



Creative Work

Terminalia haiku

Jacqueline Stearn*

Introduction

I was invited to contribute to an international online gathering of artists marking the Festival of Terminalia earlier this year. It occurs on or around February 21st, and is the Roman festival of boundary marking. My contribution was four haiku. I have walked many miles of the River Frome and her tributaries in Stroud's valleys, researching my MA dissertation (Creative and Critical Writing), and became fascinated by deposits of tufa in streams. These haiku attend to the chemical boundary between a calcium-saturated spring emerging from limestone rock into slightly acidic air, leading to calcium being attached to small stones and twigs as tufa. My experience of writing these haiku, which form part of my exploration of writing as a poetic practice, mirrors Jim Kacian's words, "We have had a moment of insight, a seeing deeper into the workings of the world."¹

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Terminalia haiku

1.
mist droplets cling, swell,
plummet to pond, mingle
circle on circle

2.
wind pours, adds base notes
to stream's creamy trickle
over and under

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¹ Jim Kacian, *First Thoughts — A Haiku Primer*, blogpost, University of Harvard, 7th August 2008 <https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/ethicalesq/first-thoughts-a-haiku-primer-by-jim-kacian/> [accessed 18th May 2026]

3.

pouring forth to air
our chemistry coats twigs
in fine tufa fur

4.

stream's music ripples,
dances around hexagrams
revealed beneath

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Author's bio

Jacqui Stearn, who lives in Stroud, Gloucestershire, has come to sharing her poetry later in life. She has pamphlets published by the Yew Tree Press — *Gravel Songs* from a 2021 Cotswold Water Park residency — and work published in poetry magazines. Her studies for the Creative and Critical Writing MA (University of Gloucestershire) have introduced her to 'The Search for New Stories to Live By' (<https://www.storiescourse.org/new>) and the power of haiku. As a poetic form, it strips away human ego both in the writing and reading, creating connection and presence with nature. Jacqui brings a deep commitment to nature connection into her poetic practice, and to her role as the Voice of Nature on the board of Create Gloucestershire.