

Freeman Ng is the author of

- *Bridge Across the Sky*, a YA verse novel about the Chinese immigration experience through Angel Island (www.AngelIslandNovel.com)
- *Basho's Haiku Journeys*, a haiku picture book (www.BashoPB.com)
- *Trumpbert*, a political webcomic (www.Trumpbert.com)
- *Haiku Diem*, a daily haiku feed (www.HaikuDiem.com)



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Carridine Poran is an illustrator who finds that the lines he draws with his eyes closed say more about how things actually are.



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haiku

story



a tale of conflict
and reconciliation
in 5-7-5

written by Freeman Ng

illustrated by Carridine Poran
(with his eyes closed!)

Haiku Story

Written by Freeman Ng

Illustrated by Carridine Poran

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The Story

I wrote this story during the first year of *Haiku Diem*, my attempt to write one new haiku every day that ended up lasting eight years, from mid 2010 to mid 2015 and then from 2022 through 2024.

You can subscribe to receive reposts of past haiku at:

www.HaikuDiem.com

(And I might also start writing them again someday.)

Please also check out Pi-Ku, a new site I've created where you can search for haiku in the digits of Pi:

www.Pi-Ku.xyz

The Illustrations

When I asked my artist friend Carridine if he would illustrate this story, he asked me to go through his portfolio and pick the style I liked best for the project. I ended up picking a piece he'd done without looking down at the paper or his own hand doing the drawing! I didn't know that was how he drew it; I just thought its quirky, improvised style would be a perfect match for my quirky little story. He went ahead and created all the illustrations in this book—in one hour!—using the same blind method, and I hope you'll agree that they did turn out to be perfect.

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In fact, we've made it easy for you to print more copies of this booklet. At

www.HaikuDiem.com/story

you'll find downloadable PDFs and instructions for printing.

Please feel free to print copies and pass them along to anybody you think would enjoy them, as long as you follow the licensing rules listed above.

Haiku Story



The big day had come.
A doctor sat his son down
for a solemn talk.

He said to his boy,
“Son, what would you like to do
when you’re all grown up?”

“I will write haiku,”
replied the lad. The man smiled
as if his son joked.

“No,” he tried again,
“I meant: what will your job be?”
“A haiku writer!”



“A haiku writer,”
the doctor lamented. “He said
he would write haiku!”

“What’s wrong with the boy?
What kind of living is that?
Do haiku save lives?”



They left together.
Above them, among the stars:
a bright crescent moon.



Father embraced son.
The son forgave his father.
His mother looked on.

"I thought you were nuts,
but really, it was simply
that you were not me,"

confessed the doctor.
"Dear?" his ex-wife pointed out.
"You spoke in haiku."



The doctor's wife soothed.
"He's just twelve. Not everyone
can save lives like you."



The doctor's mood plunged.
He watched his son, suspicious.
He drank way too much.

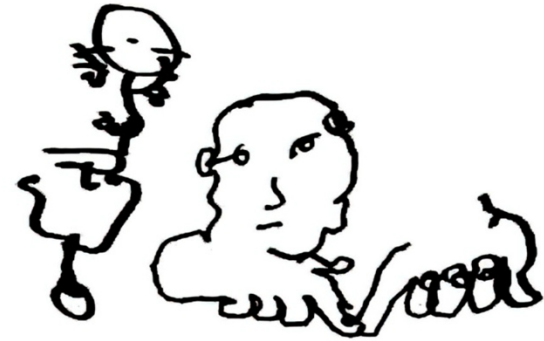


He put down his gun.
The fingers of his raised hands
ticked off syllables.



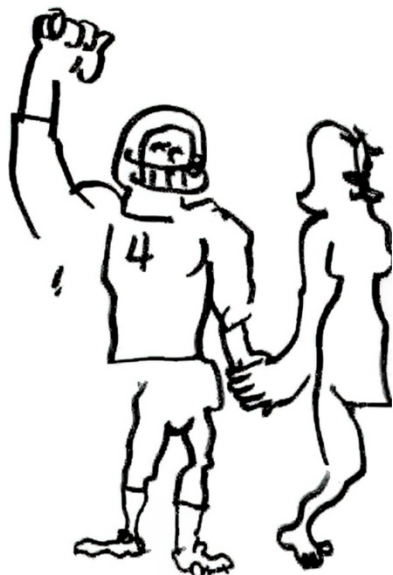
“Concise syllabics
imply no incoherence...”
his captor shouted.

“...but an ordered mind,”
replied the son. The boy gasped,
understood at last.



Sometimes, he caught him
ticking off the syllables
upon his fingers.

“Mark my words,” he said,
“This will not end well. That boy
is wrong in the head.”



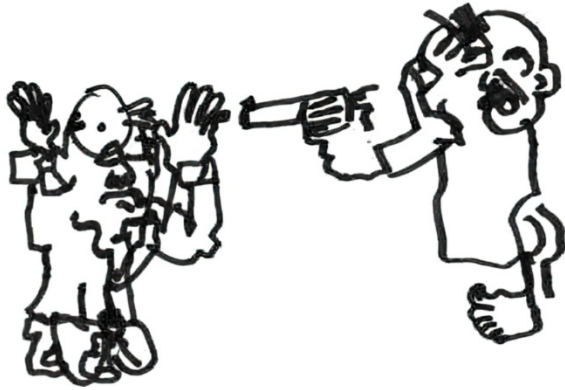
But the boy did fine.
He got A's, played high school sports,
and found a girlfriend.



The son was flown in.
By that time, he was living
in another state

and had three children:
one seven-year-old daughter
and twin sons, age five.

The police briefed him
on his father's plight. They came
to where he was held.



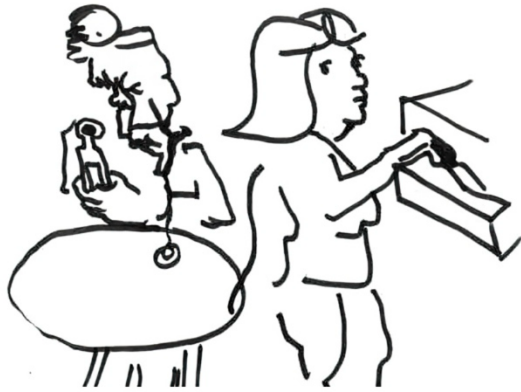
Years later, the man
was held hostage by a child
who was in his care.

“Concise syllabics
imply no incoherence!”
the boy kept yelling.

“I don’t understand!”
the doctor cried. But the boy
only cocked his gun.



He wrote her haiku
love poems. She dreamed of him
in brief vivid scenes.



He did his homework
in haiku. Essays, reports.
His mother hid them.

One day, the man learned
his son had won a school prize—
in biology!

He was ecstatic.
Now the world was coming right!
They went to the school.



That day, his father
remained at home, emptying
his cache of liquor.

He thought, "Well, at least
I'm rid of him now." Lucky
for him, he was wrong.



He married his love
from high school. Naturally,
they wrote their own vows.

“You are the seven
to my five. Following you,
I surprise myself.”

“You are my first thought
and my last. You begin me,
and you complete me.”



The winning project
was a test of how the brain
discerns syllables.



He divorced his wife
and refused to pay support.
"This was all your fault!"



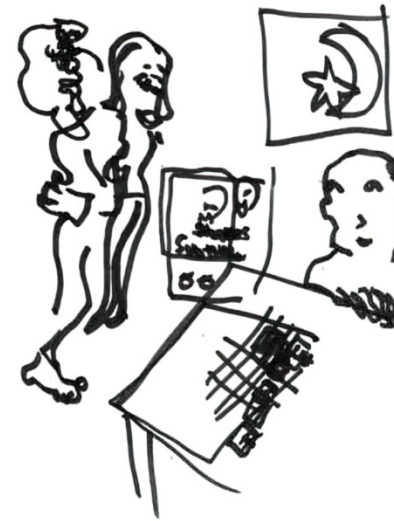
"He says what's needed,"
was his reputed secret.
"No more and no less."



The son finished school
top of his class, gave his speech—
that's right!—in haiku,

went on to major
in Haiku Studies, was hired
straight out of college

by Hallmark, and rose
to VP in record time
in that cutthroat field.



But mother and son
were content. They played word games
in the calm evenings,

sometimes inviting
his girlfriend over to watch
subtitled movies.



The doctor meanwhile
changed his practice, focusing
on brain disorders:

obsessive verbal
compulsiveness in children
and how to cure it.



He threw out letters
sent by his son unopened.
(He knew what he'd find!)