

## **Renga - a definition by Paul Sutherland**

Renga' (originally a Japanese poetic form) is a series of very short poems alternating between 2 and 3 lines that can explore a vast range of subjects.

Renga is a communal activity with often many participants involved in creating a sequence of 'imaginative observations and comments.

Traditionally, the poems were 17 and 14 syllables; in modern times the count has been less strict.

Renga is an ancient and excellent way for a group to produce a collective piece of work that allows for individual expression.

Normally a Renga master or guide assists the writing and edits the completed series. He usually begins with his own poem and the group follow, one after another. The ideal is for the poems to connect to each other through various technical and thematic means to create a unified piece of art. Equally important, the sequence should be challenging requiring the reader to make leaps of imagination or to read more carefully to see how separate miniatures link. This quality means that the poems might suddenly shift in location, time of year or in mood. Sometimes the sequence may seem a series of dialogues in which one person keeps offering a different perspective to the view just presented; at other times the next poem reinforces the previous observation. These varied responses gives the Renga a momentum, sense of flow, like a stream or an ever-growing bead necklace.