# **PROGRAM OVERVIEW** SEJONG CULTURAL SOCIETY 2004–2019

# **2019 BENEFIT DINNER** SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2019 | DRURY LANE 100 DRURY LANE, OAKBROOK TERRACE, IL

# scholar king KING SEJONG THE GREAT



King Sejong the Great (1397–1450) was the fourth ruler during the Choson dynasty. His reign was a period of great cultural and intellectual accomplishment in Korea. Believing that the basis of good government was a ruler with broad-ranging knowledge, virtue, and the ability to recognize and utilize men of talent for government service, he governed according to Confucian principles that included the belief that justice and righteousness should characterize the relations between sovereign and subject. He placed great emphasis on education and promoted research in the cultural, economic, and political heritage of Korea, and he sponsored many new developments in the areas of science, philosophy, music, and linguistics. To encourage young scholars to devote their time to study, he established grants and other forms of government support.

King Sejong was not only a patron of the arts and education but also a scholar and inventor himself. Among his many contributions are the development of musical notation for Korean and Chinese music, improvements to the Korean system of movable type, and numerous inventions including the rain gauge, sundial, water clock, astronomical maps, and armillary sphere. As a prolific writer, he wrote many books and songs, including a dictionary on proper pronunciation, a biography on the Buddha, and several collections of poems and songs.

Sejong introduced many progressive ideas and implemented reforms to improve the life of the common people. In times of drought and flood, he established relief programs and opened centers to provide food and shelter. He was also a humanitarian who proclaimed that there must be three trials before a final judgment is reached, and he prohibited brutality in the punishment of criminals, such as flogging.

The most outstanding of his achievements by far was the creation of the Korean alphabet, or hangul. Initially, scholars relied on Chinese for written purposes, using awkward systems that made use of Chinese characters to substitute for a lack of Korean script. With the vast differences between Chinese and Korean vocal patterns and sentence formation, the system left much to be desired, and it was with this in mind that King Sejong commissioned a group of scholars to devise a phonetic writing system that would correctly represent the sounds of spoken Korean and that could be easily learned by all people. The system was completed in 1443.

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# VISIT OUR WEBSITE! www.sejongculturalsociety.org

For more information about the Sejong Cultural Society, check our website at **www.sejongculturalsociety.org** or email us at **sejong@sejongculturalsociety.org**. Read past writing competition winners' entries or watch videos of music competition winners' concerts, or learn how to write sijo. Sijo teaching materials intended for educators are available as well.

# greetings HYUNIL JUHN & YOU SIM KIM





#### GOOD EVENING,

It is my great honor and pleasure to welcome all of you to our annual Sejong Cultural Society Benefit Dinner. I am very pleased and grateful for your presence this evening.

The Sejong Cultural Society's mission is to advance the awareness and understanding of Korea's cultural heritage amongst people in the United States by reaching out to all, especially to younger generations, through contemporary, creative and fine arts. Since its inception in 2004, we have been growing steadily while promoting the awareness and understanding of Korea's rich cultural heritage through our writing competition, music competition, sijo poetry workshops, music concerts inspired by sijo, and sijo presentation seminars.

This year, we had the honor of appearing at the Rush Hour Concert Series, introducing contemporary music inspired by Korean sijo poetry and performed by world-class musicians, at St. James' Cathedral in Chicago.

We will continue to do our very best in carrying out our mission and doing our part to bridge Korean and American cultures for many years to come.

I would like to thank the Executive Director, Chairman of the Board, all officers, the Board of Directors, all planning committee members, advisory council, and grant providers, for making it possible for us to carry out our mission and giving their unconditional devotion and support.

Most importantly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to you all—Sejong's friends, patrons, and contributors—for your continued interest, support, and generous contributions, all of which make our goals possible.

Have a delightful evening! Thank you.

Hyunil Juhn, Co-president You Sim Kim, Co-President

# benefit dinner PROGRAM

#### WELCOME BY FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Esther Yang & Ho Kim *Fundraising committee co-chairs*  **MIA PARK** *Master of ceremony* 

#### SEJONG CULTURAL SOCIETY PROGRAM REPORT

Lucy Park Executive Director

#### DINNER

#### PRESIDENT'S GREETING

Hyunil Juhn & You Sim Kim Co-presidents

#### **KEYNOTE SPEECH**

"An Outsider's View of Korean Culture and History" Mark Peterson Professor Emeritus, Brigham Young University

#### PERFORMANCE

Barcarole-joie de vivre ...... Misook Kim Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso ...... Camille Saint-Saëns

> Isabella Brown, violin 2018 Sejong Music Competition, violin senior division first place Sojung Lee Hong, piano

Green Mountain   청산에 살리라	Kim Yeon-joon, music & sijo
Love   사랑	
Climbing Up to Old Hill   옛동산에올라	. Hong Nan-pa, music   Yi Un-sang, sijo
Star   별	. Lee Soo-in, music   Yi Byung-ghi, sijo
Nostalgia   가고파	. Kim Dong-jin, music   Yi Un-sang, sijo
Swing   그네G	um Su-hyun, music   Kim Mal-bong, sijo

Ghibong Kim, *baritone* Yunji Shim, *soprano* Sojung Lee Hong, *piano* 

#### PUPPY LOVE

Wet nose and sloppy kisses a sweet greeting at break of dawn.

Ah, what's this? What's in your mouth? Looks like my sock or half of it.

Puppy love: The most innocent love, and the reason you're late for class.

Madison Bouse (MO) 2019 sijo adult division

# MARK PETERSON KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Mark Peterson (Professor Emeritus of Korean history, literature and language, Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages. Brigham Young University, Provo, UT) received B.A.'s in Asian Studies and Anthropology from Brigham Young University in 1971. He received his M.A. in 1973 and his Ph.D. in 1987, both from Harvard University in the field of East Asian Languages and Civilization.

Prior to coming to BYU in 1984 he was the director of the Fulbright program in Korea from 1978 to 1983. He has been the coordinator of the Asian Studies Program and was the director of the undergraduate programs in the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies.

Dr. Peterson is a member of the Association for Asian Studies, where he was formerly the chair of the Korean Studies Committee; was also the book review editor for the Journal of Asian Studies for Korean Studies books. He is also a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, the International Association for Korean Language Education, the International Korean Literature Association, and the American Association of Korean Teachers. He served as past editor-in-chief for the Korea Journal, published by UNESCO in Korea, from 2015 to 2017.

Currently he is working with a research center he founded called The Frog Outside the Well Research Center.

# ISABELLA BROWN



Isabella Brown, a Scholarship Fellow at the Music Institute of Chicago's Academy, studies violin with Almita Vamos. This past summer, Isabella was awarded a top prize in the Cooper International Violin Competition and had the privilege of performing the Dvořák Violin Concerto in Severance Hall with the Cleveland Orchestra. She received glowing reviews for this performance by Clevelandclassical.com, who wrote that "Isabella Brown delivered an intensely lyrical and scintillating performance of the Dvořák Concerto, playing the first movement double-stops with complete control. She neatly changed the musical mood with her transition into the slow movement, and soared out nicely over the big orchestra in the finale, making the Bohemians dance."

Prior to the Cooper Competition, Isabella had received First Place in numerous competitions, including the Alexander and Buono International String Competition, the Asian American International Music Competition, the Rockville Competition for Piano and Strings, the Chinese Fine Arts Society Music Festival in Honor of Confucius Competition, the Sejong Music Competition (both the Junior and Senior divisions), the Open Junior String Division of the MYA Walgreens National Concerto Competition, and the DePaul Concerto Festival for Young Performers. She was named a 2019 National YoungArts Foundation Winner, won both the 2019 Lakeview Orchestra competition and the 2019 DuPage Symphony Orchestra competition, and was both the state and north central regional winner of the 2019 Stillman Kelley competition.

Isabella made her solo debut with orchestra at the age of ten, performing with the Capital Symphonic Youth Orchestra on the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater stage in Washington DC, and has gone on to play with the Oistrakh Symphony Orchestra, the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra, the New North Shore Symphony Orchestra, the Northbrook Symphony Orchestra, the Lakeview Orchestra, the DuPage Symphony Orchestra, and most recently, the Cleveland Orchestra. Additionally, she has been featured on Fox 5DC, Chicago's WFMT and Cleveland's WCLV, and has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, the Chicago Cultural Center, Cleveland's Severance Hall and Ravinia's Bennett Gordon Hall. Isabella is very thankful to be playing on a Dom Nicolo Marchioni detto 'Amati' of Bologna circa 1740, generously on loan to her from Kenneth Warren and Son, Ltd.

# MISOOK KIM COMPOSER



Dr. Misook Kim received her B.M. with the honor of Cum Laude from Seoul National University in Seoul, South Korea. After finishing her "New Star Concert" sponsored by the newspaper Chosun Ilbo, she entered graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin; there she completed her M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in composition and a certificate in piano performance. Reviewer Mike Greenberg, writing for the San Antonio Express-News, called the composer "a bold and unrepentant modernist." He also wrote in the San Antonio Current that "her music was fearlessly modern—spiky, protean, often highly compressed, proudly declining to participate in the fashion for 'accessibility'—but she was so sure-footed in her instincts and her craft that she earned her listeners' trust to lead them safely and enjoyably through the strange realms she conjured."

Kim has been featured throughout the United States and Korea as a composer as well as pianist in various concerts of her own and other composers' works ranging from solo pieces to larger ensemble compositions. In addition to commissions for the MUSICOPIA, Hudson Duo, and Olmos Ensemble, she has won the International Alliance for Women in Music Judith Zaimont Award and the Long Island Arts Council International Composition Competition in 2007. She also won the 2008 International Sejong Music Composition Competition. Her music was broadcast on Classical Spotlight of KPAC Texas Public Radio and WFMT Chicago Classical Radio.

A founding member of the Chicago New Arts Trio and the Composers' Alliance of San Antonio, Kim has also served as a board member of the San Antonio International Piano Competition. She is a former faculty member at the University of the Incarnate Word and Trinity University in San Antonio, TX. She has also served as music director at the Korean United Methodist Church. In the fall of 2006, Kim joined the faculty at the Conservatory of Music at Wheaton College, IL.

# GHIBONG KIM BARITONE



Baritone Ghibong Kim, born in Daegu, Korea, received his Bachelor's degree in Voice Performance at Seoul National University. He continued his voice studies at the Arrigo Boito Conservatory in Parma, Italy, which Renata Tebaldi and Claudio Abbado had attended, and graduated with the highest academic honor. He was a winner of the international competition Rocca delle Macie in Siena, where Renato Bruson served as a judge. He was also a finalist at the Tito Schipa Voice Competition in Lecce and the Flaviano Lavo' Competition in Piacenza. His major teachers were Sherrill Milnes and Inci Bashar.

Mr. Kim's first professional appearance in Italy was as Cola in Paer's *Camilla* at Teatro Regio di Parma. Following this success, he was consequently engaged to sing as Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, Marcello in *La bohème*, and Rigoletto in *Rigoletto*. Other roles include Renato (*Un ballo in maschera*), and Valentine (*Faust*). Since moving to the United States, Mr. Kim has been an active performer not only in operas, but also as an oratorio soloist. Mendelssohn's Oratorio "Elijah" is his signature role. Mr. Kim made his Chicago debut as Conte in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Chicago Chamber Opera with the Northbrook Symphony Orchestra. Other roles include Germont in *La traviata* with the Elgin Opera and Morales in *Carmen* at the DuPage Opera Theater. In 2011, he performed Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Elgin Choral Union and Elgin Symphony Orchestra, which was broadcast on WFMT Chicago Radio.

Mr. Kim has given solo and chamber concerts in Europe, Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, Argentina, Paraguay, and South Korea. He taught voice as faculty at Judson University in Elgin, IL, and currently serves as the music director at the Alliance Fellowship Church in Hoffman Estates.

# SOJUNG LEE HONG PIANO



Dr. Sojung Lee Hong, Professor of Music at Judson University, has worked as a soloist, collaborative pianist, teacher, and church musician in the Chicago area since her appointment to the music faculty of Judson University. She has also performed and taught internationally, frequently touring with ensembles for charity and missions concerts. For the past ten years she has organized the annual scholarship benefit concerts to support talented Korean students who come to the United States to further their music studies. She holds BM and MM degrees from Seoul National University in South Korea and a doctoral degree in piano performance and literature from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Recently, she was awarded the Margaret Hillis Award for the Arts by the Elgin YWCA, for her distinctive contribution to the Arts.

# YUNJI SHIM SOPRANO



Yunji Shim (soprano) is a winner of the 2018 women's voice fellowship from the Luminarts Cultural Foundation in Chicago. Shim has performed as Donna Anna in Don Giovanni, the role of Ottavia in L'incoronazione di Poppea, and a soloist of Verdi Requiem in *Viva Verdi!* She is the winner of the 2017 Krannert debut artist competition and 2017 winner of the Artist Presentation Society in St. Louis. In May 2019, she made her debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall as a first prize winner of the Barry Alexander International Vocal Competition. Also in June 2019, she performed with St. Petersburg Opera in Florida as a cover of the title role in *Madama Butterfly*. In addition, she has been selected as a 2019 voice fellow for the Art of Song program at the Toronto Summer Music Festival.

Shim is pursuing a doctoral degree at University of Illinois. She received her master's degree in music from Eastman School of Music and her bachelor's degree of music from Seoul National University in South Korea. She has studied with Cynthia Haymon-Coleman, Dr. Robert McIver, Dr. Hyunju Yun, and Soonhee Lee.

# MIA PARK MASTER OF CEREMONY



Mia Park is powered by hopeful engagement. As a Chicago-based multidisciplinary artist, Mia shares her passion for discovery through acting, teaching yoga, writing, playing music, producing events, and volunteering.

Learn more about Mia Park at www.MiaPark.com.

# sejong cultural society PROGRAM INFORMATION

# MISSION AND HISTORY

# // MISSION

The Sejong Cultural Society strives to advance awareness and understanding of Korea's cultural heritage amongst people in the United States by reaching out to the younger generations through contemporary creative and fine arts. It is our hope that, through this, the rich culture behind Korea's colorful history will be accessible to people of any ethnicity and nationality while being a unique part of the larger, more familiar Western culture.

# // HISTORY

The Sejong Cultural Society was first conceptualized by founding members including Lucy Park (current executive director), Hyunil Juhn (current co-president), and Aesop Rim (current honorary board). In 2003, the Seoul National University Alumni Association of Chicago agreed to provide a seed grant to create a program dedicated to introducing elements of traditional Korean culture to the US, and on August 20th, 2004, the Sejong Cultural Society was incorporated in the State of Illinois and approved as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

The organization was named after King Sejong the Great (1397–1450), who was a strong patron of music, arts, literature, and science. Under his reign, Korea flourished culturally and academically, and he is now honored for his humanity, vision, and contributions to Korean culture.

The annual Sejong Music Competition has been held since 2004 and the annual Sejong Writing Competition since 2006. The Sejong International Music Composition Competition was held in 2005 and 2008; after being renamed the Sejong Prize for Music Composition, it was hosted again in 2012 and 2015. The first sijo events were held in 2010.

# PROGRAMS

# // CURRENT PROGRAMS

- Sejong Music Competition (piano and violin categories)
- Sejong Writing Competition (essay and sijo categories)
- The Sejong Prize for Music Composition

- Sijo workshop and events
- Music inspired by Korean poetry
- Expansion of resource materials

# // SEJONG MUSIC COMPETITION

The Sejong Music Competition seeks to both encourage talented young musicians in their studies and introduce elements of traditional Korean music to younger generations. In addition to a piece of their own choice, participants are required to perform a Korean-themed piece from our required repertoire list, several of which were entries in previous Sejong Music Composition Competitions.

Open to pre-college violin and piano students, the competition hosts four divisions per category: senior, junior, elementary, and primary. In addition to cash prizes, winners are offered performance opportunities; example of such performances include the Korean-American Day Cultural Celebration in Chicago, the Indian Trails Library concert series, and fundraising events hosted by various Korean-American organizations.

# // SEJONG WRITING COMPETITION

Since its inception in 2006, the Sejong Writing Competition has continued to grow exponentially. By the ninth annual competition in 2014, we received a total of over 1,900 entries from all across the United States and parts of Canada.

Open to residents of the US and Canada, the Sejong Writing Competition is divided into two categories:

**ESSAY CATEGORY:** Focusing on introducing young adults to Korean culture and history through literature, our essay category utilizes folk tales and contemporary literature to explore Korean culture, past and present. It is divided into three divisions: adult (age 30 and younger), senior (grade 12 and younger), and junior (grade 8 and younger). This category is funded in part by the Literature Translation Institute of Korea.

**ADULT AND SENIOR DIVISIONS:** Intended to give a glimpse of Korean life and history through contemporary literature, participants are asked to read and write about selected translated short stories and essays. Stories used for the 2019 Writing Competition were *An Appointment with His Brother* by Yi Mun-yol (senior division) and "O. Cuniculi" by Pyun Hyeyoung (adult division).

**JUNIOR DIVISION:** Korea has a rich tradition of storytelling, and its folk tales reflect important aspects of its history and culture. For this competition, students are asked to read one of several Korean folktales provided on our website and write an essay in response to one of two provided prompts. **SIJO CATEGORY:** Our sijo category brings the sijo, a classic example of traditional Korean fine arts, to a modern English-speaking audience as a unique form of poetry. Participants are asked to write a sijo in English on any topic of their choice. This category is organized in collaboration with the Korea Institute at Harvard University.

The 2019 competition marks the introduction of an adult division for the sijo category for anyone age 19 and older, while the pre-college division is open to age 18 and younger. By opening our competition to all ages, we hope to continue to foster an interest in Korean poetry amongst poets both professional and amateur in America and Canada. Although the Sejong Cultural Society's general focus is on pre-college students and educators, we believe that there is no upper age limit to learning and hope to be able to teach people of all ages about our cultural heritage.

During the 2013 Writing Competition we introduced an online registration-based system for entry submissions. For students, this system offers the option of emailing submission confirmations to teachers, which has reportedly proved convenient to multiple teachers; additionally, it enables students to edit entries easily until the competition deadline. Teacher accounts are able to view and submit their students' submissions with ease.

Since the competition's first year in 2006, the Pacific Rim Cultural Foundation (Edward Rim) has continued to provide funds for all Honorable Mentions, which have been named the Friends of the Pacific Rim Award.

# // SEJONG PRIZE FOR MUSIC COMPOSITION

Traditional Korean music contains many unique elements rhythmically and harmonically. The Sejong Prize for Music Composition encourages composers to explore these elements and incorporate them into their compositions to create contemporary pieces for Western instruments that evoke Korean themes. Using these pieces in numerous performances organized by the Sejong Cultural Society and our music competition, we hope to bring the world of Korean music not only to composers, but performers and listeners as well.

For our prior competitions, we invited composers, regardless of nationality, race, age, or gender, to submit original pieces incorporating traditional Korean themes written for western musical instruments and suitable for young student performers. For our 2012 and 2015 Sejong Prize Competition, our goals no longer focused on creating pieces suitable for young performers; instead, we sought to put a heavier emphasis on producing high quality Korean-themed pieces for musicians of any level to play. Our first Sejong Prize Concert, featuring the works of the three international winners of the 2012 Sejong Prize, was held in October 2013 at the University of Chicago.

On January 26, 2014, the Lincoln Trio and past winners of the Sejong Music Competition presented pieces with Korean themes at the popular Sunday Salon Concert Series at the Chicago Cultural Center. The concert was entitled "Music as a Window to Culture" and attended by mostly non-Koreans.

On February 6, 2014, we presented the concert "Music and Poetry" at Roosevelt University. The Lincoln Trio performed Korean-inspired pieces composed by winners of the Sejong Prize and by Professor Kyong Mee Choi (Roosevelt University). Throughout the performance, the performers recited several well-known sijo poems by famous Korean poets as well as winning entries from the Sejong Writing Competition's sijo division.

#### // SIJO WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

As an extension of our Writing Competition's sijo category, the Sejong Cultural Society hosts sijo workshops for pre-college educators. Our sijo workshop is primarily intended for English teachers interested in teaching about the sijo in their classrooms. Many different styles of poetry are commonly explored in most students' curricula, and it is our hope that someday we may see the sijo being taught alongside popular poetry forms such as haikus and limericks.

In collaboration with Professor David McCann of the Korea Institute at Harvard University, Professor Mark Peterson at Brigham Young University, and several high school literature teachers from across the United States, the Sejong Cultural Society developed teaching materials for educators to use in the classroom. Along with other sijorelated resources, they are currently available on our website. Teaching material development was funded by the Korea Foundation and the Academy of Korean Studies; distribution was funded by the Doosan Yonkang Foundation and the Kyobo Daesan Foundation.

From 2010–2016, our annual sijo workshops were held at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) in collaboration with the UIC

English Department and the Korea Institute at Harvard University. Since then, workshops are hosted in collaboration with Indiana University's East Asian Studies Center and the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia. The 2017 workshop was held at the Newberry Library in downtown Chicago. After receiving a grant from the Korea Foundation in 2018, we held two sijo workshops at the PianoForte Studio in Chicago—one in May, and one in November. In 2019, the Sijo Workshop will be at held in Indianapolis, IN.

Additional presentations on sijo poetry and a brief overview of Korean history were made in many locations in Chicago, Los Angeles, Orange, Seattle, Dallas, and Atlanta over the past several years to educators interested in learning about Korean culture. An interactive workshop on teaching sijo was presented at the National Conference of Teachers of English annual convention and Wisconsin Writing Association.

We have also hosted sijo seminars and reading events for the general public at the Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago, the Andrew Bae Gallery, and the Poetry Foundation in Chicago since 2010.

## // MUSIC INSPIRED BY KOREAN POETRY

Originally, sijo were first and foremost written as songs and performed with musical accompaniment. In continuing this tradition, we have begun to collaborate with numerous musicians from a range of different genres in creating musical works based on and featuring sijo. Through modern and popular mainstream genres of music, we hope that contemporary prize-winning and classic sijo will be used in works that may appeal to the younger generations. In the future, we hope to see sijo expressed through a wide variety of media forms.

Our first event featuring such a performance was our "Enchanted Evening with Korean Sijo Poetry, Wine, and Art", hosted on October 31st, 2015 at the Andrew Bae Gallery. The Chicago-based artists' collective and youth activist group Elephant Rebellion performed three hip-hop songs, one based on a 2013 Sejong Writing Competition winning entry by Roberto Santos, one based on a sijo by the sixteenth-century Korean courtesan Hwang Chin-i, and an original composition based on sijo written by members of Elephant Rebellion. Since then, Elephant Rebellion has performed sijo hip-hop songs at Northwestern University, Indiana University, University of Illinois, the Korean Street Festival in Chicago, and the Taste of Korea Festival in Skokie.

In 2017 we began our expansion into other genres of music in a concert at the Poetry Foundation titled "Music Inspired by Korean Poetry: Sijo Poems in Settings from Classical to Hip-Hop". The concert featured classic Korean art songs performed by baritone and piano, contemporary classical pieces composed by Misook Kim (Wheaton Conservatory) and Teddy Niedermaier (Roosevelt University), a jazz ensemble composed by Scott Hall (Columbia College), and hip-hop songs by Elephant Rebellion.

On July 30th, 2019 we presented a concert entitled "Sijo Poetry and Music" at the prestigious Rush Hour Concert Series. It was held at St. James Cathedral in the heart of downtown Chicago and was co-organized with the International Music Foundation—the parent organization of Rush Hour Concerts—and the Poetry Foundation. The program included traditional Korean art songs and contemporary classical ensembles commissioned by the Sejong Cultural Society for this concert. Three composers, Teddy Niedermaier, Misook Kim, and Eun Young Lee (Boston Conservatory, MA) participated. Performers included Suwan Choi (traditional Korean drum), Ghibong Kim (baritone), Sojung Lee Hong (piano), Anthony Devroye (viola and organizer of Rush Hour Concerts), Herine Coetzee Koschak (cello), and Jennifer Woodrum (clarinet).

# // EXPANSION OF RESOURCE MATERIALS

After reaching out to pre-college educators whose students have participated in the Sejong Writing Competition, we discussed a variety of requests and suggestions meant to assist and encourage teachers interested in teaching sijo or Korean literature in their classrooms. In response to these suggestions, we are focusing on the development and expansion of educator resource materials. This project is in part funded by a grant from the Academy of Korean Studies in Seoul, Korea, and the Korea Foundation.

We visited several schools and video-recorded high school teachers who have incorporated the sijo into their curricula for the past several years and whose students number amongst the past winners of the Sejong Writing Competition. In addition to a variety of teaching plans submitted by numerous teachers who have taught sijo, these recordings are intended to give other educators an idea of how to approach teaching sijo in their own classrooms. The teachers who participated in our program include Ms. Tracy Kaminer at the Randolph Macon Academy in Front Royal, VA; Mr. Chuck Newell at Notre Dame High School in Chattanooga, TN; and Ms. Elizabeth Jorgensen at Arrowhead High School in Hartland, WI. With further funding, we hope to eventually visit additional schools in Texas, New Jersey, and California as well as more elementary schools in order to provide a more diverse range of teaching environments. Additionally, we recorded Ms. Jorgensen teaching the basics of sijo to a group of elementary school students.

We also posted several lectures regarding various sijo-related topicsincluding how to write sijo, how to improve poorly written sijo, and comparisons between sijo, haiku, and quatrain by Professors David McCann of Harvard University and Mark Peterson of Brigham Young University.

Ms. Elizabeth Jorgenson has additionally published articles on teaching sijo in high school classrooms in professional journals, including the Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal and the Ohio Journal of English Language Arts. Ms. Jorgensen will present about teaching sijo at the Wisconsin Writers' Association (October 5, 2019) and the National Conference of Teachers of English (November 23, 2019).

We are also currently in the process of rehauling our website to vastly improve its functionality and use as a resource tool and archive.

# ORGANIZATION

The main direction of the organization is determined at board meetings, while the specifics of each program are determined by individual planning committees, which are comprised of experts in the respective field. Planning committee members are recommended by the Executive Director and approved by the Board of Directors, while officers are elected by the Board of Directors. All officers, board members, and committee members are volunteers and do not take any compensation.

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# **COMPETITION PARTICIPANTS 2004-2019**

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Music	Total	45	21	36	47	39	37	79	91	85	84	80	99	94
	Total			61	78	351	847	1169	1346	1748	1503	1948	1403	1257
Writing	Essay			61	78	208	399	463	677	799	655	640	475	242
	Sijo			-	-	143	448	706	669	949	848	1308	928	1015
	Total		52			40				38			51	
Sejong Prize	Korean		13			8				17			39	
	US		32			28				14			12	

		2017	2018	2019
Music	Total	113	106	
	Total	1123	1121	1233
Writing	Essay	209	105	148
	Sijo	914	1016	1085
	Total			
Sejong Prize	Korean			
	US			

In his snores, she hears his pounds, his extra steins. She nudges his shoulder and says, "You're snoring." He rolls, exhales—he shifts and sighs. And snores louder—so she squeezes in, spooning, settling in his sound.

> Elizabeth Jorgensen (WI) 2019 sijo adult division

# statement of activities and changes in net assets SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

	7/1/18-6/30/19	7/1/17-6/30/18
Revenue:		
Contributions from general public and fundraising events	\$35,000	\$43,000
Contributions from board members	24,000	23,000
Grants & foundation support	21,000	10,000
Program revenue and other income	5,000	7,000
Total revenue	85,000	83,000
Expenses:		
Music competition	22,000	21,000
Writing competition	30,000	24,000
Various fundraising costs	9,000	12,000
Sijo seminars and education materials	15,000	5,000
Other cultural events support	1,000	1,000
Other admin and general expenses	9,000	10,000
Prior year expense adjustment	(2,000)	_
Total expenditures	84,000	73,000
Change in net assets	1,000	10,000
Net assets at beginning of year	147,000	137,000
Net assets at end of year	\$148,000	\$147,000

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as of June 30, 2019 and 2018

	6/30/2018	6/30/2018
Assets:		
Cash	\$133,000	\$139,000
CDs	10,000	10,000
Accounts receivable	3,000	-
Prepaid expenses and other assets	2,000	1,000
Total assets	\$148,000	\$150,000
Liabilities and net assets:		
Accounts payable	-	3,000
Net assets	148,000	147,000
Total liabilities and net assets	\$148,000	\$150,000

# 2017 - 2018 MUSIC COMPETITION

# WINNERS HONORABLE MENTIONS NOT LISTED

		2018	
Division	Prize	Piano	Violin
	1	Ashley Kim, Wilmette, IL (James Giles)	Isabella Brown, Gurnee, IL (Almita Vamos)
Senior	2	Justin Chang, Schaumburg, IL (Sunghoon Mo)	Katya Moeller, Corallville, IA (Almita Vamos)
	3	Harmon Balorda, Berrien Center, MI (Tanya Gabrielian)	Rabia Brooke, Chicago, IL (Desirée Ruhstrat)
	1	Noah Kim, Indian Creek, IL (Yumy Lee Kim)	Esme Arias-Kim, Hoffman Estates, IL (Almita Vamos)
Junior	2	Matthew Hahn, Lake Forest, IL (Christina Tio)	Sameer Agrawal, Chicago, IL (Sang Mee Lee)
	3	Jayden Kim, Chicago, IL (Yumy Lee Kim)	John Lee, Vernon Hills, IL (Injoo Choi)
	1	Shixun Song, Buffalo Grove, IL (Yumy Lee Kim)	Lauren Kim, Hoffman Estates, IL (Injoo Choi & Almita Vamos)
Elementary	2	Freya Pang, Darien, IL (Sueanne Metz)	Riko Pang, Inverness, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)
	3	Chloe Palmes, Morton Grove, IL (Sueanne Metz)	Ava Isabella Angeles, Chicago, IL (Lucinda Ali-Landing)
	1	Jeremy Liu, Naperville, IL (Sueanne Metz)	Eliana Song, Lake Zurich, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)
Primary	2	Evangeline Wang, Chicago, IL (Brenda Huang)	Sylvia Pine, Chicago, IL (Isabelle Rozendaal)
	3	none	George Wang, Chicago, IL (Lucinda Ali-Landing)
	Sr	Justin Chang, Schaumburg, IL (Sunghoon Mo)	Hannah Lin, Rolling Meadows, IL (Desirée Ruhstrat)
Korean	Jr	Noah Kim, Indian Creek, IL (Yumy Lee Kim)	Ella Saputra, Schaumburg, IL (Desirée Ruhstrat)
Music	Ele	Shixun Song, Buffalo Grove, IL (Yumy Lee Kim)	Lauren Kim, Hoffman Estates, IL (Injoo Choi & Almita Vamos)
	Pri	Jeremy Liu, Naperville, IL (Sueanne Metz)	Sylvia Pine, Chicago, IL (Isabelle Rozendaal)
	,	2017	
Division	Prize	Piano	Violin
	1	Derek Chung, Long Grove, IL (Sueanne Metz)	Ria Honda, Wilmette, IL (Almita Vamos)
Senior	2	Ashley Kim, Wilmette, IL (Brenda Huang)	Thompson Wang, Glenview, IL (Almita Vamos)
	3	Emily Cho, Schaumburg, IL (Brenda Huang)	John Heo, Northbrook, IL (Almita Vamos)
	1	Aliya Alsafa, Chicago, IL (Sueanne Metz & Matti Raekallio)	Linda Wang, Lincolnshire, IL (Hye-Sun Lee)
Junior	2	Noah Kim, Indian Creek, IL (Yumy Kim)	Esme Arias-Kim, Hoffman Estates (Almita Vamos)
Junior	3	Howard Dai, Northbrook, IL (Sueanne Metz)	John Lee, Vernon Hills, IL (Injoo Choi)
	5		Claire Metcalf, Schaumburg, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)
	1	Matthew Hahn (Lake Forest, IL (Christina Tio)	Henry Auxenfans, Chicago, IL (Stacia Spencer)
Elementary	2	Jayden Kim (Chicago, IL (Yumy Kim)	Aiden Yu, Chicago, IL (Lucinda Ali-Landing)
Elementary	2 3	Jayden Kim (Chicago, IL (Yumy Kim) Audrey Yixin Yin,Vernon Hills, IL (Sueanne Metz)	Aiden Yu, Chicago, IL (Lucinda Ali-Landing)       Elle Cho, Park Ridge, IL (Olga Kaler)
Elementary			
Elementary Primary	3	Audrey Yixin Yin,Vernon Hills, IL (Sueanne Metz)	Elle Cho, Park Ridge, IL (Olga Kaler)
	3	Audrey Yixin Yin,Vernon Hills, IL (Sueanne Metz) Joshua Park, Hinsdale, IL (Sueanne Metz)	Elle Cho, Park Ridge, IL (Olga Kaler) Riko Pang, Inverness, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)
	3 1 2	Audrey Yixin Yin,Vernon Hills, IL (Sueanne Metz) Joshua Park, Hinsdale, IL (Sueanne Metz) Rosabelle Shi, Long Grove, IL (Brenda Huang)	Elle Cho, Park Ridge, IL (Olga Kaler)         Riko Pang, Inverness, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)         Reina Hisada, Deerfield, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)
	3 1 2 3	Audrey Yixin Yin,Vernon Hills, IL (Sueanne Metz) Joshua Park, Hinsdale, IL (Sueanne Metz) Rosabelle Shi, Long Grove, IL (Brenda Huang) Evangeline Wang (Chicago, IL (Brenda Huang)	Elle Cho, Park Ridge, IL (Olga Kaler)Riko Pang, Inverness, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)Reina Hisada, Deerfield, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)Claire Moon, Palatine, IL (Hye-Sun Lee)
Primary	3 1 2 3 Sr	Audrey Yixin Yin,Vernon Hills, IL (Sueanne Metz)Joshua Park, Hinsdale, IL (Sueanne Metz)Rosabelle Shi, Long Grove, IL (Brenda Huang)Evangeline Wang (Chicago, IL (Brenda Huang)Ashley Kim, Wilmettte, IL (Brenda Huang)	Elle Cho, Park Ridge, IL (Olga Kaler)         Riko Pang, Inverness, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)         Reina Hisada, Deerfield, IL (Betty Haag-Kuhnke)         Claire Moon, Palatine, IL (Hye-Sun Lee)         John Heo, Northbrook, IL (Almita Vamos)

JUDGES

# ASTERISK DENOTES ELEMENTARY / PRIMARY DIVISION JUDGE

Year	Piano Division	Violin Division		
	Geoffrey Duce (Illinois State University)	Hermine Gagné (Chicago Symphony Orchestra)		
	Haysun Kang (Loyola University)	Jasmine Lin (Roosevelt University, Formosa Quartet)		
2018	Robert Kania (Judson University)	Simon Michal (Chicago Symphony Orchestra)		
	Jue He* (Benedictine University)	Lauren Cless* (Chicago, IL)		
	Ligia Takei* (Merit School of Music, Dominican University)	Caroline Rothstein* (Northwestern University Music Academy)		
	Ludmila Lazar (Roosevelt University)	So Young Bae (Chicago Symphony Orchestra)		
	Daniel Pesca (University of Chicago)	Bing Grant (Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra)		
2017	George Vatchnadze (DePaul University)	Mihaela Ionescu (Chicago Symphony Orchestra)		
	Hyejin Joo* (Stellio Trio)	Seul Lee* (Minnesota Orchestra)		
	Young Whun Kim* (University of Illinois)	Youngsin Seo* (IUPUI Music Academy)		

C Writing a sijo poem in English was, for me, like having one foot in one world and the other foot in a completely different world. I was immediately interested in this contest because although growing up in this country has led me to assimilate to the American culture, I have always been very proud of being Korean and jumped at any opportunity to embrace my heritage. The sijo allowed me to express both my American side as well as my Korean side, representing the beautiful balance between two opposites that both carry so much meaning in my life. **>>** 

– Zion Kim, 2015 sijo category first place (11<sup>th</sup> grade, NY)

C Brandon was a student in my creative writing class the first semester of this school year. Coming into the class, Brandon didn't consider himself a significantly accomplished writer and certainly not a good poet. As he said, "I hated poetry. I didn't understand it and didn't take the time to learn how to comprehend it." He was, after all, a good-ole-boy: a starter on the football team and an avid outdoorsman. However, when we started the poetry unit, Brandon started to show some promise. He really started to shine when we wrote sijo. Each student only had to write one, but Brandon wrote three (all about hunting or fishing, his favorite topics: the cover of his final project for my class has a picture of him on a turkey hunt). Again, in his words: "We began writing a type of poem called sijo, and I wrote some really good sijos. [This] improved my writing a lot. I started writing with more detail and depth. It also made me realize I could do things that I never would have done before." I asked Brandon if I could enter one of his sijo in the contest, and he agreed, although this was clearly out of his comfort zone. I hope he does well in the contest, but even if doesn't, I'm proud that he's started to see himself in a way that he never did before. **>>** 

– Mr. Duane Johansen, English teacher (IN)

C When I first learned about sijo I was teaching World Literature to high school seniors. Most of my students were boys who had little interest in literature and who identified as math/science types. One day I announced that I had some good news and some bad news. They groaned. They wanted the bad news first. 'We're going to write poetry today.' Worse than they imagined. 'The good news is that the poems are only three lines.' Cheers all around. What I found interesting was that they liked learning the pattern of a sijo. That must have appealed to their math side. Once they understood the pattern they enjoyed coming up with poems and couldn't wait to show me their work. It was an unexpected success. **>>** 

– Ms. Tracy Kaminer, former English teacher (Atlanta, GA)

# 2018 - 2019 WRITING COMPETITION

# WINNERS

### HONORABLE MENTIONS (FRIEND OF THE PACIFIC RIM AWARD) NOT LISTED

		201	9		
	1	Young Eun Kim (Los Angeles, CA)		1	Lily Daniels (Chesapeake, VA)
Essay Adult	2	Isabella Cho (11 <sup>th</sup> grade, Wilmette, IL)	– Sijo – Adult	2	Kaitlyn Jurewicz (Dover, DE)
	3	Rachel Park (San Marcos, CA)	ndult	3	Ha Young Shin (Centreville, VA)
	1	Michael Athanassiadis (10 <sup>th</sup> grade, Miami, FL)		1	Sofia Liaw (12 <sup>th</sup> grade, Fayetteville, NY)
Essay	2	Allison Lee (11 <sup>th</sup> grade, El Segundo, CA)	Sijo	2	Hye In Lee (11 <sup>th</sup> grade, Cresskill, NJ)
Senior	3	Rachel Hur (11 <sup>th</sup> grade, Palisades Park, NJ)	Pre-college	3	Sophie Baltzan (9th grade, Lakewood, CO)
					Dorthea Kuemmerle (10 <sup>th</sup> grade, Chicago, IL)
_	1	Kevin Sohn (8 <sup>th</sup> grade, Irvine, CA)			
Essay Junior	2	Enni Harlan (7 <sup>th</sup> grade, Los Angeles, CA)			
Junior	3	Anderson Lai (6 <sup>th</sup> grade, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA)			
		201	8		
	1	Lucy Robertson (Marietta, GA)		1	Aidan Choo (10 <sup>th</sup> grade, Holmdel, NJ)
Essay Adult	2	Sarah Watanaskul (San Diego, CA)	Sijo	2	Gabe Foulk (10th grade, Indianapolis, IN)
	3	Lauren Place (Evanston, IL)		3	Luke Eckler (12 <sup>th</sup> grade, Chattanooga, TN)
_	1	Isabella Cho (10 <sup>th</sup> grade, Wilmette, IL)			
Essay Senior	2	Bertina Kudrin (11 <sup>th</sup> grade, Fort Lee, NJ)			
Semor	3	Owen Ming Kong Hawes (9 <sup>th</sup> grade, Burnaby, BC)			
_	1	Luke Park (8 <sup>th</sup> grade, Fullerton, CA)			
Essay Junior	2	Adam Kakuk (7 <sup>th</sup> grade, La Canada, CA)			
	3	Kaitlin Cobb (6 <sup>th</sup> grade, Palos Verdes Estates, CA)			

# JUDGES

Year	Essay	Sijo
	Molly Gaudry (University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT)	David McCann (Harvard University, Cambridge MA)
2019	Lee Herrick (Fresno City College, Fresno, CA)	Gyung-ryul Jang (Seoul National University, Seoul KOREA)
	Christine Lee (Berkeley, CA)	Mark Peterson (Brigham Young University, Provo UT)
	Molly Gaudry (University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT)	Gyung-ryul Jang (Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea)
2018	Christine Lee (Berkeley, CA)	David McCann (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA)
	Robert Yune (Greencastle, IN)	Mark Peterson (Brigham Young University, Provo, UT)

# 2019 writing competition WINNING ENTRIES

# SIJO CATEGORY ADULT DIVISION

# FIRST PLACE // LILY DANIELS (CHESAPEAKE, VA)

#### ABANDONED

This window reveals mysteries. Behind glass, a life that would have been. As I fade from your memory, You grow clearer in my mirror. Mom, Dad, do you search each other's faces

For the girl you threw away?

My name is Lily Daniels, and I am a rising sophomore at Old Dominion University. I am currently majoring in English with an emphasis in professional writing and minoring in Chinese studies. For the past three years, I have fenced at Tidewater Fencing Club, and my other hobbies include camping, hiking, knitting, and reading.

I learned about this competition through a flier hanging on a wall in the ODU English Department. While I enjoy reading and writing poetry, this was the first time I had encountered sijo. I learned a lot about Korean culture and writing sijo from this experience. My favorite part about writing sijo is the flexibility and creativity within the rules. I am thankful to the Sejong Cultural Society for holding the writing competition and increasing awareness about Korean Culture.

The inspiration for my sijo comes from my personal experience. I was left outside of a Family Planning Commission building in China when I was one week old. Even though I love my adoptive family and remember nothing about my first year, it was difficult for me to come to terms with being adopted. There are so many unanswerable questions about my past. Writing is one of the ways I wrestle with these questions and grow from my experiences. I hope that by sharing my writing others are able to understand and relate to my perspective.

# SECOND PLACE // KAITLYN JUREWICZ (DOVER, DE)

#### RAIN DANCE

Without fear, I offer myself to the darkening sky. I dare to wear her delicate, silver teardrops as my crown. Through the storm, I close my eyes and I *dance and dance and dance*. My name is Kaitlyn Jurewicz and I am a 10th grade English teacher at MOT Charter High School in Middletown, DE. My hobbies include teaching and performing for Unbranded Dance Academy, reading, writing, and participating in competitive trivia. I have always enjoyed writing structured poetry because every form presents its own unique set of challenges. While writing this poem, I was inspired by the inherent beauty of nature, as well as the feeling of freedom I experience while dancing. This was my first time writing sijo and I feel very proud to have received a second place award! Thank you to the Sejong Cultural Society for continuing to offer unique writing opportunities and inspiring me to explore genres outside of my comfort zone.

#### THIRD PLACE // HA YOUNG SHIN (CENTREVILLE, VA)

#### CONTEMPORARY LOVE

Swiping left, then left left right Judging faces without a thought Seeking love that fills the heart Oh could you be, my Mr. Right? Marriage bells ring left right left right For the fifth time this minute Ha Young Shin is a 1.5 generation Korean-American immigrant who is a financial analyst by day and an evening MBA student by night. In the future, she hopes to author a book and to start an educational non-profit to empower women and youth from underserved backgrounds. She also hopes to go on missions with her husband, whom she recently married.

In her free time, she loves to sing and play the guitar, ukulele, or the piano. Her personal hero is Jesus Christ and she hopes that she'll exemplify even a tiny glimpse of His love through her life.

Before this competition, Ha Young did not know what a sijo was. Having left the motherland at such a young age, she is grateful for this opportunity through which she was able to learn more about Korean literature, which she finds both poignant and powerful.

### HONORABLE MENTION // KIMBERLY RENSCH (FARGO, ND)

Winter comes in a day, blighting cold chasing away frail fall. I wrap myself in a cocoon of cheerless knitted armor. Delicate soldiers march, ordered by a relentless wind. Kimberly Rensch is a middle school language arts facilitator in Fargo, North Dakota, where she lives with her husband and dogs. She is a teacher leader in the local National Writing Project affiliate and leads an extracurricular writing group for middle school students.

### HONORABLE MENTION // RICHARD SASSO (NORTHLAKE, IL)

#### A SIJO FOR THE MARTIANS

Your rusty dot whose trajectory our ancestors trace amidst stars We name it for the God of our own belligerent dreams Poets chronicle futures until our silver robots reach your red metal shores I'm an English teacher at Hinsdale South High school in Darien, Illinois. My interests include literature, film, and food studies. I'm also involved with my church, Unity Temple in Oak Park. My future goals are to write more sijo for myself and others. One of my personal heroes among many is Argentine poet, writer and critic Jorge Luis Borges. My poem was inspired by my studies of the novel "The Martian Chronicles" by Ray Bradbury. I would like to thank the Sejong Cultural Society for giving me so many great opportunities to study this gem of a literary genre. And a shout out to Professor Sam Weller Columbia College in Chicago who got my creative writing bug inspired!

# HONORABLE MENTION // EMMANUELLE SASSON (WESTON, FL)

#### HEAVEN

I've been running in circles, achieving unfullfilment Is heaven even real, or an invented fantasy? If I don't make it to heaven, you can go without me



# SIJO CATEGORY PRE-COLLEGE DIVISION

# FIRST PLACE // SOFIA LIAW (FAYETTEVILLE, NY)

#### **ABSENTEE PARENTS**

Make their excuses when asked why they aren't at your concert. Pat yourself on the back when you see others holding bouquets. You have become your own cheerleader. This is a crucial skill. My name is Sofia Liaw and I'm currently a senior at Jamesville-Dewitt High School. I will attend Wesleyan University in the fall with the intention of majoring in Romance Languages and perhaps English as well. In my free time, I enjoys studying languages, writing, and learning about personal finance. I don't know quite yet what I want to do for a career but I would like to have a career that includes writing and learning about other people's lives and experiences. My heroes are slam poets Sierra DeMulder and Olivia Gatwood. I've been entering this competition since my sophomore year of high school thanks to my favorite English teacher Mr. Matthew Phillips who has encouraged me to write and seek out feedback.

# SECOND PLACE // HYE IN LEE (CRESSKILL, NJ)

#### A KISAENG'S SIJO

With the rhythm of the janggu, we dance like magpies, iridescent and spinning, hoping for freedom from the men and their hands feeling at our ivory ankles, calves, and thighs.



# THIRD PLACE TIE // SOPHIE BALTZAN (LAKEWOOD, CO)

The thrashing waves drown out the cries from the helpless victim Hearing the sky scream in agony the dark abyss swells below The ding wakes me from my hypnosis of the turning laundry My name is Sophie Baltzan. I am 15 years old and attend D'Evelyn Jr. Sr. High School in Lakewood, Colorado. I am on my school's volleyball team, swim team, and tennis team. I love to play sports and spend my time outside either hiking or paddle boarding when I'm not in school. I love to sing and play the guitar. Before this competition I had always found my writing to be mandatory and uninteresting. But once we got the assignment in my eastern civilization class I was fully engaged. My teacher, Mrs.Holland, asked our class to write a Sijo poem to conclude our unit about Korea. I thought for most of the class period before I started writing and I decided to go with an analogy for an everyday thing that everyone does. I wrote this poem not to win a competition but to see how far I could push myself with my writing skills. And I am so glad that I received this assignment to show me that my dreams of going into journalism might be a reality. I am so honored to be recognized along with so many other incredible writers and I want to thank Mrs. Holland for being an inspiring teacher who always wants us to grow and succeed. I also want to thank my mom and sister for always believing in me and inspiring me to do my best.

# THIRD PLACE TIE // DORTHEA KUEMMERLE (CHICAGO, IL)

Flowers swaying in the peaceful meadow, the birds are singing Captivated by the sight I sit and stare my mouth agape Then it fades. The pianist stands and bows as applause fills the air. My name is Dorthea Kuemmerle. I am a sophomore at William Howard Taft High School. I have always loved exploring different ways of writing, especially different ways of writing poetry. I also love to expand my knowledge of both Korean culture and the Korean language. My amazing teacher Mrs. Luna came to the class with the idea of writing sijo poems and taught us how to write one and the history of them. After I wrote my poem I decided to submit it to the writing competition.

I have played the piano all of my life and I also spend a lot of time hiking and being outside. The combination of those two things inspired me to create the sijo I did. I have always experienced that music can convey a number of things whether it is a scene or an emotion. I decided to try and find a way to express my love of poetry, music, and nature, and the sijo was perfect. In writing the sijo I was able to write a poem in which I showcased the transformative nature of the arts and nature.

I am truly honored to have been chosen for third place out of so many people. I would like to also thank my teacher Mrs. Luna as she was the one who taught me how to write a sijo and helped me to better understand the process of writing a sijo. I will continue to expand my knowledge of Korean culture in the future.

# HONORABLE MENTION // KATE DORAZIO (JAMESVILLE, NY)

#### THE FOREVER GAME

"Who is your biggest enemy?" I receive no answer It wasn't the jock in 10th grade or the teacher with thick glasses, You look in the mirror and see your biggest challenge yet. My name is Kate Dorazio and I am a freshman at Jamesville Dewitt High School in Syracuse, New York. I enjoy playing sports, but my favorite is softball. My goal is to go to college to play softball and hopefully make a career out of it. Writing has never really interested me until this year. When I got a notification from my creative writing teacher that there was a Sijo competition I thought it was just another one of those competitions that are next to impossible. Then once I read through what a sijo was, I knew this is something I could do, what's the worst that could happen? When I started brainstorming I had a million different ideas but I wanted to write about something that connected to my life. In softball and life in general you fail, and its important to not compare yourself to others. This is something I find very important, so I thought it was best to write about this.

# HONORABLE MENTION // KAITLYN LAUFENBERG (HARTLAND, WI)

#### FAMILY ARGUMENTS

My grandpa hosts a cramped Christmas, with four kids and six grandkids When they visit, fourteen strong voices bicker at one another. In silence, Grandpa smiles. Everyone he loves is here. My name is Kaitlyn Laufenberg and I am a senior at Arrowhead High School. I love to spend time with my friends outside of school. Currently, I am preparing to go off to college to study Criminal Justice. I am excited to pursue my dream of becoming a criminal lawyer one day. I have always been interested in helping others and can't wait to do that for a living.

This competition pushed my creativity. My English teacher, Ms. Jorgensen, was a huge help in digging deep into my creative side that has been hard for me to find. I am so grateful for her help and also to have been part of this competition!

### HONORABLE MENTION // KATIE LEE (LONG GROVE, IL)

#### DURING ONE OF CHOPIN'S NOCTURNES

Music engulfs the hall, the pianist leaping through octaves. As she slows, cold air whispers between fingers to hold a pause. Then it comes: the crinkled crackling of a lozenge unwrapping. My name is Katie Lee and I am a sophomore at Adlai E. Stevenson High School.

While I enjoy reading and writing poetry in my spare time, sijo remained very unfamiliar to me (in fact, I have never even heard of it before seeing the competition flyer!). I viewed sijo as a fresh opportunity not only to experiment with its different rhythms and twists, but also to reclaim a piece of my Korean culture, and for that I am extremely grateful for the opportunities that the Sejong Cultural Society has provided.

### HONORABLE MENTION // IAN SAIZA (SAN ANTONIO, TX)

Here in the United States we have the right to bear arms. It is legal in case you need to protect yourself or your house. I think that it is a good right because being part bear is cool.



## HONORABLE MENTION // ERIN VANEVENHOVEN (SUSSEX, WI)

#### ONE MORE DAY

An infant opens her eyes, takes her first breath, speaks her first sound; a mother stifles sorrow and masks her pain for a moment. One more day—couldn't cancer wait? An infant, without a grandpa. I am currently a junior at Arrowhead High School. Some of my hobbies include track and field, playing the flute and piccolo, and reading. I'm not sure what I want to do in my future but social work interests me. I have seen close relatives suffer the torture of the foster care system and how unjust it is, so I want to work at making it a little more bearable.

I really enjoyed writing this sijo poem and a few others I wrote in my creative writing class because of the format. The sijo structure gave me freedom to write about what I wanted without worrying about how to write it. While writing my sijo poem, I learned how to think outside the box and that there are many different ways to express what I want to say.

### ESSAY CATEGORY ADULT DIVISION

# "O. CUNICULI" BY PYUN HYE-YOUNG (편혜영 <토끼의 묘>)

Along with Han Kang and Jo Kyung-ran, Pyun Hye-young is among a group of new "international" Korean women writers whose work is characterized by its exploration of the darker aspects of contemporary society. Pyun is often compared to Western writers like Kafka and Camus, and to the Japanese writer Haruki Murakami. "O. Cuniculi" is a very representative Pyun story, which can be read on many levels as allegory, psychological realism, social criticism, and even surrealism.

What is it about the story that you find most powerful, and what insight does the story provide into Korean society (or society in general)? You may draw comparisons with other writers or provide a close reading of the story on its own terms. Be sure to explain the reason for your interpretation or comparison.

#### FIRST PLACE, ADULT DIVISION // YOUNG EUN KIM (LOS ANGELES, CA)

My name is Young Eun Kim and I am a writer based in Los Angeles. I was born in Korea but grew up in Vietnam, attending international schools where my mother taught Korean literature. I studied English & Creative Writing at Emory University for my undergraduate, and I have a MFA in Dramatic Writing from New York University.

I first heard about Sejong Cultural Society from a student I tutored, and when I read Pyun Hye-Young's "O. Cuniculi," I was struck by Pyun's strange and surreal world. Having lived most of my life as a foreigner, I am fascinated by stories about institutions that explore the rules and culture that hold the system together, and how they are shaped by the people in it, yet also shape them in return. I think Pyun's terrifying encapsulation of our contemporary society will continue to haunt me. But it was truly a pleasure reading and studying this work, and I am grateful I got the opportunity to write about it.

#### THE TERRIFYING CYCLE OF ISOLATION IN "O. CUNICULI"

When the nameless protagonist picks up a stranded rabbit in Hye-Young Pyun's *O. Cuniculi*, he does so only because this adoption has an expiration date: he will abandon the rabbit when his temporary work in the city ends. This is the ethos that permeates the world of *O. Cuniculi*, where relationships are temporal and facile, where people are nameless and their actions weightless. The most devastating part of this world is that it purges any possibilities of a change. The man who desperately yearns for connections still chooses to abandon the rabbit at the end, and thus Pyun shows how this nightmarish cycle of isolation continues.

It is ironic that the man's superior describes their job as being "a bridge between cities"—the world depicted in *O. Cuniculi* is one where there are no bridges between people. Like the anonymous protagonist who is simply called "the man", Pyun does not assign any names and instead labels characters by their job positions, like "section leader" and "superior". This anonymity does not give the characters universality as it does in fairy tales or fables, but instead highlights the collective lack of individuality and personhood. For instance, when the man's section leader changes to a different person, he is still called a section leader: without a name, this change is unnoticeable in the language. People are not ony nameless, but rootless. The man arrives at the city as a "stranger" and quickly notices that everyone else is there temporarily. Pyun thus shows a world that is both transient and indifferent to individuals, and in such a place, isolation is the norm.

Still, in the beginning of the story, the man desperately wants to connect with others. When he finds the rabbit stranded in the park, he feels relief "at the thought that he was not the only one in this world with eyes red from exhaustion". As the man takes the rabbit home, Pyun beautifully captures this moment of connection: "the slow rhythm of its breath and the twitch capillaries beneath its thin skin captivated the man". The man does not just feel sympathy, but empathy and commonality in this helpless, abandoned rabbit. The man's struggle for connection is also shown when the man visits his superior's apartment every day. He first feels "bothered" by his superior's mysterious disappearance, then increasingly finds it "intolerable" that he has no one to talk to in the city. When he kicks and yells at the door, "I know you're in there! Open up!", his declaration reflects his desperate yearning for a relationship.

Yet, the city eventually engulfs the man, as he ultimately resigns and takes part of this culture of indifference and isolation. Part of his resignation comes from the nihilistic realization that this is a world that does not allow any changes. When the man's section leader is replaced, "everything stayed the same", just like the time he purposely fudges his assignment to see if his error causes any consequences but "nothing came of it". Even when a killer stabs and wounds people with a knife, he remains anonymous—vaguely identified as "a single man in his thirties or forties" on the news—and soon even the brief fear and paranoia in the city fades: "in the end, nothing happened, and the commotion ... quieted down". In a world that is indifferent to names and individualities, actions also do not leave a mark—they are meaningless.

Pyun first signals the man's transformation when he teaches a young recruit and realizes "he was saying the same thing his own superior had told him before his transfer", even repeating his superior's hunting dog metaphor. Then he follows his superior's footstep by not showing up to work. A strange thing happens: just like he did at his superior's apartment, someone starts to knock on his door every day at the same time. But now the man is on the other side of the door, refusing to open up to the stranger who desperately wants the connection. He finishes this cycle by abandoning the rabbit, and the man watches as the rabbit—just like the superior—"vanished into the bushes as it knew what it was supposed to do".

While Pyun never explicitly states what is at the root of this widespread indifference, we see a hint of it when she describes the widespread abandonment of rabbits. Pyun describes that families

abandon rabbits because they realize essay rabbits are not affectionate or educational, "not so much pets as freeloaders". In short, caring for rabbits does not constitute a fair transaction. This logic for abandonment becomes more chilling when applied to people: you are disposable when you cannot prove your worth. Pyun adds that there is a larger social element as well to this response: "with the economy always uncertain and hard times never far off, even family members could look disposable". There is a parallel that can be drawn to the contemporary Korean society that is seeing a rise in the "Honjok" culture. The term combines the word "hon" (alone) and "jok" (tribe), and captures the growing tendency in the young generation of Koreans that live a more solitary life instead of a communal one. While there are positive side to the increased sense of autonomy and independence, Pyun shows what happens when this individualism is taken to the extreme, especially in a lens of consummerism that sees relationships as transactions. In such a world, both individuality and community break down.

Pyun's heightened, nightmarish vision of the modern world—a world "full of abandoned pets"—serves as a powerful warning for what happens when relationships are measured only through its use. The city that banishes the impracticality in relationships become sterile and inhumane. Pyun inversely points out that it is only through the net of connections and social world that human life can truly flourish. Se-

# SECOND PLACE, ADULT DIVISION // ISABELLA CHO (WILMETTE, IL)

# EXAMINING THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF CAPITALISM THROUGH "O. CUNICULI"

As humans, we often perceive ourselves as above the systems we utilize. Though we inhabit a capitalist society, we refuse to believe we have been consumed by the exploitative attitude inherent to this economic system. Rarely do we admit that the pervasiveness of capitalist thought has caused us to economize what should never be quantified: the value of living entities. Through "O. Cuniculi," Pyun Hye-young examines how capitalism informs our social behavior. By portraying the repetition of societal issues, she challenges readers to reappraise their personal agency and empathic ability in a society that often perceives its inhabitants more as objects than as humans.

Pyun emphasizes that contemporary capitalism has translated into the way people view other living entities. Towards the beginning of the story, the protagonist muses, "With the economy always uncertain and hard times never far off, even family members could look disposable". His observation reflects the economic mentality through which people view even their closest companions. When reflecting on the abandonment of pets, he explains that with the prospect of financial hardship, "parents couldn't stomach the thought of spending a decade caring for a rabbit" that does "nothing but chew hay". Rather than appreciating the animal for its inherent value, people ascertain its utility in relation to their personal gain. Upon determining that the animal is not a material asset, they discard it.

The exploitative attitude used to evaluate others perpetuates the contemporary perspective of humans as disposable entities. When describing the nature of office work, the protagonist's superior states, "you're a hunting dog". This degrading metaphor elucidates the objectification of humans in contemporary society, one strengthened by the instrumentalist paradigm used to view individuals. Rather than an appreciated member of his office community, the protagonist is merely a tool used to find data. Later in the story, as he observes the absence of his former superior, the protagonist realizes that "just because the section leaders was different did not mean anything had changed". The section leader is swiftly replaced by another individual. No effort is made to determine his whereabouts; he is simply another component of a larger system who, having done his job, now has no purpose and consequently does not matter.

The treatment of individuals as instruments contributes to their passive role in society. This dehumanization reduces individuals, perpetuating the distorted perception that people should conform to established patterns of behavior, as opposed to generate their own opinions. When acclimating to his office job, the protagonist becomes confused by the nature of his work. Rather than guiding him, the protagonist's superior states, "Only three-year-olds ask how to do some-thing before trying first. They whine to be spoon-fed". By stifling the protagonist's questions, the superior perpetuates a culture of oppressive conformity. The protagonist's abandonment of his rabbit can be explained through similar terms. Despite his criticism of discarding pets, he chooses

My name is Isabella "Izzy" Cho, and I am currently a junior at North Shore Country Day School in Winnetka, Illinois. As a Korean American, I am constantly striving to find new ways to engage with my dual heritage. I was especially excited about the Sejong Writing Competition because it afforded me the opportunity to learn more about contemporary South Korea through the lens of literature, one of my primary passions. Reading Pyun Hye-young's "O. Cuniculi" allowed me to challenge my preconceived notions regarding the human capacity for personal agency, change, and empathy, as well as how the capitalist structure so deeply entrenched in contemporary society inherently informs the ways in which people perceive one another.

Next year as a senior, I will be pursuing an interdisciplinary independent study that explores South Korea through the dual lens of history and literature, parsing formative events in the nation's history including the Korean War, the nation's remarkable post-war economic growth, and more contemporary social developments including the #MeToo movement. My role models are most definitely my fabulous parents, older sister, and twin. In my free time, I love reading and writing poetry, playing tennis, working as a teaching assistant at my local Korean school, and spending time with my family.

to "ruthlessly abandon once his time up". His behavior demonstrates his belief that he does not have the power to alter the pre-established pattern of abandonment, a mindset strengthened by the paradigm of humans as homogenous beings rather than individual thinkers. The cyclical nature of dangerous social patterns reinforces the lack of agency with which people in the protagonist's society live. Despite having experienced confusion when adjusting to office life, the protagonist fails to guide his younger colleague when he encounters these same challenges. Instead, he repeats the exact behavior of his superior, realizing that he "was saying the same things his own superior had told him". The parallelism between these two interactions demonstrates the passivity with which people witness social issues, a behavior exacerbated by the paradigm of humans as thoughtless instruments. Rather than challenge questionable dynamics, Pyun's characters internalize them, ultimately perpetuating the behaviors they once perceived as problematic.

Through her portrayal of the exhibitionist man, Pyun emphasizes the difficulty of expressing individuality in a society fixated on conformity. The exhibitionist, a rather disruptive character in an otherwise coherent narrative, "ran around stabbing people in public with a knife". It is particularly noteworthy that the exhibitionist possesses the most personal agency out of all Pyun's characters. In a society that treats its inhabitants as mere means to an end, the exhibitionist challenges conformity by harming others. Pyun deliberately makes the socially disparaged exhibitionist the single character who attempts to subvert societal stagnancy. In doing so, she accentuates the struggle of

expressing individuality in a socially acceptable manner.

Despite the bleak society she renders, Pyun implies the potential for social change through glimpsed moments of human connection. When he first gazes into the rabbit's eyes, the protagonist is filled with "relief at the thought that he was not the only one in this world with eyes red from exhaustion". Though the protagonist possesses a dismally monochrome lifestyle, spending "most of his day in silence," he momentarily sees himself reflected in another living being. During the exhibitionist crisis, the protagonist similarly yearns for human connection, remarking that being alone in a time of heightened danger "was intolerable". However, his most emphatic revelation is his concluding remark: "The world is full of abandoned pets". Through this culminating epiphany, the protagonist realizes that his angst, one generated from impressions of abandonment, anonymity, and a lack of fulfillment, are not unique. Rather, in the capitalist society he inhabits, it is something that all humans experience.

Through "O. Cuniculi," Pyun admonishes of the dangers of allowing capitalist thought to dehumanize our perception of other individuals. Pyun's is a story particularly immediate in today's sociopolitical landscape fraught with hyper-polarization: In a time when empathy is a rare quality, Pyun cautions readers against rendering the world solely through what is safe, convenient, and personally accessible. We reserve the power to see ourselves in others and, if we truly desire change, are collectively obligated to act on this realization of shared humanity.

## ESSAY CATEGORY SENIOR DIVISION

# AN APPOINTMENT WITH HIS BROTHER BY YI MUN-YOL (이문열 <아우와의 만남>)

Although it was written in 1994, Yi Mun-yol's *An Appointment with His Brother* is still highly relevant today, particularly with North Korea's almost continuous presence in international news headlines. What does the novella show you about North Korea, its culture, and its people that is different from what you imagined from the media coverage of North Korea? What does it tell you about the complex issue of reunification and the potential problems it raises for both North and South? Given what you learn from reading the novella, how would you describe its underlying central theme? Use examples from the text and from the media to illustrate your points.

# FIRST PLACE, SENIOR DIVISION // MICHAEL ATHANASSIADIS (MIAMI, FL)

#### THE LAYERS OF KOREA'S COMPLEXITY

Long, neat rows of marching soldiers, massive rolling missiles, and a tight iron fist choking freedom from its citizens are what the Western world has come to know about North Korea through media coverage. Yi Mun Yol's novella An Appointment with his Brother offers a more complex view. With characters and situations that challenge the extant narrative regarding the two Koreas, Yi creates a work layered with nuanced undertones that peel away the goodversus- evil facade we so often see. The story mirrors Yi's own life, fraught with the emotion and antagonism that come with a family torn apart by its patriarch. The narrator searches for the father who had abandoned him and defected to North Korea four decades earlier. Hearing of his father's death, the protagonist, who is the firstborn, decides it's time to meet his younger halfbrother. Arrangements for the "appointment" take place in the border town of Yanji, located in a limbo-like zone *The Economist* recently called "the third Korea," home to a Korean-Chinese ethnic minority ("China's Ethnic-Korean Enclaves Have Become Less Korean"). Whereas Western viewers see the DMZ as "littered with scores of mines and barbed wire fences" and "the scariest place on earth," this area in China acts as a similar zone of cultural buffering between the communist and free world not otherwise widely known (Maresca). The existence of a Korean prefecture inside China is one of the first surprising insights for a Western reader.

While North Korea remains an isolated stronghold for the Kim Dynasty, smuggling across borders thrives. Whether it be an antique smuggler or a middleman trafficking humans, the ease of access to both sides of Korea, as well as to China, is unexpected. Although one would anticipate a writer to expound on the difficulty of an illegal journey, Yi's deliberate ambiguity over the brother's border crossing points to the opposite. Kim, who brings the brother across the border, writes the narrator an "innocuous letter" so as not to explicitly convey the message of the text, suggesting the tight grip over private messages; however, the use of code makes for a fairly easy bypass of the law to allow the clandestine meeting to take place (Yi 10-11). Yi also includes the businessman, who smuggles historic artworks and curios from the North and sells them for a markup. The "great many paintings, callig-raphies, and old books owned by ordinary civilians" is striking for a citizenry living under a totalitarian regime (Yi 55). Yi thus corrects typical media narratives of North Koreans devoid of culture or personal items in their possession. While Chinese cultural objects are closely watched in customs, the border inspectors rarely understand the value of Korean treasures, allowing for smuggling to take place.

As the story unfolds, the difficulties of reunification become more apparent. Yi pits the unification man, who represents cooperation between all Koreans, against the businessman, who believes that unification would be financially disastrous for many. On the one hand, the businessman raises the idea of moving forth with caution, as "the South Korean economy would deplete on account of unification expenses" and "the North Koreans would be suffering from a sense of relative deprivation" (Yi 18). On the other hand, the unification man believes in brotherly acceptance for a better future, no matter the initial economic consequences. The unification man opposes the idea of smuggling altogether and those who "confuse good citizens" into believing cold, hard capitalism can cure their troubles. (Yi 60). In fact, it is even more complicated in reality. As pointed out by the *New York Times*, after decades of hearing about how Korea was, younger Southerners "now view unification as irrelevant" (NYT Editorial Board). Even in the novella, fundamental arguments over reunification between Southerners are apparent. If the South cannot unify over the issue, then the dream of reunifying will stay a dream.

Something else Westerners rarely hear about is how birthright can affect one's social position, which job he gets, or how he is treated by his peers. Central to this story is the stigmatization people feel for deeds or wrongdoings by others in their family or simply being "other" themselves. Yi describes how much the father's families are looked down upon in both countries: in the South, they are stigmatized for the father's defecting as a communist; in the North, they are characterized and being a "Southerner." They were denied high positions in North Korean government, unable to attend top universities, not allowed to apply to jobs such as the Social Security Minister "because of the blood relations Father had in the South" (Yi 64). The narrator had felt scared for his life in an anti-communist country in a family scarred by defection. As a result, the half-brothers realize that they have more in common than previously thought.

Yi uses a seemingly casual conversation between a restaurant patron and worker to illustrate the disgrace of being a foreigner in an alien land. The worker moved to Seoul with her husband for economic opportunity. When employers found out she was from Yanji, "they looked down on and tried to cheat" even going as far as "taking sexual advantage of" (Yi 21). The stereotypes of Northerners as "cheap, simple workers" and Southerners as "capitalist scum" will need to be left behind if reunification is ever to take place, as the stigma highlights the schism between South and North Korea.

An Appointment with his Brother challenges readers to think more deeply about the nature of Korean society. Yi Mun Yol brings to light human interactions not regularly reported by the media, which emphasize the militaristic back and forth between Kim Jong Un and the outside world. The inclusion of the midway border town of Yanji, the access to China through smuggling of cultural objects and humans, the importance of birthright, effects of stigma, and the constant Southern debates over reunification would surprise those used to media coverage from local and national publications.

My name is Michael Athanassiadis and I'm currently a sophomore at Miami Country Day School in Miami, Florida. My fascination with the politics in East Asia from the Cold War and beyond, coupled with my English teacher's suggestion, led me to the Sejong Cultural Society's essay competition. Yi Mun Yol's An Appointment with his Brother opened my eyes to the many layers of tension and societal differences found in the Korean peninsula. Yi was able to capture familial qualities in the narrator's brother, a North Korean, which really made me think about the fact that, although a government may inculcate ignorance upon a citizenry, individuality is always present. A great thanks to my mother, who has taught me to live as a global citizen and think of cultures outside my own, and the Sejong Cultural Society for this opportunity to read and write, which has given me depth in an area I once found black and white.

#### SECOND PLACE, SENIOR DIVISION // ALLISON LEE (EL SEGUNDO, CA)

My name is Allison Lee, and I'm a junior at South High School in California. I related to many of Yi Mun Yol's characters in An Appointment With His Brother and their struggles with cultural identity. However, I felt unfamiliar with many other characters' vulnerable sentiments surrounding Korean peninsular relations, which demand more consideration by the Western media than they do presently. I hope to read more literature by Korean authors in the future, especially during such a turbulent time in Korean history. Thank you to Ms. Shannon Cho for introducing me to the Sejong essay competition, and thank you to the Sejong Cultural Society for this opportunity to deepen and present my understanding of such an eye-opening piece.

#### HUMANIZING ALIENS

For decades, Western media has portrayed North Korean citizens as aliens. Their frequent narrative portrayal as nearly inhuman occupants of some foreign planet has resulted in virulent discrimination and estrangement. However, in *An Appointment with His Brother*, Yi Mun-yol offers a confounding perspective. Contrary to the media in its doctrinaire representations of unification, Yi portrays the complicated relationship between North Korea and South Korea through the strained relationship between two half-brothers. Yi's portrayal of the North Korean brother acts to eliminate feelings of distance held by audiences by introducing a common element of humanity that the media has failed to convey.

While the media depicts North Koreans as having blind devotion for their government, Yi depicts lesser-represented sentiments, unfamiliar to Western headlines, through the North Korean brother. Although at first the narrator's brother is passionate in voicing support for North Korea, after connecting with his elder brother, he confesses the struggles that he has endured under the North Korean government due to his father's ties to South Korea. Their father, who defected from South Korea, was loyal to the North Korean regime, yet he and his family were stained by his "blood relations ... in the South" (64), unable to be treated with any societal respect. The younger brother's drunken monologue at the end of the story reveals his unseen internal conflict. He confesses that in agreeing to meet with his brother, he was preparing to meet, "a lifelong enemy ... an invisible curse" (64). Despite viewing his family as the cause of the tremendous pain he endured and representative of the South Korea that he despises, the younger brother eventually admits that after seeing his elder brother, he "wanted to hug and cry, not to abuse and curse" (64). In seeing him, the younger brother realizes that the hatred he had felt was a pain shared with his brother from their father's defection—symbolically, the split between the countries. Yi's development of the brothers' relationship around their shared grief and hardship reveals more complexity and emotion behind the intense rivalry between North Korea and South Korea than the media portrays. Instead, the rivalry is a wounded reaction to the destructive stigma that has permeated into the entirety of Korean citizens' lives.

Misrepresentation, by South Koreans and North Koreans of the others' country and of themselves, as well as by the Western media and its audience, heavily burdens efforts towards unification. The commemoration ceremonies illustrate these cultural misconceptions. Both brothers are unfamiliar with the formalities of the other's commemoration ceremonies; the narrator's brother "has no idea of what the spirit box, the spirit tablet, and the end of the mourning period were" (29), and the narrator labels his brother's ceremonies as "just family gatherings in remembrance of the dead without any ritual" (29). Both brothers take offense to the ignorance, triggering "animosity" (29). This exchange represents the state of the relationship between North Korea and South Korea, where ignorance towards differing cultural expressions and misinterpreted intentions intensify the resentment within an already distorted rivalry. However, Yi suggests that efforts to understand and connect with unfamiliar people can clear misunderstanding and lead to genuine, positive relationships. After having the traditional ritual for their father, the brothers find newfound closeness from understanding each other's cultures: "Somehow the bundle looked bigger than when we'd brought it" (48). Although the brothers began their exchange full of disdain, acting to understand one another leads to consideration and fulfillment, a suggestion Yi makes for the progress in North Korea-South Korea relations and for the Western media's understanding of it.

Another misconception hindering progress in Yi's eyes is both countries' moral prejudices, which Yi also establishes through the metaphor of the brothers. After hearing his brother's pointed assertion that South Koreans were "money-mad" (39), the narrator is compelled to recognize the validity of the claim. He realizes that he was "innocent of few of the financial malpractices ... since the cleaning-up drive of the Kim Young Sam government began last year" (39). The narrator bought his infrastructure by ignoble means, and his loan applications, critical to his present success, were illegally approved. Although it has become ordinary to criticize the corruption in North Korea, Yi's depiction of the South Korean brother reveals the similarly faulted nature of his own country, which is nonetheless more positively portrayed by Western media. Similarly, the narrator's brother confesses his unhappiness with North Korea, refuting the slogan through which he used to defend his country's honor: "A man who received more from the country than he gave to it'—that's just a platitude not worth more than a popular song lyric" (65). Again, Yi depicts the narrator's brother's suppressed feelings of betrayal by his country, but also breaks the North Korean stereotype as completely accepting and loyal to his or her country and the existence of similarly immoral issues in their own, the brothers portray a realistic picture of the friction between North Korea, Yi demonstrates the unclear nature of the situation: while North Korea is not free from wrongdoing, South Korea also

has its share of immorality, and the media's faultless picture of South Korea is simply an inaccurate portrayal of reality.

In a time period where possibilities of Korean unification continue to reappear in headlines, the perspectives provided by Yi offer muchneeded wisdom concerning the effects of prejudice, calling into question the morality of the media's antagonistic, immoral portrayal of the relationship between North Korea and South Korea. Is the West not also at fault for the wounds of betrayal felt by Koreans in its continual affirmation of these misconceptions? As events relevant to unification continue to transpire and as lines continue to blur, it is vital for all those involved, especially in the media, to recognize the complex entanglement of issues within the situation and the far-reaching influence of their actions. **\*** 

# ESSAY CATEGORY JUNIOR DIVISION

# KOREAN FOLKTALES

Korea has a rich tradition of storytelling, and its folktales reflect important aspects of its history and culture. Many of the old historical texts are full of local legends and myths. Folk tales can be entertaining and educational, but they can also strike a deep chord in our personal lives, and many Korean folktales demonstrate the universal tragedies and triumphs of daily life in the family.

**TOPICS** (choose one): Each topic refers to the list of Korean folktales found on our folktales index page. When writing your essay, please be sure to include specific references to the tale you chose to write about. In your analysis or interpretation of the stories, you may also want to make references to your own life experiences. For the 2019 Writing Competition, we used "Congjui Potjui: Korean Cinderella", "The Curse of Three-Year Hill", and "The Golden Ax and the Silver Ax".

- Select one folktale from the list and explain your interpretation of the story. What is its importance? Why do you think it was created? Which Korean folktale character do you relate to best and why? Would you make the same decisions as that character?
- If you could change one of these folktales, what would you change and why? Do you disagree with something the tale is trying to convey?

# FIRST PLACE, JUNIOR DIVISION // KEVIN SOHN (IRVINE, CA)

#### THE CURSE OF THREE-YEAR HILL: AN ODE TO THE OLD AND AN ANTHEM TO THE NEW

"A tradition without intelligence is not worth having." These words, spoken by the poet T.S. Eliot, are the basis of my reading of "The Curse of Three-Year Hill". The characters and plot in the Korean folktale, retold by Dr. Dongwol Kim Roberson and Jimmy D. Roberson, demonstrate the contrast between established beliefs and open-minded reinterpretations, along with the resulting conflict.

Farmer Yoon represents a deference to a fixed way of thinking, following the same routine each year—farm everyday with family, collect the crops in the fall, and trade their bounty with a neighboring village at harvest time. His lifestyle is steady, untouched by anything more than the slightest amount of change, and he takes comfort in knowing that what he is doing has been done for the last few decades. However, the moment he slips on Three-Year Hill, a drastic change is introduced into his life—he has only three more years to live. Due to the deep held stigma surrounding the Hill, he believes that slipping on the hill was an event of catastrophic consequences, rather than applying his own judgement to the situation and realizing it wasn't so bad. His fixed mindset leads to him spiralling down into despair, and he becomes inconsolable in his grief.

Meanwhile, the strange young boy that comes to help Farmer Yoon in his time of misery represents a new way of looking at things. He comes into the farmer's life out of nowhere, and offers a suggestion for Farmer Yoon to do something that seems completely out of the ordinary. He

My name is Kevin Sohn, and I am an 8th grader at Sierra Vista Middle School. My hobbies include fencing, clarinet, and coding. Reading books is something that I do frequently as well. My favorite books currently would be *Name of the Wind* and *When Breath Becomes Air.* While those two books are pretty much at the opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to genre, I still enjoy them and switch back and forth between them depending on my mood.

As a Korean American, I feel that I need to get more familiar with traditional Korean culture as well as its contemporary movies, music or products provided by mass media. Reading a folktale was a good place to start and writing about it helped me appreciate more. I thank the Sejong Cultural Society for this opportunity. asks Farmer Yoon to fall down the hill again. The suggestion seems to mock Farmer Yoon's predicament, and as such, Farmer Yoon reacts with spite. His established beliefs clash with the new ideas brought by the young boy, and he refuses to accept this novel interpretation of his situation. The boy has to beg and plead with the farmer in order for Farmer Yoon to finally listen to him. The farmer rolls down the hill several times to have three more years added to his lifespan each time. After doing so, a divine voice booms out of a tree and admonishes Farmer Yoon for his lack of wisdom until then.

While at first glance the folktale may be arguing for the importance of positivity in negative situations, the actual message of the story goes deeper. "The Curse of Three-Year Hill" is preaching the necessity of being able to see things from a different angle, to understand both the perspective of others and new arguments even when not fully agreeing with them. Farmer Yoon's mindset would have only led to disaster, as he would have continued to believe until death that he would only have three years to live.

At the same time, asking for a new perspective must still lie within the realm of reason. To tell a man who has believed something his whole life to discard that belief off of nothing is unreasonable, and not what "The Curse of Three-Year Hill" is arguing for. Even in this folktale, the young boy isn't a complete twist from what Farmer Yoon's traditions dictate. He shows respect to his elder, calling him Grandfather, and quotes "the ancient golden words" to support his claims. His interpretation of what the Three-Year Hill was completely radical to how Farmer Yoon thought, but the core beliefs around which his perception of the hill grew were the traditional ones. Rather than simply obeying convention, he chose to revisit it with fresh eyes and more positive viewpoints on life. What "The Curse of Three-Year Hill" is suggesting is for people to think more like that young boy, to be able to have a flexible mindset and propose new ideas based off of what has been previously believed.

"The Curse of Three-Year Hill" is a folktale created for a wide and varied audience. Even when looking at its face value, it teaches the importance of positivity and creativity in the darkest of situations, a commonality among many stories of its genre. When you look beneath the surface, "The Curse of Three-Year Hill" is a complex study of the interplay between a long-established way of thinking and a fresh reassessment. The farmer and the boy are symbolic representations of different groups of people in society—those who hold to conventional beliefs, and those who build from them. A slight ironic twist to this story, however, is the fact that many would have most likely sympathized with Farmer Yoon in his terrible predicament as well. The readers, upon learning his fall on Three-Year Hill, would look for resolutions like a blessing from a hidden god or some magic that would resolve his problems. But that was entirely different from the real ending. The story could also be poking fun at the reader in a subtle manner, pointing out that they too are foolish for thinking in the same way as Farmer Yoon.

In the end, some may argue that "The Curse of Three-Year Hill" has no impact on our present day society. But they couldn't be more wrong. This folktale is dedicated to the entrepreneurs of today. It's an anthem to those who take old ideas and turn them into something incredible, innovators who constantly push the limits of our imagination. As Steve Jobs said, "Here's to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes ... the ones who see things differently ... they push the human race forward." And "The Curse of Three-Year Hill" teaches us to be those crazy ones. So

### SECOND PLACE, JUNIOR DIVISION // ENNI HARLAN (LOS ANGELES, CA)

# A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON THE CURSE OF THREE-YEAR HILL

Have you ever questioned why the human species has made such significant achievements in the short time we have been on this planet? While humans are not the strongest of species, we possess a gift that other species do not; an incredible capability of storytelling. Through storytelling, important morals and critical life lessons are passed down from generation to generation, allowing our society to continuously advance as we learn from past mistakes and achievements. Stories are not only a source of amusement, they teach us life lessons, and "The Curse of Three-Year Hill" is no exception. In the story the author uses superstitions to explore growth mindset, a concept recently brought to public attention by Carol Dweck, one of the world's leading researchers in the psychology of motivation and progress, to examine different perspectives on life. The main purpose of "The Curse of Three-Year Hill" is to teach its reader how to take a positive view when faced with challenges, rather than viewing the world in a fixed way limited by superstitions.

The beginning of this well-known folktale depicts the hardworking Farmer Yoon toiling happily on the fields with his family. However, all of the villagers fear the curse of three-year hill, a legend warning that if one falls while crossing the hill, only three years await them in their remaining life. Unfortunately for Yoon, three-year hill is his only pathway to the next village where his business in trade lies. One day, forgetting his usual extreme precaution, Yoon takes a tumble on the dreaded sloping path. Once he realizes that he is cursed, Yoon wastes his days moaning about his fate. His plight is turned around by a sharp-witted young boy who is able to solve Yoon's crisis through clever mathematics, showing Yoon that rolling down the hill repetitively will double his years infinitely. Yoon learns a lesson to live in the moment and look at situations from a different perspective. The typical happily ever after ending should not only leave the reader satisfied, but have a greater impact on them as well. Before the boy comes to the farmer's rescue Yoon is stuck on the idea that he cannot live longer than three years. Farmer Yoon lacks an important quality: a growth mindset. It is by no accident that the author chose to give his protagonist such an evident fault--Yoon's weakness is well incorporated into the theme. Throughout the story, the farmer shows that he has a fault when it comes to persevering and looking at situations in a different way, causing the reader to question the character's morals, and possibly their own.

A growth mindset is the ability to be open to improvement and willing to look at situations from a different perspective, whereas a fixed mindset is to believe that qualities such as intelligence are fixed traits that cannot be developed. In the folktale, Farmer Yoon's actions show that he has a fixed mindset when faced with a traumatic situation. Rather than searching for a solution and trying to improve his fading health, he spends his days lamenting his misfortune in what Carol Dweck refers to as "the tyranny of now." Yoon focuses on the fact that right now, he is destined to die rather than trying to find a solution. The author evidently made Yoon's fixed mindset observable in order to articulate this idea.

This folktale is also a distinct portrayal of how superstitions affected the lives of people long ago, specifically in Korea. While Yoon and the other villagers refer to the curse of three-year hill as a known fact, the reliability of the dreaded curse becomes questionable as the story develops. While Yoon might have gotten sick because of the curse, there is also a possibility that the farmer's depression and anxiety concerning the future both escalated to such an extreme level that they were the true source of his illness. This interpretation might cause the reader to believe that the curse of three-year hill is nothing more than a mere superstition. Growing up with a Korean mother, I was introduced to superstitions at an early age. My mother has often advised me of notions such as not shaking your legs (which shakes your luck away), not writing your name in red (which is only used for the deceased), and not giving shoes as presents (because the receiver might run away from you). She defends these superstitions by saying that such ideas are not petty beliefs but wisdom derived from common sense long ago. While this is true, the author understood that some superstitions were outdated, and therefore created this story to explain how people allow superstitions to impact their lives unreasonably.

Fixed and growth mindset are personified by Yoon and the boy, but I feel that at certain times I relate to either, and presume that in such a situation I might have acted depressed like Yoon, yet still willing to search for solutions like the boy. It seems to be an aspect of human nature that we all get stuck in our routines and beliefs, yet we sometimes have moments of inspiration where we are able to think past the barriers of the present reality. Not unlike Yoon's unchangeable perspective on his situation, superstitions are fixed and set limitations on thinking and behavior. To be free and creative, false restrictions cannot be set, because such constraints set a limit to thinking critically. Without these crucial abilities in the thinking process, storytelling would not exist. Only with the ability to think without predetermined possibilities are we able to express morals artistically. Using the ability of surpassing the boundaries of non-creative thinking to develop and narrate stories is the source of our societies' cultural evolution over time, and the author helped preserve this way of thinking through the creation of "The Curse of Three-Year Hill". \*\*

My name is Enni Harlan and I am a seventh grader at Girls Academic Leadership Academy, Dr. Michelle King School for STEM. I have been playing piano for nearly ten years, and I aspire to become a concert pianist. I feel that I am drawn to music and writing because both allow me to express myself without speaking. I love to read, especially classic literature. My favorite authors are Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and Louisa May Alcott. Many of these authors' books portray headstrong, defiant women as their protagonists, not unlike themselves. Since female authors were uncommon in the 18th-19th centuries, these women had to fight to get their books published and recognized, and I find that very inspiring. I am also very passionate about the environment, and am actively learning and fighting for climate and environmental justice. Currently, my personal hero is Greta Thunberg, who inspired me to follow her movement, School Strike 4 Climate.

I am biracial with Korean heritage, and have been introduced to two different cultures. Although I was familiar with traditional Korean folktales growing up, participating in this contest allowed me to dive deeper into the philosophy and culture of ancient Korea. In writing my essay, I realized that the morals and concepts woven into these stories are still deeply embedded into our society today. I am grateful to my English teacher, Ms. Knopfler, for introducing this contest to me, and to the Sejong Cultural Society for providing this unique experience.

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# LINDA SUE PARK ON BRINGING KOREAN CULTURE TO AMERICA

I stumbled across a type of Korean poetry called sijo. When I learned about it I was delighted, it was such a beautiful poem; the sijo I was reading were wonderful and I was enchanted about them. And then I got really angry, because it seemed to me like almost everyone in America knows about haiku. Students study haiku in school—third grade, fourth grade, teachers all do it—haiku unit. They circulate on social media. There are haiku about Microsoft. They became a part of American culture. I like haiku, don't get me wrong, but how come everyone knows about haiku but almost no one knows about sijo? ...

There's a danger when an entire people don't tell enough stories. Some cultures are better at this than others. **We Koreans, we need to get better at it. We need to get better at telling and sharing our stories.** Even the things like the label of a model minority, that's someone else's story. That's someone else putting their label on us. We don't control that narrative ... A lot of young people, sometimes Korean-Americans, say 'I read your book when I was little, and it was so important to me'. Similarly, if the Sejong Cultural Society had existed when I was young, I know it would have been so important to me. So I truly, truly appreciate the work that you are doing here. And I hope I can continue to do what I can to support it, and I thank all of you for your support of this very important work. Because you think it's writing, it's music, it's sijo—but the way I see it, it's another way to get Korean stories into the world, where they're very badly needed. **>>** 

- Linda Sue Park, author and poet, 2017 Sejong Benefit Dinner keynote speech

# 2004 - 2019 A LOOK AT THE SEJONG CULTURAL SOCIETY



#### 2019 SIJO AT RUSH HOUR CONCERTS

Chicago, IL – "Sijo Poetry and Music" was presented at the Rush Hour Concert Series at St. James Cathedral, located in the heart of downtown Chicago



#### 2019 SIJO AT RUSH HOUR CONCERTS

Chicago, IL – "Sijo Poetry and Music" was presented by the Sejong Cultural Society and the Poetry Foundation, hosted by the International Music Foundation, and supported by the Korean Consulate General of Chicago



2019 SIJO AT RUSH HOUR CONCERTS

Chicago, IL – Composer Eun Young Lee, professor at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, explains her contemporary classical work "Ha-yeo-ga and Dan-sim-ga" at a pre-concert lecture



**2019 SIJO AT RUSH HOUR CONCERTS** 

Chicago, IL – *Ha-yeo-ga* was a sijo by Yi Bang-won during the Joseon era asking Jung Mong-joo for loyalty, while *Dan-sim-ga* was Jung's response; the four performers representing Ha-yeo-ga watch on as the two representing Dan-sim-ga respond



2019 SIJO AT RUSH HOUR CONCERTS

Wheeling, IL – Composers Eun Young Lee and Misook Kim, professor at Wheaton College, work with Ghibong Kim, baritone, and Suwan Choi, Korean traditional percussion, during a rehearsal for the Rush Hour concert



**2018 WINNERS' CONCERT** 

Chicago, IL – Isabella Brown, violin senior division first place winner, performs Dvořák's Violin Concerto in A minor at the Claudia Cassidy Theater, Chicago Cultural Center



2018 WINNERS' CONCERT

#### **2018 WINNERS' CONCERT**

Chicago, IL – Sylvia Pine, violin primary division second place winner, receives her award from Music Competition committee member Misook Kim after receiving her certificate from president You Sim Kim, alongside committee chair Kay Kim and board member Esther Yang Chicago, IL – Winners and their parents pose with their certificates after the Winners' Concert and Award Ceremony. The concert is free, encouraging many members of the public —including tourists and Chicago Cultural Center patrons—to drop in and listen


**2018 NOVEMBER SIJO WORKSHOP** 

Chicago, IL – Chan Eung Park, professor in Korean at Ohio State University, performs the folktale-based *pansori* piece "The Rabbit's Liver"; her performance was accompanied by her humorous commentary



2018 NOVEMBER SIJO WORKSHOP

Chicago, IL – High school English and history teachers Elizabeth Jorgensen (WI), Chuck Newell (TN), and Deb Holland (CO), and Brigham Young University professor emeritus Mark Peterson respond to a Q&A session after giving their lectures



**2018 NOVEMBER SIJO WORKSHOP** 

Chicago, IL – Both the May and November 2018 Sijo Workshops were held at PianoForte Studios in downtown Chicago and were attended by K-12 educators; the workshops were hosted in collaboration with the East Asian Studies Center at Indiana University



2018 MUSIC COMPETITION

Chicago, IL – Board members Yuna Sung and Hye Rye Hong and UIC student Emily Kan are ready to start checking in Music Competition participants



2018 MUSIC COMPETITION



### 2018 MUSIC COMPETITION

Chicago, IL – Prior to the competition's start, executive director Lucy Park speaks with piano junior & senior division judge Robert Kania in the staff room

Chicago, IL – One recital hall is ready to be used for the piano junior & senior divisions audition room, where three judges will evaluate young musicians in grades 6–12



2018 MUSIC COMPETITION

Chicago, IL - Once the Music Competition begins, the lobby fills up quickly with students and family members; over one hundred participants from across the Midwest competed in 2018



### 2018 MUSIC COMPETITION

Chicago, IL - A volunteer keeps time by the piano category warm-up and audition rooms as a young pianist waits for his assigned time



2018 MUSIC COMPETITION

Chicago, IL – Another recital hall is used for the violin junior & senior division audition room; three judges listen and take notes while Music Competition committee chair Kay Kim, professor at Northeastern Illinois University, acts as room monitor and keeps time

2018 MUSIC COMPETITION

Chicago, IL - Lunch and breakfast are provided for all judges and volunteers in the staff room







**2018 SEJONG BENEFIT DINNER** 

Chicago, IL – The Music Competition was once again held at the University of Illinois at Chicago Performing Arts Center on a chilly Sunday in November

Oakbrook Terrace, IL - Master of Ceremony Mia Park speaks with violinist Esme Arias-Kim, respectively first and second place winner of the 2018 and 2017 violin junior division, before she performs Taryung I by Eun Young Lee



**2018 SEJONG BENEFIT DINNER** 

Oakbrook Terrace, IL – Keynote speaker Martha Vickery, editor of *Korean Quarterly*, gives her speech "The Sejong Cultural Society and *Korean Quarterly*: One Mission and Two Methods"



### 2018 SIJO AND HIP-HOP WORKSHOP

Chicago, IL – Executive director Lucy Park teaches attendees how to write sijo at a sijo and hip-hop workshop hosted by the Korean American Student Association at the University of Illinois at Chicago



2018 SIJO AND HIP-HOP WORKSHOP

Chicago, IL – Mergen "Monotone" Batdelger, Elgin Bokari Smith, and TJ Ayodele explain how to turn sijo poems into hip-hop songs; the three are members of the artists' collective Elephant Rebellion, a frequent collaborator with Sejong



2018 SIJO AND HIP-HOP WORKSHOP

Chicago, IL – Attendees are invited to write their own sijo at the workshop and recite their poem or even sing them as hip-hop-style songs



2018 SIJO AND HIP-HOP WORKSHOP

Chicago, IL – The workshop was mostly attended by UIC students; an identical workshop was hosted by the Northwestern University KASA organization for NU students, where attendance was also high

2018 SIJO AND HIP-HOP WORKSHOP

Chicago, IL – By both adding music to sijo and working with young organizations like KASA, we hope to be able to garner interest in sijo amongst young generations of Americans



2016 SIJO WORKSHOP

Glenview, IL – Profesesor Chan Eung Park explains the Korean storytelling tradition *pansori* to K-12 teachers at a sijo workshop co-hosted by Sejong, the East Asian Studies Center at Indiana University, and the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia



2016 SIJO RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Wheeling, IL – Elizabeth Jorgensen, English teacher at Arrowhead Union High School, WI, teaches elementary school students how to write sijo; her and several other high school teachers' classes were recorded and made available online for other teachers interested in using sijo in their curricula



2013 YI MUN-YOL CHICAGO VISIT

Urbana, IL – Prolific Korean author Yi Mun-yol discusses his novel *Our Twisted Hero* and other works of Korean literature with a group of college students at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; his works have been used as a topic for several Sejong Writing Competitions



2013 YI MUN-YOL CHICAGO VISIT

Winnetka, IL – Yi Mun-yol poses with then-Korean Consul General Chul Huh and other consuls at a reception hosted by the Honorable Huh for Mr. Yi at the consul general's residence



2004 MUSIC COMPETITION WINNERS' CONCERT

Chicago, IL – Winners of the First Annual Music Competition pose after the Winners' Concert and Award Ceremony at Curtiss Hall at the Fine Arts Building

### EXCERPT FROM "KOREAN POETRY COMPETITION PROVIDES OPPORTU-NITY FOR AMERICAN CREATIVE WRITING STUDENTS"

### Elizabeth Jorgensen

first published in Wisconsin English Journal, Volume 58, Number 2, pp. 34 – 39. Copyright 2016 by the Wisconsin Council on Teachers of English.

Each semester, in Hartland, Wisconsin, I welcome 180 high school students to my creative writing classes with a course introduction and overview. I read intrigue, investment, and interest on their faces as I say, "My goal is for each of you to be an award-winning or published author by the end of the semester." What follows is a curriculum focused on writers' markets. By requiring students to practice professional writing, they submit short stories, poems, and vignettes to competitions and publications throughout the semester. I say, "Everything we do will be sent to a writers' market. This semester, you will practice what it means to be a professional author."

I start with a haiku, a familiar form of poetry. "Oh yes, we did this in elementary school," Sarah says. She's typing on her laptop. "Haikus have the 5-7-5 syllable form. It's a Japanese form of poetry. And they're typically about nature or the seasons." She and the rest of the class churn out haikus and submit them to various writers' markets.

"You're right. And if you can write haiku, you can write sijo," haiku's lesser known Korean cousin. Students, after success with haiku, find comfort in the similarities. "And the thing about sijo is there's more flexibility—and more room to tell a story." (...)

Unlike typical writing classes, mine eschews rubrics and instead requires students to identify and analyze quality writing that can be used as a model. "Sijo, like all poetry, is art. And art, by nature, allows for flexibility, creativity, and originality," I say. "Although this form is new to you, don't be afraid to make mistakes, to take risks, and to have fun." I want my students to write about their passions and to find purpose and pleasure in writing.

I provide a lesson on the form, structure, and beat of sijo but remind my students that more significant are the story, the expressive nature, and the beauty. I review both forms—three lines and six lines—and prepare them to write. (...)

I discuss each line's function. First line: introduction. Second line: development. Third line: twist and conclusion. And after students have processed the new form, I ask, "What might differentiate one syllable group from the other?" Students respond: "Punctuation." — "A change in theme." — "Dialogue." — "Point of view." I remind them of the similarity of sijo to all writing: "Your writing in an essay or narrative or vignette is broken up the same way. But in sijo-writing, you're given a pattern. Many of you will find writing one easier than writing a free verse poem or essay." Because the sijo is short and focused, students find it manageable. It's not a 20-page research paper or a semester-long project. Struggling students find comfort in the form, as they have one less decision to make. (...)

I focus on asking clarifying questions and encouraging students to explain ideas, remaining supportive and optimistic. When students

share, I build a classroom community by increasing engagement and attention spans. I remind students, "Coming up with an original idea is difficult. Writing is challenging and an art." I refrain from critiquing a student in front of the class. Instead, I build an atmosphere of sharing, collaboration, and workshopping.

I persuade disengaged students with compliments and encouragement. "Although there is a form to the sijo, like all art, you are in control." I prompt them to write about topics they are interested in. "You can write about anything in your sijo. And if you're writing about something you find enjoyable, it's more likely the reader will enjoy your piece too. Your passion will seep through." We read Linda Sue Park's (2007) sijo book *Tap Dancing on the Roof* and I ask what they notice about her work. Students discuss the parts of Park's sijos, her characters, her twists and how she uses form and syllable counts. (...)

A positive and productive buzz fills my room. I move about the room, monitoring progress and re-directing off-task students with questions and encouragement. Students share throughout the brainstorming writing and editing processes, engaging with each other. This allows struggling students to hear ideas, which can trigger creativity and initiate action.

"Your first draft may be dull," I say, reminding them that writing is a process. "Think of how you can be more creative and use more interesting language within the allotted syllables in your next draft. Try to replace weak verbs with action verbs. Think about the cadence of your poem. Maybe even try your poem in the six-line form." The process of writing sijos is no different from writing a haiku, or essay, or narrative, or research paper. Students first come up with an original idea; then they form that idea into a particular structure; then they edit, adding stylistic devices and seeking feedback; and finally, they polish and submit a final draft.

After a week or two, students have multiple sijos. They peer edit, share with the class and decide which sijo to submit to the annual Sejong Cultural Society's sijo-writing competition. I publish student work on my classroom website, on my classroom walls, and in our school's literary magazine. Riley, Shawna, Lauren, Brooke, and Jude's poems are selected for publication in *Teen Ink*, a national teen publication. (...)

By semester's end, more than 85% of my students will leave my classroom either a published or award-winning author. And each year, I hear the same things: publishing gave them purpose, made them feel like their voice matters, and provided an outlet for expression.

And they say the same things about sijo too: It's a poetic form I can relate to—and one I want to continue working with. And I really enjoyed adding a twist. Sijo storytelling is challenging, but worth the rewards and satisfaction.

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Elizabeth Jorgensen has taught English at Arrowhead Union High School in Hartland, WI since 2005. She is a champion of sijo and frequent collaborator with Sejong in introducing sijo to other teachers. Many of her students have won awards in the Sejong Writing Competition.

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NOV 01 - 30, 2019 Opening Reception, Friday, November 01, 5-8pm



Wonsook Kim, Everyday, Oil on Canvas, 58 x 68in., 2018.

Andrew Bae Gallery is honored to present this remarkable artist for its finale exhibition after 30 years of presence in Chicago River North art district. This exhibition also tribute to the Illinois State University Board of Trustees and President Larry H. Dietz will announce the naming of the College of Fine Arts and the School of Art in recognition of the generosity of alumna Wonsook Kim and her husband, Thomas Clement.

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### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### 2019 SEJONG MUSIC COMPETITION

Sunday, November 17, 2019

University of Illinois at Chicago Performing Arts Center 1044 West Harrison Street, Chicago, IL 60607

Open to pre-college piano and violin students. Applications must be submitted online by October 31, 2019 Rules and application information can be found at www.sejongculturalsociety.org/music

### **2019 SEJONG MUSIC COMPETITION WINNERS' CONCERT**

Sunday, December 15, 2019, 2pm

Chicago Cultural Center 2nd floor, Claudia Cassidy Theater 78 East Washington Avenue, Chicago, IL 60602

### 2020 SEJONG WRITING COMPETITION

in collaboration with the Korea Institute, Harvard University and the Literature Translation Institute of Korea Submission deadline: March 31, 2020

Essay category open to all residents of the US and Canada age 30 and younger. Sijo poetry category open to all ages. Rules and application information can be found at www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing

### 2019 SIJO WORKSHOP

co-organized by the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia at the Indiana University East Asian Studies Center Saturday, September 28, 2019

> Pike High School 6701 Zionville Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46268

Eligibility: K-12 teachers and college educators Featuring a comparison of poetry from Korea, China, and Japan Followed by a Korean performing arts concert

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Contact us at sejong@sejongculturalsociety.org with any questions or visit our website at www.sejongculturalsociety.org.





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