

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Milind Mulick

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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.

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

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

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for the month of February 2025,

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for his brilliant watercolour painting,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Editors' Choice Commentary: Kala Ramesh
Editor's Choice: *sleepwalking* by Kashiana Singh

sleepwalking
the devil holds
my hand

Kashiana Singh

Here is a senryu that caught my attention from the first reading and lasted even after the selection was done!

Kashiana Singh is a fine poet, proficient in both mainstream and haikai poetry. In telling this story, she has convincingly stepped out of Shiki's popular *shasei* – the sketch from life – which may be defined as “*writing exactly what you see, so the reader could also experience the scene and understand what had moved you.*” [1]

Many haiku poets profess to like and follow Basho, but in truth they remain faithful to Shiki's style. Nowadays, perhaps 90% of senryu poets are followers of Shiki.

As Jane Reichhold says, “Most of Shiki's haiku were written in this style. Yet, he himself realized in 1893 that the overuse of this technique could produce many lackluster haiku, so it should never be the only method employed in a haiku.” [2].

Basho, however, advocated imagination, a practice derived from *renku* (linked collaborative verses), where the poets take turns contributing verses. A whole story unfolds under the guidance of a *sabaki* (lead poet). *Renku* themes range widely, moving among season and no-season verses, love, moon, blossom and so on.

One of the best definitions of English-language haiku (ELH) ever attempted is from **Haruo Shirane**'s essay, *Beyond the Haiku Moment*: "I would say, echoing the spirit of Basho's own poetry, that haiku in English is a short poem, usually written in one to three lines, that seeks out new and revealing perspectives on the human and physical condition, focusing on the immediate physical world around us, particularly that of nature, and on the workings of the **human imagination**, memory, literature and history."^[3]

Here is a well-known hokku (as haiku was called during Basho's time), which exemplifies the use of imagination in Basho's haiku.

**the sea darkens
a wild duck's call
faintly white**

- tr. Makoto Ueda

Only an imaginative mind can hear a wild duck's call as faintly white.

Two more examples of hokku, given below, are both taken from *Basho: the Complete Haiku* by Jane Reichhold.

**coming with frost
the wind lies down to sleep
with a deserted child**

- tr. Jane Reichhold

**a shipbuilder
will have to lend us a boat
the river of heaven**

- tr. Jane Reichhold

These poems are based on nature, but I'm underlining their imaginative play, situated within the framework of the hokku.

Returning to Kashiana's senryu:

sleepwalking / the devil holds / my hand

Many children do sleepwalk, but Ls 2 & 3: *the devil holds my hand* are extremely interesting and original. I was intrigued by the word 'devil,' and I wonder if there is another haiku or senryu using this word. The devil is known to tempt people into unfamiliar and daring ways. My mother says that I once opened the balcony door and sleepwalked on the parapet wall! Maybe the 'devil' held my hand too!

I won't forget this ku for a long, long time.
Most imaginatively done, Kashiana.

**

[1] Taken from: Masaoka Shiki, *If Someone Asks . . . : Masaoka Shiki's Life and Haiku*, trans. Shiki-Kinen Museum English Volunteers (Matsuyama, Japan: Matsuyama Municipal Shiki-kinen Museum, 2001)

[2] Jane Reichhold's book: *Basho: The Complete Haiku*. Page 399

[3]<https://www.trivenihaikai.in/post/beyond-the-haiku-moment-basho-buson-and-modern-haiku-myths-haruo-shirane-shincho>

Reader's' Choice Commentary: Padma Priya
Reader's Choice: *life was freedom* - a tanka by **Lorraine Haig**

life was freedom
and I never wore shoes
what happened
to the part of me
that lived on the wild side

- **Lorraine Haig**

Your tanka has a universal appeal, and is so relatable Lorraine!

It poses a question everyone faces at some point in their life. From the innocence of not wearing shoes and the freedom inherent in the action, you shift to the larger question of why life is tamed in such a manner that the spirit of being 'on the wild side' disappears from life completely. Wonderfully crafted tanka and theme according to me.

Padma Priya

haiku

autumn birthday
a fitting time for farewell
but not yet ... not yet

Adelaide B. Shaw

so much depends –
the black box glazed
in hibernal rain

Alan Summers

low-flung clouds
the dusk still comes early
with a scent of onions

Alan Summers

five-year check-up
“my secretary can’t book
that far ahead”

Alfred Booth

haiku

from dawn to dusk
in the olive groves
mourning

Alfred Booth

bridal finery
a pair of wonder-struck eyes
at the car window

Arvinder Kaur

a new row
in the military graveyard
21st century birth dates

Barrie Levine

evening shift —
a miner's cottage window
glows with lamplight

C.X. Turner

haiku

school corridor —
I make myself small
but not enough

C.X. Turner

between
their sunshine and ours
tariff wall

Dipankar Dasgupta

ceasefire
the boy searches
for his classroom

Dipankar Dasgupta

falling snow —
a childhood memory
takes shape

Fatma Zohra Habis

haiku

a stray dog slumbers
under the school bell -
summer holidays

Gauri Dixit

an outlet
for all the quarrels –
sooty chimney

Jagajit Salam

meadowsweet
the quickening rush
of clockwise blades

Joanna Ashwell

wishing my way
back into song
a lark in flight

Joanna Ashwell

haiku

forest trail ...
we take turns to lift
the thorny branch

K. Ramesh

mud roads in monsoon
women lift their saris
knee-high

Kala Ramesh

cyclonic winds
the rice fields
bow low

Kala Ramesh

the smell
of burning hay at sunset
autumn's end

Kalyanee Arandhara

haiku

high noon
the homestead villa
strangled in vines

Kanjini Devi

bits of hay
in the farmer's braids
bale-making

Kanjini Devi

sleepwalking
the devil holds
my hand

Kashiana Singh

dusty paddock
the shearing shed
fills with tumbleweed

Lorraine Haig

haiku

ceasefire
they reload as pigeons rise
just in case

Nalini Shetty

PPD —
a new mother
at war with herself

Padma Priya

initials scratched
on the canal's stone wall
a high-water mark

paul m.

kali yuga —
the squabble in my backyard
the squabble in yours

Rupa Anand

haiku

news cycle
the same explosion
from a different angle

Sandip Chauhan

waning moon
becoming the wind
that shapes the mountain

Sandip Chauhan

the sky empties
into the river
midair collision

Sandip Chauhan

a friend comes
with my son's helmet
... skyfall

Sreenath

haiku

all bills paid
he's so much lighter
on pallbearers' shoulders

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

a new beggar
with the same child
stop signal

Sumitra Kumar

one-line haiku

distant thunder apples loosen in the wind

C.X. Turner

peeling away the darkness dawn blackbird

Robert Kingston

hiding a makeshift hut blossoming plum

Tejendra Sherchan

two-line haiku

peeping spring
the fading white of quietude

Shloka Shankar

four-line haiku

shifting spots
of pain in my head
the fan's blades
turn and turn

Priti Aisola

concrete haiku

owlets
spotted
spotting
neck
the
in
crick

Rupa Anand

tanka

November storm
whipping the trees bare
changes the view
whether sunny or cloudy
decisions still to be made

Adelaide B. Shaw

you speak
when it's right for you ...
in September
I know to wait
for the cherry blossoms

Alfred Booth

silence lingers
over the forest moss
where fireflies flicker
middle-of-night reveries
fidget with my heartstrings

Alfred Booth

tanka

in the cemetery
I wonder how many died
heartbroken
in a village of olive groves
could I be as cherished?

Alfred Booth

the life plans
I made in my teens
never worked out ...
three decades later
I call it my Bucket List

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

I possessed
every flavoured chapstick
at sixteen ...
why then,
was I so unkissable

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

tanka

all these wilting flowers
a week after
our anniversary ...
that slight smell
of decay in the air

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

enough rain
to rinse the windowsills
but not to lift
these memories
this yearning

Billie Dee

fresh powder
as dawn sneaks its way
through the chill
roadrunner tracks stitching
shadows together

Billie Dee

tanka

pale winter sun —
the stranger's voice lingers
long after
I've walked beyond the station
toward another life

C.X. Turner

wilted wreaths
no one keeps count
of all the times
you stood at the edge
and stepped back

C.X. Turner

in half-light
the space between us
is ours alone —
not all love
needs a name

C.X. Turner

tanka

shapeshifter mind —
feed it milk and soon
the cat becomes a tiger
a feeble meow swallowed
in the depths of a fierce roar

Gauri Dixit

so much to say
so much not to say
on the clothesline
white shirts intermingled
with vibrant sarees

Gauri Dixit

crushed petals
or paper thin wings
the many ways
our love careered
to non-existence

Joanna Ashwell

tanka

my life today
is a grey shadow
the days and nights
are shuffling by
like hollow ghosts

Joy McCall

she cuts roses
and arranges them
in a vase
can one claim to love
by nipping life in the bud

Kala Ramesh

the weight
in grains of happiness
 against
these deep-set scars ...
the scales tip

Kala Ramesh

tanka

knowing you
through typed words —
wonder
how your handwriting
might look like

Kalyanee Arandhara

our eyes waltz
across the dance hall
this anticipation
like the long-distance flight
of a bar-tailed godwit

Kanjini Devi

sweet sixteen
and unable to escape
the loud voices
'look here, don't look there',
i accommodate silence

Lakshmi Iyer

tanka

what's so special
this Valentine's Day?
chances are
I get pricked by a rose
or pick a rotten apple

Lakshmi Iyer

life was freedom
and I never wore shoes
what happened
to the part of me
that lived on the wild side

Lorraine Haig

the dawn moon
through lace curtains
fragments
of last night's dream
crumble in the light

Lorraine Haig

tanka

rainbow garlands
decorate the hawkers' stalls
in little india*
our smiles enough to engage
with the babel of dialects

**little india* - Georgetown Penang

Marilyn Humbert

a red hibiscus
droops over
an unopened bud ...
do you also agonize
over your little one

Mohua Maulik

banana leaves
laid out for the feast
side by side
our hands remember
the way to serve love

Nalini Shetty

tanka

reconnecting
with you time and again
through life's crests
and troughs ... I now know
this zig-zag road goes home

Priti Aisola

resounding the oh
in a picked crocus
the old gentleman
fills his buttonhole
with spring

Robert Kingston

could it be
that I have bloomed early
that this winter feel
casts doubt on
the longevity we planned

Robert Kingston

tanka

the dreams I chased
once endless in my hands —
now they return
as fallen parijat
scattered in the rain

Sandip Chauhan

the old pear tree
bears fruit once more —
we do not count
the scars of broken branches
only the joy of ripening

Sandip Chauhan

Gaza Strip scarred
by foreign boots
... how do you silence
the jackals baying
under a crescent moon

Sandip Chauhan

tanka

dusk
during a train journey
I still hear
the echoes of our
hesitant first hellos

Srini

standing
at a crossroads
I wish
I'd run more often
with the wind

Srini

I pause
and listen to the waves
and find
in the voice of the sea
the respite I sought from noise

Srini

tanka

reconstruction plan
the architect proposes
the usual amenities
with the extra addition
of bomb shelters

Sumitra Kumar

déjà vu
while penning thoughts
is there anything
that has never been
said before

Sumitra Kumar

the periwinkles
she did not water
still bloom in full
when offering my love
should i ignore her neglect

Sumitra Kumar

tanka

he messages me
mid-conversation
the blush
that tears through my words
leaves me breathless

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

just another red rose
in a bouquet of red roses
to think
that I have lived
this inconsequential life

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Alfred Booth
~

The Quickness of Change

At least once a day I discover the piano lamp askance, its adjustable arm flattened. There is a crystal egg attached firmly to one of the regulation screws, and I know its attraction. If he jumps from the keyboard side, his talent for avoiding the keys is admirable.

hiding
with the storm's first crash
what a cat finds

Alfred Booth
~

How Tall We Once Stood

This photo is our forever farewell moment. Even more than a year later I still cry looking at it. My hair dishevelled, my vacant eyes caught both in sleep-loss and sadness. The post-op morphine only slightly removing the discomfort in my new hip. I look down at you huddled in my arms, knowing damn well this moment is the last testimony of my love. I give you all the warmth I have, to comfort you. I hold back those tears until Papa Pierre picks you up gently and puts you back into the backpack that has carried you all of your life wherever we have gone. I see your half-closed eyes, and remember how your purr was absent, how you no longer wiggled to find that perfect position of comfort.

The next morning, I couldn't take you to see Gabrielle. I wasn't able to hold you in my arms as she helped you find the rainbow bridge. Papa Pierre has only spoken once of his tears that morning.

in the rush
of wild river waters
freedom

Billie Dee
~

Curry Comb

The stall is scented with roan flesh and twilight,
dust rising in veils as I work down his girth.

The old gelding shifts weight and leans
into the rhythm. Beneath my hand, ribs press

outward — every year mapped in bone, in hollow.
His breath comes deep and steady, warm on my shoulder.

evening breeze ...
a tuft of hair drifts
into autumn

Billie Dee
~

Hulk

The foundry squats along the highway, spalling
in desert heat. Only the tang of scorched metal
remains, a sharpness that claws at the throat.
It wasn't always like this.

Once molten iron roared in great vats, rhythms
of clang and furnace shaping the bones of industry.
Now the empty yard bakes in silent dusk
as the dinosaur ossifies.

train whistle —
the slow drift of rust
downwind

C.X. Turner

Something to Hold on to

the scent of pine
sawdust swirls into
late summer light

The rocking chair is older than I am. Its wooden bones creak under my hands as I sand away the years, smoothing rough edges until the grain feels like silk. Pale dust coats my bare legs, a ghostly veil that lifts when I stand. White gloss pools like milk against the bristles, spreading smooth over the wood. It takes days to set — long enough for me to second-guess each step, long enough for patience to root itself in my fingers. At last, with a steady grip, I freehand the flowers. Red and green swirls bloom, vines curl where I once traced splinters. Lowering myself into the chair — wood, sighs. The rhythm of its arc settling into the pause of an afternoon.

rocking forward
the first petal bends
into its own shape

C.X. Turner

Grace

The cursor blinks. Patient. Waiting. I type, erase, retype. Each word settles like a stone in my chest. I tell myself this is only a message, pixels on a screen, but my hands hesitate over the keys as if I am handing you my heart. I write without expectation, yet something in me holds its breath.

autumn dusk
the weight of silence
in unsent words

The email sits there, again, a quiet confession. I could close the tab, let it vanish into the background of open windows and half-finished thoughts, as I have so many times before. Or I could press send, releasing it into an unknown current. I had promised you I was sending something earlier in the day. I keep my promises. Evening presses in, the hush of so many months' silence folds into the night.

Either choice will change nothing — and everything.

wind-tossed leaves
the hush before
they touch the ground

C.X. Turner

A Word for This

His red curls catch the morning light, his voice brimming with delight. Pamplemousse. The word rolls from his tongue like a marble, rich and round. I picture the fruit whole — golden, perfect. I used to think things stayed that way.

Later, at home, I ask if we can have grapefruit for breakfast. I don't recall the answer. Perhaps I never listened long enough to remember.

Holding the silver napkin ring handed down to me from my French grandmother, I think about how little I knew of her. What she thought of pamplemousse, if she ever said. If she ever softened its sharpness with sugar. If she ever loved the way I do.

winter dusk
smoothing the folds
of something unworn

Firdaus Parvez

Days of the Mermaids

They come to me with the ocean waves at the foot of my bathtub. Cascading in like little ideas that then grow and bloom into swishing tails and dark flowing hair. Their baby faces somber, they glance over their shoulders at me as though afraid I'll lose focus and they might dissipate with the soap suds.

But I've raised them with the yellow rubber duck of my stillborn.

ebbing tide ...
only the chipped coral-reds
of my toenails

Joanna Ashwell

Reflections

Tommy sits beside the seawall, his shoulders hunched, leaning on his rifle. He dwarves the pier, his head some days in the clouds, his bronzed hat stippled with the sea fret and wrapped in sunrise.

I stand beneath his coattails pondering where to go from here. There is no flap from the tide in this pocket of silence.

the spoils of war
gull wings
circling

Joanna Ashwell

Frequency

Here it comes again, that feeling of being nowhere yet everywhere. The confusion, the separation, my body no longer mine. My head is not just figuratively but literally in the clouds. Discombobulated – I am adrift in a whirlwind of questions. Where do I go now, what do I do, how do I find the way out?

recurring nightmare
the earth opens
to a darkened pit

Joanna Ashwell

Trigger Point

I see you there with your ruler and tape measuring every detail, dotting every i, crossing every t. Precision is important to you. Yet in your quest for perfection, humanity loses a string. You scold like a schoolmistress and shake your head at errors, missing the gold in the hidden seams of darkness.

I do my best juggling so many balls at once that my feet buckle beneath the weight of expectation. I dart left, then right, catching or missing the goal for the day.

You do not know my life, I do not know yours. The next time you tut in my direction, be warned I simmer then explode with nowhere for you to run.

stockpot
the potpourri of anxiety
beneath my skin

Kala Ramesh

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet**

“Kya? Giraand Hyate?” asks the driver with a strong Bombaiya accent. After wading through the morning rush-hour traffic and waiting indefinitely at signals, I finally enter the imposing Grand Hyatt lobby. My friend and his fiancée are waiting for me to join them for breakfast.

He says he never knew India could be like this. “This is America. Where is the killing heat, the crowds, the buffaloes lazing around on roads?” He says his friends “rave” about India.

India of the five-star hotel culture and pure drinking water – they do not see the squalor, do not travel by trains ...

“We are the only ones dressed like this,” he says.
He's in a kurta and churidar outfit, on his neck a silver chain dangles with an aum pendant.

“Plus, where is the cultural India I've heard people talk about?”

India is this, and that, I begin to say. Again, India is not this and not that, I want to say, but stop. Self-discovery is a slow process ...

stillness
close to a banyan
the breathing forest

sunlight
through bodhi leaves
the chequered path

Note: The title, taken from *The Ballad of East and West* by Rudyard Kipling, 1889.

Kanjini Devi

Rebuilding

The foundation is firm with faith cultivated over decades of prayer and meditation. The walls are steeped in reverence for the sustenance which life constantly provides. The windows remain open to observe and be guided by nature's rhythms. The roof, receptive to the sky's ever-changing canvas, absorbs the sun's rays and collects heaven's tears. The insulation, recently reinforced, keeps the dweller warm from the cold draught of well-meaning sympathy. The drainage, now cleared of clutter, allows for both grief and gratitude to flow freely.

how to reach
my potential without you
planting bulbs

Kanjini Devi

At the Heart of It

Of the five languages that I speak, Thai seems to be the most steeped in heart values. A kind person has a good or beautiful heart. Conversely, a mean-spirited person has a bad heart. When you are happy, your heart is literally in good condition. When you are sad, your heart is considered damaged. A comfortable heart indicates one who is feeling relaxed, and an uncomfortable heart is one who is feeling stressed. In the case of being easily offended, it is said you have a small heart. A real heart shows sincerity. A certain heart is one being sure, a complete heart is one who is satisfied. If you have a sore or painful heart, you've been emotionally hurt. To understand is to have entered the heart. If you are patient, you have a cool heart. In fact, if you are prone to losing your temper, I can console you by saying, "Cool your heart", since you have a hot heart!

spring breeze flowing through the chambers a string quartet

Lorraine Haig

Fresh

One thousand kilometres from the earthquake epicenter, a metre of water flooded Hakodate's fish market.

This morning it's stacked with seafood, and we breathe the fresh scent of the ocean. There's the chatter of people as they haggle a price. Fish of all sizes, octopuses, squid and crustaceans are kept alive behind glass. I aim my camera at you, my old friend, up to your elbows in thick yellow gloves and holding a huge crab. Your smile is more of a grimace.

We step around another one, a crab lying on its back, the drawcard for a vendor. He plays it like a wind-up toy. A gentle nudge with his foot and the crab peddles the light.

wave of pain
the stroke that left you
speechless

Lorraine Haig

Red Sun

Aboard the plane at last, the waiting is over.

But it's touch and go as there is one more connection.

Could it be that we'll miss our flight?

Dropping out of the clouds, the city's lights spread below us.

ending the day
fatigued
grass moon

Hanashimasen ...

I am disappointed.

Japanese seems to have deserted me. Two years of studying cannot catch up with the pace of everyday speech.

Kagoshima's cherry blossoms in Yoshino Park are a sight to behold. We stand under fluttering petals.

Listen to the laughter of families picnicking under a pale pink canopy.

Menus with pictures of local delicacies entice us.

Never quite sure what we are choosing, we savour it.

haibun

o *hashi*
poised above our plate
quiver in our fingers

Relaxing in our room we soak in the mood.

Sake in jars bought from the supermarket becomes an evening tippie.

Trains run to the minute. We queue on the platform, knowing the door will open – right there.

Under the curved moon, a star dangles like a spider. As night folds over us at the edge of the river, six balls of flame draw closer. A basket of fire spitting hot ash hangs over the bow. The fishermen in grass skirts grip cords attached to the cormorants that dive for fish.

Vending machines stand on almost every street. ‘Pocari Sweat’ is our favourite drink.

Wakarimasu – I understand the location of the art gallery.

Xylography of the floating world: woodblock prints by Utagawa Hiroshige are an unexpected delight as I wander alone while my husband sleeps on a chair.

Yes, we will return.

Zooming in, I snap my last picture in Japan – a plane lifting into the smog that drifts from China.

Note: An abecedarian haibun

Lorraine Haig

Tumblehome

Have you ever bought fish and chips, then driven to the headland to see the fishing fleet return to port in a fierce storm?

In salt-laden air you watch as the trawlers surf the rollers, then slip back down in the troughs before the next wave lifts them like boardriders. As they surf towards the shore where the breakers capsize, and it seems there is nothing left but to beach like a pod of whales, you hold your breath.

They turn side on to the swell, their gunwales rolling into the sea, and for those moments, before they reach the breakwater's safety, you glimpse their keels and wonder whether they will right themselves.

ebb tide
the backbone
of a rusting hulk

Tumblehome: The inward curve of a ship's topside.

Mona Bedi

Utopia

It's a perfect morning. The night was perfect too. I slept well, dreamt well and woke up well. I check in with my mind.

positive thoughts ++
negative thoughts +
happiness +/-
fear -

Satisfied with my daily mind report, I get down to finishing my chores: watering the plants, talking on the phone with my son and daughter, and getting ready for work.

I pick out a bright pink kurta with a white dupatta for that perfect summer vibe. A dash of dark black kajal and a fuchsia lipstick prepare me for the day ahead.

As I sit behind the wheel, another check in:

positive thoughts +
negative thoughts ++
happiness -
fear ++

A lump starts to build up in my throat. I take a deep breath and drive to work with a fake smile on my face.

summer's end
a distant mirage
turns into water

Nalini Shetty

Titiksha*

It was the last summer with my father.

The monsoon held its breath, and the ceiling fan rattled in slow protest. He no longer asked for the newspaper, no longer hummed old songs under his breath.

I spoon-fed him rice softened with dal, the way he once fed me. Sometimes he swallowed, sometimes he let it sit in his mouth, staring past me. The silence stretched — part bridge, part chasm.

dusk
a lizard clings
to the cracked wall

*Titiksha (तितिक्षा) is a Sanskrit word that refers to the practice of endurance, forbearance, or patient acceptance of hardships without complaint. It is one of the six virtues (ṣaṭ-sampat) in Vedantic philosophy, emphasizing inner strength and resilience in the face of suffering

Sandip Chauhan



Flight Paths

“Satellites do not stay in perfect orbits forever. Gravity tugs at them, slowing them down, pulling them back toward the planet that first set them in motion.”

When I left Punjab, I thought I was charting a new course. But some days, I drift back — the weight of old streets under my feet, as if I was never meant to stay away for long. I am pulled into the sounds of home — the street vendors’ calls, the far-off honk of auto-rickshaws, the clang of my mother’s bangles. Some dreams return, but they no longer ring the same. Altered, reshaped, they carry an accent I don’t remember giving them.

autumn wind
the taste of tamarind
sharper than before

Alfred Booth
~

meteorites on a collision course

a wizard
armed with invisible wands
wields a long winter

Joanna Ashwell

rediscovered polaroid

moonset
leaving a glow
where you stood

Joanna Ashwell
~

long forgotten cards

gathering the pieces
of glitter and gold
to mend a heart

Joanna Ashwell
~

neither star nor moon

the dream flight
of an owl
skimming darkness

gembun terbalik

Lakshmi Iyer

earthquakes
shifting land
over water

one more lie adds to the hundredth

Sandip Chauhan
~

deportation order pinned to the door

somewhere
a sycamore quietly lets go
of its leaves

Sandip Chauhan

a missing tooth in an old man's smile

stones carefully set
to meet at the centre
of the footbridge

C.X. Turner

Aphelion

Some people enter your life like comets — blazing, brilliant, inevitable. You were that for me. A force neither of us sought, yet there we were, caught in each other's orbit. Longer than I could bear.

But love demands more than gravity. It needs time, space, a world where it can land without shattering. We had none of those things. You were bound elsewhere. I was already falling.

We tried friendship. I pretended it was enough. That the ache in my chest was a phantom pain. That your gaze didn't linger. But silence pressed against us, heavy as dark matter.

So I severed us. Ripped the tether clean — or as clean as I could. And still, in the quiet, I feel you just beyond reach.

fading starlight
what was ours
burned too bright
to last beyond
the breaking dawn

C.X. Turner

The Quiet Physics of Falling

You thought it would feel like freedom.

No voices in the next room,
no one waiting,
no one watching.

But the silence is heavier than you expected.

Dishes pile in the sink.
The bed stays unmade.

Nights stretch long,
hollowed out
by missing conversation.

You measure the days by what you can manage:

a clean plate,
a shower,
standing by the window
instead of sitting in the dark.

No one tells you
that living alone has its own pull —
a force that gathers
in quiet corners.

tanka-prose

You move through the days in small negotiations:

if I get up now,
if I step into the shower,
if I wash a single dish.

Even falling
is a kind of motion.

morning light
catches the dust
on the bookshelf —
I trace a path
through what lingers

C.X. Turner
~

A Scar Isn't the Story

You're not as broken as you think. The world is vast beyond these narrow corridors, beyond the weight of mock results and the quiet tremor in your hands. One day, you will sit beneath an October sky, the air thick with woodsmoke, and laugh and not flinch. Until then, be gentle. The skin remembers, but it also heals.

new growth
on the lightning-struck tree
I touch
the place where once
I broke in two

Joy McCall

Snail

My days grow smaller, drawing into themselves like the garden -
stunted trees, hungry creatures, the sleeping winter hedgehog.
I watch leaves falling, saving sap for the heart of the tree -
the bark thickens, the roots curl.

drops of rain
are never enough
for this parched ground
momentary joy
gives little ease for pain

It is time for me to pull in my horns -
a slowing snail settling in a corner, hiding from blackbirds.

the view narrows
and yet ... inside
the curling shell
the whole world
shines and spins

Lorraine Haig

Superb Fairywren

He's the good looking one with dazzling blue plumage on his neck and head. Look at me he seems to be saying as he shimmies at the edge of the birdbath. While he's showing off, she does all the nest-building. Fine twigs and grasses are bound with spiders' webs, then she lines it with wool or feathers.

a lullaby
to her unborn chicks
safe for now
beneath her feathers
the egg of a cuckoo

Nalini Shetty

Farsighted

The rain drums against the windowpane, each drop blurring the city lights beyond. I rub my temples, feeling the weight of years settle in my bones. There was a time when I ran barefoot through puddles, heedless of the gathering storm.

bat sixteen
I could not wait
for life to begin —
now I long for
the stillness I once resisted

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Art Class

I remember ... the even canter of our breaths, the cavalry of clouds waiting in the wings. Was it the sand flying, mane flowing in the breeze, that smudged the setting sun?

your name
zigzagging on waves
the last syllable
finally drowning
in a fiery blaze

Mona Bedi
~

a spider weaves sunlight into its web

a lone kite
stuck in the old oak
torn and ripped
parts of me still trapped
in my childhood home

gembun with tanka

Priti Aisola
~

snap out of this cycle of withering and renewal

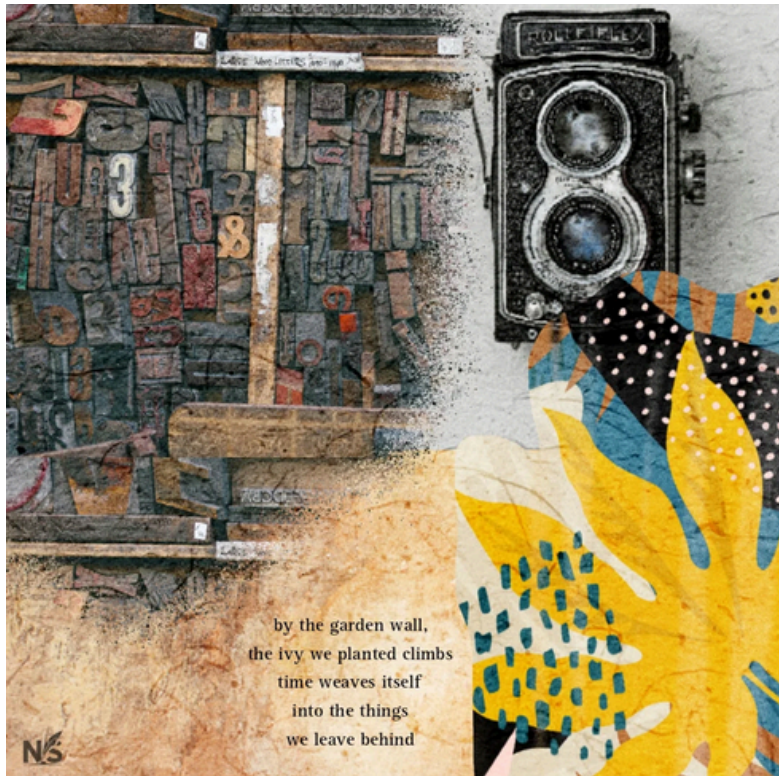
gathering
dry leaves again
and again
is there need to see
another spring

haiga



image and ku: Nalini Shetty

tanka-art



by the garden wall,
the ivy we planted climbs
time weaves itself
into the things
we leave behind

NS

image and tanka: Nalini Shetty

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

See you once again on 22 April 2025!
with many more fine poems
from our contributors.

Team: *haikuKATHA*