

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Milind Mulick

Issue 26, December 2023

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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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Issue 26
December 2023

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

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

Our heartfelt thanks to:

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Firdaus Parvez and Kala Ramesh,

for providing the weekly challenges
for the month of November 2023,

Milind Mulick,
for his watercolour painting,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Tejasvat Award

from

Triveni Haikai India

The tanka editors,
Kala Ramesh, Firdaus Parvez,
Priti Aisola and Suraja Menon Roychowdhury
are pleased to present
the

Tejasvat Award

Tejasvat in Samskrit means shining bright
with strength and excellence just like the sun,
given here to a poet
who has a set number of poems
which hold the essence of Japanese short-form
poetry in any one issue.

In this issue, we'll be honouring

Linda Papanicolaou

for her seven penetrating tanka.

Tejasvat Award

from

Triveni Haikai India

old couple
out on their daily walk
a lifetime
of habit in the way
one leads, one follows

girlhood friends
in a Coney Island
photobooth:
my mother as she was
before Dad, before me

where are they bound?
the passengers aboard
that speck of a plane
its sunlit vapor trail
across a rose-dusk sky

father's toolkit
at the basement workbench
the winter scent
of his 3-IN-ONE oil
between my fingernails

Tejasvat Award

from

Triveni Haikai India

fairy lanterns
lining the footpath
to the front door —
a house that would be quite
ordinary by daylight

train from the city —
hand cupped to her phone
in lowered voice
a woman next to me
is saying she may have cancer

from his bedroll
in the park band shell
a vagrant
does not want to hear
our poems to the moon

Editors' Choice Commentary: Priti Aisola
back home: Amoolya Kamalnath

back home
i find the sacred tulsi plant
uprooted ...
i hear about a son evicting
his mother from her house

— Amoolya Kamalnath

I was both deeply saddened and jolted after reading Amoolya's tanka. Through simple yet effective words, she creates two powerful images of acts of violation. The poem opens with the everyday phrase 'back home', and the reader wonders what this homecoming means for the narrator. Is it an ancestral home? Does being back home offer comfort? In addition, does it bring back straightforward or complex memories of childhood, youth and family members? As we read on, we discover that she finds the 'sacred tulsi plant / uprooted'. At the end of line 2 the reader's mind tries to fill in the blank momentarily with several words or expressions other than 'uprooted': (she finds 'the sacred tulsi plant') fresher or more ample than before, drying, wilting, shrunk, and so on. Uprooted is unexpected. The severity of the act hits the reader. Who did it and why? Was it a heedless act or a deliberate one? The reader will never know and herein lies the sad beauty of this unforgettable tanka.

Here, I would like to give a brief background reference to show that an act of uprooting the sacred tulsi plant is not just a simple act of discarding or removing a certain plant. I am sure most of you already know this: tulsi or holy basil is a much-venerated plant in the Hindu tradition and the Hindus consider it as 'an earthly manifestation of goddess Lakshmi' (Wikipedia), the goddess of prosperity or plenitude in all its various aspects.

The tulsi plant forms the sacred centre of many Hindu homes. It also forms an integral part of the early morning ritual of an offering of thanks to it for its auspicious presence and its medicinal properties. Watering the tulsi plant, lighting a lamp before it, offering prayers while going around it with devotion, form a part of this ritual which is supposed to cleanse the mind and heart and foster spiritual growth. While only the leaves are offered in worship, each part of the plant exudes fragrance. Hence, an act of uprooting the tulsi plant has a multi-layered connotation. In Amoolya's tanka, what is alluded to subtly is, that through an act of sacrilege, everything that held the home together and gave it its auspicious aura, has been 'uprooted' too. A gaping void has replaced its sacred centre.

A parallel movement occurs in the lower verse. The narrator hears 'about a son evicting / his mother from her house'. What can be more unsettling or disruptive than that? In traditional homes, the mother is considered the sacred centre of a family. With the tulsi plant being 'uprooted' in one instance and the mother heartlessly 'evicted' or 'uprooted' in the second instance, the sacred heart of both homes has been hollowed out.

Just lifeless walled spaces remain.

haiku

ice storm
another cracking limb
reshapes the maple

Adelaide B. Shaw

attic cleanout
I never heard him
play the cello

Adelaide B. Shaw

twirling leaves
a Strauss waltz
begins the day

Adelaide B. Shaw

earthquake ...
the tectonic shift
of Gaia's mood

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

haiku

fresh laundry
i inhale
a faux summer

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

beating eggs
in a metal bowl
summer squall

Barrie Levine

shraddha ...
haggling with the priest
one final time

Biswajit Mishra

falling snow
the landscape
paints itself

Bonnie J Scherer

haiku

adjusting
to a change in light
first snowdrops

C.X. Turner

on a quiet day -
my thoughts wandering
around the house

Gillena Cox

climate change
twilight silhouette
of the lean bear

Keiko Izawa

winter room
brother's car race sticker
unremovable

Keiko Izawa

haiku

autumn roses
our pet sitter's excuse
for being late

Keiko Izawa

first birthday
grabbing the candle
off the icing

Lakshmi Iyer

soft rain
the aroma of tender basil
in my tea

Lakshmi Iyer

summer daybreak
emerald parrots swoop through
the sprinkler

Lev Hart

haiku

autumn wind ...
I have added myself
to the ghosts of this house

Linda Papanicolaou

the tree falls
among its walnuts
Memorial Day

Marilyn Ashbaugh

winter solstice
the white smoothness
of a wishbone

Marilyn Ashbaugh

dawn train
he yawns softly inside
the open newspaper

Minal Sarosh

haiku

niqaah ceremony -
between the moon and star
a veil of clouds

Priya Narayanan

fancy footwork
a pigeon between
the cafe tables

Robert Kingston

freeway dusk —
daisies tethered
to iron bars

Sandip Chauhan

blood moon -
I guess I got
what I deserved

Susan Burch

haiku

Day of the Dead
my sugar skull
starts talking

Susan Burch

one-line haiku

walking on acorns the clickety-click of worry beads

Barrie Levine

beach resort waves fold and unfold and fold the froth

Lakshmi Iyer

moving day between the boxes a startled spider

Robert Kingston

tanka

a bruised thumb
cries throughout this lullaby
ivory and ebony
offer less and less peace
to these ageing bones

Alfred Booth

an empty nest ...
seeing the magpie's
sudden flight
I now know why
my mother is lonely

Amoolya Kamalnath

the therapist
praises one line of thought
while i continue
my long story of blame ...
incense fragrance fills the room

Amoolya Kamalnath

tanka

back home
i find the sacred tulsi plant
uprooted ...
i hear about a son evicting
his mother from her house

Amoolya Kamalnath *ECC

at night
autumn leaves
toss and turn ...
this morning you hold me
as if i am a newly born

Amrutha V. Prabhu

spiky
angular
leaning forward
as though willing to fall ...
her handwriting

Amrutha V. Prabhu

tanka

my silent love
for the boy next door
how I envy
the window moon
smiling on his shoulder

Arvinder Kaur

rocking
a makeshift cradle
she hums a lullaby
under a smoke-filled sky
it sounds like a dirge

Arvinder Kaur

quilted potholders
decorate kitchen walls
my auntie the seamstress
keeps her family
in stitches

Bonnie J Scherer

tanka

words connect us
over the centuries
across generations –
my grandmother's diary
written before I was born

Jennifer Gurney

the old compass
points north, and then
swings south
I spend her birthday
laughing and sobbing

Joy McCall

daylight
changing colours
the reflected sun
doubles up towards me ...
a quiet wave at my feet

Kala Ramesh

tanka

the colourful rangoli
patterns our doorstep
Diwali evening
this struggle to understand
your journey with me

Lakshmi Iyer

mother neatly braids
her hair and tucks it up ...
high on the acacia
weaver birds spin and weave
the strands into a perfect home

Lakshmi Iyer

one sadness
above all others
daisies
close their petals
before the rain

Lorraine Haig

tanka

in the wind
a red camelia
spills raindrops
so grateful you're here
to share my grief

Lorraine Haig

not yet
the first day of summer
hot dry winds
shake awake firebugs ...
the conflagration rages

Marilyn Humbert

how gentle
his care-worn hand
holding mine
its warmth settles
my arrhythmia

Marilyn Humbert

tanka

simmering nights
filled with passion ...
how soon
the heat destroyed
our flowering lilies

Mona Bedi

huddled together
under an awning
in pouring rain ...
is this the only way
to be with you

Priti Aisola

giving away
my father's golf sets
after many years
the pillow that cradled
his stiff neck comforts mine

Priti Aisola

tanka

wincing
in pain as she strokes
her swollen ankles
the night jasmine's fragrance
comes in gentle waves

Priti Aisola

sparrows bickering
in the chameli bush -
this longing
for the children to return
to my empty nest

Priya Narayanan

a hint
of orange on the tip
of a swallowtail's wing...
and here I sit searching
for words to describe beauty

Reid Hepworth

tanka

seniors care home ...
her meagre possessions
packed and binned
as if she never existed
or mattered at all

Reid Hepworth

a stranger
smiling wide and strong
shares his poem
an ode to the doctor
who cut below his knee

Richard L. Matta

children kicking leaves
this gold on gold
filling the sky
with laughter
and memories

Robert Kingston

tanka

moon shines
on the first snow
of many ...
the silver in my hair
takes on a new hue

Sangita Kalarickal

ash leaves
jazz-dance to the earth
in a golden fog
I sway slowly
with my dream of you

Sangita Kalarickal

we watch
Leonids light up the sky
side by side
all moments dissolve
into one memory

Sangita Kalarickal

tanka

the palace
my princess lives in
is far away
its luxury makes her
forgetful of this old man

Sreenath

a slant of light
falls across the bed
just for a second
I drift in that dream laughing
at your silly orange shirt

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

my sadness
in knowing she wanted
to leave ...
the clocks fall back
for an extra hour of darkness

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Alfred Booth
~

Fountains of Youth

I limp up and down the neighborhood hills, avoiding potholes in the sidewalk with my cane. I laugh about one scarred buttock, saying after New Year's Day when my second hip is replaced, I will fantasize about matching tattoos to hide the twin scars. I remember you said, "Then one day we'll have to compare our scarred butts."

"Don't you think we're too old to sunbathe on nude beaches?" We laughed via emoji.

dancing
in Fire Island's summer rain
a hermit crab

Billie Dee
~

Jackrabbit

quaking aspen
the dappled sway
of muttongrass

It's my tenth birthday and I'm learning to shoot the .22 rifle. It's over 100 years old, handed down from father to son for three generations, and now to me. Even though I'm a girl, Daddy treats me like his worthy heir. "Act serious," I whisper to myself, but I can't quite contain my grin.

wild strawberries
gleam like pigeon-blood rubies ...
stinging nettles

Biswajit Mishra

Shape of Time

It was nearly five years ago, one of us suggested that we go and see a catacomb and I didn't know what that was. Those were relics from hundreds of years ago, saved in a basement which was like a labyrinth we were traversing not just in space of the underground but also through bends in time and feeling that musky smell in semi-lit lanes on the sides of which bones were laid out in different arrays of some kind of artistic display and then, I learned this was a cemetery of the Franciscan missionaries.

over time,
stories gathering
shape

Outside, there were beautiful Baroque structures, the footprints left by the colonialists which the current democratic rulers still depended upon to govern from and some of those were museums where visitors paid for a peek into a different time left in tatters— for example, the library of the mission was in fact in tatters which added sheen to the viewing. Back in the catacomb, I recalled, seeing smaller bones arrayed out to which my friend commented, “ ... must have been kids.”

C.X. Turner

Drift

I dream again of flying, always flying, not away from anything as such, but towards something; where the sky isn't foggy, where each day doesn't start with trying to smile.

I pull the cold covers up around me, count the months of processing the loss of you as grief. I never got to tell you why I think in black and white or why colours cover scars I'm too ashamed to explain.

Sitting in the car with the engine off, minus 2 degrees outside, I don't bother to clear freezing rain from the windscreen; I watch it stick and run and sink into a greyscale reverie.

splashing
over river stones
one step at a time

C.X. Turner

Hidden

Knocking on the shed door, I can already feel something swirling in the pit of my stomach. I don't yet have a name for this feeling, but it seems to appear whenever a difficult conversation lies ahead.

Battling the urge to make do with my fingernail as a screwdriver, I knock and hear a gruff, impatient "Yes?!" from the other side of the tall heavy door and I gently prise it open.

A young robin in a holly bush, sitting amongst clusters of red berries, watches me. Its smallness gives me the strength to carry on into the damp barely-lit earthy-smelling shed. I make out the figure of my father sitting with his back to me. I voice my request for something to fix my red radio.

Without turning in his seat, he slurs something about how it's always *him* who has to fix everything, and I wait for a few moments before slowly closing the door.

winter rain bottled up inside

Eavonka Ettinger

To the Bone

My sister, a friend, and I decide to take a shortcut out of our half acre by slipping between the old barbwire fence. I hold the top two lines tightly together for them. It's my turn, and our friend really wants to hold the wires. But she lets go.

summer storm

Instantly, I feel the jagged slicing of my right front shin. I'm so scared, but I try to be brave because I'm the oldest. My sister is only 8, and I don't want her to worry. I squeeze the cut together to try to stop the bleeding, and then I start singing, "Row Row Row Your Boat" over and over as I limp quickly back to our home.

a lightning bolt

My mom is freaking out. She says we have to clean the wound. I think she'll put hydrogen peroxide in it, but she pours alcohol instead!

splits the tree

Eavonka Ettinger

Trash

The ants are clearly not pleased. Turquoise has formed in the rocky gaps of their home, and they are not having it. And so, tiny stone by stone, they've thrown them out of the anthill.

I was quite surprised to see these tiny gems being pushed up and out of a local hole. Now it's become a daily ritual, my visits to their worksite. As the hill grows larger, so too does my collection. My mission complete, I skip home clutching a sandwich bag of brilliant blue bits.

falling leaves
mom begins boxing up
my childhood

Jennifer Gurney

Divergent

After reading the incredible Divergent trilogy and watching the movie several years ago, I subconsciously taught myself how to wake up from a nightmare. If you scream in the nightmare, you can scream in real life. The sound you make will wake yourself up. Magic. Haven't had a nightmare since.

middle of the night
at death's door—
I rescue myself

Jennifer Gurney

Flying

One Christmas morning at my grandmother's house, my cousin Patty swung me around and around by the hands. My feet left the ground and I was airborne. I let go because I wanted to feel what it would be like to truly fly. I was four and I believed. I flew right into the metal leg of my grandparent's couch and split my lip wide open. Since it was Christmas and my mom didn't really like to go to the doctor any day of the year, let alone on a holiday, she simply put a bandaid on my lip. All these years later, I don't remember the pain of that accident, but I clearly remember the sensation of flying each time I touch the scar above my top lip. It's my favorite scar...

Christmas morning magic –
the year I believed
in miracles

K Ramesh
~

Winter Vacation

I am off to Thattekad, a bird sanctuary located 48 km away from Aluva in Kerala. It's a place where one can spot, among other birds, the Sri Lankan Frogmouth and the great Indian Hornbill. My gear includes a Panasonic G9 camera and Lumix100-300 ver 2 lens. I get off the sleeper bus, have a cup of tea, and take an empty town bus to my destination. Through the open window, Jupiter is bright and big. The cool dawn breeze is refreshing. Between the silhouettes of the hills, I imagine elephants walking down a slope dense with trees.

Reaching the bird sanctuary, I hire a guide. We walk on the bird trail. He stops now and then and points at a bird. I click a picture, and we move on. He stops and looks at a tree branch cautiously. After a pause he points again and whispers that the frogmouth is there. I look in the direction and see only dry, brown leaves, and tell him there is no bird there. He smiles and asks me to look again. I do, and this time I notice a pair of eyes. The bird is utterly still. He says it is nocturnal. I keep gazing at the bird until I sense a leech climbing up my leg.

parting the bus curtain...
moon light
on the backwaters

K. Ramesh
~

Instead of a Second-hand Car

I bought an old camera.
Walking on the pavement
with the camera in hand,
I stop at a point
and take a picture
of an endangered sparrow.
I frame the snapshot
and hang it on the wall.
Years later, someone in the family
might pull the frame out
from other things in the attic,
wipe the dust,
see the sparrow again
with a sense of awe.

empty nest ...
a piece of blue cloth
deep in the hay

Lorraine Haig

Letting Go

Now, as she catches fistfuls of sun, I am holding her in my arms and I'm sure she smiles. At twelve months when the diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy is confirmed it's more of a relief. I want to hold her close but realise I must let her live her life.

She starts school and so begins the first, small separation. As she grows, it is clear that a label will not define her. I hide my anxiety when she boards the ferry with her friends for the hour's journey to school.

Now with the sun in her eyes, she squints at the camera. Her favourite chicken sits in her lap and I'm about to take a photo when a red-headed boy enters the scene. She turns and smiles at him.

falling leaves
my granddaughter
raises her palms

Note: 'Now as she catches fistfuls of sun' is the first line of a poem by Lisel Mueller titled 'In the Thriving Season.'

Marilyn Humbert

Jardine Station

We camp beside Jardine Lagoon where turtles and freshwater crocodiles rest on half-submerged fallen branches below cloudless blue. The sun having breached the horizon, a pale yellow eye peering through ironbark trunks.

Close by stockmen in the yards sort the herd, choosing those for sale. The confined beasts stir clouds of red dust which roll towards our camp blotting out the lagoon.

cattle yards
the rhythmic clanks
of drafting gates

Suddenly, there is silence as stockmen drive off to the next job. The milling cattle stand still waiting quietly. The dust settles.

red flashes
among the shadows
a dragonfly

Marilyn Humbert

Monochrome Photo

wind tides
the shift of rock
into sand

Shadows dog my heels. Their fetid breath and nipping jaws harry me.
Again, the echo of Dad's whisper in my ear repeating this mantra, sticks and
stones will break your bones, but names will never harm you.
There I am hiding in full view in the school excursion group photo, my beret
slanted the same angle as my peers.

Valley of the Wind *
among domed monoliths
dust devils

*a Kata Tjuta walking trail

Marilyn Humbert

Farm Days

first frost
the cow herd sparkles
in sunshine

My father's yodel calls the milking herd to the shed. He is wearing his uniform of dark green cotton shirt, sleeves rolled up, same colour trousers, a wide brim hat, and black gumboots. This doesn't vary regardless of the weather or the season. He names each cow as they enter the shed, speaking gently. Sometimes, whistling a tune he has made up. There is a feeling of calm as he goes about his day. Caring for his land and stock.

imprints of hooves
among the shadows
dad's forgotten song

Mona Bedi
~

Time Warp

She is beautiful! I look at her with stars in my eyes. The way she ties her long hair has a certain musicality to it. Red lips and dark kohl bring out her sharp features. Growing older she starts to forget things. At times her hair is not tidy and at others I see a lost sad look in her eyes. She forgets to cook dinner on some days. On others she calls me by my sister's name.

this wish to start over afternoon haze

Robert Kingston

Inside out

Again, a friend mentions that another's brother is not all the ticket, he's not like other boys he would often say. Have you not seen how he hides in the showers on sports days, how he spends all his time playing with girls, how he always wants to do girlie things.

algae river
a stickleback darts between
pockets of light

Robert Kingston

Gone fishing

I could swear that pockets of dust exist in our minds. How else can it be explained when something that's been missing for so long suddenly reappears. Of course, I'm aware of the term lockers and keys, and that generally it will be someone else, or something, that will illuminate the way in.

art club
I fill the gaps
in my still life

Robert Kingston

**Walking with LACE
(Life After Cancer Essex)**

It's never the same whenever we turn up. We meet in the coffee lounge on a bi-weekly basis to a different bustle each time.

Once gathered we leave for the garden, passing through the reception to similar smiles, though sometimes on different faces.

Hyde Hall gardens is one of the Royal Horticultural Society's most favoured places, offering an abundance of plants and trees from around the world. Each pocketed in its own part of the park, albeit with some mixed areas for added contrast and attraction.

Today we begin our journey along the beech path of the winter garden.

a snow globe
shaken and left
settles on a bench

Rupa Anand

Nothing More to Say

I am rather angry. The morning after Karva Chauth, Sonia, the house help arrives for work, late. As I look up to acknowledge her greeting, I am shocked. Eyes sunken, face ashen, the erstwhile happy-go-lucky face looks like a living ghoul from Halloween night. Whilst she fasted the previous day for her husband's longevity, he rewarded her with a beating, a drunken stupor and the throttle of a motorbike leaving.

a kitten's shriek
crushed under wheels
dark sky

Sandip Chauhan

Murmurs

Drifting on the wings of a daylight dream, my shadow wakes up. Together, we tread the silent streets under the moon's watchful eye, talking in a secret language, words only we know. The air is cool and still, with only the sounds of our footsteps and the occasional rustle of leaves in the breeze. Then, as I shake off the daytime mist, my shadow quietly slips back under the covers.

crystal globe ...
each flake settles
in solitude

Sandip Chauhan

Unfolding

On her first day at the office, she dons a vibrant blue outfit with high heels and a matching purse, striding as if plucked from a fashion magazine. Whispers flutter around, noting the recent name shift—from John to Jasmine.

a blade of grass
fatefully placed
the winding way

On the weekend, she invites us to her newly furnished apartment. Stepping inside, we find a compact but beautifully decorated space adorned with her own creations, including captivating artwork.

pebbles
in the muddy water
a lotus

Sangita Kalarickal

Good Touch, Bad Touch

Water flows down her hair, her face, and her bare back, neem soap suds mingling with her silent tears. For a long time, she scrubs herself until the normally gleaming brown skin looks bruised, raw, and red. The lather flows through a blurry haze in a thin stream towards the drain.

A burst of metallic taste springs in her mouth as she bites her palm hard. The wail should never escape her throat. It would never do if the rest of the family hears.

temple hall steps
the stain of marigolds
crushed underfoot

Susan Burch
~

Follow Your Heart?

In the 1960's Margaret Howe Lovatt fell in love with a dolphin and believed it loved her back.

googly eyes
my pet rock
giving me the look

Susan Burch
~

Well Hello There

What makes a person attractive? Is it a physical attribute, chemistry, or something deeper? And can you be attracted to someone you never see, who's millions of miles away?

magnetic sky the (pull)ey of you

Susan Burch
~

Another Trip Around ~~the Sun~~ Mars

This year I've decided to be 47 because for a whole year I thought I was 48. And I can't be 48 again. That's just silly.

bobbing for apples
someone's dentures
stuck to a red delicious

Vidya Shankar

Nimbus

Friday! At last! I step into my house and lock the door behind me. And the world too. I won't have to open that door and step out into that world until Monday morning when I would live my day job until it would be Friday once again.

I shed my work clothes and stand under the shower, scrubbing myself clean of the boredom of the past five days. My hair, especially, needs a thorough wash. When done, I go to the mirror and shake my head vigorously. This is the part I love most. As droplets of water fly from my hair, streaks of rainbow-hued tresses appear in place of the black I have to wear to live in that monotonous world outside the closed door. I am laughing so much that I almost miss the ping of a message on my phone. It is S.

“Are you ready?”

Fifteen minutes later, I am on my broom.

scent of spring
unicorns graze
among the stars

Vidya Shankar

Legacy

I don't know how to respond to them when they talk to me about my writing. "I read your recently published poem about the rains. It seemed as if I was standing there, getting drenched in the rain with you," they tell me. "How do you put those words together to say exactly what you want to say!" And then, in a sheepish tone as if they owe me an apology, "Though I don't comment on your posts, I read all that you share."

Their eyes brim with admiration. The very eyes that once saw me as the woman who failed to produce an offspring.

fading murals
forgotten faces
from a distant timeline

Vidya Shankar

Exposed!

All the news broadcasts run the same stories over and over again. I pause at one where the ticker keeps urging its viewers to stay tuned for a ladies special feature. For want of nothing better to do, I wait. A never-ending five minutes later, the story begins. The camera pans over a range of colorful stoles and scarves hanging in a shop display while the voiceover says, “Dupattas, the symbol of a woman’s modesty and decorum...”

in a dark corridor
the flaming tongues
of a trishula

Bonnie J Scherer
~

At least I know how to change the oil in a car.

frilly dress
hair in a 'do
girls go to Mass
boys cut grass

Alfred Booth
~

The Wanderer

From one continent to another, I have searched for reasons to stop. In old cathedrals I found a great sense of other people's peace. Millions of steps before mine rang on these cobblestones. And still, I placed one foot before another.

in one glance
my feet anchored themselves
and I breathed out
in your eyes the word home
twirled like a beacon

Alfred Booth
~

Unsent Postcard #78

Annie, am I surprised (sorry? hurt? all three?) you haven't kept in touch during these last weeks of my healing encounters with the blue dolphin? Yes and no. I miss your contact, your liveliness and your capricious humor bordering on silly. I pine for these childhood remnants, the closeness of siblings paired to a strange destiny. I am less and less maudlin. Do I accept out of sight out of mind? Yes and no, but it's often beyond me. Even when dancing far from Cordelia's vile arms, she rearranges everything in your gut. Messes nicely with your soul too. I had a good show of tears this afternoon listening to Pentatonix' cover video of John Lennon's "Imagine." Five perfect crystal glasses. I dream up all sorts of things now. New books. Making stained glass. Garden placements. A bucket list. Sky's the limit. Not heaven yet. I bonfired a notebook filled with desperate words in the kitchen sink. They left strange stains and set off the smoke alarm. We used to share so much.

North Star
I can't cross the seas
to come home to you —
how to find peace
in tears of longing?

Amoolya Kamalnath

Late Summer

Even after more than a month, my nine-year-old daughter thinks I might still be emitting radioactive rays. She confirms each time before she hugs me or uses the same restroom. These were the two things she was forbidden to do during my isolation period after radio ablation.

after the rain
a white sheen spreads
hibiscus petals
still droop as if waiting
for more rain

C.X. Turner
~

Grief is Odd

Yesterday, the traumatising tang of no tomorrows was all I could taste. Today, I see signs of you in the season you loved and smile at the memories.

the crunch
of heart-shaped leaves
in the morning frost
I gently tread the path
where we once held light

Sumitra Kumar
~

The Wheels of Life

Rush hour. I let go of a few trains for the next ... my eyes welling up over our spat last night.

on the platform
a beggar smiling
to himself
why is he so happy
with the present

Susan Burch
~

Sinking Us

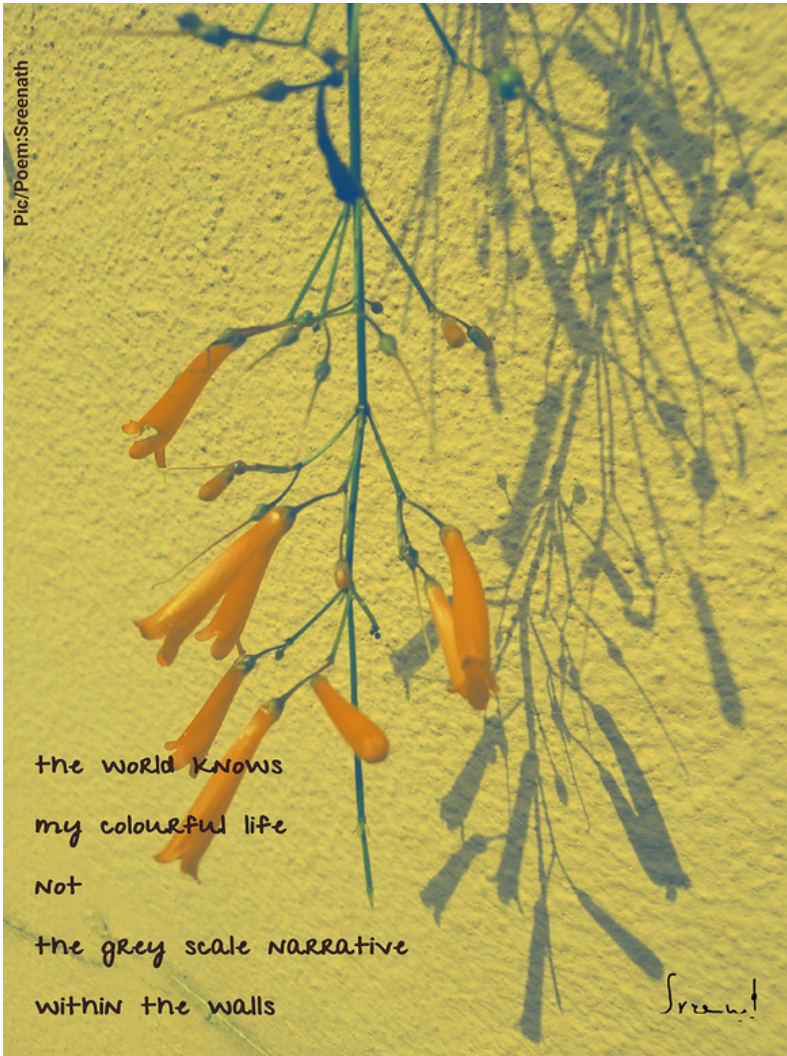
You say I help you in so many ways, but I know it's not enough. Not when we need the money.

a lead weight
around your chest
the burden
of having
a disabled wife

tanka-art

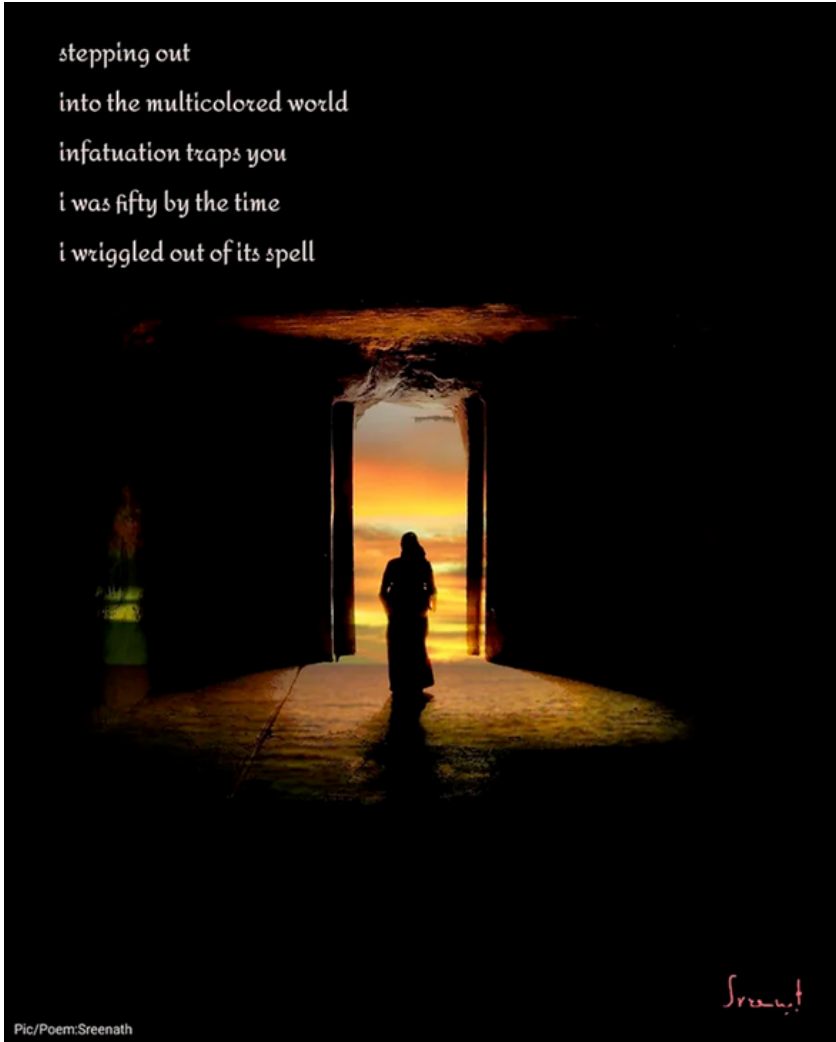


tanka-art



tanka-art

stepping out
into the multicolored world
infatuation traps you
i was fifty by the time
i wriggled out of its spell



Pic/Poem:Sreenath

Sreenath

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

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

Team: *haikuKATHA*