

haikuKATHA  
unfolding the story within



Prakash Thombre

Issue 51 January 2026

# 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.

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# haikuKATHA

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Issue 51  
January 2026

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

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Our heartfelt thanks to:

HAIKUsutradhar: Gauri Dixit

thinkALONG: C.X. Turner

haikaiTALKS: Billie Dee

Tanka Take Home: Michele L. Harvey

The Haibun Gallery: Lakshmi Iyer

,

for providing the weekly challenges

for the month of December 2025,

Prakash Thombre

for his brilliant watercolour painting,

our contributors

for sharing their poems.

**Editors' Choice Commentary:** by Ashish Narain

**Editor's Choice:** haiku by Raji Vijayaraghavan

long winter ...  
humming my way  
out of the fog

**Raji Vijayaraghavan**

The greatest of things can often be said in the simplest of ways. I chose this poem for the Editor's Choice this time, because to me, this poem is a good example of that.

L1 sets the tone. It speaks of a long, possibly hard winter, something that we in the northern hemisphere can easily relate to at this time. The biting cold, grey skies and bare, birdless trees make for a somber mood. But then comes the twist. However difficult things seem to be at the moment, the poet is able to sing her way out of it! The phrase in L2 and L3 comes as a surprise, completely changing the mood of the poem. While some might frown at the use of two kigo words, I feel the poem demonstrates an effective use of technique that really makes it resonate.

The poem hit me hard as I read it. There was much in 2025, perhaps, that we wish had happened differently. Seasons repeat, and the new year may yet bring much that we do not want. Yet there is still much to look forward to. We can already anticipate spring and summer. We can still feel gratitude for being alive and for being able to experience all the good and the bad in the world around us. Like music, happiness truly lives inside us all. We just need to be able to access it. Ron Wild once said, "Seek the wisdom of the ages but look at the world through the eyes of a child." In nine simple words, this poem shows how we can do exactly that.

This is the 51st edition of our journal. Many in India consider 51 a lucky number. It is also a good time to remember how our community of poets at Triveni Haikai India has grown and reached new heights. My hope is that 2026 will be a creative year for us all!

## haiku

white lace  
at the edge of blue  
freezing tarn

Billie Dee

shell after shell  
eggs opening  
the day

C.X. Turner

peeling paint  
on the garden gate  
autumn light

Fatma Zohra Habis

chair by the window  
I wait  
for the sunbird

Geetha Ravichandran

## haiku

sudden creaking  
of a hanging sign  
evening chill

Jacek Margolak

a rotting stump  
still aglow  
candlesnuff

Joanna Ashwell

morning pills  
sugar pressure  
and birdsong

Jharna Sanyal

winter rain  
through the day  
through the night  
a loneliness

Kala Ramesh

haiga



first shrine visit  
the shawl she once bought  
still on my back

Milan Rajkumar

image and ku: Milan Rajkumar

## haiku

mistletoe  
inchng  
closer

Kanjini Devi

fading foghorn ...  
the taste  
of last night's stew

Keiko Izawa

decaying light ...  
the pachira leaves  
half gone

Keiko Izawa

after rain  
the fresh bark  
darker

Lorraine Haig

## haiku

snow moon  
field mice return  
in the garden shed

Lorraine Haig

Advent Sunday  
incense draping  
a rose bud

Lorraine A Padden

winter fog  
the bare tree grows  
wings

Mohua Maulik

sudden chill  
the tucked in beaks  
of pigeons

Mona Bedi

haiga

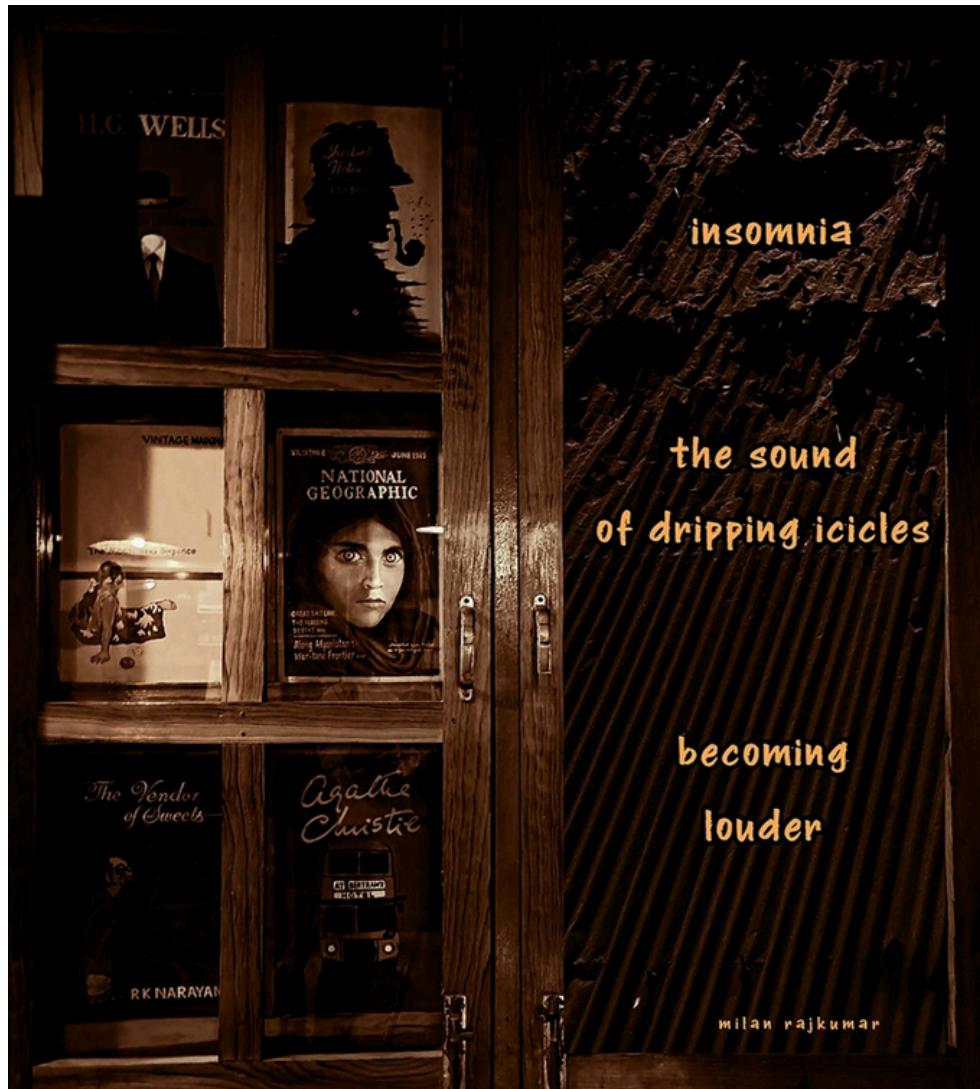


image and ku: Milan Rajkumar

## haiku

winter dusk  
the last red dahlia  
poking through snow

Nisha Raviprasad

long winter ...  
humming my way  
out of the fog

Raji Vijayaraghavan

year long winter ...  
we knit our own  
warmth

Raji Vijayaraghavan

mother's  
deepening wrinkles —  
fears I hide

Rashmi Buragohain

## haiku

church fayre  
a hint of mulled wine  
in the confession booth

Robert Kingston

mountain summit  
a glowing climber's tent  
adrift in the stars

Ron C. Moss

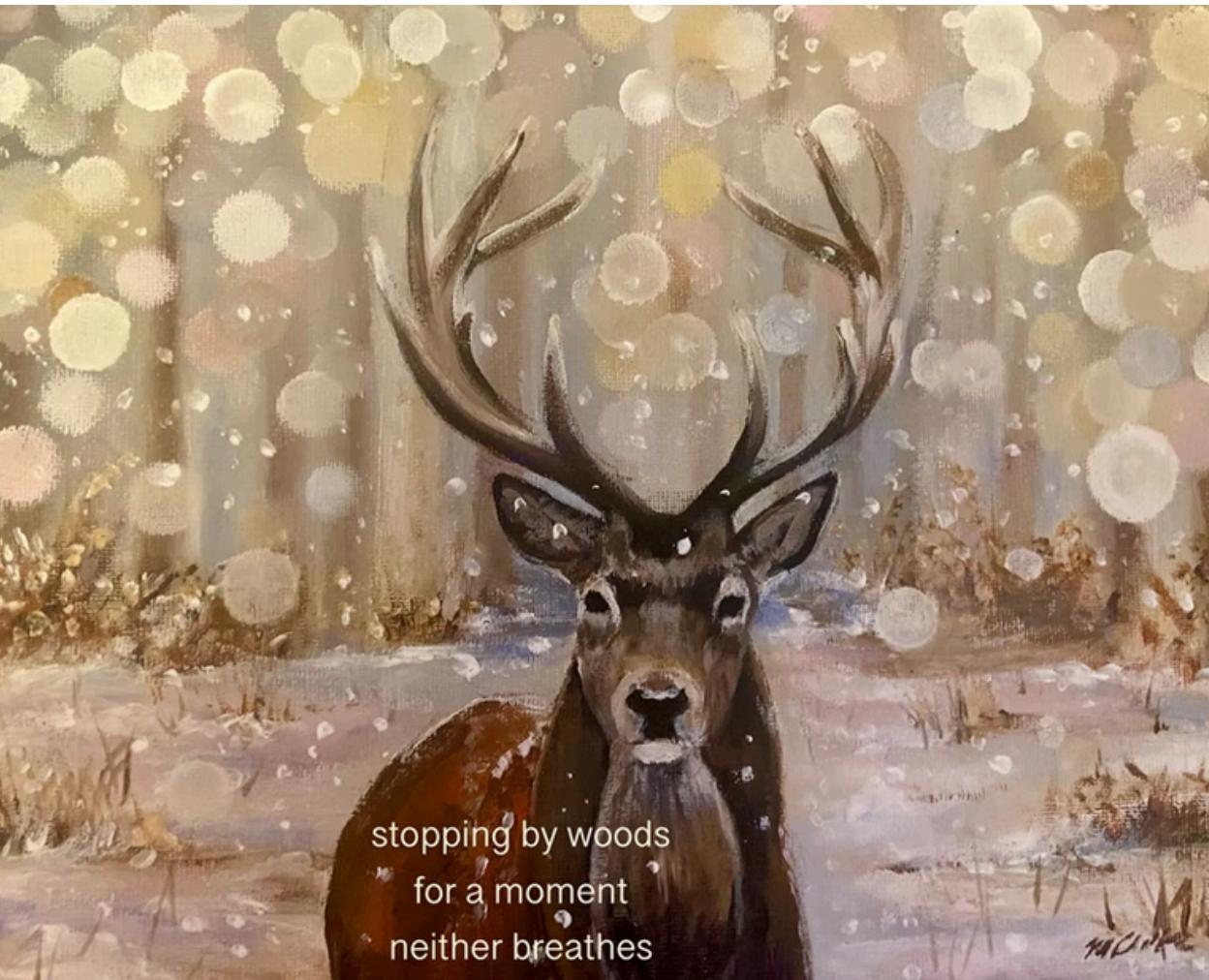
family lunch —  
the colours of dusk  
gently deepening

Rupa Anand

first snow  
the garden Buddha  
loses its gaze

Sandip Chauhan

haiga



stopping by woods  
for a moment  
neither breathes

image and ku: Marion Clarke

## haiku

hanging laundry ...  
a grasshopper jumps from  
cloth to cloth

Sathya Venkatesh

sunk into a bean bag  
the extra time to straighten out  
in winter

Sumitra Kumar

outside a house  
winter night swallowing  
the stray

Tejendra Sherchan

## one-line haiku

a single gate faces the forest snow-hinting sky

Alan Summers

deepening the blue each window tree light blinking back

Alan Summers

the unravelling of wool a hole in winter warmth

Alfred Booth

leaning back into forest pine lodge

Joanna Ashwell

## one-line haiku

within each wish the scent of rain ...

Raji Vijayaraghavan

still autumn all corridor-long squelching children

Robert Kingston

ink-dark ravens the soft chant of winter rain

Ron C. Moss

drifting to sleep the year the moon and me

Ron C. Moss

## concrete haiku

quicken  
drizzle  
a  
moth  
struggles  
to  
take  
flight

Kala Ramesh

haiga

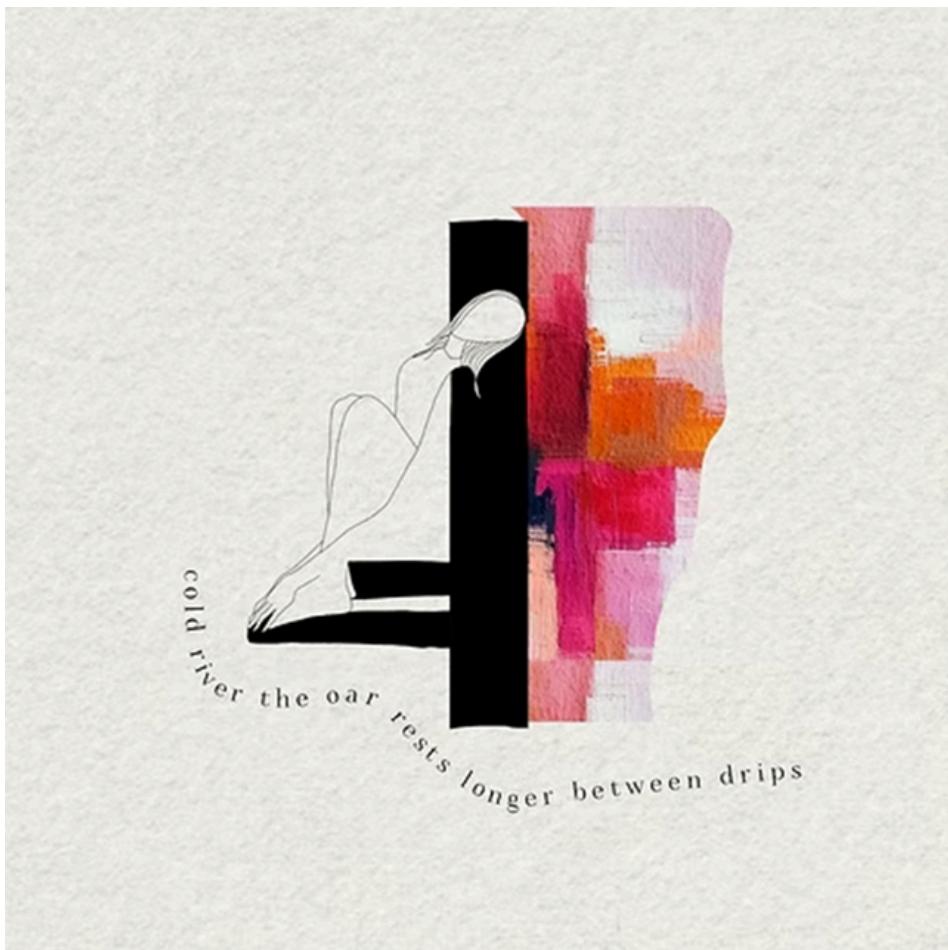


image and ku: Nalini Shetty

## tanka

it takes days  
for the new begonia leaf  
to unfurl  
high in the window  
a daddy long legs spins

Alfred Booth

I do not tarry  
in the winter-wet park  
it's a quick trek  
snails remain shell-bound  
cocooned and rain-proof

Alfred Booth

staccato jumps  
of a magpie  
unmoved by the seasons  
when will I ever learn  
to keep this balance

Barbara Olmtak

## tanka

an empty nest hanging  
from the tree's bare branches  
winter stillness  
echoes of motherhood  
never far away

Barbara Olmtak

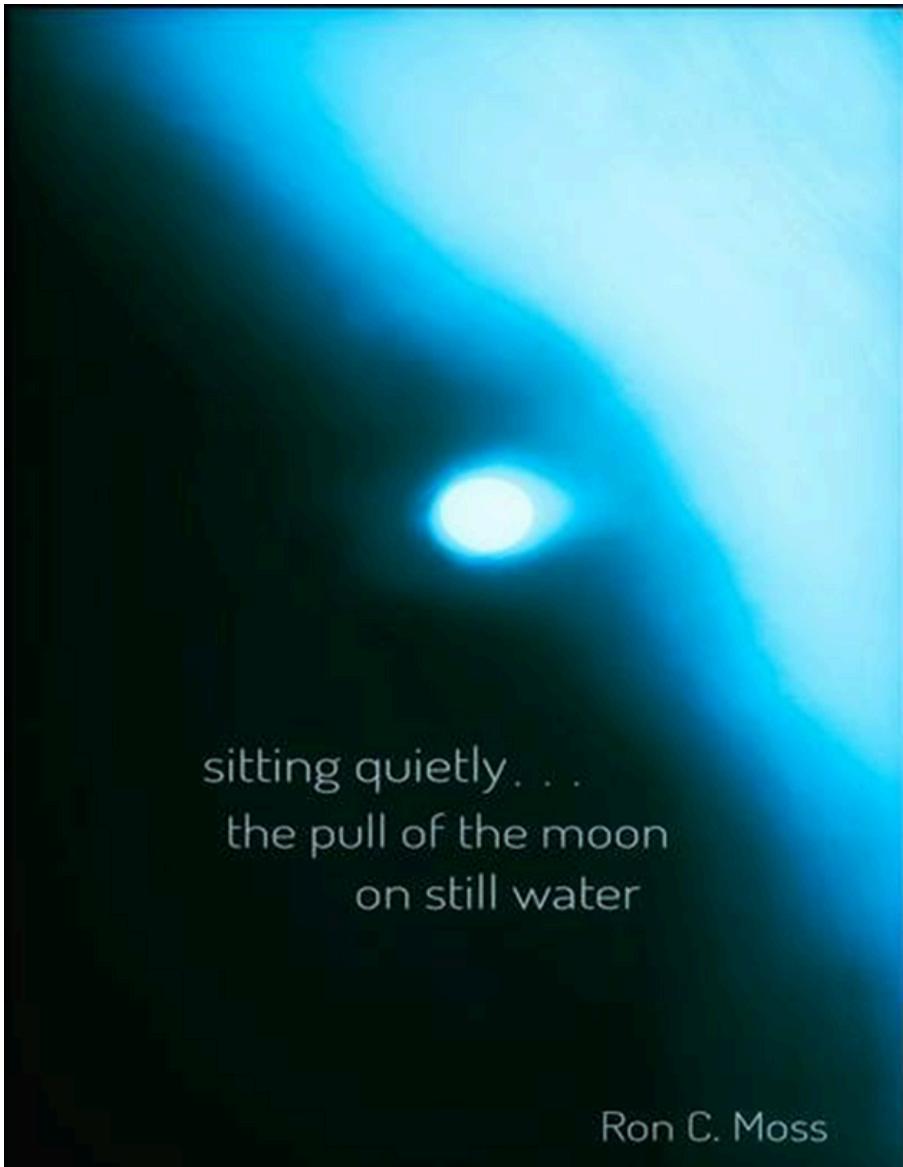
nightsong  
after rain  
the scent of you  
lingers  
in the bedding

Billie Dee

rain  
gathering in the grain  
of the bird table  
I keep returning to places  
that have already left me

C.X. Turner

haiga



sitting quietly. . .  
the pull of the moon  
on still water

Ron C. Moss

image and ku: Ron C. Moss

## tanka

therapy  
on christmas eve  
I accept  
what my hands forgot  
they were holding

C.X. Turner

a stack of rings  
chilling my finger  
year on year  
the weight of what I kept  
because they fit

C.X. Turner

frantic skitters  
inside a paper cup  
headed outside  
I promise the spider  
it'll all be okay

Cynthia Bale

## tanka

a brief escape  
from dark news —  
I'm gazing at the snow  
the promise of magnolia buds  
after december's darkness

Fatma Zohra Habis

this river  
on a winter's day  
is a sight that tempts words  
so they flow  
onto a blank page

Fatma Zohra Habis

pigeons paint  
the eventide sky  
in swirling patterns ...  
who taught them  
traffic control

Gowri Bhargav

haiga



this aloneness of mountains falling with step



Ron C. Moss

image and ku: Ron C. Moss

## tanka

endless  
tick-tock  
of the clock —  
the only sound bridging  
the silence between us

Gowri Bhargav

every time  
I plug in the Christmas tree  
the lights  
light me up  
inside

Jennifer Gurney

the rush of water  
through a river  
spinning a pebble to me  
my hand holds  
only a fraction of song

Joanna Ashwell

## tanka

that lanky mango tree  
now dries in pieces  
queer enough  
i miss its presence  
though it bore no fruit

Kalyanee Arandhara

shell  
after shell after shell ...  
from the crowded beach  
I carry back  
abundant emptiness

Kalyanee Arandhara

wild nettle soup  
simmers on a wood stove  
mom adds spices  
and syllables  
for wellness

Kanjini Devi

haiga



image and ku: Ron C. Moss

## tanka

russian dolls  
like the layers  
of an onion  
my own potential  
hidden from me

Kanjini Devi

this abandoned home  
with broken windows  
and creaking floor  
only the wind  
takes refuge here

Kanjini Devi

I look at crows  
returning home  
the dusk  
in their wings' silhouette  
the sun leaves its story behind

Lakshmi Iyer

## tanka

last night  
you wore a gown  
of moonglow  
morning light has left me  
with the scent of roses

Lorraine Haig

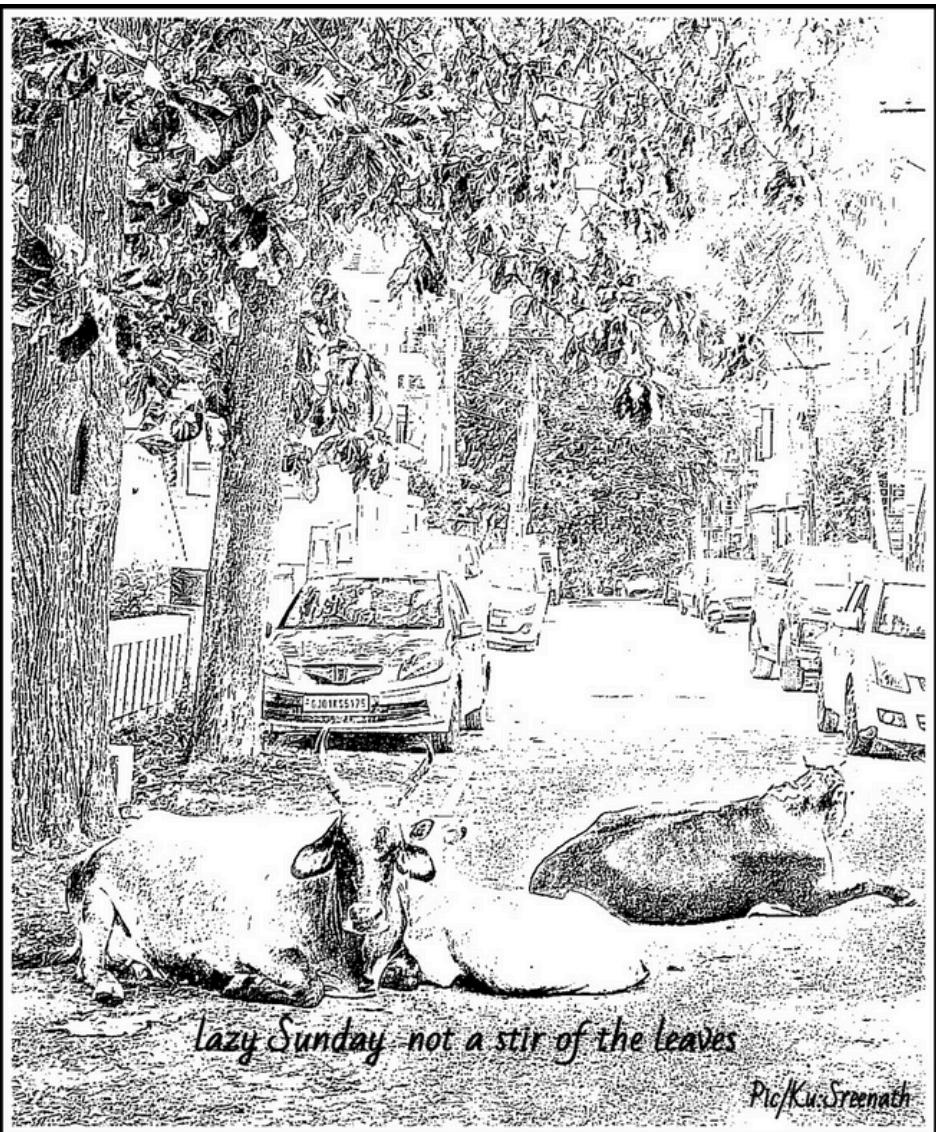
our old home  
deserted all these years  
moonlight  
still wandering through  
my childhood room

Lorraine Haig

torrential rain  
spills over roof gutters  
rushing  
towards the sea ...  
my son's first steps

Marilyn Humbert

haiga



*lazy Sunday not a stir of the leaves*

*Pic/Ku:Sreenath*

image and ku: Sreenath

## tanka

moonbeams  
dapple the forest  
serpentine trail  
I turn left at the fork  
behind your shadow

Marilyn Humbert

half awake  
as dawn pushes  
night aside  
I'm haunted by wailing ...  
curlews foretelling death

Marilyn Humbert

it doesn't matter  
to the fisherman  
tonight  
is the New Year's Eve  
and the city's partying

Milan Rajkumar

## tanka

honeybees can learn  
to read morse code  
if only i could  
decipher the hiss and buzz  
of tinnitus

Mohua Maulik

the prized dahlia  
in my garden now looks  
like an old man  
glimpses of the twinkling  
child now and then

Mohua Maulik

our white bougainvillea  
turns a deep red color  
weary  
of keeping pace  
with life's switchbacks

Mohua Maulik

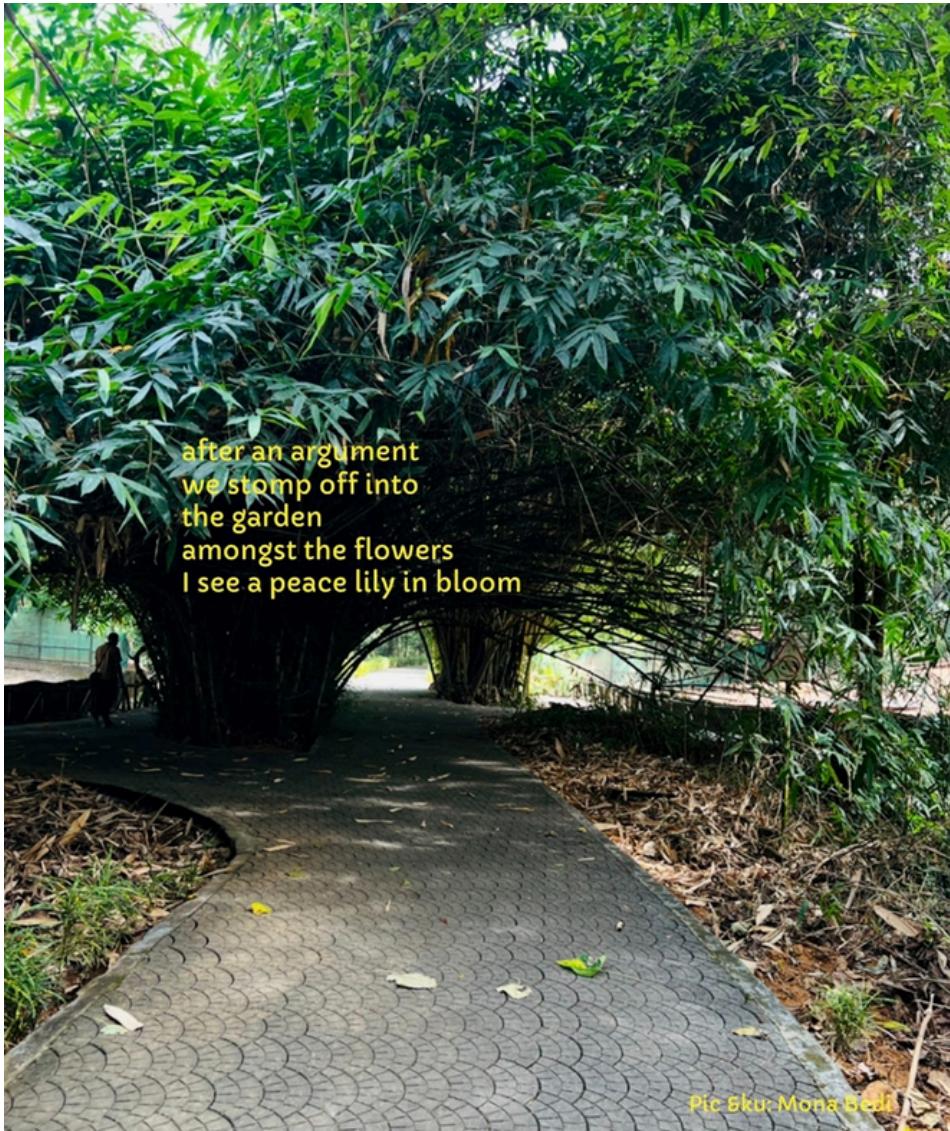


image and tanka: Mona Bedi

## tanka

a light breeze  
stirs sun-bleached curtains  
looking at old photos  
I realise some stories  
fade away on their own

Mona Bedi

silverfish  
dart in and out  
of gran's books  
do they know more about her  
than I did in her lifetime?

Mona Bedi

why shouldn't  
I curse  
our stars  
the lovebird  
without its mate

Nitu Yumnam

## tanka

you say  
what you never said  
all night long  
the wind keeps  
banging on the door

Nitu Yumnam

an old man  
drawn to a leafless tree  
in the park  
through an empty nest  
echoes of wind

Padma Priya

silhouettes  
emerging from darkness  
the time it takes  
for grief to dissipate  
and be oneself again

Padma Priya

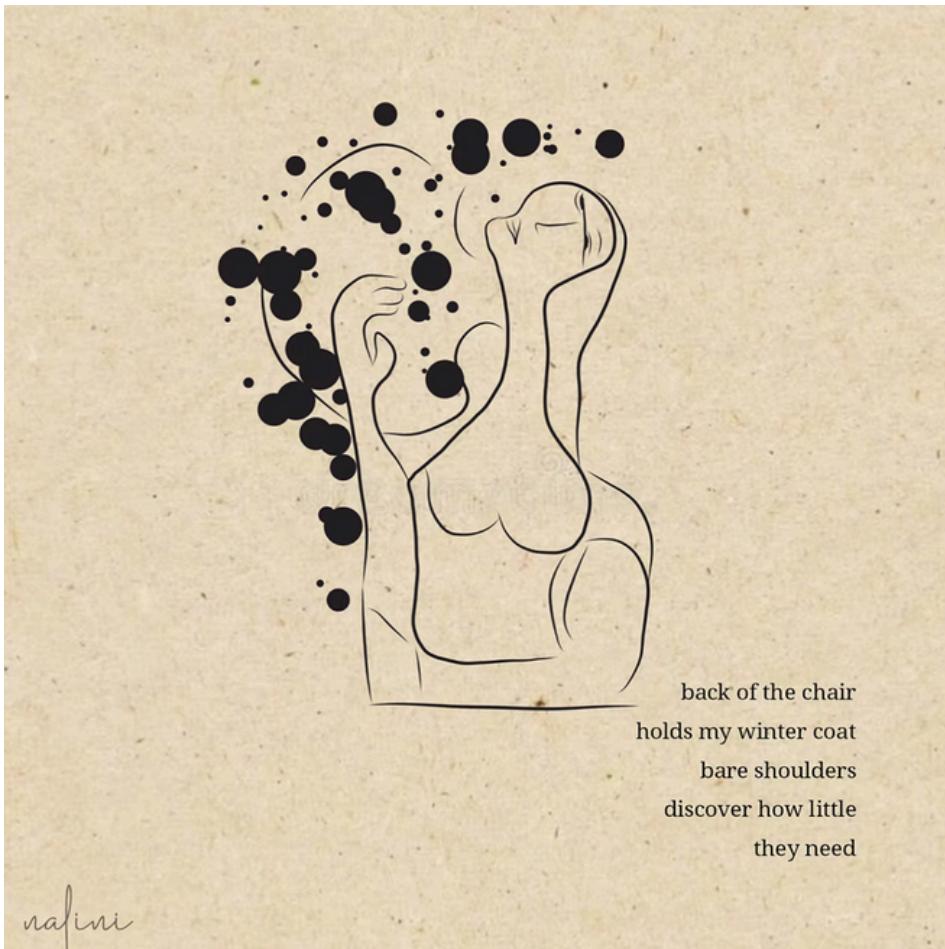


Image and tanka: Nalini Shetty

## tanka

placing a spoonful  
of cream on a stone slab  
I wait ...  
the blackbird that loved  
this feast comes no more

Priti Aisola

the last stanza  
of my unwritten song  
leans on the pine  
a breeze whispers  
*poems in dewdrops*

Rashmi Buragohain

Christmas greetings  
through the market  
a small dog  
in a woman's arms  
yaps at Santa

Robert Kingston

## tanka

bathed in sunlight  
the first whooper swan  
drifts to a pause  
a bow wave rippling  
its way ashore

Robert Kingston

amongst the din  
of the pie and mash shop  
a toddler  
expressing her dismay  
at her dropped spoon

Robert Kingston

descending the steps  
to take a dip  
in the temple pond  
... how my parents  
held me tight as a kid

Sathya Venkatesh

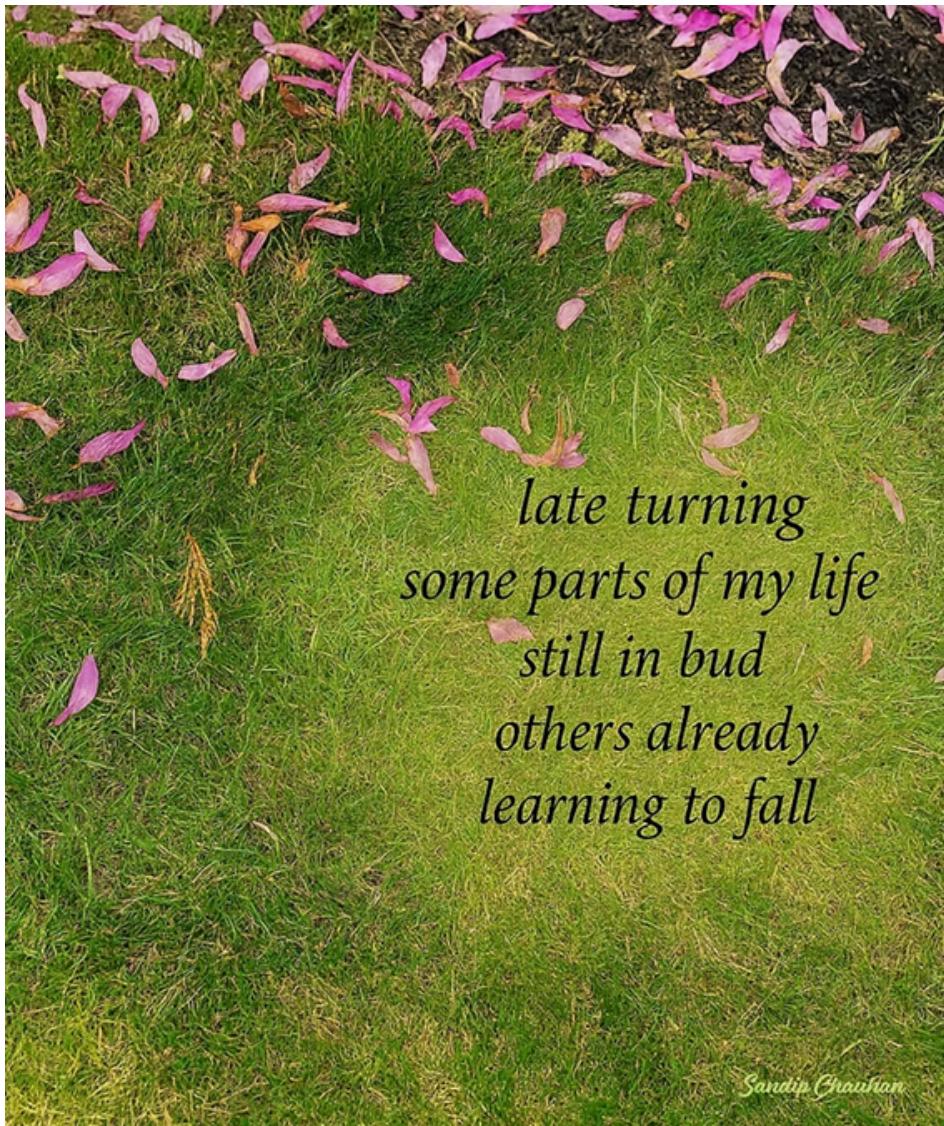


Image and tanka: Sandip Chauhan

## tanka

a langur on a wire  
draws question marks  
with its tail —  
I balance between homes  
carrying thunder and thaw

Sandip Chauhan

the many times  
mom peered into the peephole  
asking who's it  
midnight drama over a lizard  
mimicking the doorbell

Sumitra Kumar

my father's hug  
scented with cigarettes  
and newsprint  
things I can no longer feel  
in these digital times

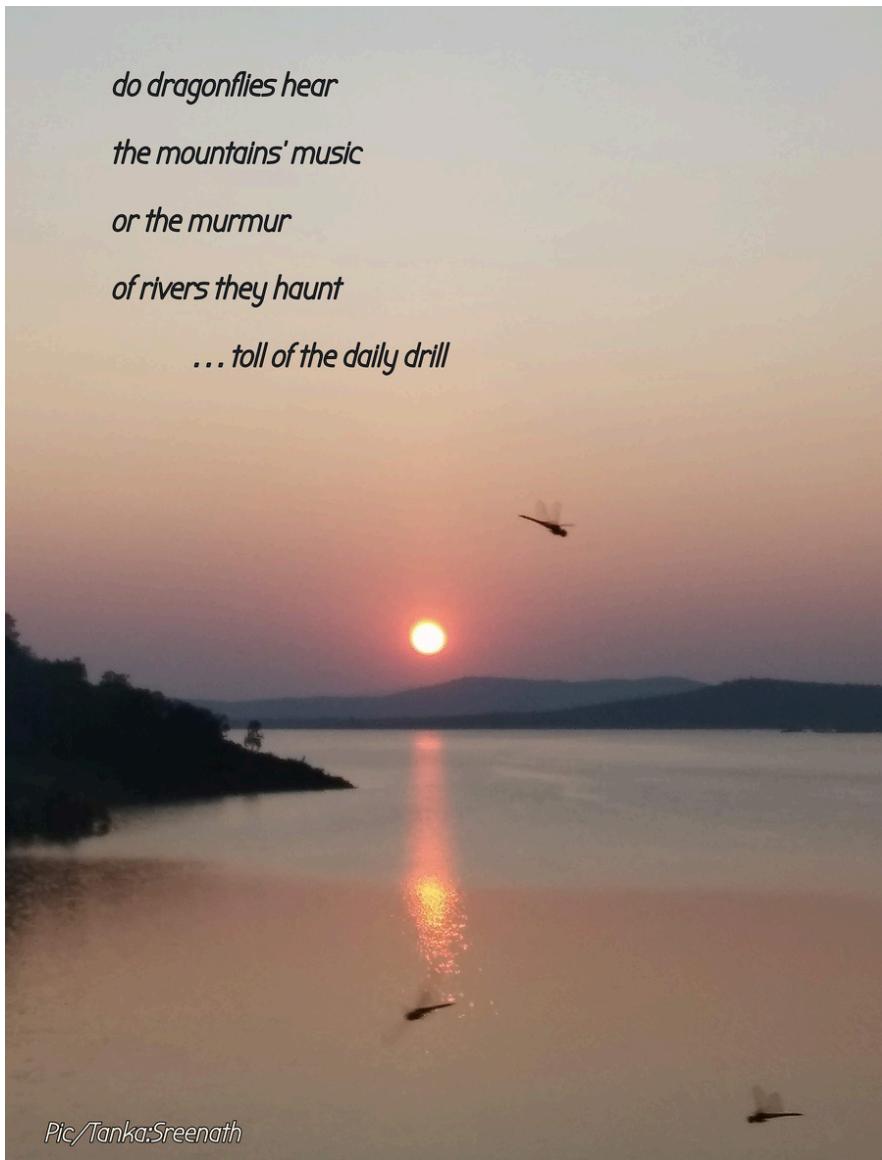
Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

## tanka

over a tree  
tiered masts  
of the spider webs  
morning glories about  
to be trapped

Tejendra Sherchan

*do dragonflies hear  
the mountains' music  
or the murmur  
of rivers they haunt  
... toll of the daily drill*



*Pic/Tanka:Sreenath*

---

Image and tanka: Sreenath

Dinah Power

Getting Breakfast

Their industry fascinates me . I watch lines of them passing back and forth across the path, not deterred by a twig I place to tease. Over - under - around, they make little fuss but continue with their loads.

the ant hill  
is lit with early rays  
at a bench i envy  
their inability to read the news  
crumbs drop from my lap

Florence Heyhoe

**When it is no more**

It is about the size of an apricot in shades of sepia and beige. A sphere around a sphere, with an almost perfectly circular entrance to the inner chamber. Paper thin walls, delicate as a petal blanket the young. The wasps built a nest here last year too.

Chewing wood from fence panels, window frames and doors to make pulp; it has taken months to build this delicate structure.

The nest is attached to chick wire under the roof of the garden shed. Gently I dislodge the wire to reach the secateurs. The nest drops to the ground, lies in pieces. About fifteen grubs squirm inside hexagonal nursery pods. Arranged like a flower head each one awaiting the nourishment that will not come.

delivering food  
at the refugee camps  
demand exceeds supply  
the haunted drive home  
those hungry eyes

Jaideep Khanduja

### The Small Light That Waits

Morning arrives without ceremony.

No announcement, no grand color — just a soft thinning of darkness at the edge of the window. The kettle hums its familiar song, and for a moment, I stand barefoot on cool tiles, feeling the day arrive through my soles. Outside, a sparrow hops once, twice, then stills, as if listening for permission to continue being alive.

Nothing remarkable happens.

And yet — everything does.

The steam from my cup fogs my glasses, and in that brief blindness, I remember how often clarity comes only after pause. I think of how much of life passes quietly, asking only to be witnessed. Not captured. Not shared. Just held.

This is the gift we forget:

that presence does not demand effort, only attention.

warm cup in my hands —  
the day leans in, listening  
to its own breath  
even silence feels crowded  
with small mercies

Joanna Ashwell

Parachutes

The meadow is filled with dandelion burrs. The long breeze carries them up and away into the blue. My eyes follow their spin, ballerina skirts twirling, lace clocks unravelling their spores, tiny seedlings latch to branches, a dizzying array of white stars explode.

too soon  
every wishbone  
splits in two  
the airborne strands  
of a silken dream

Nalini Shetty

Unflagged

Year-end posts stack up — destinations, milestones, smiling summaries. I scroll through them slowly, then close the app. The house does not mark the calendar.

friends compare years  
by titles, dates, gains  
I measure  
by what still functions  
without repair

Nalini Shetty

~

Circa

I only meant to sweep the patio, nothing more. Then, on the rim of the planter, a minuscule leafhopper shifted as if gathering courage to leap. I waited, unsure whether to move or stay.

so small  
yet it hesitates  
like I do  
edges of a choice  
brightening in sunlight

Sandip Chauhan

### Fine Adjustments

The steel needle my mother used to mend the hems of our school uniforms drew the white cotton thread again and again through the seam. The room was quiet enough that I could hear each small pull, the faint click as the needle touched the thimble on her finger. In another season, when I take a dress to be altered, I listen for the slow bite of scissors moving through the seam, the way water moves around a stone. Outside, a twig bends into the small gravity of its place; the last strip of sunlight runs along its length and spills quietly into the grass.

year's first train  
the one I miss by seconds  
pulls away  
trackside thistle shakes  
a small storm of bees

Tejendra Sherchan

### What I Need

It's not my intention to blame him for it. Not at all. Despite many good qualities to be proud of him, he had always been controlling. He hardly gave me choices. I had to do everything the way he wanted. Consequently, I find things harder.

often longing  
to live free from fear  
I wish to borrow it  
from the honey badger  
who is a fighter

Dear Readers  
Thank you for being with us.

See you once again on 22 March 2026  
with many more fine poems  
from our contributors!

Team: *haikuKATHA*