



Supplemental Guide to 2020-2021 Open Contests for Poets and Judges
“Musts and Shoulds” for June 2021

Deadline: June 19, 2021
Sponsor: Susan Rocco-McKeel
Theme: Optional
Form: Tanka
Line Limit: 5

This is an unrhymed poem composed of lines containing the following syllables:

1st line = five
2nd line = seven
3rd line = five
4th line = seven
5th line = seven

MUSTS:

“The tanka comprised the majority of Japanese poetry from the 9th to the 19th century. The first three lines are the origin of the haiku. The last two lines in a tanka are often a shift that expands upon the subject matter.” Source: A Poet’s Glossary by Edward Hirsch.

SHOULDs: [Tanka poetry](#), as a Japanese mood poem should include literary devices such as personification, metaphors, and similes to allow ample visualization.

*Note: many traditional tankas found online are translated from the Japanese and therefore will have a different syllable count than required for your English version.

Tanka Example: Oh, were the white waves,
Far on the glimmering sea
That the moonshine laves,
Dream flowers drifting to me,—
I would cull them, love, for thee
---Sadakichi Hartmann