

A session with a Haiku program

Paul McJones

This is an annotated version of [70-haiku-generation-prm.pdf](https://caltss.computerhistory.org/archive/7009-idiots-guide-jhm.pdf), which was scanned from a teletype listing generated on Cal TSS probably in the spring or summer of 1970. At the time, I was probably demonstrating the system to my wife, Raquel. In what follows, characters in an upper-case fixed pitch font appear in the original listing; red text indicates characters typed by the computer and black text indicates typed by the humans. Text in this font explains what was going on. Some documents that may be of interest while reading this include:

- James H. Morris, Jr., "The Idiot's Guide to TSS", 1970.
<https://caltss.computerhistory.org/archive/7009-idiots-guide-jhm.pdf>
- Karl Malbrain and Howard Sturgis. Bead documentation, 1969-1970.
https://caltss.computerhistory.org/#sec2_Doc_Bead
- Karl Malbrain. SCOPE simulator documentation, 1969-1970.
https://caltss.computerhistory.org/#sec2_Doc_SCOPE
- Source code of BRDCAST program.
<https://caltss.computerhistory.org/source/util/BRDCST.pdf>

And now we begin.

```
USER,RAU←QUEL
```

We log in with user name "RAQUEL". The teletype only has upper-case letters. A mistake can be corrected by typing CONTROL-Q, which echos "←" and logically erases the previous character. There are no passwords in this version of the system.

```
REMEMBER TO LOGOUT
```

This response means we successfully logged in; we're now in the main command processor, called the Bead.

```
SPACE,20000
```

We reserve 20,000 words of Extended Core Storage (ECS). This is equivalent to about 150,000 bytes — a little more than the size of an early Apple II floppy disk.

```
OK
```

The storage was available and has been reserved for us.

```
C,DISK,S
```

We run the program that manages disk files, which is called DISK,S. A file name is followed by a user name; "S" is the user name for system files.

```
DISK HERE
```

The disk program announces itself.

```
GET,REC←ACT,,REACT,JIM
```

We copy the file named REACT,JIM from the disk to ECS, where its name will be REACT,RAQUEL (omitting the username defaults to the current user). This file contains the source code for a SNOBOL4 program. JIM is the user name of Jim Gray.

OBTAINED

The file was successfully copied.

GET,DATA,,DATA,JIM

Now we copy the file named DATA,JIM from the disk to the ECS file DATA,RAQUEL.

OBTAINED

FIN

We exit from the disk program.

BEAD HERE

We're back in the Bead.

SPACE,30000

We reserve an additional 30,000 words (approximately 225,000 bytes) of ECS.

OK

The storage was successfully obtained.

C,SCOPE,S

We run the program that simulates the SCOPE batch operating system.

TSS SCOPE VER 2.05

06,01,00 ERROR .. BEAD HERE

The SCOPE simulator announces itself but then runs out of storage and reinvokes the Bead to allow us to recover from the error.

SPACE,20000

We reserve yet another 20,000 words of ECS (150,000) bytes.

OK

The storage was successfully obtained.

RESTORE

We return from the Bead to the SCOPE simulator.

ENTER TIME & DATE

The computer didn't have a time-of-day clock, so we could optionally enter the time and date.

D↑

We start to type the DATE command, but decide not to bother, so an empty line is entered.

RFL,30000

We tell the SCOPE simulator to set aside enough ECS to run a user program of size 30,000₈ words—30,000 base 8 is 12,288 words, or about 92,160 bytes.

OK
DEBUG

We call the Bead again via its “debugging” entry point.

..STOP

The Bead greets us.

TRIM

We release any currently-unused ECS (but not the storage reserved by the RFL command in the SCOPE simulator).

OK
SPACE,4000

We request 4,000 more words of ECS (about 30,000 bytes).

OK
C, ↑
RETURN

After a false start, we return to the SCOPE simulator.

SCOPE HERE
X,SNOBOL,I=REACT

We execute the SNOBOL4 command, giving it the REACT program as input.

SUCCESSFUL COMPILATION

WOULD ANYONE OUT THERE LIKE TO HEAR SOME POEMS?

The program had no syntax errors, so it begins with a silly question.

↑YES

Why else would we have worked so hard to get here? The SNOBOL program prints an “↑” each time it expects user input.

HELLO. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

The program wants to be user-friendly.

↑RAQUEL

I WRITE POETRY. WOULD YOU CARE FOR A POEM, RAQUEL?

↑YES

To terminate the program later on, we can answer “No”.

GOOD. I SPECIALIZE IN WRITING HAIKU. SHALL I EXPLAIN
ABOUT THE FORM IN WHICH HAIKU ARE WRITTEN?

↑YES

I AM GOOD AT WRITING HAIKU BECAUSE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT HAIKU IS THAT THE FIRST LINE HAS FIVE SYLLABLES, THE SECOND LINE SEVEN, AND THE THIRD LINE FIVE AGAIN. I NEVER MISCOUNT• ALSO, EVERY HAIKU MUST BE ABOUT A PARTICULAR SEASON, SO THE FIRST THING I DO IN WRITING A POEM IS TO DECIDE ON A SEASON. AS FAR AS I KNOW, RAQUEL, I WRITE HAIKU FASTER THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD. ANOTHER THING I ALWAYS DO IS TRY TO SUIT POEMS TO THE PERSONALITY OF THE ONE WHO REQUESTS THEM.

RAQUEL, I ALWAYS FIND ONE'S PHONE NUMBER A KEY TO PERSONALITY. WHAT IS YOUR PHONE NUMBER?

↑8439820

Apparently the program uses this number as the “seed” for a pseudo-random number generator.

NAME A SEASON--OR IF YOU PREFER I'LL CHOOSE ONE

↑SPRING

THANK YOU. SUCH A LOVELY SEASON. IT INSPIRES ME.

WHITE KITTENS PLAYING
LOOKING AT MURMURING SPRING
WANDERING IN PINES.

WOULD YOU CARE FOR ANOTHER POEM?

↑YES

NAME A SEASON--OR IF YOU PREFER I'LL CHOOSE ONE

↑P;LEASE

The user made a typing mistake, but it wasn't a valid season.

CERTAINLY. LET'S SEE.

FISHERMAN'S BOAT DRIFTS
STANDING BY CAMELLIAS
SPOTTED FAUNS GLIDING.

WOULD YOU CARE FOR ANOTHER POEM?
↑YES

NAME A SEASON--OR IF YOU PREFER I'LL CHOOSE ONE
↑SUMMMER

CERTAINLY. LET'S SEE.

MARTEN WANDERING
THINKING ABOUT

WAIT, WITHERED FIELDS
LISTENING TO TEMPLES.

Interspersed with the program's output were two blank lines and the message "WAIT,"

WOULD YOU CARE FOR ANOTHER POEM?
↑NOBRUCE..GIMME SOME ECS. DAVE IN 11 CAMPBELL

Raquel has had enough and types "NO", then Dave's message is typed out on every teletype. Dave is a system programmer who has been unable to execute a SPACE command.

I UNDERSTAND, RAQUEL. THE SOUL CAN TAKE ONLY
SO MUCH POETRY AT ONE TIME.

WOULD ANYONE OUT THERE LIKE TO HEAR SOME POEMS?
↑NO

THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M WRITING A SONNET CYCLE

END

The program terminates its execution.

DONE

We tell the SCOPE simulator we're finished with it.

BEAD HERE

That returns us to the Bead.

LOGOUT

We tell the Bead we're finished with the session.

RAQUEL LOGGED OUT

TRIM

We tell the Bead it can release all the ECS we'd reserved earlier.

OK