

## Exercise 1: Cinquain

A cinquain is a five-line poem with a specific syllable count for each line. It was invented in its modern form by American poet Adelaide Crapsey who was influenced by Japanese forms such as haiku and tanka. The standard cinquain is written as follows:

Line 1: 2 syllables  
Line 2: 4 syllables  
Line 3: 6 syllables  
Line 4: 8 syllables  
Line 5: 2 syllables.

Crapsey gave her poems a title as well.

There are variations of the standard form, one of which is the following:

Line 1: 1 word—noun, or subject of the poem  
Line 2: 2 words—adjectives describing the noun/subject  
Line 3: 3 words—action verbs referring to the noun/subject  
Line 4: 4 words—words that express a feeling towards the noun/subject  
Line 5: 1 word—referring to the noun/subject

Write a cinquain using either the traditional format or the non-traditional format. Be sure to give your cinquain a specific title. As you will see in the examples of cinquains that follow, the subjects are specific and the imagery (sensory images created by the words) is concrete.

### November Night

Listen...  
With faint dry sound,  
Like steps of passing ghosts,  
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees  
And fall.

### TRIAD

These be  
Three silent things:  
The falling snow... the hour  
Before the dawn... the mouth of one  
Just dead.

### Shade Tree

The oak  
in my backyard  
holds twisted rope and wood  
and knows the name of every child  
that swings.

### **SHORTLY EVER-AFTER**

She dusts  
framed photographs,  
the wedding, the babies,  
placing them just so, turning him  
face down.

### **THE PATH, 2**

What have  
you seen the cat  
consume or ferret take?  
What slaking gifts hung by the shrike,  
o path?

### **The Mechanics of Song**

Under  
those distant lights  
that Quebecois singer  
had your teeth and eyebrows, darling  
Just so.