

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Milind Mulick

Issue 18, April 2023

haikuKATHA

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 18
April 2023

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

Founder/Managing Editor:

Kala Ramesh

Associate Editors:

Ashish Narain

Firdaus Parvez

Hemapriya Chellappan

Priti Aisola

Reid Hepworth

Sanjuktaa Asopa

Shalini Pattabiraman

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Vandana Parashar

Consulting Editor: Shloka Shankar

Proofreader: Sushama Kapur

Web Editor: Ravi Kiran

Cover Art: Milind Mulick

Design: Kala Ramesh

Copyright © haikuKATHA 2021

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

Triveni Haikai India: www.trivenihaikai.in

CONTENTS

Editors' Choice: *Beyond Appearances* by Florence Heyhoe 1
Editors' Choice Commentary by Kala Ramesh

Commentary on Cover Art by Alaka Yeravadekar 3

haiku

Arvinder Kaur 4
Billie Dee
David Josephsohn

Keiko Izawa 5
Keith Evetts
Lev Hart

Linda Papanicolaou 6
Marilyn Ashbaugh
Milan Rajkumar

Nisha Raviprasad 7
Robert Kingston
Sankara Jayanth

Susan Beth Furst 8
Wanda Amos

one-line haiku

Barrie Levine 9
Billie Dee
Bryan Rickert

CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Keiko Izawa | 10 |
| Lakshmi Iyer | |
| Linda Papanicolaou | |
| Marilyn Ashbaugh | 11 |
| Meera Rehm | |
| Mona Bedi | |
| Mona Bedi | 12 |
| Nisha Raviprasad | |
| Robert Kingston | |
| Srini | 13 |
| Susan Burch | |
| concrete haiku | |
| Bryan Rickert | 14 |
| Devoshruti Mandal | 15 |
| Lev Hart | 16 |
| Lev Hart | 17 |
| Steph Zepherelli | 18 |
| Susan Beth Furst | 19 |
| Susan Beth Furst | 20 |
| Susan Beth Furst | 21 |
| tanka | |
| Amrutha V. Prabhu | 22 |
| Arvinder Kaur | |
| Billie Dee | 23 |

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Barbara Olmtak Bryan Rickert | 24 |
| David John Terelinck Dipankar Dasgupta | 25 |
| Dipankar Dsgupata Hassane Zemmouri Lakshmi Iyer | 26 |
| Lakshmi Iyer Linda Papanicolaou | 27 |
| Lorraine Haig | 28 |
| Mallika Chari Marilyn Ashbaugh Neena Singh | 29 |
| Richard Matta Robert Kingston | 30 |
| Rupa Anand Sreenath Susan Burch | 31 |
| Susan Burch Vibha Malhotra | 32 |
| haibun | |
| <i>Providence</i> by Billie Dee | 33 |
| <i>Rapid Eye Movement</i> by Billie Dee | 34 |

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Hook, Line and Sinker</i> by Bonnie J Scherer | 35 |
| <i>Visitors</i> by Bonnie J Scherer | 36 |
| <i>In the Shadows</i> by Bonnie J Scherer | 37 |
| <i>The Transparency of Petals</i> by Diana Webb | 38 |
| <i>Outward Appearances</i> by Diana Webb | 39 |
| <i>Beyond Appearances</i> by Florence Heyhoe | 40 |
| <i>The Craftsmanship</i> by Florence Heyhoe | 41 |
| <i>A Small Jungle</i> by Lorraine Haig | 42 |
| <i>Restless</i> by Lorraine Haig | 43 |
| <i>A Special Gift</i> by Lorraine Haig | 44 |
| <i>Monkey Business</i> by Mona Bedi | 45 |
| <i>Face Off</i> by Mona Bedi | 46 |
| <i>Dimly Lit</i> by Robert Kingston | 47 |
| <i>Sir Tobias</i> by Rupa Anand | 48 |
| <i>A Nymph Amidst Geraniums</i> By Rupa Anand | 49 |
| <i>Owl Say</i> by Susan Burch | 50 |
| <i>Thought Provoking</i> by Susan Burch | 51 |
| <i>Frosted</i> by Susan Burch | 52 |
| <i>Copy Paste</i> by Vidya Shankar | 53 |

tanka-prose

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>The Fifth Month of the Year at Udupi</i> by Amrutha V. Prabhu | 54 |
| <i>Meditation</i> by Billie Dee | 55 |
| <i>Messengers</i> by Bryan Rickert | 56 |
| <i>Nocturne by an Unnamed Pond</i> by David John Terelinck | 57 |
| <i>Coil of Time</i> by Lakshmi Iyer | 59 |
| <i>Whisker Twitch</i> by Linda Papanicolaou | 60 |
| <i>Time Warp</i> by Linda Papanicolaou | 61 |
| <i>A Winter Walk</i> by Lorraine Haig | 62 |
| <i>Askew</i> by Mona Bedi | 63 |

CONTENTS

haiga

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Hassane Zemmouri | 64 |
| Sankara Jayanth | 65 |
| Teji Sethi | 66 |
| Teji Sethi | 67 |

tanka-art

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Amrutha V. Prabhu | 68 |
| an'ya | 69 |
| an'ya | 70 |
| Bonnie J Scherer | 71 |
| Bonnie J Scherer | 72 |
| David John Terelinck | 73 |
| Rupa Anand | 74 |

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

Our heartfelt thanks to:

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi, Susan Weaver,
and Bob Lucky,

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

Artist Milind Mulick
for his brilliant watercolour painting,

Samir Satam
for gathering the poems
written for these prompts,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Editors' Choice Commentary: Kala Ramesh
Beyond Appearances by Florence Heyhoe

Arm in arm the mother leads her daughter to the piano where she takes her seat. The piano sits mute until she gives it voice. Lucy is neurodivergent with few words but her heart is a flower. Her fingers dust the silence with perfume. Lucy plays a Chopin nocturne, her pigtails swinging as she continuously moves her head from side to side. The notes rise feather-soft, firm as a swan's breast, fall to silence, then sound again.

impossible
running on water
the coot lifts off

Finger on finger was how she learnt to play. She laid her hands on top of her teacher's hands. Where he went, she followed.

mountain stream
the many phrases
of the thrush's song

<> <> <>

This haibun by Florence Heyhoe caught my immediate attention for two strong reasons. One was music, for I'm passionate about music and deeply drawn to anything concerning it, and the second was the term 'neurodivergent'.

What does it mean when a person is neurodivergent? According to Wikipedia, the term "neurodivergent" describes people whose brain differences affect how their brain works. That means they have different strengths and challenges from other people. The possible differences include medical disorders, learning disabilities and other conditions. The possible strengths include better memory, being able to mentally picture three-dimensional (3D) objects easily, the ability to solve complex mathematical calculations in their head, and many more.

Bombay Jayashri, the renowned Indian classical vocalist, tells how after a concert in the city of Bengaluru, a child with autism approached her backstage. The child pointed out each of the errors the singer had committed during the program. Jayashri says that she resented the child's statements at the time, but when she heard the recording of that concert later, she realised that the child was right.

This haibun is a classic study of the captivating charm of children gifted in music, painting, fine arts and other intuitive fields, which they master so much more readily than others can.

Go deeper into this expansive and creative haibun and see how this genre stirs the reader to become alert and alive to children's needs. The whole prose is music and the two haiku are music in nature: light and sound. Throughout, the unhurried pace allows the reader to get under the skin of this young protagonist.

How do we refer to these children without dehumanizing and stigmatizing them? Neurodiverse conditions, including autism, are brain differences which impact who the person is. I hope this child grows up to say with conviction, "I am not autistic. I am a person with autism." Acceptance of people who are different means looking beyond appearances.

This haibun, with its simple words and silences, deserves to be read again and again. I did and I am sure you will, too.

Cover Art: Milind Mulick
Thoughts from an art lover: Alaka Yeravadekar



The Call of the Ocean

A timeless visual unfolds before our eyes in this sublime work of art by Milind Mulick: fisherfolk hauling in their catch and untangling the fishing nets at the break of dawn. The sun is not yet up. Soon it will be time for the fish to be auctioned. This is a common scene along the extensive coastline of peninsular India.

The men handling the nets and the boat are defined by their roles; their individualities are insignificant against the vastness of the sky and the ocean. There appears to be no fuss, only a calm, time-tested camaraderie between them as they go about their work.

Finally, we come to the boat. The boat, casting a reflection on the wet sand, is a dark mass against the surrounding light. Yet it does not overpower the image. Its charm lies in its weatherbeaten look. It is a boat with experience, a survivor of the seas, a boat with stories to tell.

haiku

nothing
but his cap returns
another homecoming

Arvinder Kaur

midnight busker ...
pausing to brush the snow
from his saxophone

Billie Dee

on the horizon
a twister veers our way
... and now the news

Billie Dee

violin practice
the new student
more crow than warbler

David Josephsohn

haiku

the plough turns up
a host of arrowheads
autumn wind

Keith Evetts

haiku spirit
i swat the mosquito
compassionately

Lev Hart

a puppy pile
of homeless people
winter night

Lev Hart

sharing
a pink crayon with her ...
uguisu* song

Keiko Izawa
(*Japanese bush warbler)

haiku

somewhere in this world
someone is bombing someone -
otherwise, spring day

Linda Papanicolaou

warmth of the sun -
to that lizard I must seem
an eclipse

Linda Papanicolaou

spring field
a shadow circles the crane

Marilyn Ashbaugh

evening breeze ...
swaying in a bamboo grove
a bush warbler's song

Milan Rajkumar

haiku

war memories ...
grandpa glances
at his crutches

Nisha Raviprasad

nowt about
the robin's song that's new
but the rain

Robert Kingston

phone directory
unable to find a name
like mine

Robert Kingston

backyard sparrows
without my dog to chase them ...
winter sun

Sankara Jayanth

haiku

wind-blown forsythia
the long and short
of it

Susan Beth Furst

standing for those
who no longer stand
Remembrance Day

Wanda Amos

one-line haiku

digging through rubble at war with herself

Barrie Levine

beyond the bush warbler shimmering dawn

Billie Dee

getting along without you horsetail clouds

Bryan Rickert

street children slipping through the cracks

Bryan Rickert

one-line haiku

rinsing rice a birdsong sakura-scented

Keiko Izawa

over the watery porridge another air-raid alarm

Keiko Izawa

autumn's loose ends i let the wardrobe be

Lakshmi Iyer

spring sets in the warmth beneath the hen

Linda Papanicolaou

one-line haiku

spring stars unwrapping a box of sky

Marilyn Ashbaugh

what I've turned into night fog

Marilyn Ashbaugh

this war beyond the cul-de-sac peace lilies

Meera Rehm

what little is left of our world disappearing sparrows

Mona Bedi

one-line haiku

artillery strike the shiver in her soup

Mona Bedi

growing up all too soon wildflowers

Mona Bedi

the eyes of a refugee frozen grey sky

Nisha Raviprasad

threatening to spill the beans open soup tin

Robert Kingston

one-line haiku

in evergreen shade forever autumn

Srini

seeing stars tonight chokehold

Susan Burch

concrete haiku

every
single
grain
of
rice
this
solitude

Bryan Rickert

concrete haiku

going
downhill
red
clay
on the seats
of our jeans

Lev Hart

concrete haiku

ladder
the
up d
 o
 w
 n
 the slide
 one last time

Steph Zepherelli

concrete haiku

so many
children
disappearing
dandelions
in the
wind

Susan Beth Furst

concrete haiku

bees
dusting
the black-
berry
bush
dusting
our pails
dusting
the forest
floor

Susan Beth Furst

concrete haiku

rabbit
hole
I fall
into
a new
year

Susan Beth Furst

tanka

hundreds
of fish eyes
in the orange boat ...
my childhood memories
of hating papaya

Amrutha V. Prabhu

a conch shell
carrying the waves
of the ocean —
 my body
a begging bowl

Amrutha V. Prabhu

a bruise inside
and yet
in my garden
a refreshing spray
of purple

Arvinder Kaur

tanka

writing,
rewriting your name — as if
to cast a spell
this ache so distracting
I let my chai go cold

Billie Dee

swaying
to elevator music
my dad
grinning in the wheelchair
pushed by a pretty nurse

Billie Dee

by twilight
an old cow moose stripping
willow bark
this childhood scene released
by the scent of creek water

Billie Dee

tanka

petals closed
at the end of each day
hibiscus
I ease into the rhythm
of silent retreat

Barbara Olmtak

just in time
for blossom season
father's
diagnosis
becoming mine

Bryan Rickert

another poem
about dad's ashes
why can't I
write about any other
moment with him

Bryan Rickert

tanka

returning to
my childhood home
after fifty years
still the same shadows
inside and out

David John Terelinck

another report
of same-sex penguins
on the news —
I finally tell my mother
a truth she long imagined

David John Terelinck

ashes now
in the red-hot burner
dad's long hair
that a spoilt child
hung on to with tiny fists

Dipankar Dasgupta

tanka

a young girl
at the jeweller's shop
next to me
your earrings flash
from an afternoon long ago

Dipankar Dasgupta

an old man
crumbles bread
for pigeons ...
learning to give
till the last breath

Hassane Zemmouri

watching waves
 go in and out
I reflect
on the past, present and future ...
nothing is mine

Lakshmi Iyer

tanka

what to do
with the old vessels
the emptiness
in each echoes the silence
of my life after death

Lakshmi Iyer

grandma's nine-yard sari
tucked under the mattress ...
shadows deepen
as i recall her stories
of marriage at age nine

Lakshmi Iyer

crushed red velveteen
and a ratty white beard
in the attic trunk —
I always knew it was
our uncle in the Santa suit

Linda Papanicolaou

tanka

on the cliff
a twisted tree leans
over the void
hold my hand, let's walk
to the edge of the world

Lorraine Haig

this burden
lighter one year on
the way
grief suffuses
in the gentle arc of time

Lorraine Haig

once
it was disco dancing
fifty years on
I'm still in your arms
trying not to fall

Lorraine Haig

tanka

cooking a feast ...
below the list of spices
mom's instruction
not to mess up the kitchen
use two towels

Mallika Chari

laundry
hung out to dry
in the morning light
this randomness
of loss

Marilyn Ashbaugh

new moon:
stargazing till midnight
can we rekindle
our jaded lives
with starlight?

Neena Singh

tanka

just back
from a war zone ...
a grocer's egg carton
one stuck, one broken
make that two

Richard Matta

along the towpath
an abundance of bird song
coupled with a splash!
from an off-balanced rat
walking the loose-planked bridge

Robert Kingston

bathed in sunlight
deeper in the pond
the same egret
turns its shadow
into itself

Robert Kingston

tanka

a new breeze
blows through this land
mother's insight
to include daughters
in family bequests

Rupa Anand

all the junk
my mom
used to collect
now a treasure
i can't let go

Sreenath

dandelions -
every wish
a wish
to be with you
to be with you

Susan Burch

tanka

she doesn't ask
one thing about me
my new coworker
from Connecticut
who likes to knit

Susan Burch

seven ants
on a mission, passing through
our backyard ...
for once I don't question
the point of it all

Vibha Malhotra

haibun

Billie Dee
~

Providence

“You’ll never amount to a hill of beans.” Backhanded advice, I thought as a child. At least a thousand silos-full to build such a mound. So, yes—my value might fall short of such treasure, but I’m still gonna try to succeed.

famine dream
adding rat to Irish stew
she feeds a village

“If it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right.” My godfather’s words. No wonder I suffer from perfectionism.

counting to ten
before he pulls the trigger
Russian roulette

haibun

Billie Dee
~

Rapid Eye Movement

Once again, I'm lost in a maze of hospital corridors, pushing a gurney toward the chilly operating room. We arrive hours late; the surgical team has long departed. I look down at the patient, who turns out to be a gibbon.

anatomy class
I name the cadaver
"Bubba"

haibun

Bonnie J Scherer
~

Hook, Line and Sinker

Upside down on the official scale, the halibut burps up its last meal, an octopus.
The weight teeters at half a pound shy of 200, state trophy size. Holy mackerel!

the little things ...
sometimes
not so little

haibun

Bonnie J Scherer
~

Visitors

When I return to the office, waiting customers are rifling through my desk drawers. My entry startles them. The family wants to open an account with a large deposit.

Pulling out the New Account form, I notice a family of moose, no ... caribou ..., outside the window. The children giggle with delight and want to see the animals up close.

As I open the patio door to the deck, the smallest of the caribou pack slides inside and escapes down the hallway.

wild mushrooms
in shepherd's pie -
cracking crust

haibun

Bonnie J Scherer
~

In the Shadows

I enter my grandparents' home to find grandma at work in her favorite rocking chair. She sits in a corner of the room with faint light leaking through the window shade. Her long, slender fingers deftly guide cotton thread around the hook with skillful precision. She is crocheting maroon lace for yet another handkerchief. This one is embroidered with the name "Stella".

weaving stories
under the cloak of darkness -
gossamer threads

haibun

Diana Webb



The Transparency of Petals

roof of a glasshouse
catching the light
snowdrops

A special treat, the visit to the botanical garden. Terrified the ice cream in her favourite flavour would drip and stain her pristine party frock, its delicate embroidery, its rows of smocking.

a gleam on the Shard
with the pierce of one needle
so many threads

Strange how this journey home on the early train brought it all back. Her mother pinning her hem while spitting out barbs. How her figure was lacking, her views on all things permissive, a slur. So what would she call her now? Scarlet woman most like. At least she's lost weight. Even more since he left with no more than a floral gift. So tomorrow she'll get out that outfit she's never worn from the back of the wardrobe. Needs to look her best in the frame that will take its place among family portraits.

canvas
for a midwinter sunset
paper thin orchid

haibun

Diana Webb
~

Outward Appearances

She takes a long time planning her outfit. It's so important to get it right. After all, she hasn't seen this friend for years. They had barely left short socks behind. All her scarves lie in a tangle on the floor. She pulls one out, coils it round her neck, almost strangles herself before replacing it with another. Then another. And another. Blues and reds. In or out? Do they suit her? If so, which shades? Then the dress. Purple or mauve? Does it go with the other accessories? The earrings look all wrong. Far too dangly and metallic. They don't blend in. She glances at her watch. Only minutes to get to the venue. Seeing herself in the full-length mirror before going out, she wrenches the frock up over her head, grabs the one she'd rejected from the hanger and makes a beeline for the door. Green and yellow and that colour she wasn't quite sure about. It's too late now.

violets and celandines
scattered along the verge
a breath of relief

haibun

Florence Heyhoe - ECC
~

Beyond Appearances

Arm in arm the mother leads her daughter to the piano where she takes her seat. The piano sits mute until she gives it voice. Lucy is neurodivergent with few words but her heart is a flower. Her fingers dust the silence with perfume. Lucy plays a Chopin nocturne, her pigtailed swinging as she continuously moves her head from side to side. The notes rise feather-soft, firm as a swan's breast, fall to silence, then sound again.

impossible
running on water
the coot lifts off

Finger on finger was how she learnt to play. She laid her hands on top of her teacher's hands. Where he went she followed.

mountain stream
the many phrases
of the thrush's song

haibun

Florence Heyhoe
~

The Craftsmanship

He sculpts on paper. Choosing carefully, he creates textures, porcelain-smooth where you want to linger, and knife-sharp cutting to the bone. Story through story; the past and the present into the myriad colours of our human experience. His sentences, crowning the ordinary.

drip drip drip
eroding the rock
repetition of words

haibun

Lorraine Haig
~

A Small Jungle

“Get out of there” I yell at the cat scaling the big melaleuca in our garden. It’s spring and the canopy is full of nestlings.

Six months earlier I’m pulling out weeds while my neighbour’s ginger kitten is pouncing on leaves and sticks. My shoelace has become his fascination. Our native garden is full of birds and already I sense the developing hunter. He creeps confidently among the bushes, his instincts alive to our garden’s wildness.

Back to the tree. He’s still climbing. His claws are deep in the bark. I run for the water pistol we keep near the back door. A few good squirts and he’s changing his mind. Curiosity kills the cat, but not in this case.

moonglow
the motion sensor
snaps on off

haibun

Lorraine Haig
~

Restless

It isn't your voice that finds its way into my dreams. It's the rustle of taffeta as you fold your wings and perch on the wardrobe. Through the window, a segment of the moon lights up your fair hair. Your eyelids droop as they often did in the mornings, and sleep still in your eyes. I wonder if you are an angel. Your spreading wings fan the darkness between us. I open my eyes to emptiness and the hard stars.

heart of stone
the gleam of opal
in torchlight

haibun

Lorraine Haig
~

A Special Gift

Soft pastels rubbed into the grain leave dust floating in the prisms of light through the window. Cat's eyes leap from the paper. He's captured temperament and foibles, their unmistakable spark, and you know, though there are only the eyes, which of our cats my father is drawing.

matted fur
in mum's garden
another cross

haibun

Mona Bedi



Monkey Business

“Taste this!” my aunt orders me. It’s Diwali and she has prepared a host of new dishes. Getting recipes from the neighbourhood aunties is her favourite pastime. Not to say that not all her experiments are successful. Today is such a day. I carefully pick a spoon and take a bite of a mucky-looking dish made of pumpkin. The moment I put it in my mouth, I gag and rush to spit it out. Once back, I see a red-faced woman staring at me. “Bandar kya jaane adrak ka swaad” she tells me. (“What would a monkey know about the taste of ginger?”)

I quietly finish the rest of the meal in silence.

overproofed bread
I try hard to deflate
my ego

haibun

Mona Bedi



Face Off

After doing up my eyes, I start with the face. It's the concealer first. Just at the corner of the eyes. Then comes the foundation. It has to be a bit lighter than the skin colour. Time now for contouring. Do I need to chisel my nose? I apply just a little. Lastly the blush. What colour will go with a black dress? Confused, I put on a bright pink shade. I wear a pink on my lips too.

To be sure of my look, I video call my daughter. "Mom, what have you done to your face?" she laughs.

I go and wash off the makeup. Just kajal and a lip balm shall suffice for my dinner tonight.

a dried rose
just as beautiful
potpourri

haibun

Robert Kingston

Dimly Lit

We walk as far as we can these days, he, a multiple sufferer of several years and I, a novice at just one.

We take in all that the river can throw at us. The low-flying swan, the ducks drawing down flies and those damn coots, making off like they can walk on water.

Leaving the canal boats to dwell in their own sorrow, we enter the slippery world of the towpath: he immediately warns that the journey is more tricky from here, having walked here before and I reply, that I'm sure I'll not sink.

fading light
the shape of my butt
on the bank side

Laughter twice as loud as that at the tunnel mouth.

Of course, it didn't hurt, pride never does, I utter, as we resume to near exhaustion.

at Beeleigh Falls
watching light roll
off the rock face

haibun

Rupa Anand
~

Sir Tobias

It's five o'clock and his plaintive meow wakes me. Old now, with his sister gone, he snuggles close. He hears the dawn twitter and wants to be out in the garden at the same instant. I swing my feet down to find my slippers and scooping his thin and wasted frame close, I shuffle towards the verandah door.

The morning air caresses me as I place him gently on the grass. An early magpie grumbles into the trees.

a waning moon
in the dawn sky —
his blue eyes

haibun

Rupa Anand
~

A Nymph Amidst Geraniums

I avoid the invitation, thinking that in my current state of health, I will not be well enough. I go, nevertheless, and settle into an infinite space of silence and calm. Birdsong and more birdsong pour into me from every leafy branch of every tree in this 3.5 acres of sheer delight.

boomerang —
a raven's call echoes
from across the hill

haibun

Susan Burch
~

Owl Say!

Just answered the door again in my wizard bathrobe. I wonder what the postman thought of that.

winter wind under his breath *wannabe muggles*

haibun

Susan Burch



Thought Provoking

So by thinking about an angel on my roof, have I caused it to happen? Is there an invisible man with wings stuck on my roof & cursing me for putting him on guard duty? And would he actually help if there was a home invasion, or would he just laugh his ass off, thinking I deserved it?

getting undressed the snickers in my knickers

haibun

Susan Burch
~

Frosted

When my hair's in a ponytail it looks gray. When it's down it looks brown. Just
pick a color!

weight gain ignoring the real issues

haibun

Vidya Shankar
~

Copy Paste

I'm singing in the rain ...

That song. Stuck in my head since yesterday. Running in a loop.

bansuri ...
down the river
a peacock's cry

tanka-prose

Amrutha V Prabhu
~

The Fifth Month of the Year at Udupi

pipes and drums
play together in joy
i flow
with the highs and lows
of the sapta swaras

The scent of Mangalore jasmine clings on masses of hair. My thoughts consider whether that would outperform the sweat dripping down the underarm of the blouse.

The non-AC temple marriage hall is filled with women and men wearing heavy Kanchivarams and delicate white dhotis. One could occasionally see salwars, long skirts, and trousers. The welcome juice from the lemonade beats the scorching sun.

The bridegroom and the pandit besides agni flames adorn the mantap on stage. The bridegroom's and bride's close family members move between the rooms on each side of the stage.

The bride is yet to come.

tanka-prose

Billie Dee
~

Meditation

My feet went numb in the cold water an hour ago, but my mind is alert. I'm now deeply engaged with the rattle of this swift mountain creek — my morning song. Back in the cabin, Mom's stirring pancake batter, knowing I'll return soon with a string of breakfast trout.

a dozen
rainbows in my creel
I wonder
how it feels to be yanked
 through the sky

tanka-prose

Bryan Rickert
~

Messengers

I want to believe that you are sending birds into my life. After feeding and caring for them, I imagine them returning to you. Singing of how generous and caring I am and that I am worthy of all your love.

snow
on the feeder
just one
chickadee
is enough

tanka-prose

David John Terelinck

Nocturne by an Unnamed Pond

You must make camp by mid-afternoon; the light goes early these days. I collect hearthstones from the water's edge. Gather paper birch and hazel twigs for kindling. Split small branches of red oak and elm with my hatchet. A brace of ducks thread silver through the tannin waters.

the glow
from autumn foliage
backlit by the sun
I need no chapel glass
to tell me God exists

I pitch my tent on the edge of dusk, watch the orange weld of sunset burn itself out across the pond. Night finally sloughs off the light as a snake would shed its skin. Darkness leans into the campfire, throws an intimate arm around my shoulders.

the sky
burdened beyond
capacity
how easily
shooting stars let go

By the glow of flame, I scribble line after line in my notebook. I jump when nature taps me on the shoulder. There's a skitter of claws on bark. Another acorn drops. I look up but cannot see who is raiding the larder. There's a flapping, followed by scuffling in the undergrowth. A small squeal is suddenly silenced. In the stillness I hear the lap of water against the shore.

tanka-prose

And I think of *Walden*, all I have read of Frost, and I put away my journal.
Tonight, I want to feel the poem, not write it.

this slow
costume change
of seasons
the moonlit curve
of limb and trunk

tanka-prose

Lakshmi Iyer

Coil of Time

I still remember my grandfather, fondly called Anna, writing his daily accounts on a slate. His writing table was made of Burmese teak. It had drawers with square cells. In those days, the denomination was 'anna', a currency unit used in British India. He would pile up the annas on the wooden table, open the drawer and drop each of them into their respective cells. It was fun watching Grandpa. He was very particular that no one touch his slate. Before going to bed, he would erase the daily accounts with his closed fist and blow off the slate pencil powder.

dandelion seeds
disperse to unknown places
in my dreams
I wait for that magic wand
to take me back home

tanka-prose

Linda Papanicolaou
~

Whisker Twitch

He walks stiffly, can't jump as high as
he used to, and knows every warm spot in
the house—especially my lap. Our favorite chair
is a ratty platform rocker in the TV room.

winter solitude
with a cat named Dante

Sometimes I try to picture the world
through his eyes. What's caught his attention
that I don't see? What thoughts are going through
the brain beneath those soft tabby ears?

both of us
long since past
the midway of our lives

tanka-prose

Linda Papanicalaou
~

Time Warp

In Google's satellite view, our house looks much the same although the trees have grown and new streets extend into what used to be an open field. Could I go down there — as I often do in dreams — find the front door's been left wide open, and steal from room to empty room in search of some small precious thing the moving van forgot?

Who owns it now? Would they say "Please come in," or would they smile guardedly at this stranger from the past?

faded Kodachrome
of the gang with bikes and skates
squinting in the sun —
was it always summer
on the sidewalks of childhood?

tanka-prose

Lorraine Haig
~

A Winter Walk

Light splinters through the branches. The willows trail their yellow fronds in the river. At a corner, the track falls into deep shade. I shiver in the cold gloom and breathe the thick scent of mouldy leaves. I hear blackbirds scratching and then sense I'm not alone. A dark shape in the deepest shadow watches me and ignores my greeting. Walking faster I leave the stranger to his darkness and cross the weir over the river that drifts towards the bay.

the road curves
towards the village
in the air
the scent of woodsmoke
and pub meals

tanka-prose

Mona Bedi
~

Askew

She calls me by my sister's name. Obviously, I respond. Later in the day, I find her unknotting a rosary. She is excited like a kid. The next morning, she is missing from her room. Days later, they tell me that they saw her roaming near a railway track.

this lifelong quest
for a perfect home —
is it why
you wander alone
amongst the unknown

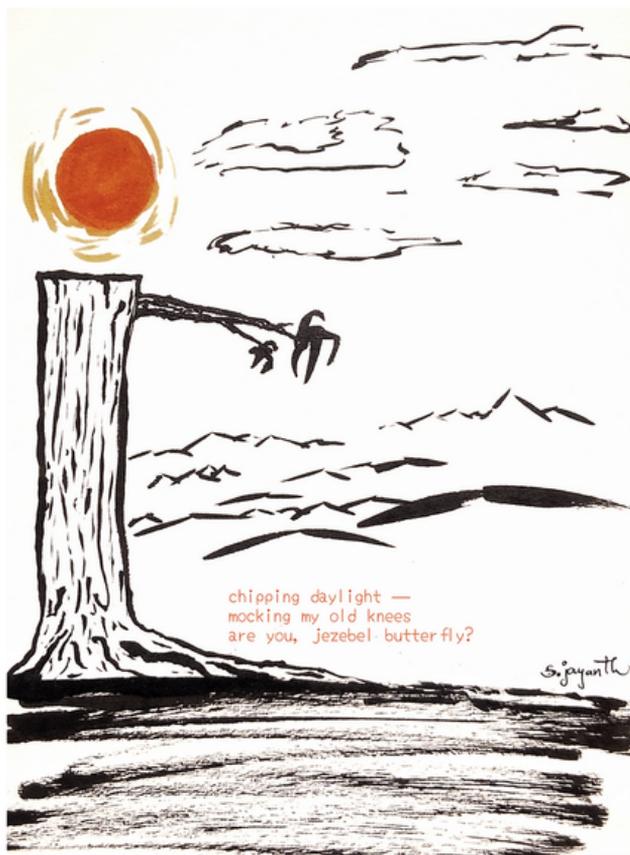
haiga

first day of school my nephew's insomnia



Poem Hassane Zemmouri
magalIBRETOU Photo

haiga



haiga



tectonic shift a child orphaned somewhere

art and senryu ; teji sethi

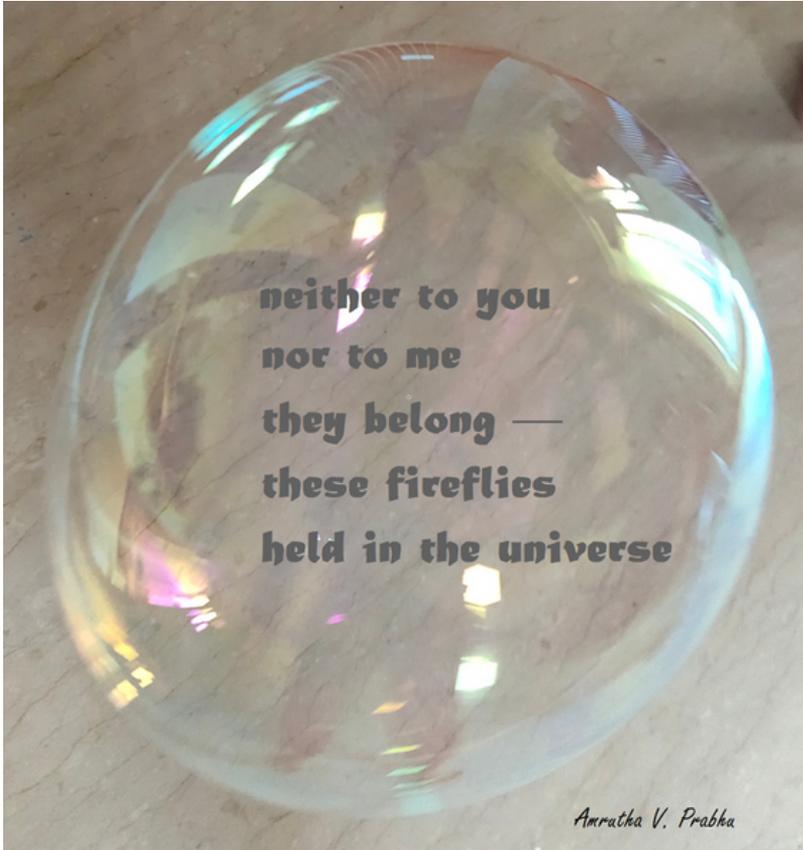
haiga



war memorial
holding onto a tree, blossoms
that braved the winds

art and senryu : teji sethi

tanka-art



tanka-art

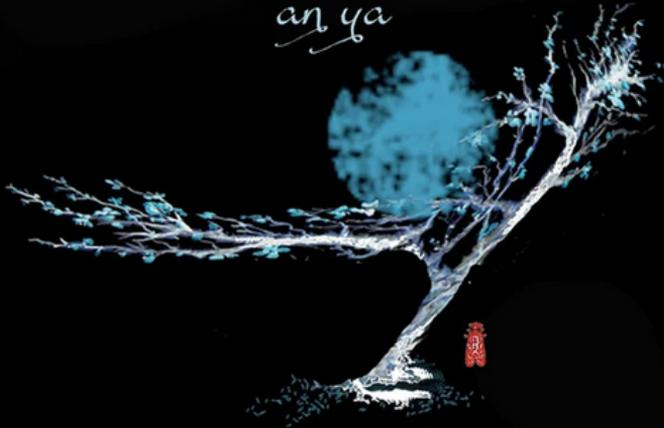
first crocus
coaxed into bloom by
a saffron sun
I squint at the road
that you travel on
an'ya



tanka-art

prematurely
you left my body...
on this heart
forever will press
the lead-weight of severance

an'ya



tanka-art

foraging
in the woods
for something edible -
pulling up roots
is never easy

Bonnie J Scherer



tanka-art

her painterly image
transformed
by the street artist
half-woman, half-flower
the warts gone

Bonnie J Scherer



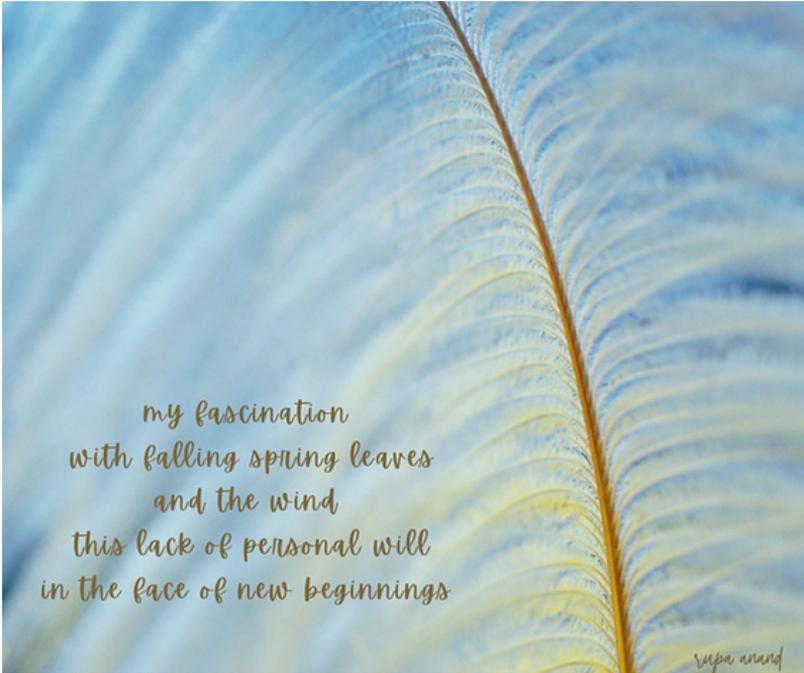
tanka-art



different illness
different doctors
yet it's clear
we both share
the same lethargy

David John Terelinck

tanka-art



my fascination
with falling spring leaves
and the wind
this lack of personal will
in the face of new beginnings

vepa arand

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

See you once again on 22 May 2023!
with many more fine poems
from our contributors.

Team: *haikuKATHA*