



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 22, 2018

Contact: Kimberly Brown – 916-653-1440  
Kimberly.brown@library.ca.gov

**“The Art of Haiku” Exhibit Opens at the California State Library**

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California State Library kicks off the new year with an exhibit of haiku poem cards, known as shikishi. Created by some of Japan’s most prominent haiku poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the shikishi combine poetry and artful calligraphy on fine handmade paper.

Shikishi are typically given as gifts to mark a special occasion, and the exhibit features works that were a gift from the Museum of Haiku Literature in Tokyo to the Haiku Society of America, whose archives are housed at the State Library.

“We are excited to share this unique collection with the public,” said Greg Lucas, California State Librarian. “One of the most important functions of the State Library is to collect, preserve, and exhibit California’s rich history and diverse cultural heritage.”

Since 1996, the State Library has been home to the American Haiku Archives, the world’s largest public collection of haiku and related poetry books and papers outside Japan. The spare, 3-line form of poetry spread worldwide from Japan about 120 years ago.

“The public presentation of these 24 haiku on shikishi poem cards has a special resonance for California,” said Dana Gioia, California Poet Laureate. “They deepen our historic cultural link with Japan and recall our diverse past. There is no way to understand our poetry without recognizing the haiku.”

The exhibit runs through April 2018 and is free and open to the public weekdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The gallery is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Library and Courts Building at 914 Capitol Mall in Sacramento.

**About the California State Library:** Founded in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for the Governor’s office, legislature, state employees, and the general public. The State Library administers federal and state grants for programs in historical preservation, library construction, literacy, and broadband connectivity in public libraries. Please visit: [www.library.ca.gov](http://www.library.ca.gov).