

# haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Milind Malick

Issue 29 March 2024

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*unfolding the story within*

*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, tanka art, 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 29  
March 2024

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

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

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for the month of February 2024,

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Editors' Choice Commentary: Priti Aisola  
Sun and friendship: Susan Yavaniski

sun and friendship  
so scarce these days  
I turn on a light  
just for the company  
of my shadow

Susan Yavaniski

There are many lovely poems this month. However, Susan Yavaniski's poem struck a deep chord within me. The feeling of being lonely is quite intense in the tanka, yet it is expressed with so much dignity and restraint. The language is simple; the mood created by the simple words lingers.

Let us look at the upper verse: 'sun and friendship / so scarce these days'. It reads like a sweeping statement, but the reader soon understands that the poet-narrator speaks from moments of felt experience; the observation is very likely based on what she is going through. To hear of the 'sun' and 'friendship' being spoken of together puzzled me at first. One can fully understand the absence/the 'scarce' presence of the sun where winters are rainy and gloomy. (I have experienced this during our three-year stay in Vancouver and this can lower one's spirits.) Sun and friendship are rarely paired together. However, one knows that friendship is like the sun bringing light and cheer into one's moments, which may otherwise turn bleak and cheerless. To have friends/a good friend is lovely. A friend with a sunny disposition is even lovelier – life-affirming.

Listen to the lower verse: 'I turn on a light / just for the company / of my shadow'. How deep the feeling of being companionless! It is perhaps late evening, or night, and this feeling of having no one to share anything with hits harder. A sad, poignant lower verse.

A shadow is featureless, expressionless, voiceless. It soundlessly follows each movement, but not the emotion of the person. If it cannot have the intent to cheer you up, it cannot have the intent to pull you down also. But if you choose to dance away your blues, it will follow your moves seamlessly. The shadow is an illusory companion, but something is better than nothing — a fairly faithful, ‘insubstantial’ companion, but a companion all the same. I am reminded of a poem, “My Shadow”, by Robert Louis Stevenson that I read as a child. Leaving you with its opening lines and Susan Yavaniski’s tanka for ‘company’:

*I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.*

## haiku

ginger tea  
maybe this spring I'll plant  
a herb garden

Alfred Booth

snow pellets  
the cat sitsssssssssss  
on my keyboard

an'ya

a breath ...  
even a songbird  
must pause

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

leap day  
no one to see  
this first plum blossom

Charles Harper

## haiku

March winds  
a leaf rises up and over  
wood anemones

C.X. Turner

a wake-up call  
for breakfast  
woodpecker drums

Dinah Power

spring rain  
again we open  
the woolens box

Govind Joshi

travelling to work  
her husband drops her  
in his rickshaw

Govind Joshi

## haiku

late winter dawn  
bubbles winking at the rim  
of a coffee cup

Keith Evetts

gathering dusk  
where the lane ends  
quiet cypresses

Keith Evetts

winter's end  
aroma of pepper  
in the pounding stone

Lakshmi Iyer

summer morning ...  
rushing buffaloes cover  
the light with dust

Lakshmi Iyer

## haiku

shearing shed —  
one by one sheep  
bolt into the sun

Linda Papanicolaou

granny squares  
piecing together  
her hippie years

Marilyn Ashbaugh

empty purse  
her bags full  
of woollen gifts

Radhamani Sarma

porchlight frost ...  
the stray knows  
it can stay

Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta

## haiku

stepping out  
in a knockoff jacket  
first-rate winter

Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta

a long hair  
in the rumpled sweater ....  
your absence, too

Shawn Blair

stage 4 cancer  
not the wild garden  
I wanted to grow

Susan Burch

fuel bill  
one sweater over another  
over another

Susan Yavaniski



## haiku

gusting wind  
the orchid unfurls  
on the windowsill

Susan Yavaniski

## one-line haiku

between the last note hush & applause

Lev Hart

skinny-dipping in a sky-blue sky robins

Rupa Anand

my scarf boa constricting

Susan Burch

## four-line haiku

daily grind  
    the farmer shouts  
keep left  
    to his cattle

Lakshmi Iyer

## zip haiku

a grey heron    lost in a trance  
  sticklebacks    tickle his toes

Keith Evetts

## concrete haiku

    r  
    e    e  
    th  
    and  
    here  
    the kite  
wind playing  
in the sky

Rupa Anand

## tanka

with a tender voice  
you call 'amrit'  
again and again  
call me by my name  
i feel like a song beautiful

Amrutha V Prabhu

the steep path  
on a monolithic hill  
to top - that one moment  
when i am not tied  
to anything

Amrutha V. Prabhu

a poem  
written  
on a piece of paper  
while sitting at my table -  
have i robbed the wood?

Amrutha V Prabhu

tanka

year of war  
a memorial bench  
in the children's park  
the silence  
of the swings

Arvinder Kaur

still there  
in mother's courtyard  
the sun-patch she loved  
her bottlebrush bends  
to caress

Arvinder Kaur

early spring  
whispers of rain  
on your lips  
the tender undressing  
of another season

C.X. Turner

tanka

crystal angel  
positioned in sight  
by my bedside  
the sentinel moon  
revealing new wings

Joanna Ashwell

back home  
i visit our childhood beach  
pouring  
its colours over the sea  
the sunset sky shows off

Kala Ramesh

my sister's touch  
all her tears become  
words  
whispered softly  
into my sleepless night

Kala Ramesh



tanka

we speak of Ancient Ones  
as if they're long gone, yet  
here stands Tāne Mahuta  
bestowing wisdom  
when I'm willing to listen

Kanjini Devi

another autumn  
for the old oak  
a circle of bark  
never quite hiding  
the scar

Keith Evetts

a cheap pocket-watch  
that no longer tells the time  
the only relic  
of a labouring man  
my great-grandfather

Keith Evetts

## tanka

more bad news  
from all around the world  
it's been a while  
since anybody  
said hello

Keith Evetts

first dream of the year —  
have I disappointed my  
parents again?  
the harsh wind sinks  
deeper into my mandible

Kirsten Cliff Elliot

the patchwork motifs  
of lesser flamingos  
homebound  
i wave them a quiet goodbye  
as the pink sky turns blue

Lakshmi Iyer

tanka

such perfect alignment  
of moonrise and sunset  
and here i am  
trying hard to draw a line  
between my wants and needs

Lakshmi Iyer

a dog and i  
watch the sunset together ...  
in its mind  
a cooked pumpkin,  
a smudged painting in mine

Lakshmi Iyer

end of the school year —  
a ceramic butterfly  
on the classroom shelf  
made lovingly by a child  
who did not take it home

Linda Papanicolaou

tanka

a bin of stones  
at the garden store  
river-smoothed  
bones of this old earth  
warm my own wrinkled hand

Linda Papanicolaou

post office window —  
at the front of the queue  
two old ladies  
counting their pennies  
select a flower stamp

Linda Papanicolaou

on the sill  
your jade elephant  
for thirty years  
I've lived with my memories  
and a heart that won't heal

Lorraine Haig

tanka

twenty-five  
red handfish removed  
from the ocean  
will we save ourselves  
by saving them

Lorraine Haig

after the fire  
volunteers search  
for injured koalas  
blackened trees  
begin to green

Lorraine Haig

discovering an umbrella  
in my school bag  
on a rainy day  
ma's love mushrooms  
in unexpected places

Meenu Maria Jose

tanka

a fledgling fern  
in the woods where I walk —  
this flashback  
of your slender hands  
cupping my eyes from behind

Milan Rajkumar

on a dusty shelf  
an old sketchbook bears  
a jacaranda tree  
some faded branches still  
have purple blossoms for me

Nalini Shetty

a cicada sings ...  
the sorrow buried  
deep within  
rising to greet the friend  
at whose grave I stand

Neena Singh

tanka

kneading dough,  
your fingers around  
my waist ...  
tenderly you have held  
broken parts of me

Nitu Yumnam

the neem branch  
shades a green patch ...  
this comforting feel  
of your arm around  
my shoulders

Nitu Yumnam

longer and farther  
searching for food and water  
they fly and fly ...  
migrating birds  
shrinking in numbers

Padma Priya

tanka

each day's  
never-ending chores ...  
a bluebird  
embroidered for the baby  
still waiting for its wings

Priti Aisola

bone-thin  
you ran mile after mile  
with grit ...  
your final collapse, we hold  
an urn full of ashes

Priti Aisola

a daily ritual  
of folding vegetable peelings  
into the red soil ...  
her child wonders if this  
offering is thanks enough

Priti Aisola



tanka

a flock of doves  
gathered on a fallow field  
will they seek me too  
upon the morning  
the day bell tolls

Robert Kingston

drinking  
from plastic bottles  
how we ignore  
the cow's agony arising  
from a bellyful of junk

Rupa Anand

frosted window  
I look through to see  
the milkman  
wary of a dog  
that isn't here anymore

Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta

tanka

rain driven  
by a cold north wind  
her hands  
cradle the urn  
for the journey home

Shawn Blair

considering  
the fate of this world  
we share  
a green apple  
in the rose garden

Shawn Blair

a grief  
of a kind clings  
to me ...  
the first dent  
in our new car

Sumitra Kumar

tanka

Orchids ...  
looking into your eyes  
as you tell me  
we can flourish  
on air, water and love

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

rain on me  
thunder cloud  
I see  
no other path  
to touching the skies

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

a slender ring  
missing two diamonds ...  
the only price paid  
on this anniversary  
of our long-ago wedding

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

tanka

when I feel like  
I'm bothering you  
I try to retreat ...  
stepping on bees  
I didn't see

Susan Burch

no portal  
to my world -  
my husband  
never suffers  
a migraine

Susan Burch

how moonflowers  
only bloom at night -  
my collection  
of 3 a.m. poems  
keeps growing

Susan Burch

tanka

sun and friendship  
so scarce these days  
I turn on a light  
just for the company  
of my shadow

Susan Yavaniski

so soulful  
this dove calling  
for its mate  
as sad as your lament  
for that missing sock

Susan Yavaniski

Adelaide B. Shaw

### Body Language

They speak no English, Grandpa and Grandma. We speak no Italian, my sister and I. Words we understand are limited to a few phrases: \*seduto, mangia, stai zitto (sometimes said in a raised voice) vatini, chuida la porta, as we are leaving. But, since we live upstairs, we are back several times a day. More is conveyed with gestures, with warm arms, a warm lap and warm food.

first robin —  
learning to read the signs  
of my new love

\*sit, eat, be quiet, leave, close the door

Alfred Booth

“To be or not to be ...”

At least I didn't lisp, although I can stutter when I'm nervous. “Try not to sound so effeminate.” What? How do I do that? Shut my mouth all day? “Don't talk with your hands so much.” OK, for this a full-length mirror sort of helped. And I did try. But sounding like a girl? What was I supposed to do about that? How had I already learned to sound like “that” as a ten-year-old in the 60s with a three-channel black and white TV?

Spanish, then French classes. A minor in French at university. Words flowed with other types of emphasis.

I was 25 when I moved to France. When I said “bonjour”, people replied without reservation. They didn't hear what I was supposed to hide. I felt such a sense of freedom! I've never apologized for who I choose to love, but my new voice didn't automatically broadcast “gay power” to people who might be intolerant. I have since learned to hear the inherent inflections of many French gay men, but cannot imitate them. How do we learn to talk wrong in childhood?

along the Seine  
the second-hand book stands  
la vie en rose

Alfred Booth  
~

### The music box

stopped working many moons ago. Its wind-up key still turns, but something in your tummy won't lullaby me any longer. Your honey-colored fur has patches from years of handprints searching softness.

Grandma brought you from Munich months before I was born. You were the first of many teddies I have since collected. Somehow no one ever thought you needed a name. After all these years, what about Theodore?

You rolled around in my crib and play pens, got mixed up in toy boxes and your uniqueness throned on toy shelves and adult bookshelves, proudly showing off your fully articulated head, arms and legs.

Strange for the musician I've become, I have no recollection of the song you played during my childhood.

millions of notes  
survive deep in my hands  
aviary



C.X. Turner

### Lifeline

A waterfall of heavy rain slides straight off the coat's hood onto a clipboard covered in torn plastic. A car park attendant talks to me through the half-open window of my car as droplets splash onto my knee. The bare earth beneath us appears waterlogged and a blur of impatient engines rev behind us but we continue our conversation.

Deep circles frame his eyes, and he sways back and forth a little, a weak smile barely touching the corners of his mouth. His face no longer has the rosy glow I've come to know and there is a hint of yellow reflecting in his smeared glasses. The digger has not yet started work for the day but sits in the redundant corner, occupying a much-needed space.

the sky behind the forest shadows grief

C.X. Turner

### Whistling Wind

Singing as she walks, her full skirts swing to the music of the moment. An injured black cat rests its paws on the patio. The sound of rain collects in small puddles. Jumping up to see over the long grass, a screech of recognition pitches up outside a purple gate. My friend asks how to talk to mum. In difficult times, the words aren't always there.

all the colours  
in wet autumn leaves  
early dementia

Dru Philippou

### The Way Home

When Rosemary asks why I always bake the same cake for her gatherings, I tell her the eggs are from my mother's silver-laced Wyandottes, who happily hunt bugs and seeds on her farm. The flour comes from my grandmother's almond trees, and the sweetener, harvested from her beehives, has hints of wild white indigo and wrinkleleaf goldenrod. My great-grandmother contributes by sending bottles of rum and dark Madagascan chocolate.

from one hedge  
to another ...  
rambling roses

Eavonka Ettinger

## Gatekeeping

Today it happened, something I've long feared as a 7th grade English teacher. My student said, "LOL, Ms. Ettinger" instead of just, you know, laughing out loud! I made the whole class laugh when I pointed this out, but it felt like something broke inside me.

I've been trying to fight the good fight against abominations like "conversate". I've endlessly explained that I know it doesn't make sense because it's a different word, but you shouldn't say, "He won me at basketball." It's "beat", he beat you, like I've been beaten down.

No matter how many times I tell them that it doesn't do what other verbs do because it's an irregular verb, my students will try to explain to me that every single person they know says "that hurted me," and I clearly don't know what I'm talking about.

But language changes and it evolves, and I can feel myself becoming the old people I mocked when I was their age. I don't want them to feel made fun of or worse, that I'm denying their urban vernacular and thus, their ethnicities. It's such an uneasy tightrope because I am also desperate for them to be allowed into the worlds that demand standard English usage.

a fledgling  
falls from the nest  
blackbird's call

Joanna Ashwell

**Born Free**

Nonsense words, I'm told again and again. Yet, are they? They mean something to me. I furrow my tiny brow, seeing so many possibilities with sound and shape. From as long as I can remember, I've filled notepads with writing. Ink covering the pages in rows and rows of shapes. Letters; not that you may recognise them as such but the action of the pen on paper is important to me. This woven spell of ink, gliding into undiscovered worlds, birds soaring away with glittering wings.

an open sky  
the castle's drawbridge  
spun in cloud

Joanna Ashwell

### Invisible Strings

Post it notes, prepared lunches, folded clothes, a flickering fire. The words of wisdom that may or may not be heeded. The small moments, the packages left on a step. The memories that shape a life, the fragments that pull together to springboard a journey.

whisper by whisper  
behind the scenes  
of every new solo

Kalyanee Arandhara

### Moving On

People say one should move on from things that do not bring in any positive outcome. Is this always easy? Well, the answer is obvious. It's easier to discard objects that are not useful anymore. But it's not easy to discard feelings, beliefs and faiths. You stay hopeful against hopelessness. You hold fast to it as it provides a kind of completeness even when it's not concrete.

flock in flight  
this vagabond heart  
takes rest in a tent

Kalyanee Arandhara

### Inseparable

Like several other objects I cannot part with, the rolling board, a stainless-steel-coated iron-plate that my mother ordered from Moradabad has become a part of my life or rather I have become a part of its journey although life changed its course.

full moon  
I name two stars  
after theirs



Kanjini Devi

### Behind Blue Eyes

He is deep in conversation with both my female friends and does not look up when I serve them hot beverages.

three years now  
your ashes  
still warm

He comes up to the kitchen and thanks me profusely for the meal I made him. His gaze holds on to mine in the time it takes to fill a teacup. All I'm able to say to him is, "Safe travels".

He walks his bike to the road and does not look back.

your favourite song  
so loud in the night  
loud in my head

K. Ramesh  
~

## Hill Temple

I have often spotted the blue butterfly, but not once have I seen it resting on a flower or settling on a branch. Almost the size of a small bird, and somewhat difficult to miss, it has always eluded the frame of my lens, 'gone again' within moments of its appearance.

on the trail again ...  
my legs remember  
the stream

Linda Papanicolaou

### Care Home

She once said that she wouldn't want to live if it came to this. Now, like someone drowning who drags anyone under who gets near, she complains about her wheelchair, about the other residents, the staff who pulls her hair when they bathe her, about me for locking her up and taking her money...

"That's the dementia talking," her doctor tells me on one of our frequent visits.

Mother in winter—  
the word she wants  
but it will not come

Mona Bedi  
~

Losing Out

“A boy and a girl is the norm,” my dad’s sister says. The youngest of three daughters, I am always made to feel by my aunts that it should have been a boy the third time round especially since I was an unplanned baby.

each with their own presence wildflowers

Nalini Shetty

Contours

The night unfolds gracefully over the hills, a tranquil embrace. Bales of hay punctuate the sparse vegetation, accompanied by the crows' final cawing as if time itself were dwindling. In the lawns, boys weave stories with their spirited football match. Amidst this scene, I grapple with uncertainty, attempting to find the elusive direction in my writing.

purple sky —  
what palette paints  
the moon today?

Sandip Chauhan

### Tilting Backpack

In the university canteen, surrounded by blooming amaltas, students chat and exchange notes over bites of food and sips of drinks. They delve into textbooks, while their laptops illuminate with the glow of research articles and lecture slides. Munna, a thirteen or fourteen-year-old from Bihar, glides through the crowd, balancing trays laden with steaming coffee, chai, samosas, sandwiches, and pastries.

When most of the students leave and Munna begins tidying up the tables, he finds a crumpled note. He gazes at the scribbles, then folds it into an airplane and lets it fly.

painting the sky with dreams peacock feathers

Sandip Chauhan

### Stitching Threads

Dawn breaks on a Monday morning, I fill the coffee pot with water and set it to brew. My eyes catch sight of the vintage tea cosy, hand-woven by my mother, resting in the glass kitchen cabinet, scarcely used. It has travelled with me across seas, a treasured memento of home. Its warm, earthy tones evoke memories of golden sunlight filtering through the sheesham tree, where I left my song cradled in its shadows.

stifled dreams ...  
chrysanthemum scent  
lingers in the air

I picture the table, central to our home, where my mother carefully sets the scene for our evening tea, arranging delicate porcelain cups and saucers with a soft clink and ensuring the teapot is snug in its cosy, ready for our tea time.

a gentle serenade  
on the spring breeze ...  
bamboo bansuri

Susan Burch  
~

### Murray's Pinocchio

At the World Bird Sanctuary in Missouri, a male bald eagle named Murray was seen incubating a rock. He built a nest for it and would scream at anyone who came near it. So when an injured chick came in, staffers decided to give him a chance to be a real dad. Shortly after they were introduced, Murray started feeding and raising the chick as his own.

Supermoon his feathers in full floof



Susan Burch  
~

## Holding the Rope

People are always saying motivational things like “you’ve got this”, “keep trying”, and even Nike’s iconic, “Just do it”. But they don’t know what it’s like to have a failing body.

losing my footholds invisible illness

Susan Yavaniski

**You barely**

see her behind the register at the express checkout. A chunky hand-knit sweater stitched with teddy bears hangs upon her frail frame, and long bangs, dyed auburn and streaked with red, completely conceal her face as she leans to search for barcodes. Every arthritic finger is weighted with gemstones, and her long oval nails are painted in assorted shades. As she pulls boxes, bags and cans across the scanner, the dozens of bangles on her wrists jingle. Beneath the Muzak speaker, you almost don't hear the voice stating the total and asking you to please insert your card.

muddy water  
a tiger lily blooms  
in safety-orange

Susan Yavaniski  
~

**In that space**

between sleeping and waking, she has a vivid dream which she later shares over breakfast with her spouse of decades. Across different times and cultures, such hypnopompic dreams are associated with demons and evil spirits, succubi and incubi. Her own dream seems to her marvellous and delightful - not at all malevolent - but she becomes aware, as she is recounting it, that it has potential to unleash a bit of mischief into their morning, and so is careful to edit a few details that might darken her husband's mood.

spindrift  
a surfer disappears  
into the wave

Susan Yavaniski  
~

Trash day

and the predawn breaks with calls of workmen and of crows, a reverberation of bins, the rumble of the compactor, and then the silence again, almost solemn, to mark this end, this beginning.

the box itself  
more lovely than the gift  
another year

Bonnie J Scherer

## Beyond Reach

Thrashing about in broken ice floes and facing high swells, 13-year old Anyū and her 18-month old cub swim toward the ice pack at the far end of the Beaufort Sea. They are on a twelve-hour swim that will take them more than 600 km north of Kaktovik. Polar bears are excellent swimmers but this journey demands much from an adult let alone a cub.

It's the height of summer. The pile of bones remaining from the carcass of the bowhead whale on the beach at this Alaska Native village no longer offers enough scrap blubber to sustain the gathering of polar bears who have come to depend on it. With the sea ice receding further from shore each day, Anyū and her cub have already set course in the open sea. Hunting for their preferred food, the ring seal with its abundant fat, polar bears have better success on the ice.

By early October, the small percentage of polar bears who remain ashore will begin foraging for food. Some will sniff out frozen muktuk in ice cellars in the permafrost and risk being shot by wary villagers defending life and home.

critical decisions  
regarding climate change  
sink or swim  
the question of survival  
in an uncertain world

C.X. Turner  
~

### Tandem

The silver spokes of our front wheels spin so quickly they become a blur. We cover a lot of ground separately yet in unison. I cycle faster until finally ready to lift my feet off the pedals and as I do so, you do the same and we free-wheel down the long slope.

two penguins  
committing to a lifetime  
together ...  
another year of matching  
Valentine's Day cards

David Rice



Connected?

a crane calls once  
and lands near the lake  
the silence  
of the burnt trees  
louder

Discouraged is easy. Look at the fire-blackened willow limbs. Mastodon skeletons, someone said. But the next year, green shoots. The mycelia survived. The roots still work. The willow will green again. Courage, which the eco-activists say we need now, is harder. But we have connections. We can work together. We could green again . . . like that willow . . .

the one willow left  
after the fire  
hosts a flycatcher  
enough  
to bring me back

Keith Evetts  
~

### Cracks in the Dam

Although it's only a few months since the ceasefire, and road travel in remoter areas is still in convoy escorted by a pickup truck with a machine gun mounted in a mesh bin, we manage to grab a few days leave and head south-west from Harare. The bush war has decimated a good deal of edible wildlife, and the elephant population has also been plundered for ivory ...

... though not entirely. Arriving at Bumi Hills we are shown to one of the luxury huts set in the slopes with a view of Lake Kariba. Shortly before dinner, the public address system warns guests to be careful. There is an elephant at the reception. We are disappointed not to see one when we get there. The receptionist tells us that this is a curious young bull elephant that is hanging around the hotel. After dining al fresco, we're all watching the outdoor film show about the local wildlife when the shadow of a large ear is projected on to the screen ...

Now time is running out for Kariba. The concrete is degrading, maybe irreparable. The Zambezi's ready to reclaim its course, a huge flood to watch on television. Like the magnificent animals of Africa, another documentary for the archives.

a party boat  
heads downstream to the Falls  
the calls of a crowned crane  
drowned out  
by boozing tourists



Lorraine Haig  
~

### The Empty Blue

a wonga vine  
opens its flowers  
to the sky  
how high must I climb  
to be with you

We buried our daughter in the small graveyard. Tall eucalyptus trees bordered one side, their trunks like the sturdy legs of mourners. The other side looked towards the bay with a view over farmland to the island where she lived.

on the sea cliff  
I write you a poem  
fold it  
into a paper plane  
why can't I let it fly

Sumitra Kumar  
~

**Just a Breath Away**

She'd reach out on her own whenever I needed help. How did she always know?  
Over the years she was a neighbour, sister, mother and a forever friend.

morning birds  
chirp at the funeral  
life goes on ...  
these bitter-sweet truths  
beyond my grasp today

Sumitra Kumar  
~

### Beating Stress

“This boat could return in the event of rough weather and there will be no refund.” The woman handing over the snorkel kits for our underwater adventure makes her mandatory announcements as we move in line to enter the speedboat headed for mid-seas.

“Oh ... I see. Why ... could you then please ... change the weather?” Hubby wastes no time making that “innocent” query with mock seriousness, receiving a solid punch on the back from me, amid a riot of laughter.

work-engrossed  
i attempt a copy paste  
across devices ...  
my goofy partner’s love  
lights up new pathways

Susan Yavaniski  
~

**The last**

of his siblings, the last of his graduating class, his old friends long dead, along with the movie stars he once emulated and the singers whose words he still knows by heart, he begins every day with the obituaries, searching for anyone, at all, from his generation.

what is left  
for the birds of winter?  
ice and snow  
have buried everything  
so they too have flown away

haiga



Adelaide B. Shaw

haiga

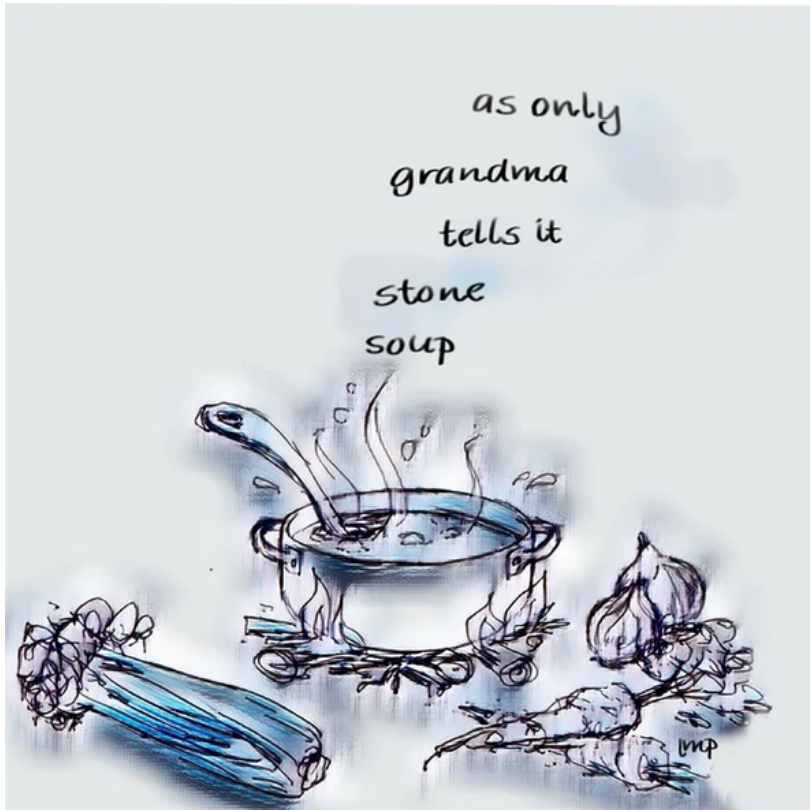


image and ku: Linda Papanicolaou

haiga



Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta

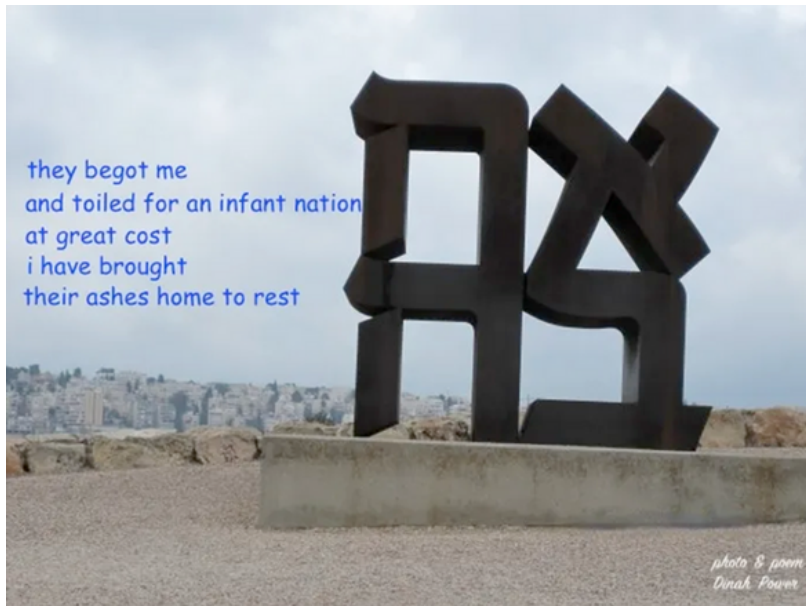
tanka-art

first strokes  
on my sketch pad ...  
this rainy day  
I follow the footsteps  
to a garden long-forgotten



Christine L. Villa





Dinah Power

tanka-art



our DNA, theirs,  
and the bars between us—  
a human dad  
making monkey faces  
in the ape house at the zoo

LMP

Linda Papanicolaou

tanka-art



Koutruk #205/47/0395

*sound of gunfire  
in the silent hills -  
still remembering  
those days ... when you brought  
food for the frontline soldiers*

*milan rajkumar*

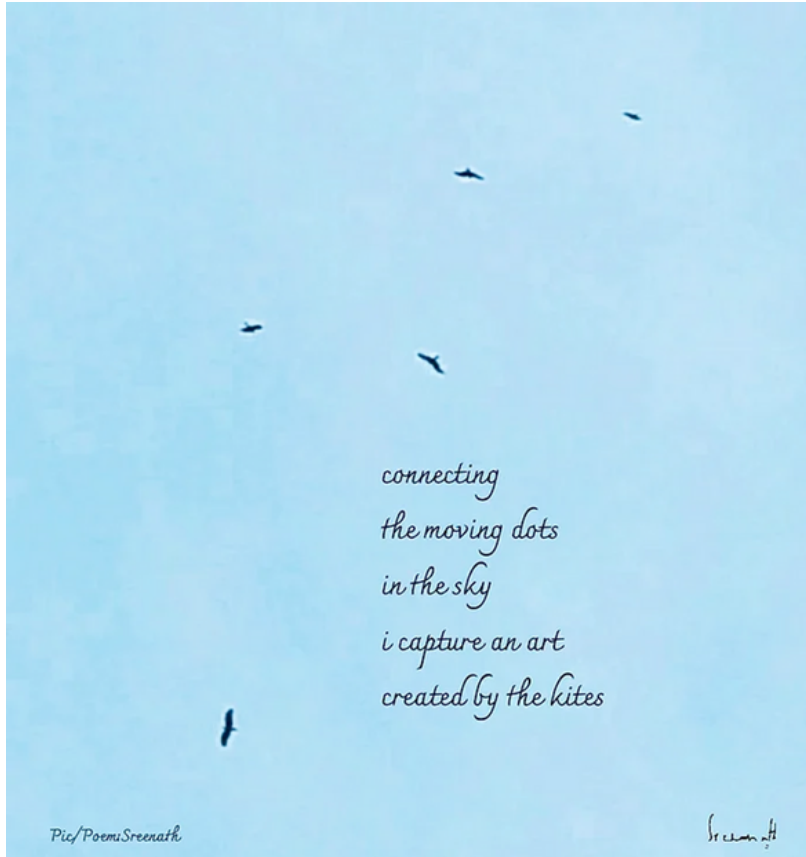
Milan Rajkumar

tanka-art



Rupa Anand

tanka-art



Sreenath

tanka-art



Teji Sethi

Dear Readers  
thank you for being with us.

See you once again on 22 April 2024!  
with many more fine poems  
from our contributors.

Team: *haikuKATHA*