

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Priti Aisla

Issue 47 September 2025

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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 47
September 2025

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

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for providing the weekly challenges
for the month of August 2025,

Priti Aisola
for her brilliant ink sketch depicting the Kerala boat race,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Editors' Choice Commentary: by Vandana Parashar
Editor's Choice: *leaf by leaf* haiku by Marilyn Ashbaugh

leaf by leaf
a snail's trail
silvers the dusk

Marilyn Ashbaugh

This haiku feels like a Zen lesson. In mere nine words, the poet has skilfully presented the contrast between the stillness of leaves and the movement of the snail; the fading light at dusk and the silver shimmer left by the snail.

“leaf by leaf” sets the reader on a slow pilgrimage along with the snail. Where our life often feels pressed by speed, pursuit of excellence, a relentless need to prove ourselves and leave a mark, the snail does not rush from one leaf to another; moving with a deliberate, unhurried grace as though respecting the journey itself, and still, the dusk is illuminated by its presence.

The trail is fragile, easily lost to rain or darkness, yet for a while it holds. The gathering darkness of dusk is softened by this silver. It makes us realise that the beauty of life isn't always in grand gestures but in the patient persistence of moving forward, leaving behind traces of quiet beauty.

Our own journeys, even if slow, may seem unnoticed at first, but like the snail's glimmer on the leaves, they shape the world in subtle ways. Wouldn't we all want to be remembered - not in noise or haste, but in something that lingers gently after us? In a sense, the poem invites us to reflect on our own lives - not as races to be won, but as quiet journeys, where each milestone deserves attention before the next is reached; to let our presence, however modest, silver the dusk of the places and people we touch. And when the end is near, what remains is not how quickly we moved, but the quiet glow of what we have left behind.

haiku

the sky above
what does the snail know
that I don't

Alfred Booth

school days —
from an old file falls
an old report card

Arvind Padmanabhan

nailing it —
my manicurist admires
her handiwork

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

fresh cement —
this urge to leave
a paw print

Billie Dee

haiku

world peace day
children's chalk rainbows
wash into the gutter

C.X. Turner

evening train
trees field trees
field trees

C.X. Turner

the challenge of
step slide step s li de
winter's sidewalks

Dinah Power

a bumble bee
humming to itself ...
sunflowers

Fatma Zohra Habis



image and ku: Dipankar Dasgupta

haiku

a yellowing sketch of me
by my son at ten ...
deep monsoon

Firdaus Parvez

following the river
back to its source
snow-stars fizzle

Joanna Ashwell

these winter rains
I fold so easily
back into myself

Joanna Ashwell

burrowing away
from his own shadow
a Groundhog winter

Joanna Ashwell

haiku

mountain stream
the grey heron's neck
curving deeper

Keiko Izawa

grey wind
the wash and tumble
of sea glass

Lorraine Haig

first spring storm ...
a kookaburra starts
to cackle

Lorraine Haig

leaf by leaf
a snail's trail
silvers the dusk

Marilyn Ashbaugh

haiga



image and ku: Kala Ramesh

haiku

misty moon
the lifeguard chair
full of sand

Marilyn Ashbaugh

still lake
the still shadow
of a still canoe

Milan Rajkumar

winter night
sucked deeper and deeper
into instagram

Mohua Maulik

monsoon sun
popping in and out
with the laundry

Mohua Maulik

haiku

heatwave
the hawker places a wet sack
on his veggies

Mohua Maulik

game of thrones
discount tags
on office chairs

Nalini Shetty

wiping my tears
before his tears
little fingers

Nitu Yumnam

guava tree ...
as many parrots
as fruits

Padma Priya

still(born)



image and ku: Mona Bedi

haiku

river bend
the water slipping quietly
past the sunning crocodiles

paul m.

morning hour
I place a few commas
in the neighbours' gossip

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

wiping the frame
dad's smile
reappears

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy

one-line haiku

reading his eyes reading my palm

Anjali Warhadpande

(c)loud(burst)

Dipankar Dasgupta

brothers-in-arms we take turns to play dead

Ron C. Moss

chipping away the morning calm birds

Rupa Anand

one-line haiku

funeral home longing for silence longing for solitude

Sathya Venkatesh

homecoming no longer sweet the mangoes

Srini

hitchhiking dusk on NH44

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy



autumn reflection
one brother haunted
by the other

marilyn ashbaugh

from a high window
a Schubert impromptu
how much romance
will two ice cream cones
add to summer heat

Alfred Booth

buck moon
suddenly the night blossoms
into ancient poetry
when deep in alleyways
temple bells rang curfew

Alfred Booth

in younger days
our conversation flowed
like a languishing river
in the silence now
your hand is still warm

Alfred Booth

they talk
of forest fires
and loss of property ...
I double check
my gas stove knobs

Anjali Warhadpande

running through
fields of mustard flowers
before I stop
for a photo ...
my Bollywood moment

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

weaving a web
a spider
in its royaume
I wonder what it's like
to be a queen

Barbara Olmtak

haiga



image and ku: Nalini Shetty

between each leaf
a glimmer of brightness
quietly returning
how the body glows
in the warmth of kindness

C.X. Turner

damp washing
left for the night air —
the words I consider
still heavy
on my tongue

C.X. Turner

in the garden shade
I hold a vole still breathing —
you ask
if saving it
might change anything

C.X. Turner

tanka

mom's sepia smile
with a one day old me
in a wheelchair
she asks once again
if I know her son

Dipankar Dasgupta

sunlight
on the windowsill
the first daffodil
alone
amid ruins of a house

Fatma Zohra Habis

cobwebs cling
to the whirling blades
of a ceiling fan
how heavy
is this air with tangled words

Gauri Dixit



the (((((echo)))))) in the MRI tunnel

Nitu Yumnam

after fifty years
he pleads for my hand
lest he should fall —
some lessons are learnt
during the autumnal years

Gowri Bhargav

a compressed sky
laden with clouds
fills every window
even my heart
is tethered to storm

Joanna Ashwell

storm lanterns
left to sway
beyond the horizon
as if my dreams too
are without anchors

Joanna Ashwell

tanka

the wails
and hoots of a loon
my thoughts
now take the shape
and sound of your voice

Kanjini Devi

although the well
holds clear water
I breathe in
the memory
of moss-laden walls

Lakshmi Iyer

rereading dad's letters
I gather the essence
of his advice
difficult to unravel
the weaver bird's nest

Lakshmi Iyer

I clean
the old mirror
but still there
staring back at me
a shadow of my past



Pic & ku Mona Bedi

looking
over the edge
into the abyss
is that how you felt
with your diagnosis

Lorraine Haig

sudden rains
spoil our picnic plans
if only
i too could join
the tantrum on the floor

Mohua Maulik

your absence
measured in the hush
after rainfall
the branches still dripping
with what they cannot keep

Nalini Shetty

what remains
of the sky
in a pothole
the milkman's bicycle
splits it in half

Nalini Shetty

predawn darkness
a chirp here and a chirp there ...
everything
in silhouette and unclear
like your love

Padma Priya

banana leaves
touch a grimy wall ...
my day
sagging with worry
gets a facelift

Priti Aisola



by the river's bend
where foam drifts aimlessly
I count again
all the small betrayals
I've tried to forget

a devi shrine
under the neem tree ...
nothing to offer
but the beads
of a broken japamala

Priti Aisola

crossing the border
a stowaway lady bug
in our car
we muse its future among
the natives of Suffolk

Robert Kingston

sing when
the clay urn kisses
the current —
I want the Sutlej
to unmake me gently

Sandip Chauhan

this last day
is perfection
never again will I live
to see this summer
August sky

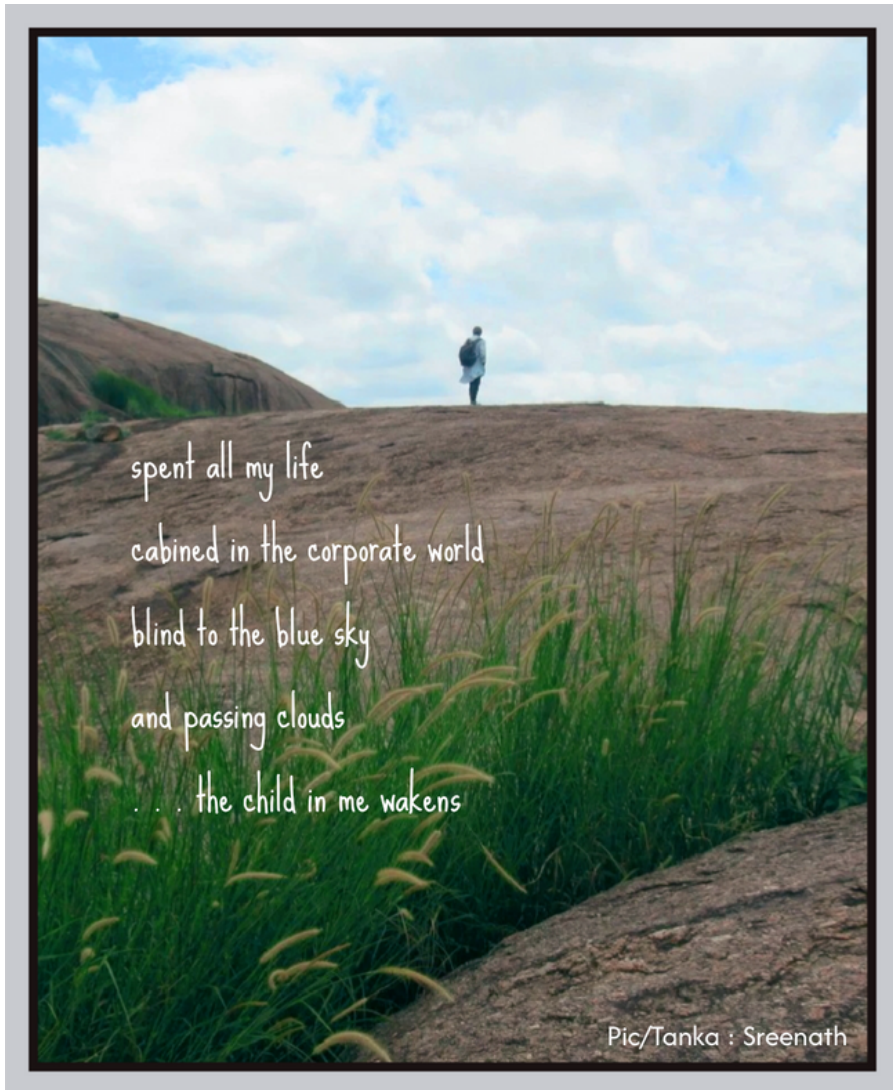
Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

I imagine
the day before
Independence
what grandmother felt, knowing
she could vote tomorrow

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

walking away
from my panic attack
my son hurries
to bury his face
in our tabby's fur

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy



spent all my life
cabined in the corporate world
blind to the blue sky
and passing clouds
... the child in me awakens

Pic/Tanka : Sreenath

thinking
of dad's unfinished book ...
at the dawn of autumn
a crimson hibiscus
in half-bloom

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy

twenty years
of conversations
washed away in silence
even the rain
speaks in downpours

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy

Alfred Booth



A few days less than two months

I don't know how not to wither. A few delicate souls ask about the black wrist brace. A neighbor across the street remarks she hasn't heard Mozart for a long while. Specialists speak in pessimistic whispers, knowing my life's devotion, the irreplaceable life-thread to let my fingers sing a lifetime of stories hidden deep in my heart.

giving into
late afternoon ennui
the memories
playing Chopin's Berceuse
and the tears I still shed

C.X. Turner



Neap Tide

Children dart in and out of the surf, chasing their shadows across the wet sand.

I keep to the tideline whilst he walks on the sun-hardened sand, the sea wind flattening the cotton against his back.

At the waterline, we pause to watch a fishing boat edge toward the harbour. Its wake fans out, unravelling into the tide until nothing remains but the slow pull of the waves.

low tide shimmer
as the minnows break away —
a length of rope
loosens from
the harbour wall

C.X. Turner



Held by the Hinge

tangled fern tips
the hush before touch
gathers weight
our bodies leaning closer
in the ache of almost

It begins where I thought I'd sealed the door. Where logic should have turned the double lock. But something unfastens — not with force, but with frequency. A sound like wind caught in the throat of a glass bottle. A resonance felt not in the ears, but in the chest.

There's a rhythm that resists the world's spin. Not a claim but an invitation, no louder than dry leaves scraping flagstones.

I leave my phone by the garden gate and slow my breath. Still, I listen. The thirsty pond, hedge clippings heavy with ladybirds, sun warming the line of my spine — each becomes a soft defiance against forgetting.

His words don't just arrive; they enter, stirring not only old resistance but something stranger: ease.

tanka-prose

Having learned mistrust at an early age, I hesitate. And yet here I am, answering. Not in protest but in alignment. As if we were never meant to follow the clean-cut path, but to carve our own, grass-stained, with skin tuned to weather.

barefoot again
i drink matcha in the rain
no answers,
just the taste of green
and the steadiness of now

Gowri Bhargav



Morning Raga

The cooker whistles. Like a master chef, I stir the curries and sambar in tandem humming a song. A variety of dishes — idli, dosa, roti and rice are prepared and stacked in lunch boxes. Cook, clean ... cook, clean ... a morning ritual that is akin to a familiar rhythm in my head. One by one everyone at home leaves and I heave a sigh of relief. Once again I read the acceptance email for my higher studies from a prestigious university. The decision that never was mine I brush off a few stray tears trickling down my cheeks. I then fill my plate with the charred curry and shapeless dosa and gulp it down with a glass of water before resuming my chores.

once again
dangling dreams flash
' midst the hues of dawn ...
the caged bird watches them fade
into the distant horizon

Joanna Ashwell



Walkways

The sky is weightless today. I am both grounded and adrift in a world of shifting mirrors. The clouds are mere wisps, floating from a horizon that folds me back in and around myself.

Where do I anchor in this mirage of selves. Darkness arrives and I am neither here nor there ...

slippers
softly patterning
the night lawn
this moment before
an epiphany

Lalitha Vadrevu



Earnestly

<phone notification>

It was a message from an unsaved number.

"I saw you last week at that crafts expo. Traced your number from one of the organizers. You are like I last saw you. How are you?" It read.

The number ended with four ones.

Some numbers are etched in our memory for life. We dialed them so many times, after all.

I looked transfixed as I saw

typing ...

in the chat window

like the pianist's hands
in a legato
I see the dots d a n c e
and I ask why
do I yearn for you

Marilyn Ashbaugh



Lightning Bolt

On a hazy day at the beach, static in the air takes hold of our shoulder-length hair to make halos around our heads.

beach blanket
from dunes to waves
and back
we bury our secrets
side by side

Nalini Shetty



Overpass

Below the flyover, traffic hums like a hive. Street vendors weave between parked scooters, tea glasses balanced on dented trays. A stray dog sleeps against a cracked pillar painted with fading election slogans.

from the underpass
a flute's thin notes
rise above the horns
I wonder if you still
call this city soulless

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy



One Last Smile

6.30 am. An unusually damp and cold Saturday morning in June begins with a doctor's apology.

the flow of breath
gets sucked
into a moment's hush ...
mother
vanishes into thin air

My father's palms in her clasp, freeze, much like his face watching her eyes frozen on him ... I rush out to make phone calls to the family. Soon people gather in waves. Murmurs.

brushing against
the new unfamiliar
coldness of her skin
my fingers tremble
unscrewing her nose-pin

At the crematorium, a tall idol of *Kalabhairava**. The smoke from the burning wood blends with the haze of the drizzle, creating a mist. As I try to gaze through the mist in my eyes, I notice the curve of a smile upon his stony lips ...

tanka-prose

kneeling down
to whisper a last prayer
into her ears
i mumble
that the gods are listening

**Kalabhairava* - an incarnation of Lord Shiva, Kalabhairava is often found or honored in crematoriums because he is associated with death, time, and the transformation of the body into the divine, representing the ultimate reality of existence. His presence in these sacred sites symbolizes the auspicious nature of death in the Tantric tradition and the power to overcome fear.

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

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

Team: *haikuKATHA*