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Gay Haikuby [Kat Avila](#)

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Publisher**Broadway Books**<http://www.broadwaybooks.com>**Credits**

Author: Joel Derfner

ISBN: 0-7679-1984-X

Illustrator:

Grade: 8

In my former life as a two-bit poet, who celebrated the occasional poem being accepted by small press publications, I penned: "To be a haiku poet is to be able to pick out something meaningful from this world's continuous chatter." With ***Gay Haiku***, Joel Derfner recycled his prolonged heartbreak into 110 humorous capsule poems using the traditional three-line, 5-/7-/5-syllable haiku format.

Now, I recall having un-Zen-like arguments regarding haiku with various individuals, from the idiot who maintained that haiku could NOT be written in ENGLISH all the way to the nice lady who thought any nature poem stuffed into a 5-7-5 straitjacket was haiku. (Modern English-language haiku frequently does not adhere to this format.) I've mellowed. If Derfner & Co. want to call his poems haiku, then fine; instead of senryu (about human nature), that's okay, too. I

mean, how many people outside of haiku poets and World Lit majors know what a senryu poem is.

Gay Haiku is haiku parody, poking tongue-in-cheek fun at gay culture as well through caricatures, and this by a self-proclaimed "professional homosexual." The dust cover is an eye-catching baby pink adorned with a cartoon samurai costumed in a red, female kimono falling generously off his shoulders. Martini cocktail icons footnote each page.

The book proves that in pain there is much humor. Derfner is like a wickedly funny girlfriend who whispers rude comments in your ear about passersby (ex-boyfriends or soon to be, in Derfner's case). You'd like to say, "That's not nice," but you're busting up too much. If you don't have a date on Valentine's, this could be the book to comfort you.

*Why is it you fuck
As hard and fast as you can?
I'm not PlayStation.*
(pg. 14)

Obviously a haiku directed to the arcade game generation in entertainment system language they can understand.

"Rule: Kiss toad, get prince."
*It's been three weeks. So you can
Change any time now.*
(pg. 68)

The line breaks aren't always in the best places, because Derfner is trying to hold to a 5-7-5 pattern. Three weeks? We all know someone who's waited years (and it better not be you).

*No more empty sex:
It is interfering with
My TV schedule.*
(pg. 105)

It must be nice to have a choice (or would you the reality show junkie write the reverse).

The way to supremely enjoy this book is with your superior single friends ... pigging out on unforgiving ice-cream

sundaes ... with *Sleepless in Seattle* (or similar sappy movie) playing in the background, while you take turns reading aloud from Joel Derfner's *Gay Haiku*, creating your own faux haiku.

Written: January 19, 2006

Published: February 1, 2006

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