

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Milind Mulick

Issue 10 - August 2022

haikuKATHA is the official monthly publication brought out by Triveni Haikai India. Its primary function is to publish the best in contemporary English-language haiku, senryu, tanka, haibun, tanka-prose and haiga.

Each month's issue is put together by a team of editors who select poems from the previous month's prompts posted on the Triveni Haikai India website. The magazine is copyrighted by Triveni Haikai India.

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within

Issue 10
August 2022

haiku, tanka, haibun,
tanka-prose, renku, haiga and tanka-art

Founder/Managing Editor:

Kala Ramesh

Associate Editors:

Akila G.

Ashish Narain

Firdaus Parvez

Madhuri Pillai

Priti Aisola

Shalini Pattabiraman

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Vandana Parashar

Consulting Editor: Shloka Shankar

Proofreader: Sushama Kapur

Web Editor: Ravi Kiran

Cover Art: Milind Mulick

Design: Kala Ramesh

Copyright © haikuKATHA 2021

All rights revert to the author upon publication. Works may not be reproduced
in any manner or form without prior consent from the individual authors.

Triveni Haikai India: www.trivenihaikai.in

CONTENTS

Editors' Choice: Reid Hepworth - <i>Changing Landscapes</i>	1
Editors' Choice Commentary by Suraja Menon Roychowdhury	
Commentary on Cover Art by Alaka Yeravadekar	4
haiku	
Baisali Chatterjee Dutt	5
Barbara Kaufmann	
Barrie Levine	
Barrie Levine	
Billie Dee	6
Billie Dee	
Billie Dee	
Daipayan Nair	
Daipayan Nair	7
Florence Heyhoe	
Hifsa Ashraf	
Kashiana Singh	
Kashiana Singh	8
Kavita Ratna	
Kavitha Seeraj	
K Ramesh	
Lev Hart	9
Mallika Chari	
Marcie Wessels	
Martin Duguay	

CONTENTS

Martin Duguay Muskaan Ahuja Muskaan Ahuja Radhamani Sarma	10
Reid Hepworth Reid Hepworth Robert Kingston Robert Kingston	11
Ron Russell Rupa Anand Samir Satam Sangita Kalarickal	12
Sanjukta Asopa Sanjukta Asopa Sanjukta Asopa Sankara Jayanth	13
Sankara Jayanth Srini Srini Vibha Malhotra	14
Xenia Tran Xenia Tran	15
tanka	
Agus Maulana Sunjaya Barbara Kaufmann Billie Dec	16

CONTENTS

Billie Dee	17
Billie Dee	
Daipayan Nair	
Ken Slaughter	18
Marilyn Ashbaugh	
Marilyn Ashbaugh	
Mona Bedi	19
Mona Bedi	
Mona Bedi	
Muskaan Ahuja	20
Muskaan Ahuja	
Reid Hepworth	
Reid Hepworth	21
Richa Sharma	
Robert Kingston	
Ron Russell	22
Rupa Anand	
Rupa Anand	
Rupa Anand	23
Sankara Jayanth	
Subir Ningthouja	
Xenia Tran	24

CONTENTS

haibun

<i>Have You Seen Her?</i> by Diana Webb	25
<i>Delusions</i> by Florence Heyhoe	26
<i>All in a Day's Work</i> by Gauri Dixit	27
<i>What I Don't Write</i> by Gauri Dixit	28
<i>Even Now</i> by Janice Doppler	29
<i>A Salesman's Life</i> by K. Ramesh	30
<i>Scones and Cinnamon</i> by Kanjini Devi	31
<i>Gossip</i> by Keith Polette	32
<i>Clue</i> by Ken Slaughter	33
<i>Breaking News</i> by Margaret Walker	34
<i>A Part of Me</i> by Mona Bedi	35
<i>Chance Meeting</i> by Reid Hepworth	36
<i>Comeuppance</i> by Reid Hepworth	37
<i>Things You Can't Control</i> by Reid Hepworth	38
<i>Inside Out</i> by Robert Kingston	39
<i>Forks and Knives</i> by Rupa Anand	40
<i>Fleeting Window Views</i> by Subir Ningthouja	41

tanka-prose

<i>Season's Change</i> by Marilyn Ashbaugh	42
<i>Changing Landscapes</i> by Reid Hepworth	43

Triparshva Renku - Collaborative Linked Verses: GRAHAPRAVESH

Renkujin as they appear in the renku

Firdaus Parvez: vs 1	44
Kala Ramesh: vs 2 & 17	

CONTENTS

Priti Aisola: vs 3 & 15	
Margherita Petriccione: vs 4	
Angiola Inglese: vs 5	
Sushama Kapur: vs 6 & 14	
Lakshmi Iyer: vs 7 & 19	45
Marcie Wessels: vs 8	
Milan Rajkumar: vs 9	
Kavita Ratna: vs 10	
Arvinder Kaur: vs 11	
Robert Kingston: vs 12	
Sanjukta Asopa: vs 13 & 21	
Amrutha V. Prabhu: vs 16	46
Kanjini Devi: vs 18 & 22	
Mona Bedi: vs 20	
Comments by Linda Papanicolaou and contributing poet	48 - 51
 haiga	
Xenia Tran	52
 tanka-art	
<i>who could have guessed</i> by Barbara Kaufmann	53
<i>the setting sun dances</i> by Barbara Kaufmann	54
<i>listening</i> by Daipayan Nair	55

haiku, senryu, haibun, tanka-prose, renku, haiga and tanka-art

Our heartfelt thanks to:

Terri Hale French
for providing brilliant weekly challenges
for the month of July 2022,

to, the four editors
of The Haibun Gallery
Shalini Pattabiraman, Firdaus Parvez
Akila Gopalakrishnan and Shobhana Kumar
for their exemplary haibun,
to, Pamela A. Babusci
for her stunning tanka used as prompts.

Artist Milind Mulick
for his watercolour painting,

Samir Satam
for gathering the poems
from HAIKUstradhar.

our contributors
for sharing their poems

Editors' Choice Commentary by Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Changing Landscapes by Reid Hepworth

Moving cautiously through the front drive, the bear takes a moment to sniff the air. It's skinnier than I remember, the late spring affecting the summer crops and the ever-expanding deforestation above us. I watch through the window, hoping that I remembered to put the bungee cord around the garbage can.

*the house
that was home
is empty now
our love raked over
in legalese*

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury writes:

So many of us live our lives in busy urban areas. The closest we come to nature is probably our front yard lawns or the seasonal vegetable gardens or the pots with geraniums in our windowsills or balconies. As for wildlife - the ubiquitous crows and sparrows and robins are all that we see, depending on which part of the world we live in. We have forgotten that these lands once belonged not to humans, but to the animals, to the wild grasses and trees that we 'homo sapiens' have destroyed steadily over the millennia.

And that was why this tanka prose from Reid Hepworth caught my eye from the very beginning. "*Moving cautiously through the front drive, the bear takes a moment to sniff the air.*" A BEAR? In the front driveway? That first line itself captured my attention, made me automatically look up at MY driveway, not quite sure what to expect. Nothing there. Whew! Then the story unfolds ...

This bear is not a stranger, or an interloper. The poet actually knows it from previous visits, perhaps over several years. Because it is "*skinnier than I remember*". The reader pauses here. What memories does the poet have of this bear? Was it its large size? Did it walk in a certain way? Had it been threatening? Perhaps she watched it with her family from an upstairs window in breathless excitement. Her family - who had lived in harmony in that one moment of togetherness! Had the bear then rummaged through her trash in the past? Who knows. But today she can see that it is thinner. Perhaps, she thinks, this is because it is losing its habitat thanks to a progressive deforestation by humans, that feeds an endless consumptive greed. She clearly anticipates that animals go through garbage - not just the bear, but others too - looking for food. We know this because she's in the habit of fastening the garbage can down with a bungee cord.

The reader pauses here at the end of the prose, seeing in their mind's eye, a driveway, with a bear in it, a mountain rising in the front, with ugly bald patches that once had been mighty green forests ...

And then the tanka swings the prose away - to heartbreak and to homelessness of another kind:

*the house
that was home
is empty now*

The quiet and yet soul wrenching sorrow in these first three lines. The reader's heart aches for the poet. And for the bear. Comfortable habitats now destroyed, families scattered, sustenance lost.

*our love raked over
in legalese*

This is a broken relationship - now in the courts. So is the garbage exposed, with the bungee cord off? The word "raked", evoking not only a sense of cruelty, but also the bear's paws, desperately clawing for food. Man and bear, after all, are not so different in their needs. And yet, in both cases, one senses that the responsibility for their sorrow is man-made.

The beauty in this tanka prose is that the title, the prose and the tanka are all different, and yet there is a subtle link running through the whole piece that holds it together. The concept of link and shift from the prose to the tanka is beautifully illustrated here. Large themes are tackled within the confines of a few words - deforestation, hunger, homelessness, heartache. Every reading reveals another layer of understanding. Another tug at the heartstrings.

When will it end?

Cover Art by Milind Mulick
Old World Charm: From An Art Lover by Alaka Yeravadekar



A painting, they say, can be a gateway to a whole universe. This one leads me straight to Konkan.

As we move inland from the sandy beaches of the west coast of India, we come across one or two storied houses, with sloping roofs designed to wash away the heavy rainfall in these parts. Tall stands of emerald green betel nut and coconut palms dot the landscape. Swathes of red earth are interspersed with big and small rivers that flow into the Arabian sea. The cries of birds: seagulls, egrets, herons, river terns, brahminy kites, and sea eagles, lend a suitable sonic backdrop to the bobbing fishing boats on sparkling water.

Most homes here try to be self-sufficient for food. Many of the houses have a small plantation and kitchen garden, with cashew and jackfruit trees. Often one finds a few cows in a shed, a bull unyoked from the cart and placidly chewing hay. With the onslaught of concrete buildings and tar roads, these traditional coastal homes seem to be vanishing, and in the distant future, might be found only in paintings.

haiku

vacant parking lot
crows
play hopscotch

—Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

chutes and ladders--
the ups and downs
of being five

— Barbara Kaufmann

cartwheels in the grass traveling moons

— Barrie Levine

beach mat ...
staking her claim
to a patch of the sun

— Barrie Levine

haiku

war crimes aren't they all

— Billie Dee

three yellow saris ...
the rhythm of a jump rope
in the schoolyard

— Billie Dee

as if we didn't already know mockingbird

— Billie Dee

street art—
spittle of chewed betel nuts
all over a slogan

—Daipayan Nair

haiku

slides –
the awkwardness
of pulling up the pants

— Daipayan Nair

leaves dance ...
the wind
rearranging me

— Florence Heyhoe

leftover milk
in the discarded bowl
day moon

— Hifsa Ashraf

shapeshifting
a raindrop breaks away
from its cloud

— Kashiana Singh

haiku

dawn
not quite
quiet

— Kashiana Singh

off-key melodies
strung along with gusto
antakshari

— Kavita Ratna

summer moon ...
grandma sets a rice ball
in our outstretched hands

— Kavitha Sreeraj

breakfast ...
a purple sunbird hovers
in the mirror

— K. Ramesh

haiku

summer
our train passing the moon
in a nameless lake

— Lev Hart

orphanage
the dinner plates
need no cleaning

— Mallika Chari

true colors
each cabbage white sees
its own purple

— Marcie Wessels

dodgeball
my best Michael Jackson
moves

— Martin Duguay

haiku

the quickening click
of the hedge shears
dark clouds

— Martin Duguay

gang rape —
the ribbon comes loose
from her pigtail

— Muskaan Ahuja

turbulence
my every decision now
filtered through marriage

— Muskaan Ahuja

morning stillness ...
the possibilities of each
new poem

— Radhamani Sarma

haiku

I am Woman
all the hills still left
to climb

— Reid Hepworth

dappled light
a daisy reaches through
the split rail fence

— Reid Hepworth

the off-key chime chimes deeper within

— Robert Kingston

needle threading a second lick of the thread

— Robert Kingston

haiku

your long answer
to my simple question
was that yes or no

— Ron Russell

marriage ...
all the needlepoint done
these forty years

— Rupa Anand

lost stars ...
our forks poke the silence
at candle light dinner

— Samir Satam

under pressure
the new bride
cooks her first meal

— Sangita Kalarickal

haiku

hopscotch squares ...
till the children come back
the pigeons

— Sanjuktaa Asopa

hawayein ...
scatter me
but gently,
gently

— Sanjuktaa Asopa

hide & seek ...
all the shadows
begin to whisper

— Sanjuktaa Asopa

monsoon wind —
sparrows and undergarments
drying on clothesline

— Sankara Jayanth

haiku

bowl of hot ramen
... for a moment I consider
using chopsticks

— Sankara Jayanth

as though the air has bumps hoopoe's flight

— Srin

bending and unbending the river sculpts life

— Srin

dying embers ...
the kohl beneath his eyes
unsmudged

— Vibha Malhotra

haiku

summer breeze
the grass waves at anyone
who passes

— Xenia Tran

cherry blossom
the whole of the moon
turns pink

— Xenia Tran

tanka

the cry
of a cicada
grows weaker
I share the story with no one
but my shadow

— Agus Maulana Sunjaya

stopping to inhale
the hyssop and mint
in the garden
we plant an oak sapling
for the newborn

— Barbara Kaufmann

the long night
of a lovesick mockingbird
at what point
does the grieving heart
become calcified

— Billie Dee

tanka

gentle breeze ...
visiting my childhood friend
after so many years
a cherub's playful smile
on the marble headstone

— Billie Dee

summer heat ...
I clean out the closet
as a final devotion
why does your ratty sweater
fill me with such tenderness

— Billie Dee

catching
sight of a moon moth
on the sunflower
I call my beloved "beautiful"
for the rest of the day

— Daipayan Nair

tanka

nothing
interesting to say
at a party
I wear a smile
and do the dishes

— Ken Slaughter

a flooded cornfield
 full of clouds
you left too soon ...
alone I gather bouquets
of could-have-beens

— Marilyn Ashbaugh

after the chainsaws
a chipmunk rests
on a sycamore stump ...
 I too rest
in those memories of trees

— Marilyn Ashbaugh

tanka

broken mirror—
one half of me disappears
into oblivion
who said we were equals
in this long marriage

— Mona Bedi

paper moon—
remembering the love
that once was
i still fold your name
into origami flowers

— Mona Bedi

silent rain—
just the sound of
unsaid words
the conversations we stopped
having a long time ago

— Mona Bedi

tanka

your fingers
running through my hair...
on days like this
I call myself a woman
utterly whole and complete

— Muskaan Ahuja

the bee
feeding on the nectar
in a blossom ...
memories of you
as I fall asleep

— Muskaan Ahuja

all the times
 i placed you
before me
the curve of this road
too much to bear

— Reid Hepworth

tanka

rain
arrives at dusk
in the flatlands
the song
of a meadowlark

— Reid Hepworth

on a branch
two beads of water
which of us
will leave
first

— Richa Sharma

as if
anchored to this chair
could stop me
thriving in a world
meant for living

— Robert Kingston

tanka

luv balloon
beyond our grasp
drifting away
the distance
between us

— Ron Russell

babblers
with their fledgling
gone ...
what's left is silence
playing to an empty garden

— Rupa Anand

sunrise
through the acacia ...
on cobblestone
the yellow laburnums
flattened by walking

— Rupa Anand

tanka

some doors
i shut in my lifetime
revolve no more ...
the magnolia i replant
roots in the new rain

—Rupa Anand

lotus pond —
frogs and ducks
occasionally weigh in
as we talk about
what we like in each other

— Sankara Jayanth

orchids
in your tresses ...
the moonlight
sculpts a shaded fantasy
wrapping me in fragrance

— Subir Ningthouja

tanka

this summer
finding happiness
where we belong
a river smooths the stones
that tumble from the mountain

— Xenia Tran

haibun

Diana Webb



Have You Seen Her?

Texts. Scribbled notes. Memorised quotations. Words of scholars. Burning the candle at both ends some would say. A whisper of names at the end of a thread. A chance exchange. An impetuous act.

woodsmoke
after the summer solstice
the river so still

haibun

Florence Heyhoe



Delusions

chair bound
travelling to
cruel places

We talk of the invisible blackheads on her nose. I bring the mirror and she hates the sight of them. The writing on the wall tells her; that she hasn't paid, that she is a sponge, and will be thrown out at three o'clock. No one likes her. The lost engagement ring was never found. I tell her once more that I am happily married.

the bogey man
mother's threats
stay with me

They moved her to a different room. The stories came too and I enter the unraveling. As always, she says "I love you," as I leave.

haibun

Gauri Dixit



All in a Day's Work

the cup gets stuck
to a coffee ring ...
morning after

Where does the mind go when one loses it? I ask myself. Does the mind hide within or escape to a better human, animal, or place?

I would want it to remain intact in case it decides to come back to me but I have a feeling that it breaks and the pieces go places. I would love to go places too.

afternoon breeze ...
an orange leaf joins
the pile

haibun

Gauri Dixit



What I don't write

The glint in his eyes, the smirk on his face, the glistening tongue, his hand reaching out! I say it as it was, no beating around the bush.

ancestor worship —
the crow picks at the sore
on her hand

Janice Doppler



Even Now

She stands in the light of her open door - last on the left. We hug, then she heads to the kitchen sternly declaring “do not move my clown.” I head for the clown – just a onesie surrounding a six-inch length of lumber that serves as a spine, cardboard hands and feet, felt eyes and mouth glued to a sphere with a cone-shaped hat. We enjoy the baked macaroni and cheese. Grandma always serves when I visit for dinner. We pretend the clown hasn’t been moved.

apartment balcony —
 through fall foliage
 the setting sun

Many clown-moves later: Grandma phones, says she’s having a heart attack and asks me to sit with her until the ambulance arrives. A several-minute-long silence is broken when she whispers “they’re here.” I head to the hospital – the one where she held me on the day I was born. Per Grandma’s request, I go to her apartment and remove spoilable food from her refrigerator. I also move the clown.

Grandma’s morning perkiness fades to frequent napping. We talk when she’s awake. I read while she sleeps. The next day, Grandma mostly drifts somewhere beyond sleep yet not as far as a coma. I mostly hold her hand. The nurses insist that I leave when visiting hours end.

on bony knees
 by the bedroom window
 lunar eclipse

My phone rings at 5:30 am. My uncle says the family is meeting at Grandma’s apartment at 10:00. After the funeral plans are complete, I move the clown one ... more ... time ...

haibun

K. Ramesh
~

A Salesman's Life

One more night journey. I'm already on the train, sitting at a window seat witnessing the drama of departures. I hear a mother advising her pregnant daughter to eat well. A father asks his son to be careful in the new college where he will be for the next few years.

I wipe the raindrops off the window bars. The city's neon lights seem to say, 'we are there for you.' A chill breeze touches my face. I close my eyes. The train starts to leave.

vacation over ...
mother alone
again

haibun

Kanjini Devi



Scones and Cinnamon

spelt sourdough
kneading
the scents of home

I sit with him, watching 'Friends' back to back until he dozes off, the oxygen concentrator plugged in just in case. I am thankful for the cushiony contours of a lazy boy chair as I mould my body into its folds. Staring at white walls, I trace cold lines and listen to his laboured breath. The windows are ajar, just as he had requested.

He starts to stir at 5 a.m. so I venture out to the staff canteen; the silent corridors strangely calming, the sight of night nurses a constant comfort. His mouth is wide open when I return with two mugs of freshly brewed coffee.

"I thought they only had instant!" he gasps.

My husband wants to know when he can come back with me. It is still dark and wet as I wait in my car for the first ferry across the harbour.

haibun

Keith Polette



Gossip

When I was a boy, my great grandmother, who once had a job playing the piano accompaniment to silent movies, told me that trees like to gossip, especially in autumn. The elms, she said, liked to whisper behind the backs of sugar maples, smirking that no respectable tree should flash so much red. And the sugar maples, staying silent as window store mannequins, would wait for a hard wind so they could flash the underside of their scarlet leaves to the elms, who would quickly yellow and turn away.

ruby red sunset
the smudge of lipstick
on a shirt collar

Given their few numbers, shagbark hickory trees, their bark thrusting out like shingles curling on the roof of an old farmhouse, are spoken about with pity by the other trees, the way one might talk about a three-legged dog or an old man with psoriasis.

winter shed
stiff empty work gloves
clutching nothing

But the tree that is most disdained and the subject of the harshest talk is the pin oak, not only because of its helmet-hard bark but because it holds onto its leaves deep into winter, while the rest of the trees, bare and bald, shiver with resentment.

rusted lock
refusing to release the key ...
dead of winter

haibun

Ken Slaughter



Clue

Dad said his brother was an alcoholic and committed suicide. That was why he didn't approve of drinking.

game of clue
I cross out every weapon
but the gun

Margaret Walker
~

Breaking News

I called back right away. Voicemail. I called again. Voicemail. All day. Voicemail. At 4:34 pm the phone rang. A police officer asked why so many calls from my number.

“My brother.”

“Sorry, ma’am.”

last angry words last

haibun

Mona Bedi



A Part of Me

Hers is a beauty unsurpassed. The pink cheeks, pink lips, and dark black eyes draw me towards her. She makes tiny bubbles of saliva while sleeping. The bright lights in the room make her squint. Her nose is like her mother's and the shape of her face is like her dad's. I look out for a part of her that resembles me. After all, she is my first grandchild.

new moon —
all the wishes
I wished for

haibun

Reid Hepworth
~

Chance Meeting

The animal waddles onto the road. My mind registers that it's a dog as I drive past. "What the heck", I think as I double-check my rear-view mirror and scramble to find a place to pull over.

The dog, a rotund little dachshund with a pink bejewelled collar, noses around the edge of the highway as I play death-wish running in and out of traffic.

My nerves are shot by the time I reach the dog. Sensing me and the busy roadway, the dog stops sniffing and stares at me with its orb-like eyes. Its pint-sized head is a study in still life. It looks like it's willing itself to disappear.

I hear the squeal of brakes before I see the semi-truck. I quickly grab the dog and pick it up. Not an easy feat with twenty-five pounds of dead weight and a bad back.

date night
we laugh about
 how we met

haibun

Reid Hepworth
~

Comeuppance

The long days of summer are getting to us. We're bored and have become so disagreeable that my parents drag us to the garden shop. We wander the aisles aimlessly until we spy an old house behind the shop. It's mostly obscured by a canopy of trees and looks like a breeze could blow it down. It's the perfect distraction for our mischievous little minds. We take turns ringing the bell and running away. I'm so excited that I don't even notice the old guy opening the door until he's yelling at us.

whisper of leaves
you remind me
of my shortcomings

haibun

Reid Hepworth
~

Things You Can't Control

I sit by your bedside and watch you sleep. Your breath, shallow little gasps. Moments before, in semi-wakefulness, you squeezed my hand and smiled. I could feel your nails, overgrown, dig into my palm. Holding on, letting go.

The nurse checks your feet first, then your legs. Tells me that this is to be expected, the coolness is your body shutting down, one extremity after the other. She asks me if I need anything. I ask for another blanket. Letting go, holding on.

open window
a stellar jay
breaks the silence

haibun

Robert Kingston



Inside Out

It was said that it would not be a difficult procedure. A simple explanation of what options were available for pain relief or sedation and the whole thing would be over in approximately fifteen minutes.

subway ...
graffiti on the walls paint
a sinister picture

haibun

Rupa Anand



Forks and Knives

With lymphoedema, I make adjustments.

Clothes are re-fitted. Space is organised for compression garments, bandages, and other paraphernalia. Hell, it's debilitating.

The arm swells and deflates. I can no longer adorn it. Mosquitos are not allowed access. I keep it covered. A hundred dead trees grow from my axilla and a dozen people steam-press my chest area.

It's not survival, it's management.

The world no longer beckons. I move from the first floor to ground level to be with songbirds and yawning cats.

I thought the road is straight. I discover that maybe, my life's journey is circular. I come back to where I started, to rethink the stuff I thought I knew, and seek a deeper meaning.

cracked cup
a sip of
perfect tea

crayons in hand
i colour the mandala
— kaleidoscope

haibun

Subir Ningthouja



Fleeting Window Views

It was my first trip to the medical college in 1984. Father and I got into onto the Purulia Express at 4:40 PM p.m. amidst lots of jostling. Being the 'sitting-only' coach, things settled down after the second sub-station.

The sunset over lotus-filled ponds by the vast rice fields mesmerized me. I wanted to get down and spend a night in those fields. My father nudged me with 'jhaal moori' on a plate of leaves with the tea in an earthen tumbler. A warm breeze flowed from the light left behind by the sun.

I remember my father every time I take the mixture of dried puffed rice, bits of green chili, onion, coriander, and tomatoes.

that aroma ...
 i hitchhike
on the dark road

tanka-prose

Marilyn Ashbaugh



I walk barefoot into winter.

light
harvests the mist
this limpid lake
we loved together
now full of emptiness

tanka-prose

Reid Hepworth
~

Changing Landscapes

Moving cautiously through the front drive, the bear takes a moment to sniff the air. It's skinnier than I remember, the late spring affecting the summer crops and the ever-expanding deforestation above us. I watch through the window, hoping that I remembered to put the bungee cord around the garbage can.

the house
that was home
is empty now
our love raked over
in legalese

renku

Gruhapravesha
— a 22-verse triparshva renku

I. Jo

housewarming ...
all the flavours of summer
on a dining table / Firdaus Parvez

a dozen ripened mangoes
from the neighbour next door / Kala Ramesh

the gleeful shouts
of street kids rolling
a bicycle tyre / Priti Aisola

an airplane through the clouds
in an indigo twilight / Margherita Petriccione

so close
the snow moon
envelops the field / Angiola Inglese

crackling silence as we bend
over the chessboard / Sushama Kapur

renku

II. Ha

caparisoned elephants
raising their trumpets
to the morning sun

/ Lakshmi Iyer

a pied crested cuckoo
on a telephone wire

/ Marcie Wessels

after the downpour
she squeezes our clothes
under the banyan tree

/ Milan Rajkumar

a backlit craving races
into an embrace

/ Kavita Ratna

those dreams
of my first love
once again

/ Arvinder Kaur

the merry-go-round horse
stopped on a high note

/ Robert Kingston

a crick
in the neck
after Sistine Chapel

/ Sanjukta Asopa

shadows lengthen
this new bite in the air

/ Sushama Kapur

moonbeams dipping
into a storm drain and a stream
with the same alacrity

/ Priti Aisola

renku

the whisper of falling leaves
rolls into a pyramid

/ Amrutha V. Prabhu

III. Kyu

trekking on Himalayas
our false selves peel off
in layers

/ Kala Ramesh

synchronized silhouettes
planting rice in paradise

/ Kanjini Devi

giggles follow
the ventriloquist's voice
in the Panchatantra

/ Lakshmi Iyer

our small garden abuzz
with the day's anecdotes

/ Mona Bedi

a bamboo fence
lost
in the magnolia haze

/ Sanjukta Asopa

this makeshift clothesline
swaying in spring wind

/ Kanjini Devi

Triparshva – a 22-verse renku
Sabaki (lead poet) – Linda Papanicolaou

renku

Renkujin as they appear in the renku.

Firdaus Parvez: vs 1

Kala Ramesh: vs 2 and 17

Priti Aisola: vs 3 and 15

Margherita Petriccione: vs 4

Angiola Inglese: vs 5

Sushama Kapur: vs 6 and 14

Lakshmi Iyer: vs 7 and 19

Marcie Wessels: vs 8

Milan Rajkumar: vs 9

Kavita Ratna: vs 10

Arvinder Kaur: vs 11

Robert Kingston: vs 12

Sanjukta Asopa: vs 13 and 21

Amrutha V. Prabhu: vs 16

Kanjini Devi: vs 18 and 22

Mona Bedi: vs 20

Gruhapraves, meaning 'Housewarming' in Samskrit, was started on the 2nd of June and completed on the 28th of July 2022 in Triveni Haikai India.

Note: We noticed the closeness between verse 7 in this renku to the haiku that was written by Geethanjali Rajan in 2016, from *Majesty*, haibun of Genjuan which was featured in Triveni Haikai India.

festival in May-
elephants nod to the beat
of village drummers

Lakshmi's original version which is shown below has now been revised in the renku:

caparisoned elephants
raising their trumpets amid
the village prayer beats

0

renku

Tomegaki

by Linda Papanicolaou

Sabaki

I was delighted and honored when Kala asked me to lead Renku, which would be the first on Triveni Haikai India. It seemed appropriate that the particular form of renku we ought to write for this inaugural endeavor would be a 22 verse, a three-sided form called Triparshva. Invented by Norman Darlington, and named after the Samskrit word for “trilateral”, it is a good form for learning the basics of renku because it retains the features of traditional collaborative Linked Poetry as practiced by Basho, but shortens and modernizes them.

Another significant decision from the beginning was to use the Subcontinent Saijiki here on the website as a way of exploring international renku’s ability to find relevance in climates and cultures beyond its Japanese homeland. This also meant adding a fifth season — monsoon — to the four seasons of the standard saiijiki. It worked very well, and from the moment we placed the first two monsoon verses in the fourth and fifth slots, I could see that our renku was going to have a distinctly regional flavor.

My deepest and fullest admiration to Kala Ramesh and the team at Triveni Haikai India for creating such a warm, supportive, and accomplished community of poets who participated in this project. Seventeen writers’ verses found a place in the final product, but more dropped in occasionally to offer verses, and their ideas too are part of the renku. While in-person renku parties are always fun, the advantage of online renku is that the writing process is archived. Do visit the renku section on the website and see all of the wonderful offers and conversations that lie beneath the surface of what you have read in the finished product.

renku

What was particularly amazing to me was how the renku seemed to take on a life of its own: I often felt that I was not myself choosing among the offers to select what verse would be placed next, but listening to the poem tell me what it wanted. For me, it was a joy to lead this renku. And I hope this housewarming gift we have given Triveni Haikai India will be an auspicious beginning and a collaborative poetry feature. Many thanks to Kala and Firdaus for all they did to make it happen.

— Linda Papanicolaou

Kanso

Linda, it was a very successful trip! Thanks a ton for leading us through "Gruhapravesha"; and being with us for two whole months. The promptness with which you posted the selections, your explanations giving reasons why a particular verse was chosen, and how well each verse took the renku forward were masterful. It was a real collaboration between 17 poets — with you at the helm! We couldn't have asked for a more auspicious housewarming for Triveni Haikai India!

— Kala Ramesh

Thank you, Linda, for your time and commentary as the renku progressed. It has been an enriching experience.

— Firdaus Parvez

renku

A magical treat woven with fresh and rich verses blended with the taste, smell, touch, vision, and sound.

— Lakshmi Iyer

Thank you, Linda, for a lovely journey.

— Robert Kingston

A beautiful learning experience and a remarkable journey.

— Priti Aisola

This is my first experience with renku. I enjoyed the camaraderie and the creativity and I learned a lot about India in the process.

— Marcie Wessels

It has been a delightful journey of learning and unfolding. The way a renku river flows never ceases to amaze me.

— Kanjini Devi

Observing keenly, how this renku has taken shape is an experience I will cherish for the rest of my life.

— Kavita Ratna

renku

Thank you, Kala, for initiating renku on Triveni and allowing us to participate and learn so much from our wonderful Sabaki, Linda!

— Sushama Kapur

I don't have words to capture the beauty of renku. On this day, it is my favourite of all the flavours in haikai. With every verse being added, I was aware, of how less I knew.

— Amrutha V. Prabhu

A magical path: to come together in serenity and lightness...

— Margherita Petriccione

Grateful for the opportunity I had to take part in this group work that has taught me so much.

— Angiola Inglese

haiga



tanka-art



who could have guessed
all the places we would go
a blessing
all along the way
the scent of wildflowers

tanka-art





*listening
to the thrush's song
in late summer
I tour my garden
along with a dragonfly*

Daipayan Nair

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

See you once again on 22 September 2022
with many more fine poems
from our contributors.

Team: *haikuKATHA*