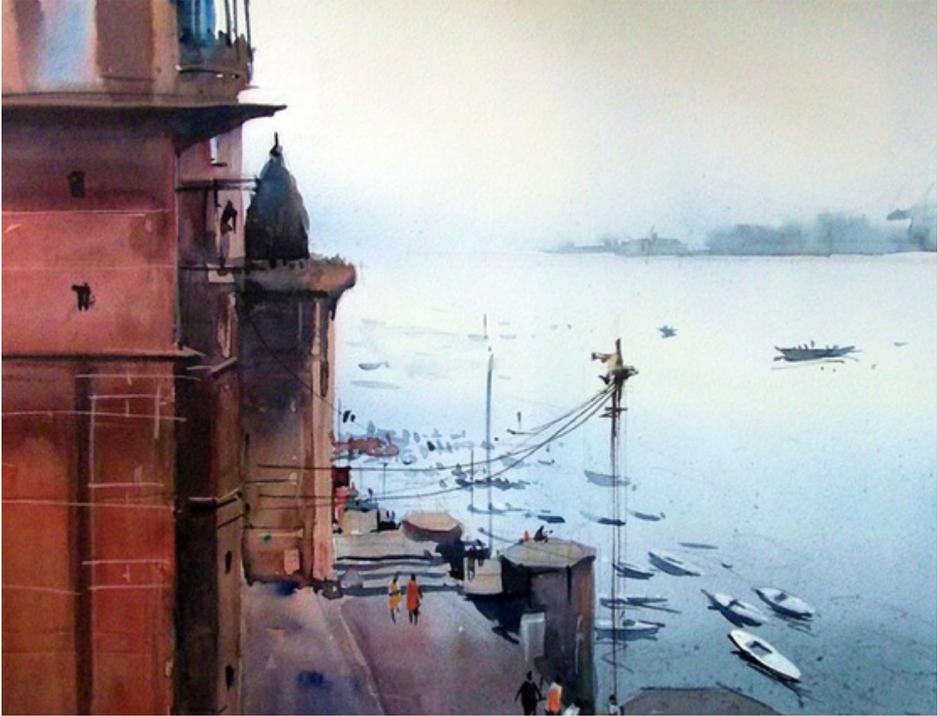


# haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Issue 6 April 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 will be put together by a team of editors who will 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 6  
March 2022

haiku, tanka,  
haibun, tanka-prose, shahai and tanka-art

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haiku, haibun, tanka-prose, shahai and tanka-art

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written for these prompts,

our contributors  
for sharing their poems.

## Editors' Choice Commentary

Editors' Choice Commentary by Shloka Shankar

face reading ...  
nothing new to say  
about my husband

— Lakshmi Iyer

A person's face can give so much away and becomes a sort of portal into taking a peek at the inside workings of their mind. This is more so in married couples. In this rather tongue-in-cheek senryu, which gave me a good chuckle upon first reading it, I instantly pictured my own middle-aged parents.

The poem highlights the film of familiarity that settles on any marriage over a period of time, leave alone several decades. Note how L2 and L3 are of equal length. It brings to light the comfortable silences, the complacency, a husband set in his own ways, the wife privy to all of his responses, actions, tastes, and so on. This senryu readily shows the reader the well-oiled machine that is the persona's marriage.

On the contrary, it can also be interpreted as the wife, perhaps, wishing for something different, something exciting, a respite from the humdrum of life.

Not to take away anything from Lakshmi's fine senryu but I just wanted to share a poem by Angela Terry in the same vein that was first published in Issue Six of *Sonic Boom*:

summer haircut –  
my husband still  
predictable

— Angela Terry

## haiku

slowing my paces  
in the exercise yard  
magpie carol

— Agus Maulana Sunjaya

ninety percent blockage  
... he still does not know  
the way to my heart

— Akila G

split wood  
nails through the arms  
of a cross

— Alan Peat

blowing bubbles ...  
an evening wind  
wings rainbows

— Anju Kishore

## haiku

acceptance mail —  
how the heart  
turns cartwheels

— Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

i in the circle of thoughts whirlwind

— Devoshruti Mandal

dream surfing  
a pearl grey egret  
on my quilt

— Kavita Ratna

kaleidoscope ...  
I forget my phone  
for a few hours

— Kavya Janani

## haiku

face reading ...  
nothing new to say  
about my husband

— Lakshmi Iyer (\*ECC)

puppet show  
king twirls his moustache  
every now and then

— Lakshmi Iyer

dung beetle  
what mistakes did you make  
in your previous life?

— Lev Hart

dear crocus  
let's meet at the corner of  
winter&spring

— Lev Hart

## haiku

twilight pond –  
ringlets of ripples  
nudge each other

— Milan Rajkumar

war news  
a distant breeze flutters  
the koel's song

— Neena Singh

summer breeze ...  
braiding the sunrays  
into her hair

— Shreya Narang

on leaves the shadow of a clock tower

— Srinivas S

## haiku

parikrama —  
moonlit floor caresses  
her blistered feet

— Teji Sethi

## tanka

all this long night  
no sign nor a signal  
from my maestro  
suffice in morning sun  
the music of daydreams

— an'ya

hot sand  
seemingly on fire-  
sea glass  
sparking memories  
of my old flame

— an'ya

I find  
a thousand reasons  
to leave the city  
another thousand to stay ...  
the scent of the sea

— Agus Maulana Sunjaya

tanka

shining  
on this lonely street  
cold moon  
I return to the place  
where we used to meet

— Agus Maulana Sunjaya

some viewers  
may find  
some of the images  
upsetting —  
someone's son

— Alan Peat

soap bubbles  
drift in the breeze  
but for a second  
the world revolves  
on my daughter's fingertip

— Arvinder Kaur

tanka

all my poems  
going back to her  
I wonder  
how many times  
I have yet to lose mama

— Arvinder Kaur

another bouquet  
for Women's Day...  
how easy  
it is to cut things  
down to size

— Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

an old memory  
of chalking the sidewalk  
at seventy  
perhaps it's not too late  
to feed my inner child

— Barbara Kaufmann

## tanka

early autumn  
the warmth of embers  
in our kitchen  
my ink pen gliding  
over a blank page

— Daniela Misso

in a drawer  
a daisy seed packet  
never used ...  
how many dreams  
I've yet to realise

— Daniela Misso

a word-cloud floats  
in front of my eyes  
isn't it tempting  
to pluck random words  
and weave them together?

— Gauri Dixit

## tanka

a fragile vase  
shatters on the floor  
I focus  
a magnifying glass  
on cheap little hurts

— Ken Slaughter

still a few drops  
after all this hard rain...  
one by one  
I thank my desires  
and let them go

— Ken Slaughter

black clouds  
hovering above the temple ...  
post-war  
stains of hurt and anguish  
in the spring wind

— Lakshmi Iyer

## tanka

golden hues  
of a desert sunset ...  
once again  
this play of light  
on his upturned face

— Lakshmi Iyer

bare wall sockets  
and the smell of fresh paint  
on move-in day  
I hang an old photo  
of my family home

— Linda Papanicolaou

puddle of shade  
beneath a poolside umbrella —  
when did I  
become an old crone  
tut-tutting at teenagers

— Linda Papanicolaou

tanka

not a ripple  
disturbs the still pond,  
below the surface  
a crocodile waits ...  
my anger at your affair

— Marilyn Humbert

hospice visit  
my dad just a shadow  
of his former self  
how I miss the shoulders  
on which he carried me

— Mona Bedi

evening walk  
near Puget's sound  
black cormorants  
    screeching  
through my loneliness

— Neena Singh

tanka

after you leave  
your sinful shadow  
still lingering  
on the sheets of my skin  
i shower for hours

— Pamela Babusci

pen  
against paper  
Ukraine  
explodes through my mind  
and my hand goes numb

— Pris Campbell

this house  
with many windows —  
what would change  
within me if at least one  
faced Arunachala

— Priti Aisola

## tanka

a heat wave  
empties the streets  
all week  
while not a leaf stirs  
this rustle of thoughts

— Priti Aisola

caught up  
in consonants and vowels  
I become  
deaf to the music  
of the monsoon

— Srinivas S.

your face  
in the copper sunlight  
a palaash bloom  
my restless mind goes  
to that lost afternoon

— Subir Ningthouja

tanka

finding my voice  
to lose it again ...  
melting snow  
falls into  
the sound of a river

— Vandana Parashar

as if my crying  
will bring him back  
like clockwork  
I water  
the dead plant daily

— Vandana Parashar

## haibun

Akila G.



### Making a Choice

*'You want a puppy or Pappa?'*

“Pappa”... her face crestfallen like the drooping rose in my balcony.

And as if he read my mind, *“You grow up fast, buy a house and keep a puppy.”*

“But you won't visit me. You won't come to my house!”

*“I will! Whenever I come, you lock the dog in the kennel.”*

“You are so unkind and insensitive!”

I quickly signal to him to stop this conversation; that grin, evident of his idea of fun. A few weeks later, her school hosted a day with pets. As soon as she stepped down from the school bus, she declared, “Let us buy a kennel and put Pappa inside it.”

twelfth birthday –  
you too now know  
what she wants

## haibun

Anju Kishore  
~

### Pegasus

Nobody else knows that the moth in my cupboard is only pretending to be dead.  
People tell me to get rid of it.

still grassland ...  
dew glistens  
on the gazelle's nose

I sense a stirring. I see the familiar flutter. Within seconds, the monstrous wings are pressing against my breath, stinging my eyes. The next instant, I am swallowed whole by an abyss. I fall, face down, and keep falling as if in slow motion.

My fingers feel the dark, liquid floor for something— anything that could offer me a crutch.

streaks of dawn ...  
the door latched  
from inside

Anju Kishore  
~

### Folding and Unfolding

darkening day  
sand stirs  
on the edge of a crab hole

I stand on the long, sandy mound that the sea has created. For some reason, I stay away from the water's edge. There are some who have plunged headlong into the leaping froth. A few are feverishly clicking away at the boiling, hissing mass of steel. There are others sitting on the mound, mostly young couples, sinking into each other's murmurs.

The wind is fast turning into a gale. I watch it chasing the sea all the way from a horizon that it has consumed.

There is a lull. A briny stillness sticks to the skin and traps my breath within its warmth.

Suddenly, a crash empties the sky. Everybody stands drenched in the rain.

## haibun

Diana Webb



### The Way

You walk so often along this street from home to supermarket, back again, the pavements trampled by countless feet, sometimes smeared with stuff you prefer to avoid, the excrement, the dust, decaying leaves. Sometimes you wish you could fly, sail far away as you tread across the cracks. Across the cracks. The cracks.

somewhere between  
turquoise aquamarine  
a shimmer of wings

You blink. The symmetry. The perfect placing in the top right-hand corner of the rectangle. The parallels. The haiga of your dreams. You blink again. The paving stone is just a paving stone a paving stone a paving ...

Diana Webb



### Warmth of a Cuddly Toy

The baby polar bear born in captivity in London Zoo, shone bright as the Arctic snow that she would never see, across the pages of my childhood annuals. Icon and celebrity. These words weren't common parlance as they are now, but she was both. But even then perhaps, the heat was just too much.

ice lolly  
how soon it melts  
in one small hand

Gauri Dixit



### Anticipation

A large patch of sweat has formed on my back and it is growing. My hair is damp and sweat beads are getting into my eyes, making it impossible for me to see anything. I have tried tinkering with the air conditioner settings, switching it off completely, opening the windows, putting the ceiling fan on at full speed; nothing has worked.

At this point, the sky rumbles, clouds darken and the air freshens up carrying petrichor from a faraway land ...

red ants  
hide  
amidst the hay ...  
storm

Gauri Dixit



Moonlight Across my Window

What do I write, a poem or her obituary?

She came to me late last night, bleeding. I think she mistook my demeanor for a doctor's and fainted at my feet. These white walls do make my room look like an emergency ward.

I am a patient myself, getting treated for a while now, for wanting to write. They haven't found a cure for me yet like they could not stop her bleeding last night. She bled to death at my feet, her blood a strange liquid rainbow.

dreamboats

I thought

sailing was easy

Mona Bedi



### Chronicle

Entering my 57th year, I wonder about the world at large. How many different life stories there must be — the roadside vendor, the blue eyed boy next door, the old couple sitting at the garden bench every day ...

long road journey

I live a life

in the passing houses

Tapan Mozumdar



#### 400 Bad Request

“Enough about twilights! Or, full moon, dew drops and such nonsense! Can you write about an open wound?” She asks, and then replies, “You can’t.” Unwrapping, she goes on, “You haven’t relished the feel of your tingling nerves lapping up all the air they can. After years of running docile under the layers of skin and muscles, free finally!”

“Ecstasy of being one with the beloved?”

“That needs surrender. You can’t do that. You can’t write about an open wound without metaphors. You are too busy dressing the wound tight.”

summer drizzle —  
the street dog stays put  
wherever it is

Outside this emergency ward, back in the streets, she will be waiting at the bus stop while I zoom past her in my sedan. Here, with the authority of the spotless white uniform she dons, she tells me to sit still as she tinkers with my festering wound.

## tanka-prose

Barbara Kaufmann



### Unfolding

When I was very young, I wanted to write stories. That was seven decades ago. At some point I decided to study nursing. Soon I found caregiving to be all consuming and my desire to write was forgotten... for fifty years. One day, I remembered my childhood dream and I began to write.

my busy hands  
wash and fold laundry  
all morning  
a love poem writes itself  
inside my head

## tanka-prose

Gauri Dixit  
~

### Rains

I haven't spoken for a while now, not even with myself. My breath is raspy, words trying to get out with it. The oil on my skin guarding the tiny pores, even the pores are enough for words to escape otherwise.

The teacher gives us some homework every day; today it is writing, writing an essay about the Sunday picnic. My bench mate has a happy write-up about the garden, the slide, the ice-cream and friends.

"Homework must be done," I tell myself. If I allowed myself to speak, I would beg her to lend me her essay. But I can't, no other option but to write my own.

I title it 'Best Sunday Ever'. That sounds joyous! And then I start with the first paragraph.

Hide-and-seek is my favourite game. I hid behind a large tree holding my breath. Just then I felt a hand pressing on my back. Anju seemed to have found me but why would she gag me and blindfold me and threaten to kill me if I moved?

what sound  
do sparrows make  
when sad ...  
all we ever talk about  
is the birds' happy chirps

## tanka-prose

Tish Davis  
~

Doorbell

*isolation*

Our elderly neighbor, now on hospice, has come for a visit once again, forgetting to tell his wife. While I make the call, my husband makes space for him.

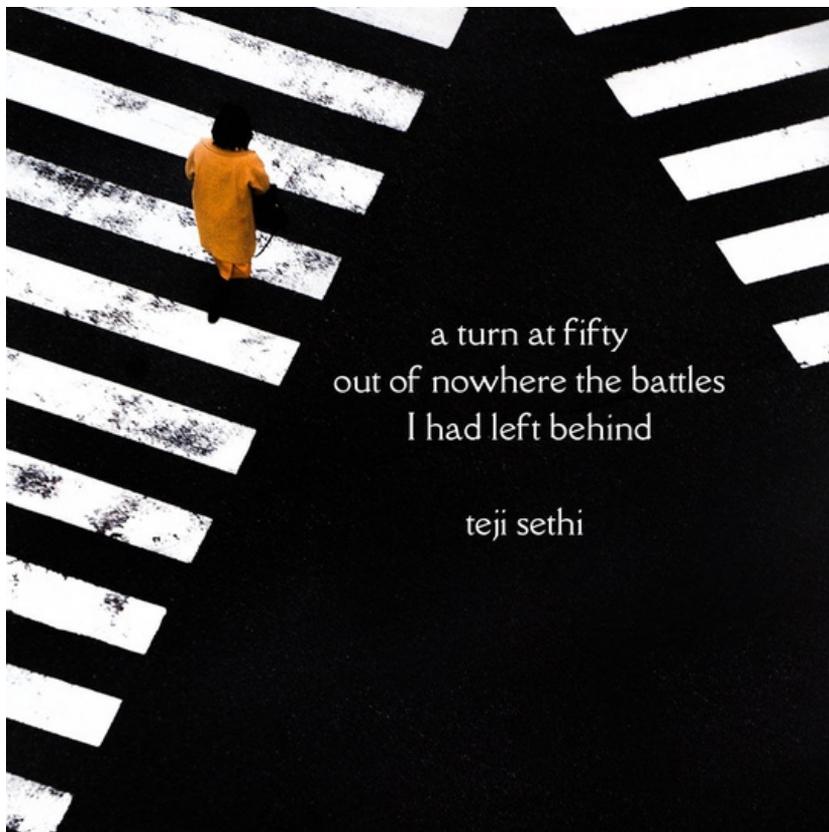
*patterns*

After finding a comfy spot on the small, green couch in the office, our terminally ill friend settles in. Soon three dogs gather around him wagging their tails as if it's been years since their last meeting.

*on panes of glass*

“What did you two talk about today?”

*dust, the dust ...  
the death of the antique clock*

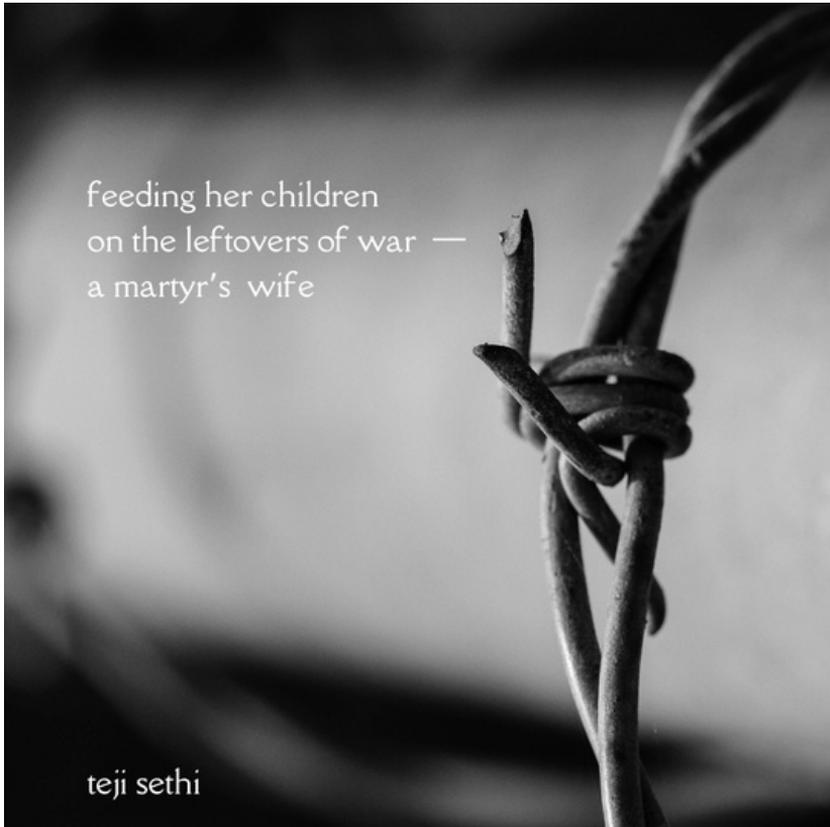


a turn at fifty  
out of nowhere the battles  
I had left behind

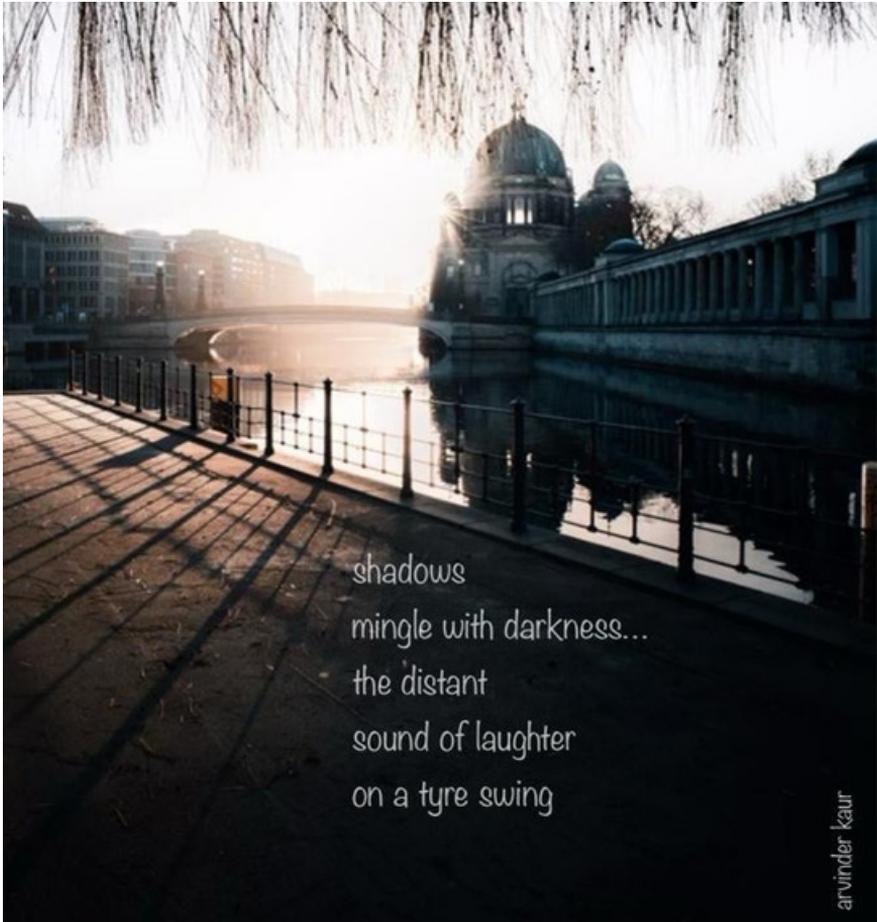
teji sethi

Teji Sethi  
pic sourced from Canva

shahai



Teji Sethi  
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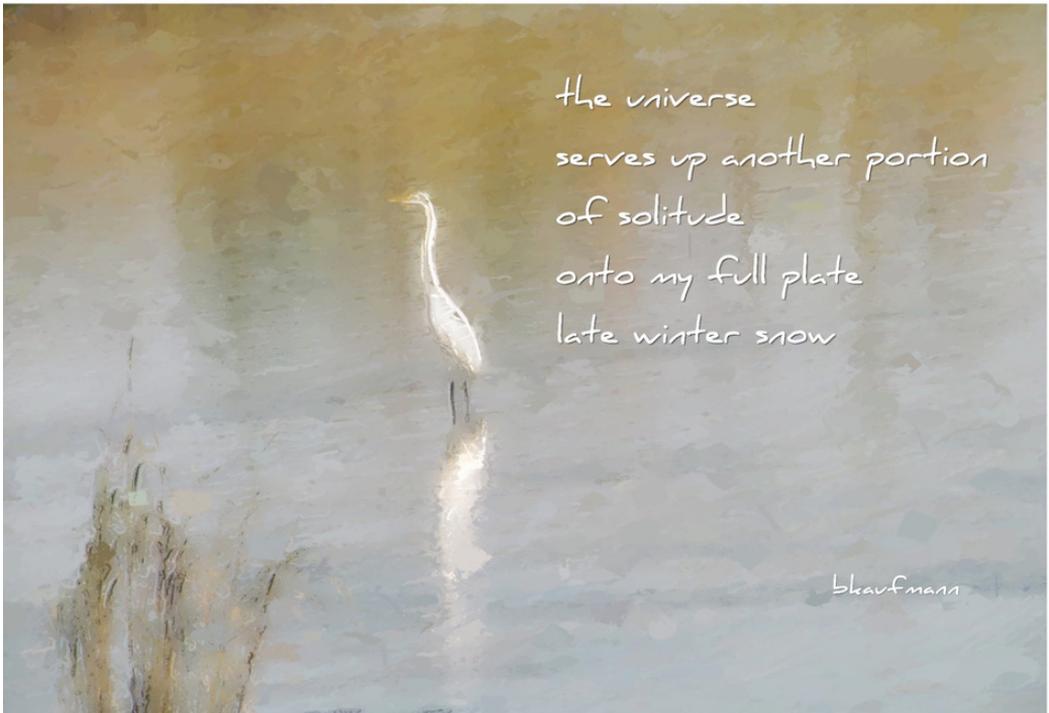


Arvinder Kaur  
pic sourced from Unplash

tanka-art



pic and poem by Barbara Kaufmann



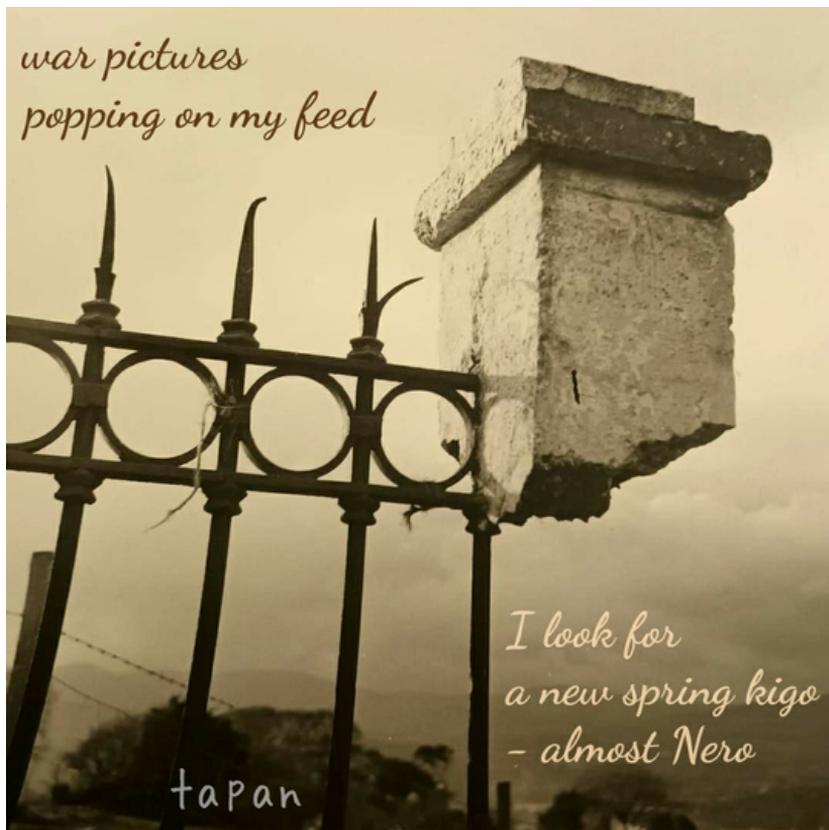
pic and poem by Barbara Kaufmann



blue mist  
shrouding  
the emptiness  
that nobody  
can fill

pamela a. babusci

painting-babusci



Tapam Mozumdar  
pic sourced from free zone

Dear readers,  
thank you for being with us.

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

Team haikuKATHA