.

The first line – “*against azure sky*” – draws attention to the sky as the backdrop of the composition. The deep blue expanse symbolizes openness, freedom, and infinity, as well as the silence stretching across the hills. In Tuscany, clear, sunlit skies dominate much of the year, and their contrast with the greenery of the trees creates a tranquil balance, reinforcing the region's peaceful essence.

The second line – “*spread across the rolling hills*” – introduces spatial movement and highlights the region's distinctive topography. Tuscany's gentle, flowing hills have long been celebrated for their natural beauty, resembling an artist's composition where each tree is carefully placed by nature. The hills add depth to the landscape, allowing the observer to feel the vastness of the open space while maintaining a sense of order and continuity in nature's rhythm.

The final line – “*pine trees in the sun*” – emphasizes a defining element of the Tuscan countryside. The characteristic umbrella pines, with their slender trunks and distinctive canopies, stand in striking contrast against the sky. These trees do more than shape the region's aesthetics—they create a unique microclimate, providing shade and protection from the Mediterranean heat. They also serve as a bridge between humans and nature, reminding us that within such landscapes, we can find a profound sense of calm and belonging.

This scene illustrates that Tuscany's landscape is not merely a backdrop to human activity but a masterpiece in its own right, capable of inspiring and soothing those who take the time to appreciate it. The haiku reminds us that experiencing nature's beauty is a universal feeling—regardless of where we come from, we can all find peace in the sight of sunlit hills and ancient trees standing resilient through the generations. In a world driven by speed and noise, this image invites us to pause, breathe, and admire the untouched beauty of the natural world.

3.20. Hangs on the line / Wisi na sznurze

*hangs on the line
warmed by a gentle breeze,
Italian daily life*

*wisi na sznurze
ciepłym wiatrem smagana
włoska codzienność*



Fig. Hangs on the line / Wisi na sznurze, Source: DALL-E, OpenAI, May 2024

Opening Commentary

Some everyday scenes carry more than just their literal meaning—they encapsulate the rhythm of life, the aura of a place, and the warmth of a fleeting moment. This haiku portrays one of the most characteristic sights of Italian streets and courtyards: laundry swaying on a line, caught in the gentle breeze, becoming a visual emblem of the slow, unhurried pace of daily life.

The first line – “*hangs on the line*” – draws attention to a seemingly ordinary image, familiar in many southern cities. In Italy, laundry strung between buildings is more than just a necessity; it is a defining feature of the landscape, adding a sense of intimacy and closeness to narrow urban spaces. The garments fluttering above the streets tell silent stories of the people living within the buildings, subtly revealing their daily routines.

The second line – “*warmed by a gentle breeze*” – introduces movement and sensation, evoking the warm air drying fabrics under the Mediterranean sun. The Italian climate ensures that laundry dries quickly, while the soft wind animates the hanging clothes, making them sway like flags of everyday life. This sensory aspect—the scent of freshly washed linens, the feel of sun-kissed fabrics—enhances the sense of tranquility and simplicity in the moment.

The final line – “*Italian daily life*” – places the scene in its cultural context. What may seem mundane to residents can appear deeply poetic to an outsider, symbolizing a southern way of life where time flows more gently, and small rituals take on an effortless beauty. The sight of laundry, draped across the facades of buildings, not only decorates the streets but also defines their character—woven into everyday existence yet carrying an understated aesthetic charm.

This haiku is a reminder that beauty does not always lie in grand gestures or extraordinary events but in the simple rituals and small details of everyday life. It captures a moment that, when observed in the right light, reveals not only the Italian atmosphere but also a universal truth—that daily life itself can be an art form.

PART III THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF HAIKU AND OPENING COMMENTARY

1.1. Culture and Heritage

Haiku, originating from Japan, is a valuable carrier of culture and heritage. Writing and reading these short poems introduce us to the world of Japanese literary, philosophical, and aesthetic traditions, revealing deep connections with nature, transience, and simplicity. A key element of this poetic form is its structure—three lines with a 5-7-5 syllabic arrangement, which together create a concise yet evocative image. Although experiments with length and structure have appeared throughout history, the classic arrangement has remained the central feature of haiku, shaping its unique character. In our own poems, we have decided to stay true to this traditional form, paying homage to its timeless elegance.

Haiku, arising from the chain poetry form known as renga and its later variant—*haikai*, developed its shape through significant transformations, drawing on the rich tradition of Japanese poetry at every stage of its evolution (Yasuda, 2011). A pivotal moment in this process was the separation of *hokku*—the initial verse of renga, which during the haikai era gained autonomy, becoming an independent poetic form.

The modern adaptation of this concise poetic style in various parts of the world opens new possibilities for literary and cultural exchange. Haiku, translated into many languages and adapted to different traditions, has become an international medium that allows for expressing universal emotions and ideas.

Composing haiku in new contexts not only promotes an understanding of diverse cultures but also reveals their unique features. Our own works, inspired by travel memories, aim to capture the essence of the places visited—the most beautiful and distinctive qualities. In this way, haiku becomes a tool for discovering and sharing the beauty of the world in its diversity.

For example, our haiku:

*smells from the oven
have stirred up the hunger
pizza or pasta?*

Such poems make it possible to capture fleeting moments of travel, engaging the senses and invoking associations that reflect the unique character of the places visited. In this case, the haiku refers to one of the most important aspects of Italian culture—food, which is not only a daily ritual but also a deeply rooted part of the national identity.

The first line, “fragrances from the oven,” evokes the image of a traditional pizza baked in a wood-fired oven, a symbol of authentic Italian life. Meanwhile, the question “pizza or pasta?” reflects the constant dilemma arising from the richness of Italian cuisine. This short yet significant question reveals the variety and the special importance of culinary art in Italian culture—where food becomes a form of art, a celebration of the moment, and a pretext for spending time together.

Introductory comments, which we have attached to each of our poems, serve precisely this purpose—if the poem in question calls for it, they place the haiku in the appropriate cultural context. They clarify the meaning of characteristic images and references, which may often be unclear to readers unfamiliar with a particular tradition, making these elements more understandable and allowing for deeper appreciation of their content and significance.

By way of illustration, in the haiku:

hanging on the line

warmed by a gentle breeze

Italian daily life

the introductory comment introduces the reader to the atmosphere of everyday life in Italy, describing how the sight of laundry waving in the Mediterranean wind becomes a symbol of harmony with nature and the daily rhythm. In a simple way, the haiku captures the essence of life in an Italian town, allowing us to better understand the traditions, aesthetics, and character of that region. Thus, the poem can serve as a starting point for conversations about culture, climate, and the daily customs of Italian towns.

Haiku in this form allows us to freeze a moment in time, convey the atmosphere of a place, and emphasize how history and culture intersect in everyday experience. It can be a valuable educational tool, combining the art of observation with the poetic expression of emotions and impressions.

To fully harness the educational value of haiku in the context of culture and heritage, we propose the following practical exercises:

1. Studying Classical Haiku

Goal: To understand the structure, aesthetics, and deeper values of haiku, as well as to develop the ability to analyze literature in its cultural context. This also provides an opportunity to learn about the philosophical and aesthetic aspects of Japanese heritage.

Task: Read and analyze haiku by classical poets such as Matsuo Bashō, Yosa Buson,

and Kobayashi Issa. Pay attention to themes, style, and literary techniques, including *kigo* (a seasonal motif) and *kireji* (a cutting word).

2. **Writing Haiku in the Context of Your Own Culture**

Goal: To develop creative skills and strengthen cultural identity by combining the universal form of haiku with a local context. This also teaches you to view your own culture from an artistic perspective.

Task: Write haiku that reflect your culture, daily experiences, and local imagery. Incorporate elements related to nature, traditions, or modern life.

3. **Cultural Exchange of Haiku**

Goal: To promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. This exercise develops empathy, broadens knowledge of cultural diversity, and highlights how haiku can serve as a bridge connecting people worldwide.

Task: Organize haiku exchanges with people from different cultures and countries. Share your works and discuss the cultural contexts that inspired them.

Writing and reading haiku opens the door to a rich world of literary and aesthetic traditions. This practice not only brings us closer to literature but also allows us to explore philosophy, history, and diverse cultural traditions. Haiku becomes a tool for conveying knowledge and experiences, enriching our perspective on the world and expanding our horizons.

1.2. **Mindfulness and Observation**

Mindfulness, derived from ancient Eastern philosophical traditions, is now widely recognized as an effective tool for personal development and improving one's quality of life. Defined as the practice of consciously directing attention to the present moment with openness and acceptance, mindfulness has a deep and positive impact on many aspects of human functioning (Choi et al., 2021; Hölzel et al., 2011). These principles find particular application in poetry. The creative process—requiring focus on words, rhythm, and emotions—becomes a space for fully immersing oneself in the here and now.

Researchers have long emphasized the interrelationship between poetry and mindfulness, recognizing its significant educational potential. Writing poetry, which demands concentration, reflection, and creativity, is a valuable way to support the development of mindfulness. Equally important is the conscious reading and interpretation of poems, which opens up a space for personal transformation, reflection, and gratitude, enhancing the process (Barrett, Areavey, McNutt, 2019).

A seventeen-syllable poem, often referred to as a “zen poem,” is deeply rooted in Eastern tradition and exceptionally apt at capturing the fleeting moment of “here and now.” Its seemingly simple form hides a profound philosophy and a practice of meditative immersion in the present.

Haiku originates from a rich centuries-old tradition in which creating poetry is not only an artistic act but also a way of life. It is a method of cultivating mindfulness, celebrating everyday moments, and discovering their uniqueness (Nguyen & Roth, 2020). Every moment can become a subject of reflection, and each poem—a symbolic monument to mindfulness, attesting to the poet’s deep immersion in the present moment.

It was precisely these practices, characteristic of the meditative Zen tradition, that inspired the contemporary mindfulness movement, which draws on the idea of conscious living and full presence.

The aesthetic categories found in haiku—such as *sabi*, *wabi*, *karumi*, or *aware*—are key to understanding the depth of this poetic form and its connection with Zen philosophy and mindfulness. They express subtle, often elusive emotions and reflections that align with the idea of meditative immersion in the present. For example, *sabi*, referring to the beauty of solitude and transience, teaches the acceptance of change and an appreciation for the serenity found in the fragility of existence. Meanwhile, *wabi*, focusing on simplicity and the charm of daily moments, helps us notice the value in seemingly ordinary elements of life (Śniecikowska, 2016).

In a unique way, haiku combines tradition with mindfulness, serving as both a valuable carrier of culture and aesthetics. It encourages conscious observation of the world, developing the art of noticing details often overlooked in the rush of daily life and giving them deeper meaning.

For example, our haiku:

*the olives smell
picked before midday
with a glass of wine*

conveys the charm of simple, everyday moments that gain special significance through full presence and attention. The act of picking olives in the morning sun, paired with a relaxing moment over a glass of wine, becomes a poetic celebration of life. This haiku highlights the beauty of the everyday, showing that even the most ordinary moments can become a source of deep reflection and wonder.

As we mentioned earlier, both creating and reading haiku allow the reader to focus on the fleeting images and emotions carried by this form of poetry. In this process, mindful reading—consciously engaging with the text, which requires simultaneous focus on its content and one’s own feelings during reception—is essential. Equally important is adapting one’s reading strategies to the nature of the text and the goal one wishes to achieve (Carillo, 2017).

This practice promotes the development of sensitivity to ambiguity and hidden meanings, which often constitute the essence of haiku. Through mindful reading, readers can gain a deeper understanding not only of the poetry itself but also of their own emotions and reactions—both emotional and physical. Thus, haiku becomes more than just a literary form—it is a tool for introspection and relaxation, harmoniously combining aesthetics with the practice of mindfulness.

Introductory comments can provide additional help in interpreting haiku by acting as a guide, directing the reader and setting the tone for reflection. These comments not only help to uncover hidden meanings but also foster an appreciation for the subtle nuances of a moment. Thanks to them, the reader has a better chance of understanding the context and emotional depth of the poem.

However, interpreting haiku requires more than just grasping literal meanings—it calls for a mindful pause, looking beyond the surface of words and perceiving their layers. This process is akin to meditation, enabling not only the discovery of new meanings in poetry but also the chance to find fresh ways of looking at life and valuing the everyday.

Another significant interdependence between poetry, mindfulness, and observation is revealed in haiku. According to its guiding principles, haiku should be strictly objective (Śniecikowska, 2016), meaning the poet refrains from subjective interpretations in favor of faithfully portraying the moment being observed. A similar objectivity is crucial in mindfulness practice, which requires focusing on reality as it is, without assigning personal judgments or emotional overtones. This approach not only promotes the refinement of observational skills but also teaches critical thinking. Through a mindful, detached view of reality, both haiku writing and mindfulness practice allow us to recognize subtle connections between elements of the surrounding world. Engaging in both practices can therefore support the development of analytical skills, aiding a deeper understanding of nature and our own experiences.

An example of this principle of objectivity in haiku is the poem:

touched by time

the greenhouse stands among trees

birds sing around

This poem faithfully represents the observed moment, avoiding subjective interpretations or emotional judgments. The description of a “greenhouse among trees” and “birds singing” shows reality as it is, leaving space for the reader’s own reflection. The concise and simple imagery underscores the objective perspective that harmonizes both with the philosophy of haiku and the mindfulness practice of noticing subtle connections in the surrounding world.

Mindful reading not only promotes a deeper understanding of the text but also supports the development of critical thinking and literary sensitivity. Reflection on the structure and emotions contained in a haiku plays a key role in the development of conscious writing skills. This process becomes a source of inspiration, enabling both interpretation and creative transformation of experiences, thus strengthening the competences of both reader and author (Salvatori, 1983).

In this context, introductory comments serve as an additional tool supporting both the reader and the author. On the one hand, they help place the text in a broader context, facilitating deeper understanding and reflection for the reader. On the other hand, for the author, they offer a momentary distance from one’s own work, which often leads to discovering new perspectives. Thanks to this, the writing and reading process becomes a space for ongoing dialogue—both with the text and with the surrounding world.

Below are several practical exercises that combine reflection on everyday life with techniques inspired by Zen tradition:

1. Sensory Diary: Tuning into the World

Haiku is based on strong, direct images perceived through the senses. A good way to develop this skill is to keep a sensory diary. Although only a portion of sensory stimuli reaches our conscious awareness, our brain processes a wide range of sensory information, most of which goes unnoticed. This exercise can help you become more aware of the world around you.

Instructions: For a few days, keep a Sensory Diary. Each day, note at least five strong sensory experiences. You can choose one experience for each of the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.

Example: “This morning I noticed how the first rays of sunlight illuminated the wet leaves of a tree. It reminded me of how fleeting and beautiful are the moments we often overlook.”

Goal: This exercise develops mindfulness and helps you notice details that may serve as inspiration for writing haiku or other forms of creativity. You can practice it as a daily ritual or jot down your impressions as they occur during the day. It is recommended to devote one day to each sense to focus more closely on its specific qualities and impressions.

2. **Ginko Walk: Searching for Inspiration in the Surrounding World**

A Ginko Walk is a Japanese tradition in which poets would roam their surroundings, looking for inspiration to write haiku. Although it originally involved tuning into nature, contemporary haiku can encompass the entire world around us—nature as well as elements of daily life, the city, people, or objects.

Instructions: Go on a Ginko Walk—whether in a park, forest, city streets, or even your own neighborhood. Walk in silence, trying to notice the details around you. Pay attention to moments that resonate with you—maybe it’s the aroma of freshly brewed coffee from a nearby café, the sounds of the street, strangers’ conversations, neon lights in the evening city, or sunlight reflecting on glass buildings.

Conclusion: After returning, record your experiences and then try to create a short haiku based on them. You can also share your poems with others, allowing for a shared celebration of creativity. Haiku is the art of capturing a moment—being open and mindful of what is happening around us can be extremely inspiring.

3. **Mindful Breathing and Haiku**

Mindful breathing calms the mind, helps focus on the present moment, and prepares you for writing haiku.

Instructions: Before writing haiku, do a short session of mindful breathing. Focus on your breath for a few minutes, observing each inhale and exhale. This exercise calms the mind and prepares you to notice the world around you.

Task: After finishing the mindful breathing, focus on your current surroundings and compose a haiku reflecting your impressions. This exercise helps capture fleeting moments and express them in a simple way.

4. **Five Minutes of Mindfulness: A Mini Haiku Challenge**

This exercise involves a brief, five-minute meditation that allows you to focus on details.

Instructions: Sit in silence and choose one thing in front of you—a flower, a cup, a ray of sunlight. Observe it for five minutes, noting details without judgment: shape, color, shadows.

Task: After finishing your observation, write a haiku conveying the essence of what you saw.

Goal: This exercise develops deep observation and mindfulness, both crucial in creating haiku.

5. A Daily Note: Fleeting Moments

Haiku arises from simple yet profound moments of everyday life. Daily notes help develop this skill.

Instructions: Each day, write a short note about something you noticed: the play of light on water, the movement of the wind, a passerby's facial expression, the smell of grass. Capture the essence of the moment in simple sentences.

Goal: These notes foster mindfulness and an eye for detail. They can also serve as inspiration for writing haiku, helping you reflect on fleeting moments.

6. Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Activities

You can practice mindfulness during everyday tasks that you usually perform automatically.

Instructions: Choose one activity to do mindfully—for instance, washing dishes, eating, brewing tea, or taking a walk. Pay attention to every movement, taste, smell, or sound.

Goal: Mindfully doing these tasks allows you to experience each moment fully, develops mindfulness, and can provide inspiration for writing haiku. Cultivating presence in the current moment is key to creativity.

Haiku and mindfulness are deeply interconnected, serving as tools that support personal development, introspection, and creativity. Writing and reading haiku opens up a space for mindful reflection, personal transformation, and the expression of gratitude. The link between haiku, mindfulness, and keen observation goes beyond aesthetics, infusing it with a spiritual dimension. In this way, poetry ceases to be merely a form of artistic expression, becoming also a medium for personal introspection and spiritual exploration.

1.3. Conciseness and Precision

Haiku, often called “a poem as long as a single breath” (Gurga, 2024), combines mindfulness and observation with a unique precision of form. It is precisely the brevity of this poetry that gives it a meditative character, forcing the author to consciously select every word and focus on the essence of the moment. Thanks to this compact structure, haiku becomes an exercise in focus and stillness, where the form itself supports full immersion in the present.

In haiku, form and content are inextricably interwoven, creating a structure in which neither can exist without the other. Yasuda (2011) aptly notes that “experience itself is vague and chaotic until it is captured in a form that simultaneously shapes its content.” In haiku, the form not only provides aesthetic boundaries but also actively participates in shaping meaning, transforming unorganized impressions and experiences into a clear, artistic expression. It is thanks to this symbiosis that one can capture “the essence of a vividly felt moment” (Gurga, 2004), which lies at the heart of the haiku poetic experience. Through its concise and disciplined character, the form not only sharpens the content but also directs the reader’s attention toward that essence, transforming everyday life into a moment of transcendence.

A fitting example illustrating the essence of conciseness and precision in haiku is the comparison Root-Bernstein (2010) makes to Pablo Picasso’s creative method. In his series of drawings of bulls, Picasso gradually simplified the realistic image, reducing details until achieving an abstract symbol representing the essence of the bull. A similar process takes place in the creation of haiku, where the poet starts with a wealth of impressions and observations, then, by selecting and removing unnecessary elements, leaves only the pure idea.

In both cases, this process of reduction does not mean losing content; on the contrary—it leads to the refinement and concentration of that content. Haiku, like Picasso’s abstract bull, becomes not only a representation of reality but its quintessence, capable of eliciting an intense emotional response from the recipient. It is this precision and brevity that allow haiku to operate on an intuitive level, conveying a wealth of meaning in just a few words.

This process underscores the role of form as a tool for organizing experience—in Picasso’s case, the image, and in haiku, the word—which simultaneously highlights and transforms the content, leading it to its artistic fulfillment.

Such economy of expression also reflects an aesthetic that does not allow for lengthy descriptions or complex metaphors. In line with the principle of “maximum content, minimum words,” haiku strives to condense emotions and impressions in a way that is simple yet evocative (Śniecikowska, 2010). The sparse form endows haiku images with extraordinary power. Their precision and conciseness stimulate the reader’s intuition, triggering strong

associations and opening up space for multiple interpretations. Metaphors in haiku are hidden in subtle juxtapositions of images and meanings, which reveal themselves in mindful reading and reflection.

The poem

*a crouching cat
threatens the chick
of a silver tern*

perfectly illustrates the art of conciseness and precision characteristic of haiku. Every word in this short piece is charged with meaning, creating an intense image of danger and tension. The author focuses on the essence of the experience, condensing a moment filled with uncertainty and potential peril—one that intertwines nature (the chick of a tern) with human experience (the instinctive sense of dread). The scene appears simple, almost stylistically transparent, yet it hides a deep sense of urgency and unease. It is an example of how haiku can convey maximum content and emotion without superfluous embellishments, all the while leaving readers ample room for their own reflection and interpretation.

This indirect form of metaphor opens the door to many possible interpretations, stimulating the discovery of hidden meanings and the creation of associations, thereby developing imagination and abstract thinking skills. Haiku thus teaches us to view reality in a multifaceted way.

Similarly, in the haiku

*hidden within
notes of the deep sea's abyss
an oyster defends*

metaphorical meaning arises not directly but in the juxtaposition of images. The oyster symbolizes the protection of something precious, concealed in the depths. The “note of ocean’s depth” suggests subtlety and mystery—something delicate and hidden. Without a literal metaphor, these images point to deeper associations about human intimacy, emotions, and values that require safeguarding.

Here too, introductory comments play a key role in the interpretation of haiku, enabling a deeper understanding of its content and meanings, which are compressed into such a concise form.

The brevity of this poetic form can pose a challenge to the reader—without the right context, they may fail to grasp the full significance contained within a haiku. The introductory comment fulfills its function here by expanding the poem’s compressed content and revealing the subtleties and symbolism behind the images.

Introductory comments also serve an educational function, teaching readers how to interpret minimalist means of expression. They clarify that the brevity of haiku does not indicate a lack of depth but rather requires the recipient to engage more thoroughly in uncovering its hidden meanings.

Precision, conciseness, and the skillful use of metaphor can be developed through practical exercises. The tasks below can effectively support improving the art of writing haiku:

1. **Writing Haiku on a Given Topic**

Goal: Develop the ability to focus on a single theme and express it in a minimalist form.

Task: Choose a topic such as “a rainy day” or “an autumn leaf,” and try to write a haiku that succinctly conveys the essence of that theme. The key is to concentrate on simplicity and minimalism, avoiding unnecessary words and adornments.

2. **Word-Elimination Exercise**

Goal: Learn how to express content precisely and remove irrelevant elements.

Task: Write a short description of any scene or experience, then try to halve its length by removing superfluous words, leaving only those that best capture its essence. This exercise helps you learn to focus on key elements.

3. **Reducing a Text to Haiku**

Goal: Improve the ability to condense longer content into a minimalist poetic form.

Task: Select any piece of literary text (for example, a short story excerpt or a poem) and try to transform it into a haiku, reducing its content to three lines while retaining the main idea. This exercise fosters the skill of choosing the most important elements and discarding what is unnecessary.

4. **One-Line Writing**

Goal: Develop the ability to condense emotions and observations into a minimal form while preserving their depth.

Task: Try to describe an emotion, a moment, or an observation in a single line. Strive to use concise yet suggestive words that convey deep meaning.

5. **Editing Haiku**

Goal: Improve the ability to analyze and revise one’s own texts to achieve greater precision and conciseness.

Task: Choose a haiku you’ve already written and try to edit it, making it even more

concise. Identify words you can replace with more accurate ones or sections that can be removed entirely without losing the essence.

Haiku can not only create beautiful poetic images but also develop skills that have practical applications in education and daily life. It is an excellent tool for learning the economy of words and precise expression of thought. It teaches the careful selection of words to convey a wealth of meaning and emotion in minimal form.

Through its condensed imagery, haiku inspires creative thinking and fosters a heightened sensitivity to the surrounding world. It helps us recognize beauty in simplicity and the ability to reach the core of a message. By drawing on metaphorical language, haiku invites the reader to actively co-create meaning, encouraging reflection and interpretation. It is not just the record of a fleeting illumination but the outcome of thoughtful work on both form and content. This harmony is what makes haiku a unique vehicle of artistic and intellectual expression.

1.4. Empathy and Sensitivity

Haiku is the art of capturing the essence of a moment, reflecting not only the visible world but also allowing insight into its internal dimension—emotions, sensations, and subtle relationships. Empathy and sensitivity play a key role in this process, enabling the poet to go beyond personal experience and immerse themselves in the perspective of others—whether people, animals, or nature.

Empathy takes on a particularly interesting role in poetics, allowing one to adopt the perspectives of others and feel their emotions as one's own (Płuciennik, 2004). This is precisely what makes haiku so distinctive—it implements the idea of empathy in its purest form, enabling the sharing of personal, profoundly meaningful moments. When composing a haiku, the poet attempts to capture feelings that are difficult to describe, hoping that the readers, through the description of the event that triggered them, will feel similar emotions (Higginson & Harter, 2009).

For example, the haiku:

art in the shadow of walls

with a woman's voice it cries out

demanding equality

conveys, in just three lines, the intense emotions involved in the struggle for equality. When readers immerse themselves in this image, they may sense the frustration, determination, and hope that foster empathy for those fighting for their rights.

Sensitivity, like empathy, is a crucial aspect of human experience. It enables a deeper understanding of oneself and the surrounding world. Combined with aesthetics, it becomes both a means of emotional expression and a key to discovering beauty in the simplest and most fleeting aspects of reality. Japanese aesthetic tradition shows that profound sensitivity can lead to the creation of minimalist works rich in emotional and philosophical content. One of these aesthetic categories, *aware*—an expression of deep emotion and admiration for ephemeral beauty—helps us grasp the emotional dimension of life and art (Śniecikowska, 2010). In haiku, *aware* sharpens our awareness of impermanence and fragility, encouraging the development of empathy and the capacity for contemplation. It becomes a sign of the poet's sensitivity to beauty, whose inherent feature is transience. By sensitizing the reader to these fleeting moments, *aware* prompts a deeper reflection on the fragility of life. An example might be:

*a melodic voice
in the walls of an old castle
fades into twilight*

This brief work introduces a moment in which past and present merge in a sense of the inexorable passage of time. Through contemplating such moments, the reader discovers not only the emotional dimension of the depicted scene but also personal reflections on impermanence and the meaning of life.

Because haiku, as a poetic form, is notably tied to nature, it also serves as a tool for fostering sensitivity to ecosystems, sustainable development, and harmony between humanity and the natural world.

By describing simple natural phenomena, a haiku can, for example, highlight our vulnerability and fragility in the face of nature.

Consider this haiku:

*clouds over Arno
shining adorned by the rain
narrow alleyways*

It paints a picture of a rainy day in a city. This scene prompts reflection on weather's changeability, the beauty of urban landscapes, and our role in these dynamic, ever-changing

spaces. Contemplation of such moments may lead to a greater respect for nature and a better understanding of our place in the world.

Seasonality, woven into the haiku tradition, further strengthens this empathetic bond with nature. The use of *kigo*—words or phrases indicating the season—is not merely a formal requirement but reflects a profound understanding of and shared resonance with the cyclical nature of the natural world. Describing natural phenomena requires not only keen observation on the poet’s part but also knowledge of ecological processes, making haiku a unique tool for supporting learning in biology, geology, and ecology.

As Williams and Shipley observe (Williams, Shipley, 2019), haiku encourages direct engagement with nature, capturing real-life encounters with flora and fauna while avoiding excessive intellectualization. By doing so, it develops sensitivity to nature and supports the formation of ecological attitudes—critical in times of environmental crisis.

An example might be:

*fragrant nature
in the strong embrace of vines
conquers the city*

This poem expresses empathy toward nature, which encroaches on urban space, reminding us of its power and essential connection to humanity. In simple words, the poet depicts both harmony and tension between the natural environment and urbanization. The image of the “tight clasp of vines” symbolizes nature’s regenerative ability as well as its presence as a key element of a larger whole. This haiku prompts reflection on our responsibility toward ecosystems, uniting poetic sensitivity with ecological awareness.

*a container ship
docked today at the port
China in Europe*

This poem encourages reflection on the consequences of our lifestyle and our responsibility for sustainable development. It reflects the realities of globalization and its link to excessive consumerism. The image of a container ship symbolizes the relentless flow of goods, often at the expense of the natural environment. The juxtaposition of “China” and “Europe” points to trade interdependencies that drive resource exploitation and affect local ecosystems.

Empathy toward nature, developed through haiku, allows us not only to recognize and appreciate the beauty of the environment but also to perceive it as part of a larger harmony of which humans are an integral component. The poet’s ability to convey this bond in simple yet

evocative words makes haiku an educational and artistic tool, combining poetic sensitivity with scientific understanding of the world around us.

To cultivate empathy and sensitivity through haiku, one can apply several practical exercises:

1. Fleeting Moments

Task: Pay attention to short-lived, quickly passing events (e.g., a flicker of light in a window, the sound of a door closing). Reflect on the emotions they evoke within you and then try to capture them in haiku form.

Goal: Develop the ability to perceive beauty in fleeting moments and to express the emotions tied to everyday, transient impressions.

2. Understanding Others' Emotions

Task: Observe people in everyday situations: in a queue, during a conversation, or in a moment of focus. Try to imagine what they might be feeling at that moment and then create a haiku reflecting their possible emotions.

Goal: Foster empathy by understanding other people's emotions and expressing them in a poetic, minimalist form.

3. Journey into the Past

Task: Recall a situation in which you experienced intense emotions—joy, sadness, surprise, or pride. Try to convey the essence of those feelings in a few words in the form of a haiku.

Goal: Deepen reflection on your own experiences, develop emotional awareness, and practice articulating it poetically.

4. Observation of Nature

Task: Take a walk, sit in a park, or look out the window to notice details in the natural world around you: the rustle of leaves, the shape of clouds, patches of light on the grass. Think about what moves you most in these views and which emotions you wish to share. Writing this in haiku form allows you to express your relationship with nature in simple yet suggestive words.

Goal: Develop a sensitivity to the natural environment and the ability to express your bond with nature in poetic form.

5. Discovering Ephemeral Beauty

Task: Pay attention to everyday tasks and ordinary objects—a cup of coffee, a creaking floor, or morning sunlight. Look for elements in them that might conceal

special meaning or beauty. Capture these in a haiku to inspire the reader to similar attentiveness and sensitivity toward the seemingly unremarkable aspects of life.

Goal: Increase awareness of small, everyday moments and develop the skill of finding beauty in simplicity.

6. Collaborative Haiku Creation

Task: Try composing a haiku jointly with someone else. First, pick a shared theme—for instance, a situation you both observe (a sunset, passersby in the park, a memory from school days). Next, each of you writes your own three lines describing the same event or phenomenon. Compare the results and discuss how you approached the same emotions and images—whether similarly or differently.

Goal: Enhance sensitivity to diverse perspectives and develop the ability to share emotions and experiences collaboratively.

7. Seasonal Haiku

Task: Focus on seasonal changes in nature—like the first signs of spring, the golden leaves of autumn, or the stillness of a winter morning. Compose a haiku that captures the essence of this natural transition. Use a *kigo*—a word indicating the season—to strengthen the poetic message.

Goal: Develop the ability to observe nature and understand its cyclical rhythms, thereby fostering ecological awareness and reinforcing empathy toward the environment.

8. Haiku on the Human-Nature Relationship

Task: Portray in a haiku a moment in which humans and nature coexist harmoniously—or remain in conflict. It could be a city scene (e.g., a bird on a bus stop) or a moment in the wild.

Goal: Encourage reflection on the human-nature relationship and promote awareness of ecosystems and humanity's impact on the environment.

By encouraging reflection on personal experience and one's relationship with the environment, haiku prompts us to notice beauty in everyday details. The practice of writing and contemplating haiku can deepen self-awareness, enhance sensitivity to nature, and enrich our connections with others. In this way, this concise poetic form becomes not just a literary genre but also a tool for personal growth and understanding of the wider world.

1.5. Creativity and Imagination

Although haiku is inherently minimalist, it is a poetic form with remarkable depth. Its apparent simplicity makes it an excellent tool for developing creativity and imagination in various contexts—artistic, educational, and scientific. The condensed nature of haiku holds immense potential for discovering new connections and meanings, making it a fascinating subject of study in exploring creative processes.

Root-Bernstein’s perspective perfectly illustrates the connection between the essence of haiku and the process of creative discovery. In analyzing the haiku phenomenon, Root-Bernstein refers to a definition by Jacob Bronowski, who described a creative discovery as “the process by which a scientist or artist takes two facts or experiences that we keep apart, finds a resemblance between them that no one saw before, and makes them one” (Bronowski, cited in Root-Bernstein, 2010, p. 19). This mechanism—merging seemingly unrelated elements into a coherent whole rich with meaning—lies at the heart of haiku, giving this form its special creative power.

Root-Bernstein’s claim is supported by the literature, which often describes haiku as a short poem whose images intertwine in a sudden flash of awareness, culminating in a moment of enlightenment or deeper understanding (Gurga, 2004). A key feature of haiku is this “flash”—the sudden synthesis of two seemingly different experiences or images, which enables new meanings and relationships to be discovered. This essence of haiku highlights its capacity to reveal hidden connections, rendering the form exceptionally valuable in studies of creativity.

Haiku poetry not only illustrates these concepts but also expands on them, demonstrating the practical dimension of uncovering hidden relationships. Creating haiku requires not only noticing fresh connections among seemingly separate elements but also expressing these relationships in a suggestive, image-based manner. This process supports the development of abstract thinking, experimentation with language, and the ability to recognize patterns in the complexity of the world.

An example of this creative dynamic can be seen in the following haiku:

the aroma of coffee
in the square by the Cathedral
slows the walk

This poem creates a sense of pausing time, inviting the reader to discover the link between a sensory experience and an everyday ritual. Haiku thus encourages the exploration of subtle relationships among elements of reality, emphasizing their deeper meaning.

The form also underscores the role of intuition and emotional engagement, adding another layer to the creative process. In both educational and artistic settings, haiku can serve as a tool for cultivating the ability to perceive multidimensional connections in the surrounding world, enhancing the capacity for innovative thinking and creative problem-solving.

Creativity, as the ability to generate new ideas and solutions, is intrinsically linked to imagination—the power to transcend what is directly accessible to the senses. In *De Anima*, Aristotle described imagination (*phantasia*) as a “movement that results from an actual sense perception” (Aristotle, 2008), a process that allows humans not only to perceive and interpret reality but also to expand upon it with imagined extensions. Through imagination, we can anticipate the future, merge sensory impressions with intellectual concepts, and transform experiences into new ideas. Imagination thus serves as a fundamental creative tool, enabling us to see potential where others see mere facts.

Literary creativity, particularly in the form of haiku, beautifully illustrates how imagination fuels creative processes. Haiku centers on capturing a brief moment or impression and expressing it in a way that engages both the author and the reader. Crucial to this form is the fact that it does not provide a complete picture—instead, it stimulates the reader’s imagination to fill in the scene, emotions, and context based on personal experiences.

Composing a haiku demands heightened sensitivity to details in the world around us. The poet must not only perceive beauty in simplicity but also capture what is fleeting and translate it into a form that evokes images and feelings. In this way, writing haiku fosters creative thinking, connecting sensory impressions with emotions and intellectual concepts—a prime example of how to practically apply Aristotle’s notion of imagination.

Reading a haiku likewise engages the reader’s imagination, which fills the space left by what is unsaid. Each concise image can give rise to a multitude of interpretations. The reader becomes a co-creator, contributing personal memories, emotions, and experiences to grasp the poem’s message.

For instance, consider this haiku:

a glass in hand

the fruit tempts with sweetness

the scent of memories

Through simple yet evocative imagery, it allows the reader to envision not only the scene but also sense its atmosphere—the fruit’s flavor, the wine’s aroma, and the emotions entwined with

memories. Thus, a haiku appeals not only to the senses but also activates the imagination, inviting creative engagement and reflection.

Introductory comments that suggest what the author may have intended can also shed light on the creative process behind haiku. They help clarify how particular images were chosen and how they function within this poetic form. Such guidance can inspire those learning to write haiku to adopt a similar approach and gain a deeper appreciation for how this form works.

These opening remarks can also offer insight into the author's creative process, explaining how specific images were selected and the intentions behind linking them. This context allows readers to understand the rationale behind the haiku's form and how seemingly simple elements can be combined to achieve a poetic resonance. Consequently, the reader not only gains a better understanding of the poem but may also find inspiration for writing their own haiku—using tips about image selection and building poetic expression.

Practical Exercises for Fostering Creativity and Imagination Through Haiku

1. Observe and Take Notes

Goal: Develop the ability to notice details in your surroundings.

Exercise: Choose any location (e.g., a park, café, or bus stop). Spend 10–15 minutes observing the environment. Write down short impressions or images that catch your eye (e.g., “birds singing over an empty bench,” “a ray of sunlight on a coffee cup”). Based on these notes, try to compose a haiku that combines different elements in a new and surprising way.

2. Use a Photograph as Inspiration

Goal: Develop the ability to uncover hidden relationships among images.

Exercise: Pick any photograph (e.g., a landscape, everyday scene, or still life). Look at it closely and consider what feelings or memories it evokes. Write a haiku inspired by this photo, striving to capture its atmosphere or notable details.

3. Changing Perspective

Goal: Practice creative thinking by experimenting with points of view.

Exercise: Select an ordinary object (e.g., a cup, leaf, or stone). Imagine how that object “sees” the world or “feels” about its surroundings. Describe its perspective in haiku form, using suggestive, emotionally charged imagery.

4. Random Words

Goal: Stimulate creativity by combining seemingly unrelated elements.

Exercise: Randomly pick three words from any source (e.g., a book, magazine, or dictionary)—they can be nouns, verbs, or adjectives. Try composing a haiku by weaving these words into a coherent, vivid whole.

5. Transforming Memories

Goal: Develop imagination by interpreting personal experiences.

Exercise: Choose one of your own memories. Focus on a single detail that evokes strong feelings (e.g., a sound, scent, or gesture). Write a haiku in which you transform this memory into a poetic image.

6. Haiku Interpretation

Goal: Refine the imagination through reading and analysis.

Exercise: Select a completed haiku. Think about which emotions and images each word or line evokes in you. Then, try to write your own haiku inspired by the impressions you gained from this interpretation.

7. Haiku About Contrasts

Goal: Practice noticing relationships between opposites.

Exercise: Choose two contrasting concepts (e.g., light and shadow, warmth and cold, movement and stillness). Write a haiku that subtly depicts the interaction between these opposites.

Haiku exemplifies a creative process in which imagination and originality intersect to uncover hidden relationships among elements of reality. Through its brevity and suggestiveness, the poet creates images that engage the reader's imagination, prompting co-creation of meaning. In this way, haiku bolsters our ability to detect subtle connections and patterns while offering inspiration both artistically and intellectually.

1.6. Interdisciplinarity

The previous subsections in themselves exemplify the interdisciplinarity of haiku, in which we have shown its connection to various facets of culture—from aesthetic categories to deep ties with Zen philosophy. Interdisciplinarity is no random occurrence in the history of art and literature; rather, it is their natural state, manifesting on multiple levels. As an artistic form, haiku perfectly illustrates this synergy, embedding itself within a broader context of philosophical and aesthetic tensions among material culture, literature, and the visual arts.

These aesthetic categories, analyzed in relation to haiku, intersect with different types of Japanese visual and applied arts, such as *sumi-e* ink painting, calligraphy, Zen gardens, or the

tea ceremony. This interconnectedness is no coincidence: art and material culture influenced literature and philosophy, which, in turn, shaped the choices of visual artists. The boundaries between these fields are difficult to delineate clearly, as their mutual influence creates a space of deep interconnections and creative relationships.

One of the most distinctive aspects of this poetry is its visual dimension—it's no accident that the motif of the image has appeared repeatedly in our book. In analyzing haiku, we have pointed out suggestive scenes emerging from simple yet profoundly meaningful words. The intersection of haiku and the visual arts can already be discerned in its basic principles, a point noted by Yasuda. He compares this poetic form to painting, highlighting their shared approach—representing objects in a simple, concrete, and meaningful way, without superfluous commentary (Yasuda, 2011).

It is, therefore, unsurprising that Japanese artists have long recognized the deep connection between haiku and the visual arts. A perfect example of this synergy is *haiga*—compositions in which haiku poems coexist with ink paintings, often enriched by calligraphy. This art form employs various shades of black to convey, in a few strokes, not only the majesty of nature but also the fleetingness of the moment, the subtlety of emotions, and the harmony of the world (Śniecikowska, 2016). These works formed complex pieces in which words and images blended harmoniously, mutually enhancing each other's message.

E. E. Cummings likewise noted that painting and poetry have much in common, but he went a step further by deciding to combine these two disciplines. He treated them as equivalent modes of expression, enabling him to create works in which visuality and language merge into a cohesive whole. By uniting his literary and visual perspectives, Cummings developed a singular artistic style (Cohen, 1990).

Contemporary times offer new possibilities for fusing poetry with visuality, transcending traditional techniques of painting and calligraphy. We, for our part, take advantage of modern developments by illustrating poetry with artificial intelligence—through the program DALL-E. This tool generates images inspired by a poetic text, conveying both the mood and aesthetic of the poem.

One of the greatest advantages of this approach is its speed and flexibility. Illustrating poetry using DALL-E requires little time, allowing for the generation of almost endless ideas and variations. In addition, the images can be easily modified and adapted to one's personal aesthetic vision. The program also offers a choice of techniques in which the illustration may

be rendered—from realism to more abstract styles. We, for example, opted for a watercolor technique, which best reflects the subtlety and lightness of our poetry.

DALL-E operates using advanced artificial intelligence algorithms that analyze text and transform it into imagery. This process is based on deep neural networks that learn the relationships between words and their visual representations by drawing on extensive data sets. As a result, the program not only “understands” the words but also interprets them, taking into account their context and potential meanings. The images produced thus reflect the poem’s mood and message with extraordinary precision while also offering new possibilities for interpretation.

The illustrations created by DALL-E represent a contemporary counterpart to the historic synergy between word and image seen in Japanese artistic traditions. In our work, these visualizations become not just an accompaniment to the poetry but also stand-alone works of art that resonate with the reader on both emotional and intellectual levels.

Incorporating artificial intelligence into literary creation demonstrates how interdisciplinarity in art evolves in tandem with technological progress. Just as Japanese artists once integrated haiku with painting and calligraphy, we integrate poetry with technology, exploring new forms of expression and communication. By doing so, we continue the tradition of visual poetry, adapting it to the demands and opportunities of the modern world while relishing the pleasure of crafting illustrations that perfectly align with our texts.

All the poems in this book, along with their accompanying illustrations, serve as examples of these principles, filling the space between word and image while demonstrating how these two fields can inspire and complement one another.

Additionally, in order to highlight not only the interdisciplinary nature but also the hybrid character of our project, we decided to create a virtual gallery on the Spatial platform, where we present DALL-E-generated images alongside our poems. This approach allows us to transcend the traditional boundaries of art reception, giving viewers the opportunity to explore the exhibition space interactively in a digital environment. The virtual gallery demonstrates how combining poetry and visual art in 3D not only amplifies the artistic message but also fosters the emergence of new, unexpected dialogues between word, image, and technology.

Practical Exercises for Fully Embracing the Interdisciplinary Potential of Haiku:

1. Design Your Own Haiga (Combining Haiku and Image)

Task Description: Write a short haiku, then illustrate it yourself (e.g., with ink,

watercolor, or collage). You can follow the traditional *haiga* layout—the poem and illustration should complement each other, creating a cohesive composition.

Goal: Understand how the written word and image can intersect to produce a new aesthetic quality. Develop the ability to express emotions and reflections in the form of brief poetry combined with creative imagery.

2. Use DALL-E to Illustrate a Chosen Haiku

Task Description: Select any haiku (your own or someone else’s) and input it into DALL-E (or another AI-based image-generating tool). Compare the generated image with your own mental picture and expectations.

Goal: Learn about modern technologies in the creative process and reflect on the differences between human and artificial “imagination.” Develop critical thinking regarding the relationship between text and visuality.

3. Comparative Analysis: E. E. Cummings vs. Traditional Haiga

Task Description: Analyze selected poems by E. E. Cummings, paying attention to how the author experimented with text layout and graphic form. Compare these techniques with the Japanese *haiga* tradition, in which image and poetry coexist side by side.

Goal: Understand various approaches to merging image and word in Western art (Cummings) and Eastern art (*haiga*). Cultivate sensitivity to the formal and thematic aspects of visual poetry.

4. Painting Emotions: From Haiku to Image

Task Description: Choose (or write) a short haiku that particularly moves you or connects with your personal feelings. Using traditional painting tools (e.g., watercolor, ink, acrylics), try to create a painting inspired by your chosen poem. Pay attention to how colors, lines, and composition can convey the mood of the haiku and its key words. Finally, combine your painting with the haiku text—you can place the words directly on the image (for example, in calligraphic form) or present them side by side in a unified arrangement.

Goal: Develop the ability to translate poetic content into a visual form and shape your own individual painting language. This exercise also offers a hands-on experience of how words and images can complement one another and amplify artistic expression.

The interdisciplinarity of haiku reveals a creative process in which poetic language merges with diverse fields of art, such as painting, calligraphy, and modern technology. Through its conciseness and suggestive power, this unique formula stimulates the imagination, inviting the reader to uncover profound connections between image and text. In doing so, haiku nurtures an awareness of the multidimensional links inherent in the arts, while also inspiring creative pursuits in literature, visual media, and innovative forms of expression.

CONCLUSION

Haiku from the regions of Liguria and Tuscany in hybrid metamorphoses is a record of a journey through spaces brimming with sensory impressions, distilled into concise poetic forms. We chose haiku as our point of departure to capture the fleeting moments and places that moved us most during our research—from the rugged beauty of Liguria’s coastal cliffs to the sun-baked hills of Tuscany. Each poem is paired with a brief commentary that brings readers closer to the context of the reflection while inviting them to mindfully contemplate the world.

In creating this work, we decided to blend the traditional haiku form with illustrations generated by the DALL-E program, thus aligning our publication with the *haiga* convention—the Japanese art of merging words with images. Through the watercolor-like subtlety of these AI-generated visuals, each poem is enriched, deepening the perception of every facet of reality we sought to capture.

A pivotal aspect of our project lies in its educational value. The opening notes, which include cultural and contextual backgrounds as well as our personal reflections, are meant to demonstrate that haiku can serve not only as an artistic expression but also as a tool for cultivating sensitivity, empathy, and mindfulness. We encourage readers to pause at each poem, discovering in the simplicity of words and watercolor washes elements that may inspire deeper exploration—both in the external world and within themselves.

Additionally, to emphasize the interdisciplinary and hybrid nature of our work, we have created a virtual exhibition on the Spatial platform. In this interactive space, we present generated images alongside our haiku, inviting viewers to freely navigate the digital gallery and explore new relationships between words, images, and technology.

Haiku in hybrid metamorphoses thus becomes not merely a collection of short poems, but rather a narrative of encountering the nature and culture of Italy, as well as an expression of our own curiosity and openness to the world. By weaving together poetry, research experiences, and digital visual art, we aim to show that even in an era of technological innovation, what truly matters is the search for beauty and depth in seemingly ordinary moments of everyday life.

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The Virtual Exhibition Haiku in Hybrid Metamorphoses – Liguria & Tuscany is a space where tradition meets modernity, and poetry intertwines with visual art in a new digital dimension. It is an extension of the idea presented in our book, where haiku is not merely a record of a fleeting moment but becomes a way to deepen the perception of landscapes, emotions, and sensory experiences.

On the Spatial platform, poetry and imagery come together to form a three-dimensional gallery where visitors can freely explore the space, admire the artworks from different perspectives, and pause at selected pieces to experience their connection with the surrounding scenery. This is more than a traditional exhibition – it is an immersion in poetry, where words and images exist in an entirely new, interactive form.

This virtual gallery opens up new possibilities for experiencing art and literature – allowing visitors to walk among the works, engage with them at their own pace, and create their own paths of interpretation. Haiku, which celebrates transience and simplicity, gains a fresh perspective in this context – it is not just a text to be read but a space in which one can pause, contemplate, and experience poetry in a new environment.

The exhibition demonstrates how tradition and modern technology can coexist, creating innovative ways of experiencing art. It is also an invitation to reflect on how the perception of poetry and imagery evolves in the digital world – does the place where we view them influence our interpretation? How does virtual space shape our artistic experiences?

We warmly invite you to visit this unique gallery – to immerse yourself in the atmosphere of Liguria and Tuscany, where words and images merge in a new way, creating a space for discovery, reflection, and personal artistic experience.

How to Join:

Visit the Link:

<https://www.spatial.io/s/Haiku-in-Hybrid-Metamorphoses-Liguria-and-Tuscany-67ab8a09e33bd83ec9b427e8?share=596340585082468046>

Scan the QR Code:

Below you will find a QR code that directly transports you to our virtual gallery. Use your smartphone or tablet to scan the code and instantly enter the world of hybrid art.

