

Structure and Samples

# SIJO: KOREAN POETRY FORM



bridging gaps  
between generations and cultures

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- 2020 sijo webinar

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Resources

Downloadable resources

Powerpoint Slides

A Brief Overview of the History and Culture of Korea (.ppt)

A Brief Overview of the History and Culture of Korea (.pdf - with speaker's note)

Sijo structure and samples (.ppt)

Sijo structure and samples (.pdf - with speaker's note)

A Basic Guide Writing Sijo

Basic guide to writing sijo

Sijo samples

Sijo Teaching Lesson Plans

Reading and Writing the Sijo by Tracy Kammer (.doc)

Sijo lesson plans by Elizabeth Jorgensen (.pdf)

Writing Haiku and Sijo by Chuck Newell (.doc)

Sijo lesson plans by Deb Holland (.pdf)

Sijo Reference

Essence of Sijo by Jang Oung-nyul (.pdf)

Sijo: Power in Diversity by Elizabeth Jorgensen (.pdf)

Teaching Poetry with Student Exemplars by Elizabeth Jorgensen (.pdf)

Inquiry, Questioning and Art of Korean Poetry by Elizabeth Jorgensen (.pdf)

Korean Poetry Competition provides Opportunity for Students by Elizabeth Jorgensen (.pdf)

Sijo Primer (an introduction for those new to sijo) by Larry Gross (.pdf)

Structure of the Korean Sijo by David McCann (.pdf)

Further readings on sijo

Video Recordings of Sijo Lectures and Class

Lectures: Professor David McCann

Part 1: form and structure

Part 2: history

Part 3: sample analysis of sijo

Lectures: Professor Mark Peterson

Lecture 1: Rhythm of sijo and classic masterpieces

Lecture 2: Correcting sijo

Lecture 3: Teaching sijo through mimicry

Lecture 4: Creating sijo from other texts

Lecture 5: Sijo and haiku

Video Recording of High School Sijo Classes

Ms Elizabeth Jorgensen and Ms Heidi Hamilton (Arrowhead Union High School, Hartland, WI)

Day 1 of 2

Day 2 of 2

Mr Chuck Newell (Natre Dame High School, Chattanooga, TN)

Day 1 of 2

Day 2 of 2

Ms Tracy Kammer (Randolph-Macon Academy, Front Royal, VA)

Ms. Deb Holland (D'Evelyn Jr/Sr High School, Denver, CO)

Video Recording of Sijo Class for Elementary School Students

By Ms. Elizabeth Jorgensen

What is Sijo?

Let's Read Sijo

Write Your Sijo

Share Your Sijo

The screenshot shows a YouTube playlist page for the channel 'Sejong Cultural Society'. The page is titled 'SIJO RESOURCES - What is, How to write, How to teach SIJO'. It features two rows of video thumbnails, each with a title, a view count, and a 'VIEW FULL PLAYLIST' link. The first row contains five videos related to sijo resources, and the second row contains five videos related to sijo and music. The YouTube interface includes a search bar, navigation tabs (HOME, VIDEOS, PLAYLISTS, CHANNELS, DISCUSSION, ABOUT), and a search icon. The Sejong Cultural Society logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

**SIJO RESOURCES - What is, How to write, How to teach SIJO**

- Sijo lectures by David McCann 2011** (3 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)
- Sijo lectures by Mark Peterson 2014** (5 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)
- Sijo Lessons for Elementary School Students by Ms...** (4 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)
- Teaching sijo writing in high school classes** (6 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)
- Sijo (Korean Poetry) Lectures - What is Sijo, How to Write sijo,...** (18 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)

**SIJO AND MUSIC**

- 2019 Rush Hour Concert** (4 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)
- Music Concert Inspired by Sijo - 10/21/17 at Poetry Foundation** (5 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)
- Sijo Hip-Hop music videos - performance by Elephant...** (2 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)
- Sijo Hip-hop: An Enchanted Evening of Sijo, Wine and Arts** (4 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)
- Sijo Hip hop and Window to Korean Cuisine** (4 views) - Sejong Cultural Society - [VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)

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한글서체문화연구원

## Sijo (시조)

- Pronounced SHEE-jo
- The sijo is a traditional three-line Korean poetic form
- Organized both technically and thematically by line and syllable count.
- Themes of Korean sijo masters
  - cosmological or metaphysical,
  - description of nature
  - love songs, humor,
  - political statements,
  - instructional



The origins of the sijo remain obscure. Sijo is a vernacular Korean-language form, but the Korean alphabet (Hangeul) was developed in the fifteenth century by King Sejong (r. 1418-1450). This means that for sijo predating the alphabet's promulgation, such as famous examples by U T'ak (1263-1343) or Chŏng Mongju (1337-1392), ascription is not certain because no contemporary written accounts can confirm it. As a song form, sijo were not collected and printed until the eighteenth century, which makes the trail of authorship difficult to pursue back.

*(from Korean literature and Performance? Sijo!" by David McCann. Azalea 2:359, 2009)*

## Three Lines, 45 syllables

- First line
  - Introduces or states theme
- Second line
  - Expands or develops theme in equal length and power
- Third line
  - Twist or surprise at the beginning of the last line acts as a counter-theme before the rest of the line completes the poem

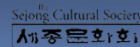
The three long lines provide plenty of room to express thoughts, feelings, contradictory impulses; more than the very brief Japanese haiku which by its restricted size forces or enables the poet merely to suggest a meaning.

The statement of the counter-theme in the third line can be achieved by making the 'twist' phrase a single exclamatory word, or by introducing a word, image or idea that is in sharp contrast to the tone or images of the first two lines.

## Three lines, 45 syllables

- The basic standard:
  - First line      3      4      4 (or 3)    4
  - Second line    3      4      4 (or 3)    4
  - Third line      **3**    5      4            3
- Variants which occur:
  - First line      2-5    3-6    2-5      4-6
  - Second line    1-5    3-6    2-5      4-6
  - Third line      **3**    5-9    4-5      3-4

From "Bamboo Grove" by Richard Rutt



Each of the sijo's three lines can be a complete sentence, with the four parts of each line closely linked as grammatical units.

The rhythm of the poem is established by the proportions of the twelve short sections, rather than by tonic accent or by syllable count. In sijo the phrases are important. The relative weight of each of the twelve phrases is distributed throughout the poem in such a way as to give the whole poem a proportioned and dynamic shape. In most cases the first and middle lines are completely or very nearly alike in shape and in syllable count. The four phrases of each line may even be all of equal length, but most commonly the first is shorter than the second and the third may be shorter than the fourth. This gives a significant upbeat to the rhythm of these two lines.

The last line has a quite different pattern. The length of the first phrase is invariably fixed at three syllables. In many of the classic poems this is an exclamation or a word of strong emotional value and serves as a pivot-point in the movement of the poem toward its conclusion. The second phrase of the last line is normally the longest in the poem, and in any case must be very syllable heavy. It draws a sense of impending conclusion. The remaining two phrases of the last line are of medium length, but the last phrase of all is merely a rhetorical conclusion, both in sense and sound. Since it is frequently cast in a form expressing strong emotional involvement or reaction by the poet, this phrase often intensifies the subjective quality of the poem; but when a sijo is sung it is left out altogether, because it is scarcely necessary for the understanding of the poem and may even detract from its impact on the hearer.

See "The Bamboo Grove" by Richard Rutt.

## Yoon Seondo 윤선도 (1587-1671)

### *Excerpt from "Song of my five friends"*

You ask how many friends I have?

water and stone, bamboo and pine. (2-6-4-4)

The moon rising over

the eastern hill is a joyful comrade. (2-4-4-6)

Besides these five companions,

what other pleasure should I ask? (3-4-5-3)

### 오우가

내 벗이 몇인가 하니 수석과 송죽이라 (3-5-3-4)

동산에 달오르니 그더욱 반갑고야 (3-4-3-4)

두어라. 이 다섯밖에 또 더하야 무엇하리? (3-5-4-4)

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Sijo are written in three lines, each averaging 14-16 syllables for a total of 44-46 syllables. Each line is written in four groups of syllables that should be clearly differentiated from one-another, yet still flow together as a single line. The third line starts with a 3-syllable group, then usually goes to a 5 (in this example, 6), then 4, then 3 to end. When written in English, sijo may be written in six lines, with each line containing two syllable groupings instead of four. Additionally liberties may be taken (within reason) with the number of syllables per group. The sijo is a flexible form.

## Sijo Chang (singing sijo)

- The traditional Korean sijo are lyrical, as they were originally sung.
- 20<sup>th</sup> century and later sijo poets deliberately composed them to be printed on a page and read as modern poems.
- Singer is accompanied by Dae-gum (bamboo flute) and Chang-gu (hour-glass shaped drum).
- All sijo *chang* are sung in a very deliberate pace, and the singer must be trained to extend the notes of the song for effect.



# Sijo Chang (singing sijo)

DRUM

ch'öngsanri  
pyökkyesuya

su i kamül

charang mara

il:so ch'anghac  
hamyön

tasi ogi

öryö wöra

myöngwëli  
mankongsan  
liaui

suyö kami

平時調

7

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Korean traditional music notation of sijo chang “Chung-San-li (Jade green stream)” by Hwang Chin-i.

## HWANG CHIN-I (1506-1544)

Jade Green Stream, Don't boast so proud  
of your easy passing through these blue hills.  
Once you have reached the broad sea,  
to return again will be hard.  
While the Bright Moon fills these empty hills,  
why not pause? Then go on, if you will.



청산리 벽계수야 수이감을 자랑마라  
일도 창해하면 다시오기 어려오니  
명월이 만강산하니 쉬여간들 엇더리

Click here  to listen to sijo chang, sung by Wol-ha Kim

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Hwang Chin-i, the assumed author of the poem, was a *kisaeng*, a female entertainer, rather like a geisha in Japan. It was said that no man could resist her. She went by the name Bright Moon. A Confucian scholar-official, whose title was a homophone for Jade Green Stream, bragged that he could resist her and could pass through her region without stopping. She made up the song and when he heard it, he supposedly fell off his mule. The story frame makes the natural scenery a pun for the two humans, the man and woman, the official and the *kisaeng*, the two opposite poles of traditional Korean society. As happens over and over again in Korean folk literature, the cleverness of the vernacular makes the official, stuffy male seem a fool and topples him from his lofty yet precarious perch.  
-from "Early Korean Literature" by David McCann (Columbia University Press, 2000)  
(Click the link at the bottom of the slide to hear this sijo sung by Wol-ha Kim.)

## ANONYMOUS

My horse neighs to leave here now,  
but you plead with me to stay;  
the sun is dipping behind the hill,  
and I have far to go.  
Dear One, instead of stopping me,  
why not hold back the setting sun

말은 가자울고 님은 잡고 놓지않네  
석양은 재를 넘고 갈길은 천리로다.  
저님아 가는 날 잡지말고 지는해를 잡아라.

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A wonderfully inventive poem about the impossibility of staying longer: *I can't be held here any more than the sun can be stopped in its course through the sky.* There are many wonderful sijo poems of unknown authors. Probably some authors simply did not bother to write their name. Others were written by nobles who did not want to disclose their identity.

## YI BANG-WON (1367-1422)

What difference does it make,  
this way or that?  
The tangled vines of Mansu San  
in profusion grow entwined.  
We too could be like that,  
and live together a hundred years.

이런들 어떠하며 저런들 어떠하리  
만수산 드렁칫이 얽어진들 어떠하리  
우리도 이같이 얽혀져 백년까지 누리리라

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As General Yi Songgye, founder of Chosôn dynasty, worked at ending the Koryô dynasty and setting up a new dynasty of his own, he and his followers kept encountering the stubbornly loyal, highly regarded scholar and Koryô state minister of Goryeo Chông Mongju. Therefore general Yi's son, Yi Bang-won, who (later became the third king of Chosôn, arranged a banquet, in the course of which he offered a sijo song to Chông urging him to relax his vigilant loyalty, and just live on and on, like the vines on Mansu Mountain. Chông replied with the sijo in the next sijo refusing to join the coup d'état. Chông was murdered by the Yi followers on his way home from the banquet. It presents a performance, on the stage of Korean history, and adds a Shakespearian denouement, in the midnight murder.

## CHÖNG MONGJU (1337-1392)

Though this body die and die,  
it may die a hundred times,  
my white bones become but dust,  
what's called soul exist or not:  
for my lord, no part of this red heart  
would ever change. How could it?



이 몸이 죽고 죽어 일 백 번 고쳐 죽어  
백골이 진토되어 뉘이라도 있고 없고  
임 향한 일편단심이야 가실 줄이 있으랴

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세종문화회

As General Yi Songgye, founder of Chosôn dynasty, worked at ending the Koryô dynasty and setting up a new dynasty of his own, he and his followers kept encountering the stubbornly loyal, highly regarded scholar and Koryô state minister of Goryeo Chông Mongju. Therefore general Yi's son, Yi Bang-won, who (later became the third king of Chosôn, arranged a banquet, in the course of which he offered a sijo song to Chông urging him to relax his vigilant loyalty, and just live on and on, like the vines on Mansu Mountain. Chông replied with this sijo. Chông was murdered by the Yi followers on his way home from the banquet. It presents a performance, on the stage of Korean history, and adds a Shakespearian denouement, in the midnight murder. The poem itself performs a sort of spiritual dissection, down through the corporeal to the loyal spirit at the center of the individual's existential frame.

This sijo has become a classic example of Korean fidelity- especially in one phrase of the last line meaning, "one-piece red heart".

-from *"The Bamboo Grove: An introduction to Sijo"* by Richard Rutt (University of Michigan Press, 1998)

## CHŎNG CHŎL (1536-1593)



A shadow strikes the water below:  
a monk passes by on the bridge,  
“Stay awhile, reverend sir,  
let me ask you where you go.”  
He just points his staff at the white clouds  
and keeps on his way without turning

물 아래 그림자 지니 다리위에 중이 간다  
저 중아 게 있거라 너 가는 데 물어보자  
막대로 흰 구름 가리키며 돌아 아니 보고 가노메라.

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The poem reflects on the monk's life's journey. The theme can be found in the shadow - the earth - and the white clouds - Heaven - as the commitment of the monk and his focus on his goal. He is asked to pause, to turn away from his goal, but he is focused on his journey - he doesn't even take the time to respond to the speaker and merely points, causing us to examine the difference in earth and sky, in the now and hereafter.

*-from Teaching Plan by Tracy Kaminer, Marist School, Atlanta, GA*

## YI SUNSHIN (1545-1599)



By moonlight I sit all alone  
in the lookout on Hansan isle.  
My sword is on my thigh,  
I am submerged in deep despair.  
From somewhere the shrill note of a pipe...  
will it sever my heartstrings?

한산섬 달 밝은 밤에 수루에 홀로 앉아  
큰 칼 어루만지며 깊은 시름 하는 때에  
어디서 일성호가는 남의 애를 끊나니

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Supposedly written by the great admiral who saved Korea from the Japanese by his invention and management of the famous armor-clad “turtle-ships (Kôbuk-sôn)”. It has been suggested that this poem is an elegy for his friend who died in the battle of Pusan, but Korean commentators usually interpret it as expressing the concerns of the commander-in-chief on the eve of battle.

The first line sets the scene where the poet is sitting along in a tower on an island in the moonlight. The martial strength and determination symbolized by the great sword, and the bitterness of the commander’s worries and sorrows are represented in the second line. The last line begins with twist phrase, “from somewhere”, a change of sense managed by directing the attention away from the tower and the poet. The next phrase “a shrill note of a pipe (in Korean “one note of the Mongol flute”) invites further attention. The Mongol flute was thought to make a particularly sad tone. The final line suggests both the deep melancholy of the warrior and Korea’s national anxieties about facing foreign invaders.

-from “The Bamboo Grove: An introduction to Sijo” by Richard Rutt (University of Michigan Press, 1998)

## YANG SAŌN (1517-1584)

T'aesan is mighty high, they say,  
but it still is a hill beneath the sky.  
Climbing it and climbing,  
there's no reason you can't climb all the way.  
It's people who won't try to climb  
who say, "That hill's too high, it's too high."

태산이 높다 하되 하늘 아래 뫼이로다  
오르고 또오르면 못오를리 업건마는  
사람이 제 아니 오르고 뫼흘 높다 하더라



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세종문화회

One of the best known of moralizing sijo is the mountain-climbing allegory of Yang Saon. The last line makes the poem's 'twist' by turning from generalized comments to the "people (sarami)" who are the ones who decide whether to climb or just make the same old excuses.



DAVID McCANN *(from Urban Temple, 2010)*

**FIRST SIJO: A NIGHT IN ANDONG**

One night in Andong  
after a tour of back-alley wine shops,  
head spinning, I staggered down  
the narrow, paddy-field paths,  
when the two pigs grunted  
“So, you! Home at last?”



하룻밤 안동 시내 골목술집 구경하고  
머리가 뱅뱅돌때 발дук길을 거닐다가  
도야지 꿀꿀 소리야 이제 왔노 하노라

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David McCann (Professor & Director of Korea Institute at Harvard University) used to live at a house in Andong, Korea where his room was right next to the pig pen. Some years later, he wrote this sijo poem, the first he ever wrote in the Korean language, remembering the grunting of the pigs as something like a *Welcome home*.

## YI UNSANG 이은상 (1903 - 1982)



### I WILL WRITE A POEM TOO

Above the shimmering sea  
two or three seagulls are hovering.  
Rolling, wheeling, they write a poem.  
I do not know the alphabet they use.  
On the broad expanse of sky  
I will write a poem too.

### 나도 같이 시를 쓴다

아득한 바다 위에 갈매기 두엇 날아 돈다.  
너훔너훔 시를 쓴다. 모르는 나라 글자다.  
널따란 하늘 북판에 나도 같이 시를 쓴다.

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Yi Unsang (Yi is the family name, Unsang is the first name) was a historian, writer and sijo poet. He was imprisoned under Japanese colonial government for writing and teaching Korean language which was banned by the Japanese ruler. He was a champion of sijo revival and published several books of sijo poem and Korean history including a biography of General Yi Sunshin who fought a victorious war against Japanese invaders in the 16th century. Many sijo poems of Yi were used in Korean Art Songs that are very popular among Koreans.

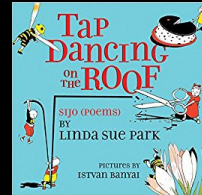
## Linda Sue Park

### Breakfast

For this meal, people like what they like,  
the same every morning.

Toast and coffee, Bagel and juice.  
Cornflakes and milk in a white bowl.

Or--- warm, soft, and delicious-----  
a few extra minutes in bed



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세종문화회관

**Linda Sue Park** is the author of the Newbery Medal-winning *A Single Shard*, the best-seller *A Long Walk to Water*, and the highly-praised novel *Prairie Lotus*. She has also written several acclaimed picture books and serves on the advisory board of We Need Diverse Books. She lives in Rochester, New York, with her family. [www.lspark.com](http://www.lspark.com), Twitter: @LindaSuePark

Amazon Book Review: "The verses in this book illuminate funny, unexpected aspects of the everyday—of breakfast, houseplants, tennis, freshly washed socks. Carefully crafted and deceptively simple, Linda Sue Park's sijo are a pleasure to read and an invitation to experiment with an unfamiliar poetic form."

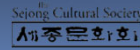
Elizabeth St. Jacques

*(Around the Tree of Light, 1995)*

**EVEN NOW**

Just us two in the photograph  
his arm around my thin shoulder  
That strong limb I then leaned against  
would break so many falls  
We stood like this but only once  
but his strength holds me still

<http://startag.tripod.com/IntroSijo.html>



Elizabeth St. Jacques is a Canadian poet and sijo writer. She wrote numerous articles about sijo in poetry journals and made her own website about sijo: *AN INTRODUCTION TO SIJO AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AMERICA* (<http://startag.tripod.com/IntroSijo.html>)

LARRY GROSS *(from Sijo Forum)*

**Untitled**

Rising early each morning,  
                  I let her into the warm barn;  
I pour oats, clean her stall,  
                  then fork more hay into the trough;  
When she kicks my hand away,  
                  why do I think of my wife?

*From "sijo forum at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sijoforum/>"*



The twist at the last line is a double surprise.

Visit "sijo forum <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sijoforum/>"

**TAYLOR EDWARD** (10<sup>th</sup> gr. Euless, TX)

*2009 Sejong Writing Competition, second place*



### **Secret Song**

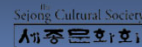
You ask me what I'm humming; I tell you I'm humming about nothing.

This is untrue because I'm humming about you, all day long.

Who am I to tell you you're "nothing" when you are my song?

### **비밀 노래**

뭘 흥얼거리는지 묻는 너에게 별것 아니라 했지  
하지만 그건 거짓말, 하루종일 널 노래했어  
내 노래인 너에게 별것 아니라는 나는 뭐지?



Read about Taylor Edwards at

<http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing/past/2009/winnerssijo.html#2>

The twist is an effective reversal, from "you" to "I," and in three syllables.

**CREASY CLAUSER** (12<sup>th</sup> gr. Crawfordsville, IN)

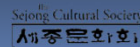
*2009 Sejong Writing Competition, first place*



**Untitled**

A single sole was lost today, deep in the river Yalu.  
Thrashing, twisting, torn to shreds with color quickly fading.  
On the bridge a small boy laughs, holding out his empty shoe.

오늘 신발 밑창하나를 잃어 버렸네, 압록강 깊이  
몸부림치고, 뒤틀리고, 색깔이 닳아 없어지도록 갈가리 찢기며  
다리위에서 작은 소년 하나 웃고 있네, 밑창 없는 신을 든 채



The twist in the third line might remind a reader of the one in Chông Ch'ól's poem about the shadow and the bridge and the monk.

Read about Creasy Clauser at

<http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing/past/2009/winnerssijo.html#1>

**MICHAEL CHUNG** (5<sup>th</sup> gr. Los Angeles, CA)

*2008 Sejong Writing Competition, third place*



### **Dreams on a Lake**

I'm floating on the dark lake, dreaming I'm floating on a cloud

The surface of my tanned skin tingling as water dries on it

A man yells, "Hello, good neighbor!" breaking my dreams to pieces.

#### **호수에서의 꿈**

어두운 호수에 둥둥떠서

구름위에 떠있는 꿈을 꾀다.

검게 탄 나의 피부 표면에서 증발하는

물방울의 간지러움을 느낀다.

사람이 고향지른다. "어이, 이웃 친구!"

나의 꿈은 산산 조각이 난다.



Third line twist, a man yelling "Hello, good neighbor!", is a good strong one. And "A man yells" is the three syllables we look for.

Read about Michael Chung at

<http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing/past/2008/winnerssijo.html#3.1>

I am 11 years old and I attend the Curtis School in Los Angeles. I found out about this contest last year when my older brother, Richard, brought home a flyer from his school. Although I had never heard of a Sijo before the competition, I enjoyed this type of writing. Somehow, it seemed easy to express my feelings in this format. Later, I found out from my mom that our family starter, on my dad's side, sixteen generations ago, Chung Chul, was considered the best Sijo writer in all of Korea at the time. He wrote Samiinkok, a poem known by all Koreans. My hobbies are playing piano, building complex Legos, and technology. I want to be an entrepreneur, but I am still not sure in what field. Some days I want to make computers; some days I want to build cars; some days I want to start a company like Samsung, which makes refrigerators, cars, computers, and other electronics. My personal hero is Admiral Yi Sun Shin, who protected Korea (then known as Chosun) from Japanese invaders from 1592–1598. In the last battle, when Japan retreated, Yi Sun Shin was hit in his heart by a stray bullet. However, he acted as if he was not harmed in order to not distract his soldiers. When Korea finally triumphed, he died. I admire that he defeated the Japanese navy of 300 ships, even though he had only 12 ships. I also admire that he fought to stay alive to see his soldiers victorious.



**ROBERTO SANTOS** (12<sup>th</sup> gr. Laredo, TX)  
*2013 Sejong Writing Competition, first place*



**Still American**

They say go, return to land that I don't know. It makes no sense.

Born and raised American, so Mexico is still foreign.

Culture kept, but this is my home. Immigrant, no: Hispanic.

그래도 미국인

가라네, 내가 모르는 나라로 돌아가라니, 말도안되  
난 여기서 나고 자란 미국인, 멕시코는 외국인데  
미국은 내고향, 난 이민자 아냐 히스패닉이지!



Read about Roberto Santos at

<http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing/past/2013/winnerssijo.php#1>:

I'm **Roberto Santos**, an 18 year old senior at John B. Alexander High School. I had first heard of this competition as a class assignment for my English 4 class, and winning first place came as a great surprise! Without my teacher pushing the class to join, I probably would've never done it out of fear of failure. The fact that I won something for just writing thoughts I've always had with a creative twist still blows my mind!

I live in a border town made up of a Hispanic/Mexican majority, where Spanish is spoken just as much as English; although I'm proud of my heritage, English is still my primary language. In my spare time I make music with my friends and spend time with my family. I plan on majoring in musical engineering and help expose some of my talented friends' music.

Thanks to this competition I have more confidence in my academic capabilities, and feel inspired to participate in more writing competitions.

# Sijo Hip-Hop Song by Elephant Rebellion

## Still American by Roberto Santos

They say go, return to land that I don't know. It makes no sense.

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Sejong Cultural Society  
세종문화회관

Read about Roberto Santos at

<http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing/past/2013/winnerssijo.php#1>

Click the picture to start the song. Recorded in Chicago in 2017. Performance by Elephant Rebellion (<http://www.elephantrebellion.org/bio-encore>)

## Sijo Hip-Hop Song by Elephant Rebellion

Jade Green Stream, Don't boast so proud  
of your easy passing through these blue hills.  
Once you have reached the broad sea,  
to return again will be hard.  
While the Bright Moon fills these empty hills,  
why not pause? Then go on, if you will.

Sejong Cultural Society  
세종문화회관

Please, tap the picture to start video. Recorded in Chicago in 2017. Performed by Elephant Rebellion (<http://www.elephantrebellion.org/bio-encore>)

Hwang Chin-i, the assumed author of the poem, was a *kisaeng*, a female entertainer, rather like a geisha in Japan. It was said that no man could resist her. She went by the name Bright Moon. A Confucian scholar-official, whose title was a homophone for Jade Green Stream, bragged that he could resist her and could pass through her region without stopping. She made up the song and when he heard it, he supposedly fell off his mule. The story frame makes the natural scenery a pun for the two humans, the man and woman, the official and the *kisaeng*, the two opposite poles of traditional Korean society. As happens over and over again in Korean folk literature, the cleverness of the vernacular makes the official, stuffy male seem a fool and topples him from his lofty yet precarious perch.

-from "Early Korean Literature" by David McCann (Columbia University Press, 2000)

(Click the link at the bottom of the slide to hear this sijo sung by Wol-ha Kim.)

## Bibliography and Useful Links

- *Early Korean Literature* by David McCann, Columbia University Press, 2000
- *The Bamboo Grove: An introduction to Sijo* by Richard Rutt, University of Michigan Press, 1998
- *The Book of Korean Shijo* by Kevin O'Rourke (Harvard East Asia Series)
- Sijo References  
(<https://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/resources/resources.php>)
- Sejong Writing Competition:  
(<http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing/current/index.php>)