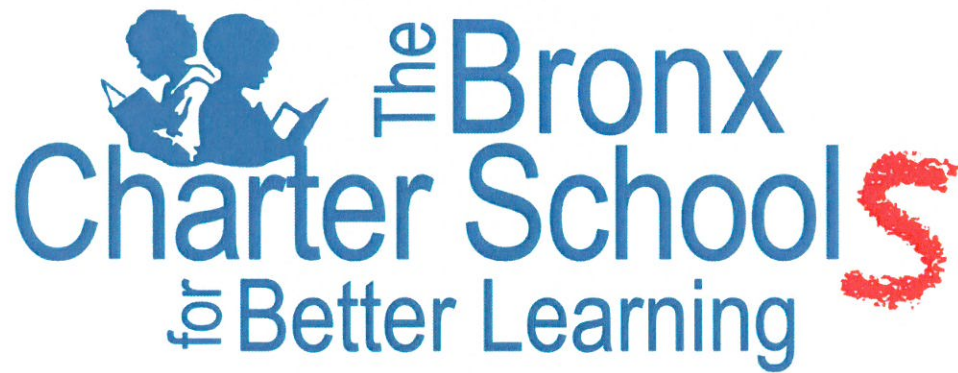


Children's *Sijo*



Compiled 2nd and 3rd Grade *Sijo* Poetry from the Past Eight Years

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Cover art by Keonna, 3rd Grade

Introduction

Every year, the 2nd and 3rd Graders at Bronx Better Learning 1, during their weekly Korean class, study a Korean classical poetry form called *sijo* (pronounced “she – jo”). We define *sijo* as a three-line poem that is often sung with a backup of traditional music instruments.

Each line has a unique role:

- Line 1: introduces a situation
- Line 2: develops the situation
- Line 3: adds a twist, punch or conclusion

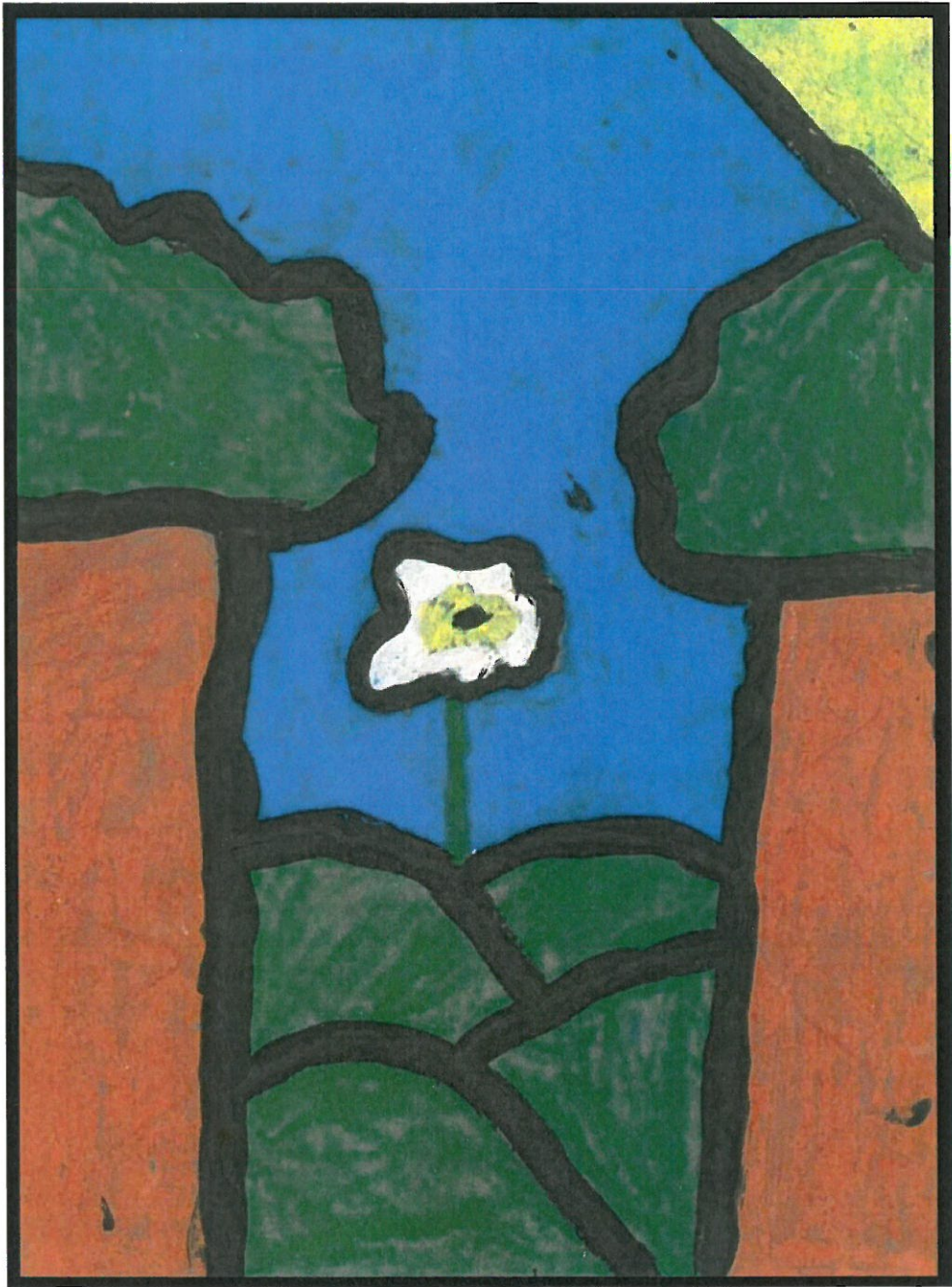
First the BBL students read translations of classical Korean *sijo*, written by King Hyojong, Hwang Jin-i, U Tak, Kim Su-Jang and other famous poets. Many of these *sijo* talk about nature or philosophical issues such as growing old.

Then the children write their own poems, often echoing the same themes. Traditionally, *sijo* had a set number of syllables and phrases per line. However, as modern *sijo* have eased the syllable count, especially in the West, we give the students the freedom to write lines of varying length, as long as they adhere to the three-line rule above.

Please enjoy the examples that appear on the following pages.

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Art by Jessica, 3rd Grade

The Freezer

On a hot summer's day, I go to the freezer to cool off.

In the freezer, I stay cool eating Cookies and Cream.

Colder than a polar bear's toes, I should do this every summer.

- Elizabeth

Death

Death, graveyards, skin and bones, no movement. Funerals, people, cries and sadness.

Death. Go to Heaven, go to Hell. It doesn't matter. It's still death.

Death. You meet your fate, and you see where you go. Death.

- Tyler

Food

Mom, may I get food. What kind of food do you want?

I want ice cream, donuts, pizza, burgers, ice pops, ice and candy.

Open the refrigerator, they're singing a beautiful song called Joy.

- Shemya

The Big Test

I was sweaty. I was nervous, but that stopped and it felt good.

I took a deep breath. Huh! I took the test. I was confident.

Good. I did well. I hope I passed – I really do. Hope you passed, too.

- Elijah

On My Birthday

On my birthday when I listen to music I sing with my family, friends.
When I eat the cake and it tastes like fireworks my puppy says oyayayayaya,
And my friends, family laugh.

- *Jared*

So Old

A singing baby, then a teenager. My adult stage. Also my young-hearted family.
Now grown old, so old. 85 years old. I'm still strong and singing. Just have grown
So old. Now I rest in peace. Next the stages happen again. Singing.

- *Jadine*

Summer

The sun on my face like a flashlight and the water so cool
I want some ice cream so sweet it makes me sing a summer song
Ah, someone squirts water at me and I smile

- *Najah*

Winter I Wonder

Winter is cold. I wonder how cold winter is.
Snow lies on the ground like a white blanket. I wonder if it can cover me.
They say winter is fun. I wonder, how fun?

- *Mackenzie*

How Time Goes Fast

On a weekend day, kids play around everywhere.

But parents never stop working, even when they are tired.

When the parents pass away, the children's playtime is over.

- *Dubem*

Summer

Summer is a nice season ice cream yes waterparks yes smiles again ya ya.

O there is love. There is my birthday, what am I going to get, nothing?

O there is a good summer going on, swimming in water cool as ice cream.

- *Kezia*

I Wish I Was the Government

I wish I was the government. Oh, I wish I was the government.

Why can't I be the government? Because I'm a child. A child!

I wish I was the government, so no one could tell me what to do!

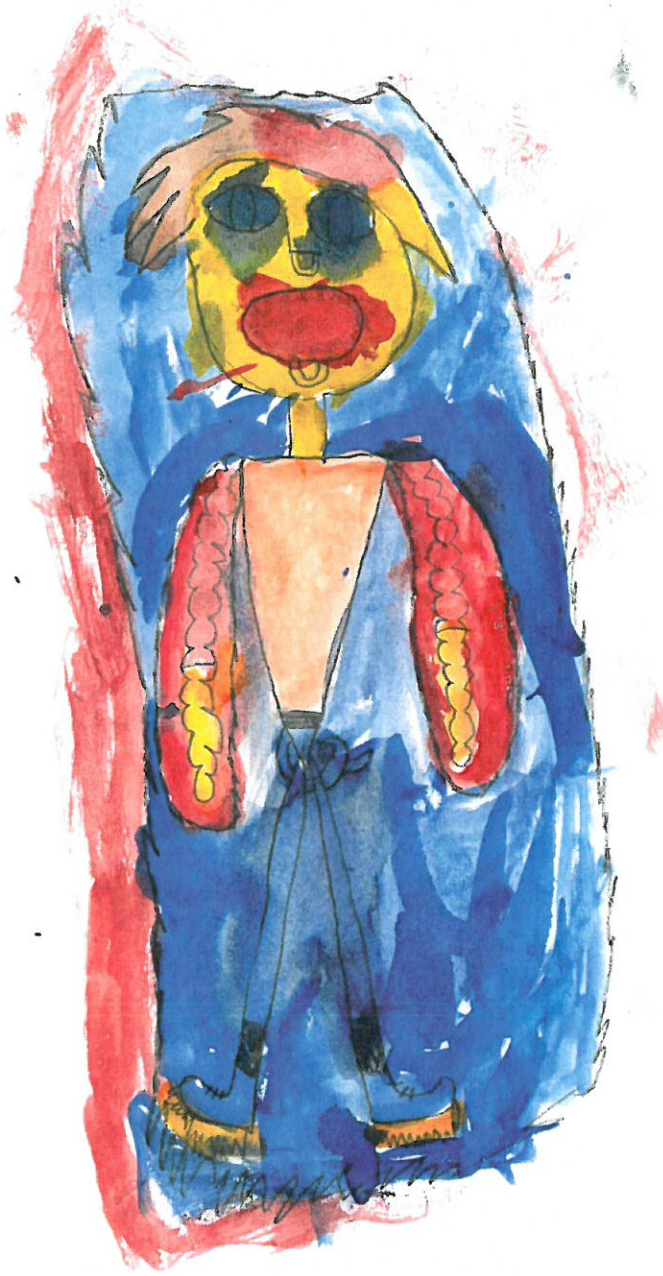
- *Rochelle*

Waterpark

on a hot summer day I go to the waterpark I sing along the ride we

go down the slide and swoosh! down the slide going fast as a train down in the
water it's so fun let's go again

- *Kaydean*



Art by Jaire, 3rd Grade

Why I Love Winter

Winter is the time we snuggle and cuddle, play and enjoy so much more.

Winter is the time to sit by the fire and listen to the flames go *kaboom* like Pop Rocks.
That's why I love winter, but summer comes first in my heart.

- *Jada*

Pool Time

Summer, thank you, summer. I go to the pool and when I swim I sing like Michael Jackson.

Ice cream in the pool, on my face, like I don't care.

When it melts on my face it feels soft, like a dog licking me.

- *Taylor*

Winter Wonders

I wonder in the winter why the wind sounds like someone whistling.

I don't know if the wind and snow will stop.

It did! And I am happy because it hurts my ears.

- *Michael*

Happy Songs

Happy songs make me happy as a peach.

Happy songs are like smiles.

Happy songs are my happy thoughts when I am sad.

- *SeQueen*

Ice Cream

My ice cream has different flavors. And different songs, too.
Chocolate is gospel, vanilla is jazz. But what is the best?
Yes, strawberry, with all the different twists.

- *Nia*

Robots

Robots sound like a printer about to break down.
They do everything you say, like a servant. They talk like crunching paper.
But if robots could sing, they would sing like a real person!

- *Daniel*

Summer

In summer I go to the pool with my friends, eat ice cream, and get brain freeze.
The ice cream drips like a sloppy joe and smells like the swimming pool.
But it also sings to us like a lady.

- *Jared*

Fall's Leaves

Leaves fall in the fall like rain in the sky above the ground.
People rake the leaves into big piles, then jump on them.
The leaves live a very sad life once fall dries them up.

- *Amelia*

Happy Singing Summer

Summer summer singing softly, like a gentle pillow. Summer summer my birthday month.
How can I thank the hot breeze? Summer.
Flowers sing along with the breeze, gleam and glow like fireflies.

- *Jadine*

Cave Colors

I wonder what color a cave is. Is it brown? Black or white?
Blue like a blanket? Gray as a midnight sky with a bright moon behind a cloud?
Oh, I know – I'll just bring a flashlight to see. Silly me!

- *Chibugo*

Growing Up

I wish I could grow up.
If I could grow up I would not have bed time, and
I could see the shining stars.

- *Michelle*

Winter Snow

Why is winter so white and cold as ice?
I see kids playing and playing in the white snow.
But when the snow leaves, the kids stay inside.

- *Zavier*



Art by Alexis, 3rd Grade

My Mom's Gift

My mom nourished me.

She gave me life to survive.

If it weren't for her, I wouldn't be born at all.

- *Laila*

Spring Sijo

In the spring I was born.

I developed through the years.

Now I am a vast boy in 3rd Grade.

- *Tremaine*

Summer Sijo

In the summer grass grows.

The grass gets cut.

Then the grass grows back.

- *Jazmyne*

Summer Sijo

In summer, everything's beautiful.

But it doesn't last long.

Wait until next year; your life won't change.

- *DaAsia*

In spring, flowers bloom.

Spring, surprise me.

May flowers scatter; spring has ended.

- *Djeneba*

Nature

In spring, leaves sit on tree branches.

In fall, the leaves change color.

In winter, the poor leaves lose their home.

- *Tyseir*

Bears

Bears hibernate in the winter

Eat in the spring

And die in a couple of years

- *Jhamir*

Winter

The snow falls.

It looks like a white blanket.

The snow melts.

- *Chibugo*

Summer

On a hot day, I stay at the pool to keep away from the sun's heat, which can burn me a tan in seconds.

I go down to take...BAM! Before I finish my sentence, a seagull snaps up a woman's shoe.

Then my mom and dad start singing in joy.

- Akachi



Art by Samantha, 3rd Grade

Death is madness.

Death is sad and heartbreaking for others.

Death hurts.

- *Kerryana*

Being Born

Being born is hard for everyone.

You think being born is easy, but your mom gets stressed out.

But after you are born, your mom cools down and feels happy.

- *Connor*

Christmas

It was Christmas.

I went down the stairs and I saw a big Christmas tree.

But I saw no presents.

- *Elijah*

On Christmas we open presents.

On Christmas I ask Santa for an Xbox.

Santa needs to give out presents.

- *Jaheem*

Only Child

I have no brother or sister.
I have no other kid in my house.
But I get all of my mom's love.

- *Imani*

If I Were a Princess

If I were a princess, what would I do?
Will I dance at a ball and sip tea, too?
Would I have to do homework, too?!

- *Mylee*

The Flowers

Mom, can I go near the flowers? Which flowers?
The roses, the daisies, and the tulips.
When I went in the garden, there were bees humming a song. I loved it.

- *D'mar*

The State Test

I was in the bathroom worrying about this huge test.
Finally, I toughed up and I went to my desk.
This huge test worried me, but I did it anyway!

- *Ceriah*