

Short Subjects<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v55/i37/37a00604.htm>

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JUST ASKING**Verses of Economy**

By STEVE KOLOWICH

Poetry is all about economy. Words are used with precision and thrift.

But not all poetry is about economics. In fact, almost none of it is, and that is a tragedy, says Stephen T. Ziliak, an economics professor at Roosevelt University. "An economics without poetry" he says, "is an economics that is blind."

To supplement their studies, Mr. Ziliak encourages his economics students to compose haiku, the Japanese poetry that consists of three lines of verse in a 5-7-5 syllabic order. He assigns haiku challenges for bonus points on exams, and even holds haiku workshops as part of a course on rhetoric in economics.

Mr. Ziliak has a paper on "Haiku Economics" forthcoming in the *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*. We recently asked him a few questions about pedagogy, economic theory, and the financial crisis — in haiku, of course.

Q. How does writing verse

Help your students understand

A math-based science?

A: Thought transportation —

Newton's laws might still abide,

Listen: Einstein's train.

Q: A labor union

Protects workers from abuse —

But what does it cost?

A: Green Knights of Labor,

free Haymarket Anarchists,
cost less than Madoff.

Q: Debt plus recession —

Which is the better move:

saving or spending?

A: Treasury shoppers

choose plain broth over duck soup,

Nudge this paradox.

Q: Regarding Wall Street,

Do virtues of laissez-faire

Apply as elsewhere?

A: Traders are human,

swapping vices for virtues

and vice versa.

Q: Mom and Dad, I'm home!

The job market is nasty —

Where is my bedroom?

A: Invisible hand:

Mother of inflated hope,

Mistress of despair!

Q: Haiku might seem dumb

to bean counters and stuffed shirts —

Students disagree?

A: In this other world

wild orchids freely blossom —

haiku GDP.

Send ideas to short.subjects@chronicle.com

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