

Some notes on 'Falling leaves'

In 2005 I wrote a haiku diary, attempting to write a haiku a day for a year. Or at least documenting my attempts to write haiku every day for a year. I think writing haiku in English is hard. And there are lots of different opinions about what 'makes sense' given the constraints of the form in Japanese and it not being obvious how to translate those constraints into English. (Japanese haiku are comprised of 17 moras, which are shorter than syllables, and certainly much shorter than English-language syllables.)

I learned a lot trying to write haiku in English. I'm also not sure I wrote any good haiku.

One of the tropes of some haiku (as I understand it) is setting a scene that recognisable as a particular season. But then presenting an image that is 'shocking'. Shocking in the sense of breaking the reader out of their complacency. Allowing them to see the world for the first time; to be present in the moment.

One of the 'poems' I wrote was:

falling leaves
caress trees
tenderness

I don't think it works as a haiku. But the idea was something about playing with the familiarity of a jazz standard lyrics, but in a way that was different. Especially in the use of the word 'tenderness' rather than 'tenderly'. The semicolon was supposed to function like a *kireji*. I don't think that semicolons make sense. Hyphens, maybe. (I do like semicolons though.)

I wonder if it would actually work better with some of the actual lyrics (simplified) and then changing 'tenderly' to 'tenderness':

trembling trees
embrace the breeze
tenderness

Anyway... cut to 18 years later, and I thought that while it didn't really work as a haiku, it could be an interesting (part of a) score.

I added the text(s) on the right that either describe the text and/or describe how to play that text and/or are instructions for the performer. Or descriptions of what the performance should be.

And then the word 'kind' by itself. Perhaps an invitation to be kind to the composer? Or to be kind to the (would be) poet? Or kind to the audience? Or kind to oneself when performing the piece? Or kind generally? Perhaps describing the score (or 'poem') itself
Perhaps an instruction that the music should be kind?