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# Passwords & Poems



Poems selected by  
Nancy Roberts

This book was handmade for:

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The Syracuse Poster Project brings together poets and Syracuse University artists to create an annual series of poetry posters for public display. It also taps its reservoir of short poems (haiku) for a variety of novel products, such as this.

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Passwords have always been a quick, simple, but deeply meaningful form of communication.

They open doors; admit you to select company; protect the privacy of your internal, even secret life. Still, twenty years ago, passwords were rarely used. Today, we each have a collection of dozens—at the least.

Because they are ubiquitous and relentless—Which password did I use for that website? What's my email logon? What do you mean I have to have one capital letter and two symbols?—we have come to think of them as nuisances at best, necessary evils when we are in a hurry.

But looked at squinting and with your head slightly cocked, they can

become an art form—a shorthand for a person's turn of mind, imagination, or even the world they protect. In short—all all puns intended—they are like little poems with a rigid set of rules that must be memorable, meaningful, and significant. In short, like haiku!

A computer-wise friend once gave me a formula for devising unique passwords that I would always remember. He suggested using a combination of a date I would easily recall (probably not my birthday, though!), an acronym for a phrase I liked, and something unique to the thing I was trying to access (website, hard drive, etc.).

I liked this idea: it was sufficiently difficult for anyone to hack, yet easy

for me to remember because I understood it.

When I was asked to choose my favorites among the many delightful haiku available for this booklet, I remembered that suggestion, and realized that a good haiku will have similar characteristics. It is deeply personal and meaningful, and at first glance, deceptively simple.

I hope you enjoy the ones I have chosen. Perhaps they will give you a glimpse into my way of thinking—just not the entire public key!

—**Nancy Roberts**

Accompanying card design by  
**Rebecca Rutherford**

**URL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Username:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Password:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Anxious to take flight,  
chrome-decked mares at the  
curb**

**Ellen Agnew  
Syracuse, NY  
2003**

**URL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Username:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Password:** \_\_\_\_\_

**boisterous blackbirds—  
hundreds of revelers fly  
as one shifting shape**

**Carol Corwin  
Martville, NY  
2013**

Nancy Roberts started with two of her three primary passions very early in life. She began writing (on walls) and acting (carrying on) as a toddler. Computers came much later.

Challenged by a friend as “not being logical,” she decided to take a course in computing. Because it had a lot in common with magic, she was hooked, and remained fascinated.

At Time Warner, she hosted “Point ’n’ Click,” a call-in show on computers and technology. She also wrote columns for Time Warner’s website and for “Table-hopping,” about the fun and frustration computers.

Nancy continues to work in theater, writing, video production, and web content development.



**Nancy Roberts**

## Haiku Guidelines

- » *Develop the habit of poetry.*
- » *Carry paper and pencil.*
- » *Slow down, pay attention.*
- » *Note experiences in the moment.*
- » *Reflect, mull.*
- » *Three lines: 5, 7, 5 syllables.*
- » *With each line, create an image.*
- » *Together, a progression of effects.*
- » *Write for sound, but avoid rhyme.*
- » *Convey a sense of season, nature.*
- » *Juxtapose: big/small, finite/infinite.*
- » *Use simple, concrete words.*
- » *Use literal, not figurative images.*
- » *Tell just enough.*
- » *Leave room for the reader.*

