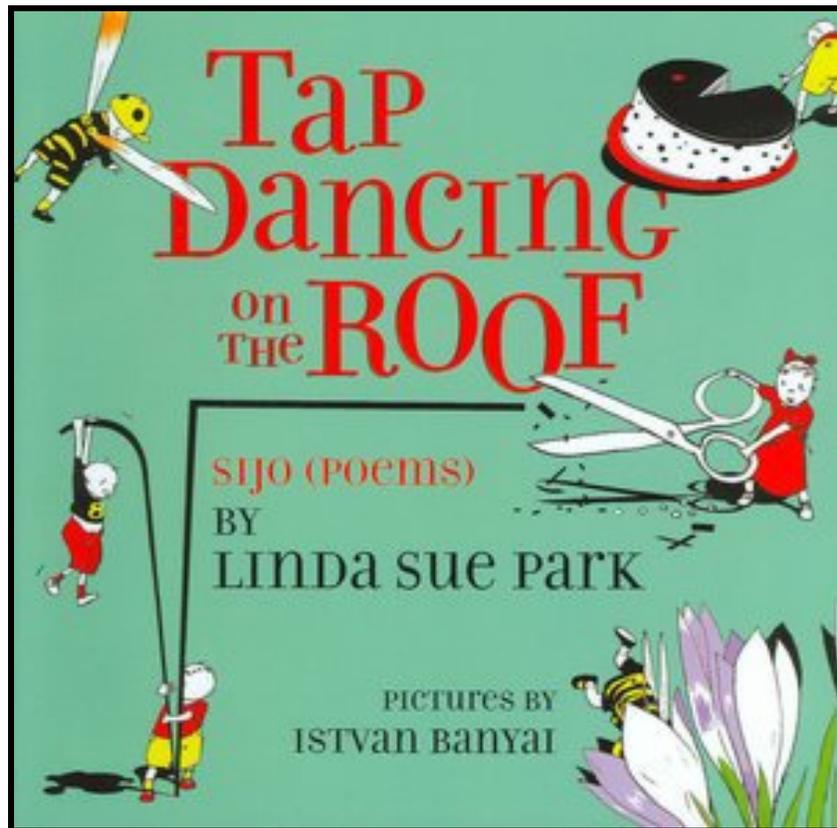


Tap Dancing on the Roof: Sijo (Poems)

By Linda Sue Park

Illustrated by Istvan Banyai



Readers Guide

By Amy Seto Musser

2012

Bibliographic Citation

Park, Linda Sue. 2007. *Tap Dancing on the Roof: Sijo (Poems)*. Ill. by Istvan Banyai. New York: Clarion Books. ISBN: 9780618234837

Recommended age level

9-12 Years Old

Book Summary

This collection includes 28 sijo poems written by Park and illustrated by Banyai. A traditional Korean poetic form, in English sijo are made up of three lines. The first line introduces the topic, the second reveals more information, and the last line contains a twist using humor, irony, imagery, or wordplay. Park's clean, sharp style is evident in her nimble and clever choice of words and imagery. Her poems speak directly to the reader, and focus on revealing unexpected aspects of familiar topics, such as breakfast, school, nature, sports, and chores. Banyai's understated illustrations, in a muted, inky palette, are sketch-like riffs on the poems and serve to provide context without resorting to literal interpretations. Information about writing your own sijo, as well as the history and definition of the form, is provided in an introduction and an author's note.

Review Excerpts

"Reflecting *sijo's* breadth of theme, Park's poems cover topics of immediate resonance to children, including school lunch, long division, and snowmen threatened by warm weather, and children will recognize the engaging turnabout at each poem's close. Banyai's artwork forms a charmingly oblique counterpoint to the mostly down-to-earth entries, with an understated mint-and-gray palette and loose representations that avoid cleaving to any single interpretation." **-Starred**

Review in Booklist

"Banyai's illustrations enhance the collection with an extra element of wit and imaginative freedom; he staves off sentiment with ironic, retro-style cartoons, carefree lines, and playful interpretations of the verbal text." **-Horn Book Magazine**

"The sijo's contours are clean and spare, qualities echoed in the blue-gray, black and white architecture and crisp shadows of Banyai's (Zoom) digital illustrations. In the spirit of Park's experiments with this verse form, Banyai's miniature children bounce through a series of imaginative leaps unencumbered by the rules of the real world." **-Publisher's Weekly**

"Park's sijo, 28 in all, harmonize with illustrations that are deceptively simple at first glance, but have a sophistication and wise humor that will make viewers smile, and at second glance make them think." -**School Library Journal**

Awards & Honors

- ABC Children's Booksellers Choice Award
- ALA Notable Books for Children
- Bank Street Best Children's Books of the Year (2000)
- The Lion and the Unicorn Prize for Excellence in North American Poetry
- New York Public Library, 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing (1999)

Questions to Ask Before Reading the Poems

○ Ask how many students know about haiku. Ask them if they know what makes haiku unique. Most kids are familiar with haiku or at least recognize the term. Then segue into a conversation about sijo. Ask if anyone knows what a sijo is and then compare sijo and haiku. Look at the number of syllables/stresses, the country of origin, as well as the subject matter for each form.

○ Ask the kids to define irony and give examples of irony. Then ask if poems can be ironic. Why or why not? Then when you read the poems, "School Lunch" and "Art Class," point out the ironic twist in the third line and discuss how irony serves to make the reader rethink a familiar topic.

○ Before you read the poem, "Echo," ask the kids if they ever get a song stuck in their head. What song is it and how does it get stuck there?

Suggestions for Reading Poems Aloud

○ Sijo are typically divided into three lines – introduction, development, punch line. Ask for volunteers and assign each child a line of the poem. Performing as part of a trio can be more attractive to children who are nervous about saying an entire poem out loud. Another variation on this idea is to split the room into three groups and assign each group a line to say in unison. Some sijo are divided into six lines, instead of three. You can choose to assign two lines per child/group or expand to use six children/groups.

○ Read one of the poems from this collection without stating the title and see if the children can guess the subject of the poem. Good candidates for this are "Breakfast," "Long Division," and "Frog." Read in this way the poems become more like riddles and kids will need to listen carefully to catch the clues. You may want to read the poem two or three times so that everyone can find the clues before

guessing. Use the poems in this book in combination with other riddle poems (see Related Books).

o Wrap each line of the poem in a layer of paper and play Pass the Poem Parcel. When unwrapped, each layer will reveal one line of a three line sijo. Attach the third and final line to an object that relates to the sijo. For instance, for "School Lunch" you could wrap a lunch tray and for "Tennis" a tennis ball or a racquet and for "Laundry" a pair of socks. Play music as the kids pass around the poem parcel while sitting in a circle. When the music stops that child unwraps a layer and reads the next line of the poem. After the entire poem has been unwrapped read the poem again to appreciate how the three lines work together.

o Several sijo in this collection are about specific seasons. Read one of these poems as part of a seasonally themed unit or story time.

<u>Poem</u>	<u>Season</u>
"October"	Fall
"November Thursday"	Fall
"Overnight"	Winter
"Vanishing Act"	Winter
"From the Window"	Spring
"Crocuses"	Spring
"Important Announcement"	Spring
"Summer Storm"	Summer

Follow Up Activities

Writing

o Use the tips provided by Park in the back of the book to help students write their own sijo. In addition, the Idaho Human Rights Education Center provides two graphic organizers to help students develop the three lines of a sijo. One organizer focuses on narrative elements, while the other focuses on the theme. These organizers are on page 4 and 5 of the "Sijo: A Korean Art Poetic Form" lesson plan: <http://idaho-humanrights.org/userfiles/Korea%20-%20Sijo%20-%20A%20Korean%20Poetic%20Form.pdf>.

o If you are working with older kids or kids who feel more confident in their poetry writing skills, try writing linked sijo. Start with a sijo of your own or choose one from the book. Then the second poet writes a second sijo which links to the first in some way be it the subject, an emotion, an idea, an object mentioned, etc. Continue to link sijos together in this fashion. This can be done by two poets trading back and forth or it can be passed from person to person within a group. Each sijo should link to the sijo immediately previous, but does not have to link with all the previous poems. In addition, each sijo should stand on its own, as well as fit within the whole. For more

information on linked sijo, as well as an example, go to:
<http://startag.tripod.com/LinkedSijo.html>.

o Some poets have compared the three parts of a sijo to the three parts of a narrative – conflict, complication, and climax. Take a well known story, such as a fairytale, and break it down into three parts and craft it into a sijo. For instance, here’s a poem based on Cinderella:

Wearing a gorgeous, but borrowed, dress instead of rags and tatters.
12 O’clock. Magic gone. But the persistent prince found me at last.
If the shoe fits, why not wear it? So what if I met him last night?

-Amy Seto Musser

o Have each child write a letter to Park that includes a sijo they have written. Other information to include in their letters could be:

- The reasons they liked *Tap Dancing on the Roof*
- Their favorite sijo from the book and why they like it
- The reasons for the choosing the subject/content of their own sijo
- The reasons they like the sijo form

Encourage the kids to include questions as well as statements. Park states on her website that she is happy to send an autograph or reply to a letter if a SASE is included.

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New York NY 10003

Art

o Sijo poems were originally an oral form, however when the Korean alphabet came into being sijo were then written down. Sijo are not traditionally presented with images, however in *Tap Dancing on the Roof*, Banyai’s illustrations provide context to Park’s poems. Some illustrations depict elements directly pulled from the poem, such as the snowman in “Vanishing Act,” while others provide context in terms of atmosphere or humor, such as the illustration of a boy sleeping inside a coffee cup that accompanies “Breakfast.” Ask the kids to choose a poem and then create two illustrations, one a “literal” picture and one that provides context in an unexpected way. Encourage children to read the poem of their choice for the group while displaying both their illustrations. Spend a few minutes discussing the positive elements of each illustration. How do the illustrations reveal something new about the poem? The idea is to stretch your mind in multiple directions, rather than choose which one is “best.”

Math

o Read the poem “Long Division.” Challenge the kids to write a sijo about another mathematical symbol, function, or equation. First create a mathematical sijo as a group. Brainstorm for ideas and draw the suggestions on the board. Pick one to work with and write down all the descriptive words and ideas about it on the board. Sijo poems are often about relationships, so write a poem about the relationship between a + and a -. What about the numbers in the Fibonacci sequence? How do odd numbers feel about even numbers?

Social Studies

o Park mentions in the author’s note that sijo-like poems were written as early as the sixth century B.C. Although the poems in the book address contemporary subjects, discussing the origins of this poetic form can be a starting point to discussing Korean history and culture (See Related Web Sites and Related Books).

Related Web Sites

Web Sites about the Author

<http://www.lspark.com/index.html>

This is Linda Sue Park’s own web site and includes Information about Park’s other books, as well as FAQs, her top 10 favorite books, and biographical information.

http://www.childrenslit.com/childrenslit/mai_park_lindasue_qa.html

This web page features a Q & A interview with Linda Sue Park conducted by Sharon Salluzzo for the Children’s Literature Web Site. The interview addresses *Tap Dancing on the Roof* and *Keeping Score*, a fiction book for kids. Park discusses her love of poetry and why she decided to write *Tap Dancing on the Roof*.

Web Sites about Sijo

<http://www.ahapoetry.com/SIJO.HTM>

Aha Poetry provides a wonderful explanation of sijo, as well as a brief history of the form.

http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/mediafiles/writing/current/sijoprimer_gross.pdf

The Sejong Cultural Society provides a link to a PDF of Larry Gross’ “Sijoforum Primer: # 1: An Introduction for Those New to Sijo, a Refresher for Others.” The two page document defines sijo and provides examples of the distinct characteristics of the form.

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

This is an online collection of sijo about nature, writing, and music written by various poets.

<http://webpace.webring.com/people/ev/vgendrano/sijo.html>

This web page discusses the merits of complementing sijo poems with illustrations

http://www.sijopoetry.com/resources/mccann/mccann_sijo_reading.html

This is an audio clip of David McCann, American sijo poet, speaking about writing sijo in English versus Korean. McCann also reads/sings poems in both languages.

<http://www.sijopoetry.com/>

This is a directory of links to other sijo resources.

Web Sites about Korea:

Note: Although sijo was invented in Korea, the country is now divided into North Korea and South Korea. South Korea is officially known as the Republic of Korea. In general, historical references to Korea on these web sites refer to the old unified country. Web sites that talk about Korea in the present are referring to South Korea, unless otherwise noted on the website.

<http://www.pbs.org/hiddenkorea/>

Based on information from the PBS documentary, *Hidden Korea*, this web site provides brief introductory information on the geography, culture, religion, history and food of Korea.

<http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/sites/gokorea/index1.html>

Go Korea! is a web site developed by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) to provide middle school students with information about Korea in the 21st Century. Information is divided into four themed sections: Ideas & Influences, 21st Century Snapshots, The Environment: Manufactured and Natural, and Then & Now. The web site includes many high quality color photographs.

<http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/countries3/Korea.html>

This is a directory of web sites about South Korea divided by subject, including Food, Arts & Crafts, Regions & Cities, Folktales & Myths, as well as History, Culture, and People.

Related Books

Books about Sijo Poetry

Note: With the exception of Virginia Olson Baron's book, these texts are written for adults. These books are recommended as resources for educators, however, many of the sijo included in these books can be shared and appreciated by children.

Baron, Virginia Olson. 1974. *Sunset in a Spiders Web*. Henry Holt & Co. (Out of Print)

Contogenesis, Costantine, and Wolhee Choe. 1997. *Songs of the Kisaeng*. BOA Editions.

Kim, Jaihiun, trans. 1994. *Classical Korean Poetry*. Asian Humanities Press.

Ko, Won, ed. 1970. *Contemporary Korean Poetry*. University of Iowa Press.

Lee, Peter H., ed. and trans. 1964. *Anthology of Korean Poetry*. John Day Co.

O'Rourke, Kevin, ed. and trans. 2002. *The Book of Korean Shijo*. Harvard University Asia Center.

Rutt, Richard, ed. and trans. 1998. *The Bamboo Grove*. University of Michigan Press.

Other Books with Riddle Poems

Dotlich, Rebecca Kai. 2001. *When Riddles come Rumbling: Poems to Ponder*. Wordsong/Boyd's Mills Press.

Lewis, J. Patrick. 2009. *Spot the Plot: A Riddle Book of Book Riddles*. Chronicle Books.

Sidman, Joyce. 2006. *Butterfly Eyes and Other Secrets of the Meadow*. Houghton Mifflin.

Spires, Elizabeth. 1999. *Riddle Road: Puzzles in Poems and Pictures*. McElderry Books.

Spires, Elizabeth. 1995. *With One White Wing: Puzzles in Poems and Pictures*. McElderry Books.

Swann, Brian. 1998. *Touching the Distance: Native American Riddle-Poems*. Harcourt.

Swenson, May. 1993. *The Complete Poems to Solve*. Macmillan.

Young, Ed. 1980. *High on a Hill: Chinese Riddles*. Penguin Group.

Non-Fiction Books about Korean Culture and History

Bowler, Ann Martin. 2011. *All About Korea: Stories, Songs, Crafts, and More*. Ill. by Soosoonam Barg. Tuttle Publishing.

Holt, Daniel. 1999. *Tigers, Frogs, and Rice Cakes: A Book of Korean Proverbs*. Ill. by Soma Han (Stickler). Shen's books.

Stickler, John. 2003. *Land of Morning Calm: Korean Culture Then and Now*. Ill. by Soma Han. Shen's Books.

Fiction Books about Korean Culture, History, and Folklore

Bae, Hyun-joo. 2007. *New Clothes for New Year's Day*. Kane/Miller Book Publishers.

Climo, Shirley. 1996. *The Korean Cinderella*. Ill. by Ruth Heller. HarperCollins.

McClure, Gillian. 2008. *The Land of the Dragon King and Other Korean Stories*.

Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

O'Brien, Anne Sibley. 2006. *The Legend of Hong Kil Dong: The Robin Hood of Korea*.

Charlesbridge Publishing.

Park, Janie Jaehyun. 2005. *The Love of Two Stars: A Korean Legend*. Groundwood Books.

So-Un, Kim and Jeong Kyoung-Sim. 2004. *Korean Children's Favorite Stories*. Tuttle Publishing.

Other Books Written and/or Illustrated by Istvan Banyai

Banyai, Istvan. 1995. *Re-Zoom*. Penguin Group.

--. 1995. *Zoom*. Penguin Group.

--. 1997. *R.E.M.* Penguin Group.

--. 2005. *The Other Side*. Chronicle Books.

Sandburg, Carl. 1999. *Poems for Children: Nowhere Near Old Enough to Vote*. Ill. by Istvan Banyai. Random House Children's Books.

Picture Books by Linda Sue Park

Park, Linda Sue. 2004. *The Firekeeper's Son*. Ill. by Julie Downing. Clarion Books.

--. 2005. *Bee-bim Bop!* Ill. by Ho Baek-Lee. Clarion Books.

Chapter Books by Linda Sue Park

Park, Linda Sue. 1999. *Seesaw Girl*. Clarion Books.

--. 2000. *The Kite Fighters*. Clarion Books.

--. 2001. *A Single Shard*. Clarion Books.

--. 2002. *When My Name was Keoko*. Clarion Books.

--. 2005. *Project Mulberry*. Clarion Books.

--. 2006. *Archer's Quest*. Clarion Books.

--. 2008. *Keeping Score*. Clarion Books.

--. 2010. *A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story*. Clarion Books.

About the Author – Linda Sue Park



Linda Sue Park was born in Urbana, Illinois on March 25, 1960. Her parents emigrated from Korea in the 1950's and wanted her to assimilate into American society, so she grew up knowing very little of her family background. She was an avid reader as a child. She received a B.A. in English from Stanford University and advanced degrees in literature from Trinity College, in Dublin, Ireland and from the University of London. Before becoming a full-time author, she held numerous jobs including working for an ad agency, teaching ESL to college students, and working as a food journalist. She won the Newbery Award for her book, *A Single Shard*. She lives in Rochester, NY with her family and dogs.

"The limitations of formal poetry are a goad to creativity. When I'm trying to fit a thought or an idea or an image into a set number of lines or syllables or a rhyme scheme, it really pushes me to explore as many possibilities as I can in terms of word choice." – Linda Sue Park

Interesting Facts about Linda Sue Park to Share

- Her favorite book is the third Harry Potter Book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J.K. Rowling.
- If she had the chance to meet another author, she would love to meet J.K. Rowling or Phillip Pullman.
- At the age of nine, her first work, a haiku, was published in *Trailblazer* magazine. She was paid a dollar, which she gave to her father for Christmas. He framed the dollar and it still hangs above his desk. Here is the poem:

In the green forest
A sparkling, bright blue pond hides.
And animals drink.

—*Trailblazer* magazine, Winter 1969

About the Illustrator – Istvan Banyai



Artist and designer Istvan Banyai was born in Budapest, Hungary. His innovative editorial illustrations have appeared in magazines and newspapers including *Atlantic Monthly*, *Time*, *The New Yorker*, and *Rolling Stone*. His first children's book was *Zoom*, published in 1995. This wordless book was named one of the best children's books of the year by the *New York Times* and *Publishers Weekly*, and was followed by a companion book, *Re-Zoom*. Banyai, who lived for many years in Manhattan, now makes his home in rural Connecticut.

Biographical & Fact Resources

"Istvan Banyai." *Chronicle Books*. n.d. <http://www.chroniclebooks.com/landing-pages/Chronicle/excerpt/0811846083-e0.html>

"Lexus Fiction – My New American Life." *Lexus Drivers*. n.d. <http://drivers.lexus.com/lexusdrivers/magazine/articles/Lexus-Lifestyle/Lexus-Fiction>

"Linda Sue Park Biography." *Encyclopedia of World Biography*. n. d. <http://www.notablebiographies.com/news/Ow-Sh/Park-Linda-Sue.html>

"Linda Sue Park Interview Transcript." *Scholastic*. n.d. <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/linda-sue-park-interview-transcript>

Park, Linda Sue. "Biography – Linda Sue Park." *Linda Sue Park*. Last modified 2012. <http://www.lindasuepark.com/bio/biography.html>

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Petri, Gail. "National Book Festival - Linda Sue Park speaking at the Book Festival." *Library of Congress*. n.d. <http://www.loc.gov/bookfest/kids-teachers/educators/2010/festival36.html>