



## **VANCOUVER CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL HAIKU CONTEST STARTS TODAY**

Live public outdoor events return for 16<sup>th</sup> annual festival celebrating city's 43,000 cherry trees

**VANCOUVER, BC (March 2, 2022)** – With its pink and teal banners now lining the Burrard Street Bridge and cherry blossoms slowly beginning to come out across the city, the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival presented by Coromandel Properties is proud to launch its 2022 Haiku Invitational poetry contest and announce its 2021 winners.

The Haiku Invitational presented by Leith Wheeler invites established and budding poets to submit up to two unpublished haiku, which are judged in six categories: Best Vancouver, Best BC, Best Canada, Best United States, Best International and Best Youth haiku, with additional haiku recognized in the Sakura Award and Honourable Mentions categories. Each year, the internationally acclaimed contest attracts thousands of entries from 40+ countries around the world.

The annual celebration of Vancouver's iconic cherry blossom trees will see the return of its signature events in 2022, with The Big Picnic taking place at David Lam Park, April 1<sup>st</sup> and Sakura Days returning to VanDusen Botanical Garden, April 9-10. The Big Picnic will serve as the official kick off for the Festival with a full day of free events, including the Cherry Jam Concert and cultural activities for the whole family to enjoy while picnicking amidst the cherry blossoms.

"We're delighted to reconnect with Festival fans and welcome back our signature events that do so much to bring our communities and generations together to celebrate the magnificent but fleeting beauty of our spectacular cherry trees," said Linda Poole, Founder and Artistic Creative Director, VCBF. "In many ways, these past two years have taught all of us to take life one day and one moment at a time, and to appreciate the little things that make life special, like the delicate and captivating beauty of the cherry blossoms that celebrate the arrival of spring with joyful bursts of colour along city streets and throughout city parks.

"This year, we're also delighted to welcome the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations to our team to help us celebrate the blossoms, as well as the winning haiku submitted last year by cherry blossom lovers the world over."

At the Big Picnic, the six winning poems from the 2021 Haiku Invitational will be displayed in a unique First Nations haiku installation that will connect the poetry to the cherry tree. The 2021 winners will also be recognized at the VSO Tea & Trumpets event at the Orpheum on March 24, where they will be read by the incomparable Christopher Gaze.

Judging the thousands of haiku received in 2021 were Chuck Brickley, Terri L. French, and Claudia Radmore. While there were poems about love and poems about loss, the judges noted that the predominant theme was hope, which they found so refreshing during these times. They were also heartened to read the poems by children, whose imagery was so unique, with expressions most profound.

Anyone looking to learn more about writing haiku is invited to participate in the VCBF's "Discover Haiku" online workshop on April 19 at 6pm, which is hosted by Michael Dylan Welch, the founder of National Haiku Writing Month and cofounder of the American Haiku Archives and the Haiku North America conference. Welch will take participants on a preliminary exploration of haiku poetry in English and introduce important and commonly found elements to haiku writing with an emphasis on the seasonal and nature-focused aspects of this poetry.

The Haiku Invitational will run from March 2 to June 1. To submit a haiku, please visit the Festival [haiku submission page](#).

**About the 2022 Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (April 1 – 23):**

Presented by Coromandel Properties, the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival is a charitable not-for-profit organization with the objective to educate and actively engage diverse communities through accessible local arts and culture to celebrate the fragile beauty of the cherry blossom. To sustain and renew Vancouver's cherry tree heritage. Cherry blossom viewing has become a joyful Festival springtime tradition in our city now as people marvel at 54 different varieties blossom across our city. For more information, visit: [www.vcbf.ca](http://www.vcbf.ca)

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## **BACKGROUND: THE HAIKU INVITATIONAL**

*inspired by the cherry tree*

### **What is a haiku?**

A haiku is a poem that captures a scene or experience in just a few words, suggesting the depth and intensity of the moment. Haiku use concrete images to capture this moment of intuition. Above all, haiku try to imply the emotion of the poet's experience without stating it.

### **What are some of the basics of writing haiku?**

Haiku are plain-speaking poems where every word counts. Try to avoid using abstract or conceptual words. Use sensory images to convey experience about sights, sounds, smells or tastes.

### **Does a haiku have to have 17 syllables?**

In Japan, the haiku is traditionally written in a single vertical line with sound symbols arranged in a 5-7-5 rhythm, but Japanese words tend to be longer than their English counterparts, so literal translations end up as English poems with fewer than 17 syllables. While some haiku poets writing in English do follow the 5-7-5 pattern with wonderful results, most view the haiku as a poem in three lines of 17 or fewer syllables.

### **What else should I know about the form of a haiku?**

Most haiku contain a kigo, or a word or short phrase that places their poem in a season of the year. For example, if you use the word "daffodil," the reader will know you are describing a scene in spring. The kigo links a haiku to the deeper rhythms of nature. In addition, many haiku have two parts, separated by a word or punctuation mark to create tension and resolution, or an unstated relationship between two images.

### **Submission deadline:**

The deadline for haiku submissions is June 1, 2016. For more information on submitting your haiku, visit <http://www.vcbf.ca>.



2021 VANCOUVER CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL  
HAIKU INVITATIONAL WINNERS

Presented by



**Judges:** Chuck Brickley, Terri L. French, and Claudia Radmore

**Best Vancouver Haiku**

for lease  
reflected in the storefront  
cherry blossoms

*Ann Harreb  
Coquitlam, British Columbia*

**Best United States Haiku**

letting the mask fall  
below my nose . . .  
cherry blossoms

*Chad Lee Robinson  
Pierre, South Dakota*

**Best BC Haiku**

keeping her secret . . .  
a whisper of wind  
among the blossoms

*Susan Constable  
Parksville, British Columbia*

**Best International Haiku**

first blossoms—  
the child's eyes  
says it all

*Rita Odeh  
Haifa, Israel*

**Best Canada Haiku**

the foster child's  
backward glance  
falling cherry blossoms

*Charlotte Hrenchuk  
Whitehorse, Yukon*

**Best Youth Haiku (Under 18)**

empty playground  
fallen cherry petals  
on the carousel

*Sebastian Ciobica, age 9  
Botosani, Romania*