

# CLIMATE HAIKUS

from the Global Classroom

A Cross-Cultural Collaboration Between Students  
from the University of Pretoria in South Africa and  
Le Mans Université in France

Edited by

Siobhan Brownlie, William Gleeson,  
Heather A. Thuynsma, Stéfan Meyer





ESI Press University of Pretoria, Lynnwood Avenue, Hatfield, South Africa <https://www.esipress.up.ac.za>

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Editors: Siobhan Brownlie, William Gleeson,  
Heather A. Thuynsma and Stéfan Meyer  
Graphic Design & Illustration: Katinka Strydom

Printed and bound in 2025

Published by ESI Press 2025

ISBN: 978-1-0370-5836-3 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-0370-5837-0 (E-book)



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# Contributors

Benaoudi, Ouiam  
Biévelot, Clara  
Brownlie, Siobhan  
ChatGPT  
Duval, Marie  
Gleeson, William  
Guerrouaz, Khouloud  
Jervais, Mathilde  
Keetse, Khanyisile  
Konlani, Djayome  
Kuntz, Camille  
Legay, Maëline  
Malatse, Palesa  
Mendela, Lucien  
Meyer, Stéfan  
Mosia, Bonolo  
Mpeppo, Okuhle  
Ollivier Pallud, Coline  
Ouattara, Sara  
Picault, Amandine  
Pinot, Maéva  
Pillay, Neha  
Sephoko, Unathi  
Tessereau, Emeline  
Zine Eddine, Lilia

# An Introduction from the Lecturers

## **Introduction to Haiku:**

Haiku is a Japanese poetic form comprising three lines in a 5-7-5 pattern of morae (sound units) which in European languages has been equated with syllables. Other traditional features of haiku are a reference to nature, a focus on the present (although climate change haiku have challenged this, placing emphasis on the future as important), and a comparison whereby the beauty of the form is considered to consist in the relationship between two contrasting images or items.

## **A Collaborative Reflection on the Environmental Crisis**

This collection of Haiku poetry represents a truly remarkable cross-cultural and interdisciplinary academic endeavour. This unique project, which grew out of the ‘Confronting Climate Change’ course, was collaboratively developed and curated by graduate students along with their lecturers at Le Mans Université in France and the University of Pretoria in South Africa. This innovative initiative purposefully engaged students from a range of linguistic, cultural and disciplinary contexts and asked them to articulate their perceptions of the looming climate crisis through the concise medium of Haiku poetry.

This introduction explains the genesis, the pedagogical context, and the intellectual depth of the many themes encapsulated within the students’ poetry.



The students' haiku are part of the broad movement of eco-poetry that stresses a biocentric perspective and has a political agenda to elicit ecological responsibility. Eco-poetry derives its power through interdisciplinarity, tackling multiple topics, and by being both informative and provoking visceral emotions. As can be seen in the students' work, ecologically activist haiku involve emotional calls for action. Poems that describe the beauty of nature, or describe an ecological disaster contain implicit calls, whereas other poems recount a crisis along with an explicit call for action.

## **Genesis of the Project: Our Global Classroom Framework**

This Haiku project was conceived as part of the Global Classroom initiative — an innovative pedagogical framework aimed at fostering inquiry-based learning and transcontinental collaboration. Initiated in 2018, the Global Classroom was one of the first initiatives to bring students from different disciplines, different universities and different continents into one classroom in real time. And the ensuing classes enabled students to engage in intellectual exchanges that transcended geopolitical and cultural boundaries.

The course has evolved over the years to include more creative elements and to concentrate on different topics — the most recent being climate change and the evolving impact it has on people, their philosophies and global politics. Within this context, the 'Confronting Climate Change' course provided a platform for these students to critically examine the global scale and impact of the environmental crises while anchoring their analyses in their own local experiences.

The course was also designed to achieve a range of pedagogical objectives. At its core, the course cultivated the students' critical thinking and analytical acumen, enabling them to dissect how the environment, the social, the economic and the political intersect and realise their global impact. Each class took the form of a weekly virtual seminar and discussed topics ranging from ecological sustainability to the socio-political dynamics of climate adaptation. Central to the course's ethos was the recognition that effective responses to climate change necessitate both global solidarity and a real sensitivity to different regional contexts.

Another essential was promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaborative engagement amongst the students. The interactive structure of the course encouraged students to share their perspectives and appreciate how these were shaped by their distinct ecological and sociopolitical realities. For example, French students often emphasised renewable energy transitions and policy frameworks, while South African students illustrated the real limitations of resource-constrained environments.

The specific class in the Global Classroom course during which students wrote the haiku was a class on climate activism. Given that poetry has the reputation of being ineffectual and obscure, it was questioned whether poetry could indeed be activist. The answer is that there are many styles of poetry, and that among other forms of ecologically aware poetry, the conciseness of the haiku form makes it particularly appropriate for activist purposes. Haiku is indeed being used in this way, notably by the Hot Poets group who attended the COP 28 meeting in 2023; they provided a pavilion with films of poets reading their haiku

and held haiku writing workshops for the COP delegates! The inclusion of Haiku poetry infused a creative dimension into the intellectual exercise of the Global Classroom course, challenging the students to distil complex concepts into succinct and evocative expressions. This was both a pedagogical innovation and a symbolic gesture. The brevity of haiku mirrors the urgency and clarity demanded by the climate crisis, while its universal appeal deliberately provokes diverse perspectives in a format that transcends linguistic and cultural divides.

The Global Classroom students were presented with the traditional features of haiku but were given freedom to diverge from those features and let their creativity flow. As such, some students did not necessarily follow the traditional syllable pattern, and some wrote more than three lines. Nevertheless, the spirit of the haiku is present: a concise form that focuses on images, which in this case have a striking activist force. In exercising their creative freedom, some students also expanded beyond the specific topic of climate change to write more generally about man-made environmental degradation. The students were encouraged to write individually or collectively, and in whichever language they felt most comfortable with, thus producing a rich linguistic kaleidoscope that mirrors the global reach of the current climate challenge. As well as writing a haiku, students were asked to provide a small explanatory paragraph about their poem. Through both the haiku and their explanatory writing, we can feel these young people's heart-felt engagement with the most important matters of our time.

The Haiku project enriched this dialogue by encouraging multilingual and multicultural collaborations (including the use of AI) to emphasise how linguistic and cultural nuances inform environmental narratives.

In writing their Haiku, students were able to explore their innate poetic genius and, from the brief descriptions each author has included with their Haiku, readers will be able to appreciate the complex quagmire that climate change has become. The production of Haiku in multiple languages, including French, English, isiZulu, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Italian, Southern Sotho, isiXhosa, Afrikaans and Arabic also celebrates the linguistic diversity of the participants and stresses the universality of this crisis.

In addition, the project illustrates the significance of interdisciplinary inquiry. Although anchored in the social sciences, the course also exposed students to the artists, scientists, environmentalists and literary perspectives. This integrative approach encouraged students to grapple with the complexities of climate change and to recognise the role that culture can play in fostering environmental awareness and advocacy.

## **Thematic Exploration within the Haiku Collection**

This anthology is organised into four thematic sections: Nature, Earth's Cries, Humans: Cause and Consequences, and Hope and Activism. Each section encapsulates a unique dimension of the climate crisis, offering a tapestry of reflections, emotions and calls to action.

### **1. Nature**

The opening section pays tribute to the resilience and fragility of natural ecosystems. Haiku such as 'Important' and 'Flowers and Scent' underscore the intrinsic interconnectedness of biodiversity and the delicate equilibria underpinning life on Earth. These poems evoke a profound reverence for nature's complexity while issuing an implicit plea for its preservation.

## **2. Earth's Cries**

This section gives voice to a planet in distress. Haiku like 'Last Serenade' and 'Ocean's Tears' personify Earth as a grieving entity, lamenting the ecological devastation wrought by human activity. The imagery of melting glaciers, scorched forests, and polluted oceans functions as both an elegy and an admonition, compelling readers to confront the consequences of anthropogenic environmental degradation.

## **3. Humans: Cause and Consequences**

Here humanity's complicity in the ecological crisis is scrutinised. Poems such as 'Aftermath' and 'Development' explore themes of avarice, indifference, and exploitation. These Haiku illuminate the destructive legacies of industrialisation, deforestation, and consumerism, while also invoking an ethical imperative for humanity to fulfil its custodial responsibilities toward the planet.

## **4. Hope and Activism**

The final section serves as a counterpoint to the preceding despair, emphasising resilience, agency, and the potential for transformative action. Haiku such as 'Keep Hope Alive' and 'A New Generation' celebrate the emergent possibilities of grassroots activism and intergenerational solidarity. Through imagery of burgeoning flora, collective efforts, and whispers of renewal, these poems evoke optimism and a sense of shared purpose.

## Conclusion

This Haiku anthology embodies the synergies of collaboration, creativity, and critical reflection. Through their evocative and incisive verses, the students at Le Mans Université and the University of Pretoria have crafted a compelling commentary on the climate crisis. May these Haiku inspire a profound awareness of the fragility and beauty of the Earth and galvanise collective action toward its preservation.

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Heather Thuynsma, University of Pretoria

Siobhan Brownlie, Le Mans Université

William Gleeson, Le Mans Université







## Part I: Nature



This haiku is representative of a message from all sorts of small plants, pleading their importance to the world. They indicate that they may not be big in size, but they have the power to preserve life. The purpose of the haiku is to illustrate the importance of the presence of all kinds of plants within the ecosystem, regardless of their size. It can also allude to a plea to stop deforestation.

## Important

I am not big  
I am fragile  
But I am life.

Unathi Sephoko

This haiku evokes the importance of flowers since there are handsome places on earth with various flowers that we humans must not destroy with our trash. We both think that flowers give joy, but also a visual satisfaction and without them the earth would not be so joyful.

## Flowers and scent

Because flowers shine,  
The smell is rose,  
The place is flourishing.

Djayome Konlani and Sara Ouattara



This haiku highlights the life cycle of flower species. Nowadays we see fields that bloom at times when they should not bloom. In fact, because of the constant consumer demand for fruits and vegetables throughout the year, some farmers may resort to harmful agricultural practices, such as using banned pesticides which could be harmful for the environment and humans, to increase their out-of-season vegetable production. The excessive use of chemicals can lead to long-term degradation of soils, and exacerbate environmental issues including biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions, and resource degradation.

## La Vie / Life

Des fleurs et des arbres  
Il vous parle de leur vie,  
À chaque fleur un temps précis. (French)

Of flowers and trees  
He tells you about their life,  
Each flower its time.

Lilia Zine Eddine

The aim for this haiku is to create a vivid image for the reader about intense heat and changing weather patterns caused by global warming. This haiku captures the interplay between the changing climate (represented by the golden skies) and the adaptive response of nature (symbolized by the blooming sunflowers), highlighting both the challenges and resilience in the face of environmental changes.



## Sunkissed with regret

the sun paints skies gold  
nature responds with sunflowers  
endless in their bloom

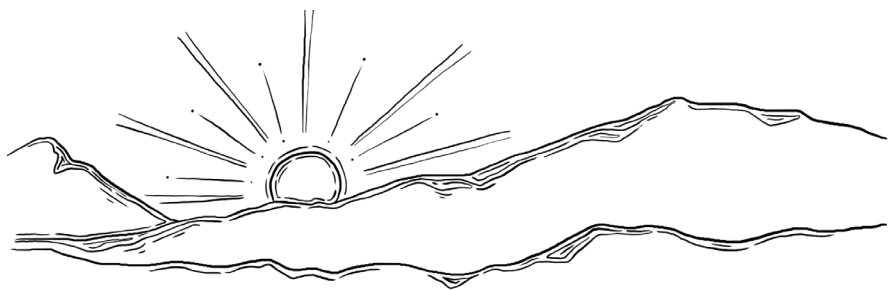
Lucien Mendela and Unathi Sephoko

This haiku's opening line mentions the consequences of climate change and how the wind is blowing so strongly that the trees are swaying along with it. The beauty of the sunset is discussed in the second line, particularly when it is viewed in a setting with mountains. The last line describes how peaceful nature can be when one pays attention to the little things.

## Beauty of the sunset

Trees sway with the wind,  
Sunset hues kiss mountain view,  
Nature's grace at ease.

Neha Pillay





## Part II: Earth's Cries



This haiku evokes the fleeting beauty of the sunset contrasted with the increasing disruption of the natural world. The evening colours symbolise the fragility of the balance of nature in the face of environmental change. The 'fragile dance' refers to the delicate harmony of nature, threatened by human activity.

## **Last serenade**

Sunset hues fade fast,  
A world in flux, out of sync,  
Nature's fragile dance.

Emeline Tessereau

This poem casts the world as the protagonist in a fighting movie in the climactic scene where the goodies fight the villain, getting thoroughly beaten with all lost, but refusing to give up. The melting glaciers are a metaphor for tears and the damage is evident through creaks and cracks. Though seemingly hopeless, with the earth's voices being muffled in darkness, the poem is meant to be ambiguous. These voices, muffled as they are, ring out in the dark showing that something is still alive if not well and that at the very least the fight ain't over yet.



## Dis nog nie oor nie / It's not over yet

Gletsers smelt in nag  
Die aarde se lakens blou  
Windsels van rou waai  
Natuur se skoot kreun en kraak  
Stemme dof in donker vaak (Afrikaans)

Glaciers melt at night  
The Earth's blue covers, bruised  
Bandages of grief sway  
Nature's womb groans and cracks  
Voices muffled in the dark

Stéfan Meyer

This poem is about how climate change is affecting the weather. Storms and floods are getting more common and intense nowadays. Seasons seem to fade away; the temperature changes all the time and doesn't match them anymore. It seems like mother nature is reacting to what humans are throwing at her.

## Nature's anger

少しずつ

全部の気候要素

猛威を振るう (Japanese)

Little by little, all of

The natural elements

Are wreaking havoc

Marie Fermond

This poem was a collaborative effort between four of the South African students in the Global Classroom module, writing in different languages. As a reflection of the diversity of South Africa, with its eleven official languages, as well as the common struggle experienced by climate change, lines from four of the other poems written were combined to create this new piece. The commonality of messages in the different poems about how the earth is suffering shows how, although we may all be from different cultures, places and backgrounds, climate change affects our world everywhere.

## **A common tragedy**

Imiphunga yelizwe iminxekile (isiXhosa)  
Agwinya ukuphila (isiZulu)  
E kare lefatshe le ya fela (Sesotho)  
Natuur se skoot kreun en kraak (Afrikaans)

The country's lungs are choking  
It swallows life  
It's like the world is ending  
Nature's womb groans and cracks

Okuhle Mpeppo, Palesa Malatse, Khanyisile  
Keetse and Stéfán Meyer

The extremely high temperatures brought on by global warming are described in this haiku. Global climate change results from this, and many people may face droughts that deplete water supplies, dry up most vegetation, hinder the growth of produce, and have negative impacts on people's health.

## **Burning heat**

Fields dry, sun scorches,  
The sun heats up the surface,  
Parched earth yearns for rain.

Neha Pillay

This poem describes how I feel when I'm in my home village that has no electricity. Rising temperatures have led to our water well that was situated in our spacious yard drying up, so water has to be collected at a nearby water source. When I am home, there is no way for me to cool down unless I sit under the guava tree in our yard where I risk being attacked by a monkey, a snake or fire ants in my sleep.



## Sun

Days under the sun  
Hiding under the guava tree  
It is so hot  
I cannot breathe

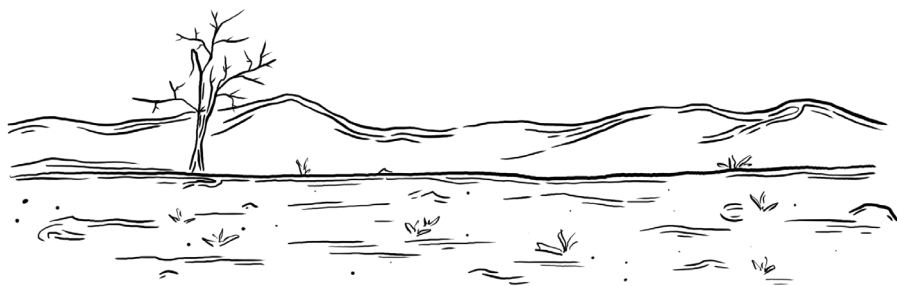
Khanyisile Keetse

This haiku was written due to the fact that I was unaware that South Africa is a drought-prone country. One of the articles I read describes droughts as ‘simmering disasters’ (hence my title), which are an ongoing and slowly intensifying disaster that has not yet reached their full destructive effects. This poem emphasises the harsh reality of droughts and extreme heat – the dual crises of heatwaves and water scarcity. The last phrase of the poem, ‘quench our thirst’, can be interpreted both literally as the need for water, and metaphorically as the need for sustainable solutions and policies to mitigate climate change.

## Simmering disasters

The sun is scorching,  
Heatwaves, no water.  
Is there a will to quench our thirst?

Bonolo Mosia



This haiku evokes the threat of extinction facing many bird species as a result of environmental change. The birds, deprived of their natural habitats, are expressing their distress through their pleas. The final question invites us to reflect on our responsibility to protect biodiversity.

## Sky prayer

Birds search for lost homes,  
Whispers of extinction near,  
Will we hear their plea?

Emeline Tessereau

This poem is about how humans keep throwing trash into the sea. They have even managed to create a whole continent made of it. This is obviously very dangerous for all the creatures living in the ocean. I want this poem to serve as a reminder that the sea is not a trash can but an important element of nature that is a necessity to every living creature on earth including humans. The oceans also help regulate the climate and actively reduce pollution.

## **Ocean's tears**

人間のせいで  
ゴミ箱になる  
海の悲痛 (Japanese)

Because of humans  
Becoming a trash can is  
The grief of the sea

Marie Fermond

‘Waking before dawn’ is in homage to one of my professors, Gil Schedler, who published a wonderful book/poem with the same title. Even in the innocence of the early morning, there is no respite from the consequences of a car-centric model of mobility. Although bikes, trams and buses share the road, the reality of a rural population left with few transport alternatives besides an automobile and few viable economic possibilities outside of Le Mans mean that cars regularly make pre-dawn appearances, leaving their petrol effluvia as invisible signs of their passage.



## Spring, Morning

Waking before dawn –  
Every day, my walk to work  
In cars' diesel wake.

William Gleeson

This haiku explores the disconnect between our fast-paced lives and the long-term consequences. Clear skies, once commonplace, are now a rare sight, highlighting the impact of pollution. Speeding towards a future shrouded in exhaust fumes, we leave behind a trail of unnecessary waste.

## **Waste cage**

Rush, clear sky a dream,  
Exhaust clouds the future's blue.  
We speed, leaving waste.

Lucien Mendela

I wrote this haiku with my mom because I wanted to write one in my home language, so I called her and asked for her assistance. This was not an easy task to do, because she kept on asking me why the poem had to be about climate change, why it only had to be three lines and why it had to follow a certain syllable count. I had to explain the whys and why not. The inspiration of the poem comes from my mother, as she dislikes smoke and air pollution, because she suffers from shortness of breath. The poem tries to encapsulate the impact of industrial activities on climate change and air pollution.

## **Tshilafalo ya moya / Air pollution**

Phetoho ya boemo ba lehodimo,  
ka baka la muso wa difeme,  
tsesa kgathalle hore di senya lehodimo.  
(Southern Sotho)

Climate change,  
due to factory smoke,  
not caring that they damage the air.

Bonolo Mosia

This haiku captures the duality of air travel and its environmental consequences, emphasising the need for awareness and action in reducing the carbon footprint of air travel to mitigate climate change. Although we may see planes looking very tiny in the sky, we shouldn't ignore the major impact they have on the planet. The haiku forces us to also think about the small impacts we can make daily that can create a positive change in the environment, despite peoples' doubts about this.

## Needle impact

Wings cut through clear skies  
planes roar, earth's sigh whispers  
Carbon trails linger

Lucien Mendela

This haiku discusses the detrimental effects of climate change, particularly the excessive rains that cause rivers to flood and may endanger local animal species. In certain places, plants may also sustain damage as a result of this intense rainfall.



## **Dangers of climate change**

Rivers overflow,  
Dry land swallowed by the surge,  
Life in peril waits.

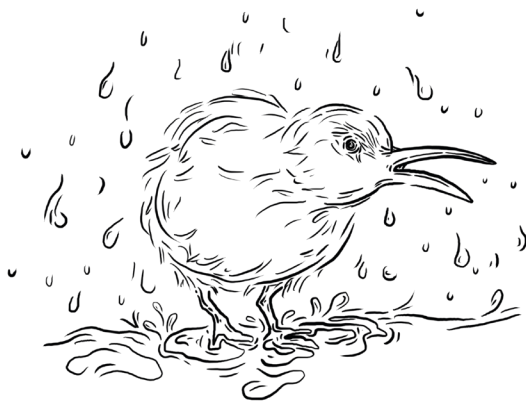
ChatGPT

This poem evokes a very severe weather event resulting from climate change that took place at the end of January and beginning of February 2023 in Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand. The flooding of the city was the worst in modern history. The Kiwi is the emblematic bird of New Zealand, and New Zealanders are commonly known as Kiwis. The bird is flightless and an endangered species; the female Kiwi makes a squawking call.

## Auckland flooded

In one day pelts down  
an entire Summer's worth of rain –  
a Kiwi bird screeches

Siobhan Brownlie



The inspiration behind this haiku is the 2022 floods in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa that were labelled as the worst natural disaster to happen in the province. People died and homes were destroyed. The title of the poem indicates that the flood is not occurring yet, but that it is a looming potential threat. This creates a sense of anticipation and anxiety which demonstrates the tension that communities in KwaZulu-Natal might have felt when they experienced intense rainfalls. The poem highlights the unpredictability of climate change and the importance of being ready for a situation that might or might not happen.

## Potential flood

Intense rainfalls.

Disaster team on the front line.

Is KwaZulu-Natal flooding?

Bonolo Mosia

This poem is a spinoff or a part two of the haiku above, 'Potential Flood'. It shows the aftermath of the floods that took place in KwaZulu-Natal. The poem succinctly captures the devastating impact of the floods, focusing on the immediate and tangible consequences. These floods resulted in significant devastation which highlights a lack of resilience and an increase in social vulnerability. The floods resulted in the tragic loss of at least 459 lives, displaced over 40,000 individuals, destroyed more than 12,000 houses, and temporarily left 45,000 people without employment. This is why I decided to title the poem 'Flooded Out', because the title directly refers to the displacement caused by the floods, indicating how people were forced out of their homes and normal lives.

## Flooded out

Overflowing floods,  
homes destroyed,  
people left stranded.

Bonolo Mosia

Water is a symbol of life, but climate change has turned what used to work for us against us. The *Daily Maverick* reported that the 2022 KwaZulu-Natal floods caused dangerous and permanent damage with a death toll of at least 306. The record-breaking rainfall caused immense flooding and landslides, and the situation was declared a provincial disaster. Weather forecasters and climate scientists warn that this may happen again.



## **Amanzi (Water)**

Amanzi anok'phila  
Amanzi ezikhukhula anokufa  
Agwinya umhlaba  
Agwinya uk'phila (isiZulu)

Water brings life  
Flood water brings death  
It swallows the Earth  
It swallows life

Khanyisile Keetse

This haiku evokes forest fires, which destroy ecosystems and lead to the loss of biodiversity. The burning forests are depicted as a place of destruction where life is consumed by smoke. The trees, symbols of strength and life, are mourning their own destruction.

## Incandescent nature

Forests burn brightly,  
Life dwindles in smoke and ash,  
Silent trees mourn loss.

Emeline Tessereau



This haiku denounces the impact of deforestation on nature. Colonies of thousands of trees are victims of human violence contributing to the increase of global warming. If the Amazon Forest is assimilated to the lungs of the planet, its slow death is painful to the world's future. Forests are CO<sub>2</sub> guardians that naturally regulate the atmosphere. The haiku is an ode to the forests' suffering, their imminent disappearance and a message about the dangers it will produce. Without Amazonia, without forests, without trees, the green earth will become a bare, dry and unbalanced desert.

## **Lamento della Foresta**

Colonia verde in sofferenza  
Respira, un'ultima vita  
La morte della Foresta. (Italian)

## **Complainte forestière**

Colonie verte en détresse  
Respire, une dernière vie  
La mort de la Forêt. (French)

## **Forest's lament**

Green Colony in distress  
Breathing, one last life  
The death of Forest.

Camille Kuntz

Deforestation is a disheartening process that just keeps on occurring, altering Earth's beautiful landscapes, and destroying natural biodiversity in forest lands. One wonders where compassion is when someone cuts down a tree, because you are not just cutting down an inanimate object, you are cutting down history. Earth and nature cannot be seen as objects of dominion, Earth is part of us as much as we are a part of it.

## **Rest in destruction, beautiful tree**

Trees falling, machines destroying  
Her rings of life cut prematurely  
Her death, justified obscurely

Khanyisile Keetse

This haiku refers to the alarming decline of Korean fir trees in the fir forest on Jeju Island's Mount Halla. Mount Halla holds a deep significance for Koreans. It embodies their connection to nature, their spiritual beliefs, and their cultural heritage. Here, Hallasan is portrayed as a living entity capable of feeling pain due to the impact of global warming.



## Hallasan

한라산의 봉우리에  
가슴에 이슬이 녹아내려  
자연의 애도의 표시 (Korean)

On Hallasan's peaks  
dew melts on its bosom  
a sign of nature's lament

Marie Duval

This haiku reflects the rapid urbanization and expansion of cities, where green spaces are being lost to concrete jungles. It suggests a sense of urgency and loss in the face of urban sprawl and its impact on nature. At Wits, there were so many trees I could see.. However, I was also thinking about how polluted the city was, which was evident in the unclear skies. Simultaneously, I pondered how many trees needed to be cut down for these developments to take place.

## **Blurred race**

Green trees blur past, chased,  
By streets blending, nature's grace,  
In urban sprawl's waste.

Lucien Mendela

This haiku lays emphasis on the consequences of climate change. In fact, over the years, flora has begun to flourish in Winter due to the rising temperatures, while it should be flourishing around Spring time. This highlights the now fine line determining the seasons. In the poem, the personification of Earth addresses a cry for help to everyone willing to listen.

## Winter Spring

Winter, trees in bloom  
Earth crying in misery  
Climate change

Maëline Legay

This haiku captures the fleeting nature of Spring. In the past, Spring brought a magical transformation to the trees. However, recent changes in the climate have caused the beauty of these pink trees to fade. I passed by the tree at the garage four times during the week without noticing its pink hue, but one evening, while parking near the tree, I was struck by its vibrant pink beauty. I loved the view but also felt disheartened that artificial light was needed to highlight the natural beauty that should shine on its own.

## Once I was genuinely pink

Spring's warmth fades too soon,  
Climate shifts, astray  
If only there were a better way.

Lucien Mendela





# Part III: Humans: Cause and Consequences



This haiku refers to the renewable resources, not as renewable as we think, that lie beneath our feet. What is not directly visible to us is an excuse to deny it to others. Our future depends in part on these resources, which we continue to drain a little more every day.

## Human Greed

Sous terre s'assèchent  
Nos précieuses ressources  
Futur incertain (French)

Underground are draining  
Our precious resources  
Uncertain future

Amandine Picault

The poem describes the world of beauty engulfed in smoke from war and development. No longer beautiful, the world was built upon with humanity believing that it could redesign it, however the result is a hellish landscape of war and industry.

## Aftermath

The smoke will not clear  
From the gun nor the factory  
Hell, we have designed

Stéfan Meyer

This poem describes how we have been affecting the world over time. While still beautiful, the planet is struggling, burdened with our existence. Becoming warmer, dryer and tired, it is like a sick person with a fever meant to kill an infesting parasite, while the guardians are nowhere to be seen.

## Development

Warming, drying, wary  
The world of beauty, burdened,  
We are killing it

Stéfan Meyer

The poem conveys how temperatures fluctuate as a result of global warming. It alludes to how human activities have severely damaged the planet's climate and ecosystems due to pride and greed. The poem aims to serve as a warning of God's wrath if humanity persists in its self-ambitions. There is no direct translation of 'climate change' as a phenomenon in the Sesotho language. Instead, the language utilizes the phrase 'the climate is changing' that refers to a physical manifestation of the weather severely changing over time in a region.



## Phethoho ya boemo ba lehodimo

Ho ka tshoha ho bata kapo  
Ho tjhesa.  
Hape ho ka ba na le moya.

Pula le yo na e ka na haholo.  
ya etsa dikgokgola  
e kare lefasti le ya fela  
Ntate Modimo wa re kgalema! (Sesotho)

## Climate Change

It could be cold.  
It could be hot.  
It could also be windy.

It also rains a lot.  
And creates more floods.  
It's like the world is ending.  
God is reprimanding us for our actions!

Palesa Malatse

Small-scale farming on the African continent is prevalent and is how many people make ends meet, however, the rising temperature makes it challenging for crops to be grown sustainably. This impacts small-scale farmers who produce lower crop yields and possibly none at all. Climate change effects lead to the challenge of food insecurity, especially for individuals whose livelihoods are dependent on rain-fed agriculture.

## Umlimi / The farmer

Umlimi uhamba ensimini engenalutho  
Wayekhulisa izitshalo  
Ukushisa kwelanga akuvumeli ukuphila  
Umlimi ukhuleka kuNkulunkulu  
Ukuze ilanga lakhe liphole (isiZulu)

The farmer walks through an empty field  
He used to grow crops  
The sun's heat does not accommodate life  
The farmer prays to God  
So that the sun he created heals

Khanyisile Keetse



This poem alludes to a chaotic future whose beginnings we are already seeing. If we don't do something about climate change, the earth's heart will stop beating, the harmony of the earth's energies will collapse and lead to an indomitable wave of climatic disasters. Humanity will be left in the middle of an abyss, unable to find a remedy to survive as a victim of nature, but above all as a victim of itself.

## El porvenir / The future

El latido se derrumba  
Y la ira se derrama,  
Dejándonos en el abismo. (Spanish)

The heartbeat collapses  
And anger pours out,  
Leaving us in the abyss

Maéva Pinot

This haiku reflects on the interconnectedness between humanity and nature amidst the backdrop of environmental degradation and climate change. The 'dry trees' sighs' symbolize the withered state of nature, whilst the 'crying earth's lament' portrays the distress of the environment. 'Humans mourn' highlights the shared grief and responsibility that human beings feel in response to the degradation of their natural environment. The haiku gestures towards the need for empathy, awareness, and action to deal with the challenges of climate change and to preserve the planet for future generations.

نزل الاءاصأ

ءءاال راأشألا ءاءءنء طسو  
ءاثر ضرألا ءكب و  
بذنء سانأ

(Arabic)

## Echoes of Grief

Amidst dry trees' sighs  
And a crying earth's lament  
Humans mourn

Ouiam Benaoudi



This Haiku provides an illustration of how climate change is taking over, and it may be too late to make a difference. The carbon emissions occurring may have taken over, and very little human action may make a difference.



## Hopeless

With little hope  
With little time  
All this gas has taken up.

Unathi Sephoko

The poem depicts the world of beauty as gone. Humanity had never been the guardians, instead infesting the world as an enemy that has killed it. This casts a picture of hopelessness for the future, a warning that we as humans are failing and must correct our path while the world of beauty still exists.

## Apocalypse

The battle over  
A world of beauty no more  
Custodians cared not

Stéfan Meyer



## Part IV: Hope and Activism



This poem invites people to stay hopeful in facing climate change. We are inundated by terrible news about climate change, a situation that has to be changed now or it will be too late. But through all this bad news, we don't see that some small good news emerges. We are blinded by horrible statistics, and events that terrorize us. This haiku, with the image of the bird singing innocently, living his life, appeals to maintaining hope. Some small actions can make a difference.

## Keep hope alive

El árbol florece  
Como el canto de pájaro,  
Una promesa. (Spanish)

L'arbre fleurit  
Comme le chant d'un oiseau,  
Une promesse. (French)

The tree blooms  
Like the bird singing,  
A promise.

Coline Ollivier Pallud

This double haiku expresses the plight of our planet, likening it to a suffering being, overwhelmed by the effects of climate change. The 'cold heart' represents the indifference or neglect towards environmental issues, which eventually leads to the 'heat of grief' as consequences unfold. The poem highlights a longing for change and a better future ('tomorrow') amidst the pain and destruction caused by environmental degradation. But it also suggests that despite the damage, there is still hope and potential for renewal ('searched in her green arms for a beginning').



## A beginning **آداب**.

And her cold heart is just the beginning  
Gave in to the heat of grief  
And squeezed with longing for tomorrow

Bleeding her wounds  
It instilled concern in her lovers  
They searched in her green arms for a beginning

آداب طقف درآب ال اهل ق و  
نزل الة راحل ملست سا  
دغل اقوش رصت عا و

اه حارج في زن  
اهي بحم في مة ل سرغ  
آداب نع ارض خال اناضح ا في او تحب ف

(Arabic)

Khouloud Guerrouaz

This haiku reflects the urgency and sadness surrounding climate change activism. The imagery of dissipating mists symbolizes the awakening to the reality of environmental degradation. The whispers in the wind represent the voices of activists advocating for change. The Earth, personified as weeping, conveys the profound impact of climate change on our planet. Through this haiku, I aim to capture the emotional depth and urgency of the climate crisis, urging action and awareness.

## Earth Cries

Brumes se dissipent,  
Voix dans le vent murmurent,  
Terre en sursis pleure. (French)

Mists dissipating,  
Voices in the wind whisper,  
Earth in peril weeps.

Clara Biévelot

This poem describes the world as it was before humanity came to ‘civilize’ it. The world is pristine, beautiful and the duty of looking after it is humanity’s, symbolizing the idea that as we live on the planet and draw from its resources, we must also guard it.

## **Gaia**

A world of beauty

We are made its custodians

What will we do now?

Stéfan Meyer

This haiku raises the topic of whether the improvements we strive to bring about in the world are truly effective in mitigating climate change. Through engaging in actions like protests, marches, campaigning, and motivating others, we can attempt to influence the world and slow down the rate of climate change.

## Hope

Climate changing fast,  
Marching for our brittle earth,  
Hoping change is near?

Neha Pillay

This haiku illustrates children actively participating in the restoration of the environment. It indicates the potential for positive change and the hope that lies in our collective efforts to protect our planet's future. I wanted to write a hopeful poem to contrast with all the desperation about climate change of my generation today. We don't know what the future will bring, but I wish to remain hopeful about the health of our planet and for the generations to come.



## A new generation

Children plant sprouts,  
Dreams of forests flourishing strong,  
Hope's embrace finally takes hold.

Mathilde Jervais



This poem is written as an injunction to take care of the planet. It rather straightforwardly reminds people that humans are not the only living creatures and that Earth itself is an ever-changing organism full of life. Humans typically clean and tidy up their households but seem to be unable to take care of the environment they live in and that provides everything they need to live. Earth and every creature that lives on it are as deserving of being taken care of as humans.

## Take care

인간이처럼  
지구도 살아 있어  
처리해야지 (Korean)

As much as humans  
The planet earth is alive  
So take care of it

Marie Fermond

This haiku brings awareness of the detrimental effects of climate change on plants, specifically roses. The haiku aims to attract our attention to the loss of biodiversity, if we do not make sufficient attempts to combat or reduce global warming.

## Loss of life

Roses wilt in heat,  
Petals fall, earth's silent plea,  
We must heed their call.

ChatGPT

This poem is a reflection on the current state of our planet and the various climate challenges we are faced with. It uses vivid imagery to depict the Earth's 'congested lungs', a metaphor for the environmental pollution that is suffocating our world. The poem personifies the 'Eye of the World' as belonging to Mother Nature, who expresses her sorrow and despair over the destruction of her creation. The poem concludes with a rallying cry, urging humanity to unite in the fight against climate change. It serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility to protect and preserve our environment for future generations.

## The Eye of the World

Imiphunga yelizwe iminxekile  
Iliso lehlabathi liyagixa  
masibambaneni izandla (isiXhosa)

The country's lungs are choking  
The Earth's guardian-eye weeps  
Let us join hands

Okuhle Mpeppo







*Climate Haikus from the Global Classroom* is the result of a remarkable cross-cultural collaboration between students from the University of Pretoria in South Africa and Le Mans Université in France. Through haiku poetry, the students were able to express their fears, hopes and struggles around dealing with climate change in their specific situations while learning from each others' experiences and reflecting on their own to broaden their horizons and expand their view on how to tackle climate change.

This book contains poems from a wide range of students and lecturers alike, from a diverse range of backgrounds in a number of languages including English, French, Japanese, isiZulu, Afrikaans, Italian, IsiXhosa, Korean, Spanish, Southern Sotho and Arabic, reflecting the ways in which climate change affects the lives of people all across the globe.

ISBN 978-1-0370-5836-3



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