

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Prakash

Prakash Thombre

Issue 51 January 2026

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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 51
January 2026

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

Founder/Managing Editor:

Kala Ramesh

Associate Editors:

Ashish Narain

Firdaus Parvez

Priti Aisola

Sanjuktaa Asopa

Shalini Pattabiraman

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Vandana Parashar

Vidya Shankar

Web Editor: Ravi Kiran

Proofreader: Sushama Kapur

Cover Art: Prakash Thombre

Design: Kala Ramesh

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Our heartfelt thanks to:

HAIKUstradhar: 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



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

milan rajkumar

haiku

mistletoe
inching
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

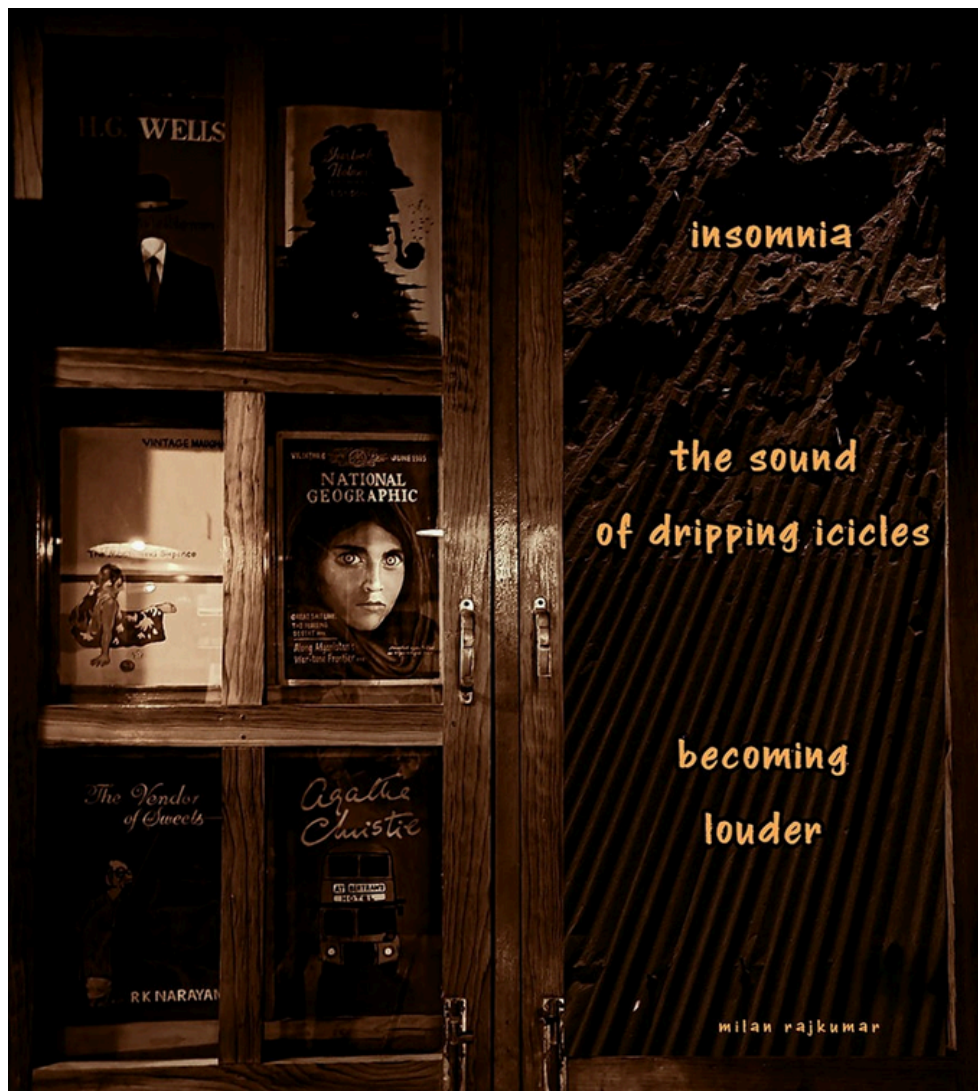


image and ku: Milan Rajkumar

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

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



image and ku: Marion Clarke

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
ing
drizzle
a
moth
struggles
to
take
flight

Kala Ramesh



image and ku: Nalini Shetty

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

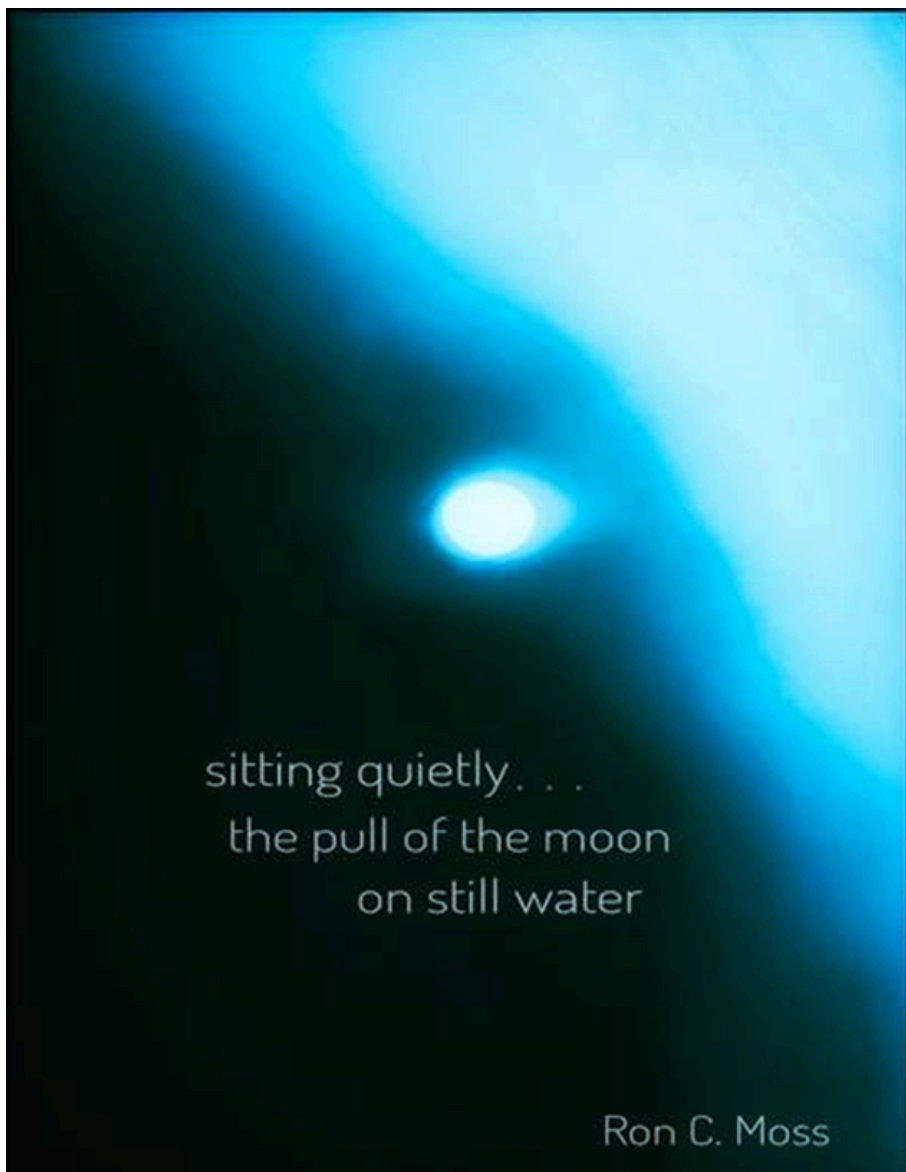


image and ku: Ron C. Moss

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 sleep



Ron C. Moss

image and ku: Ron C. Moss

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

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



image and ku: Ron C. Moss

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

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

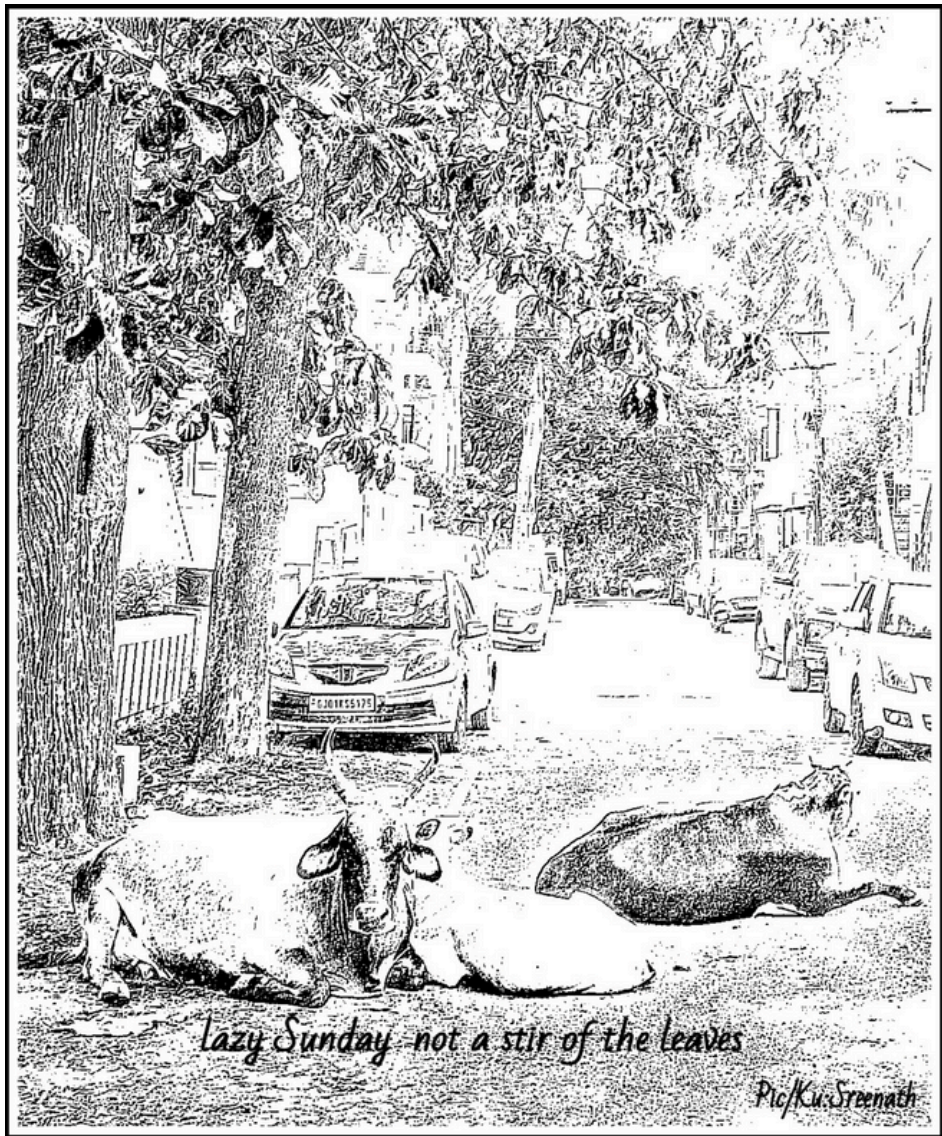
Lorraine Haig

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



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

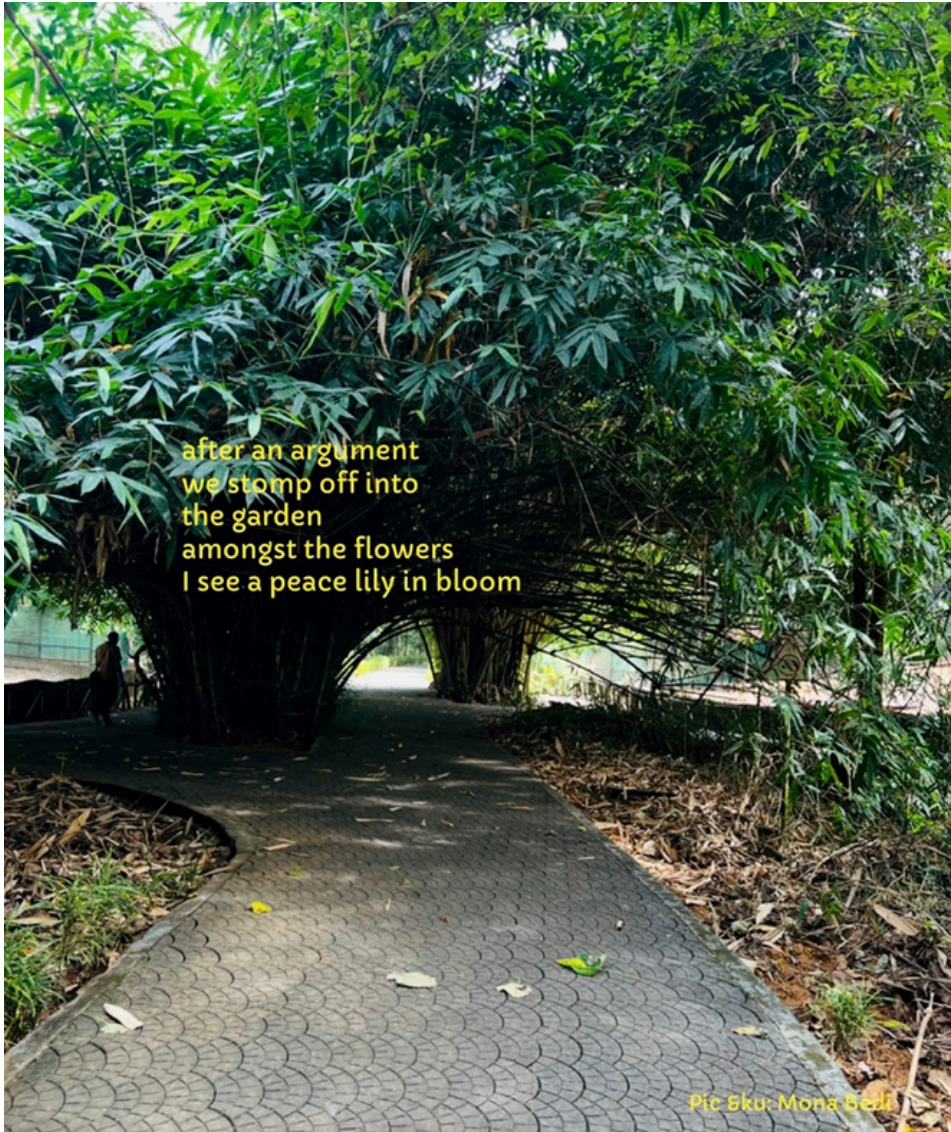
Mohua Maulik

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



after an argument
we stomp off into
the garden
amongst the flowers
I see a peace lily in bloom

Pic & Po: 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

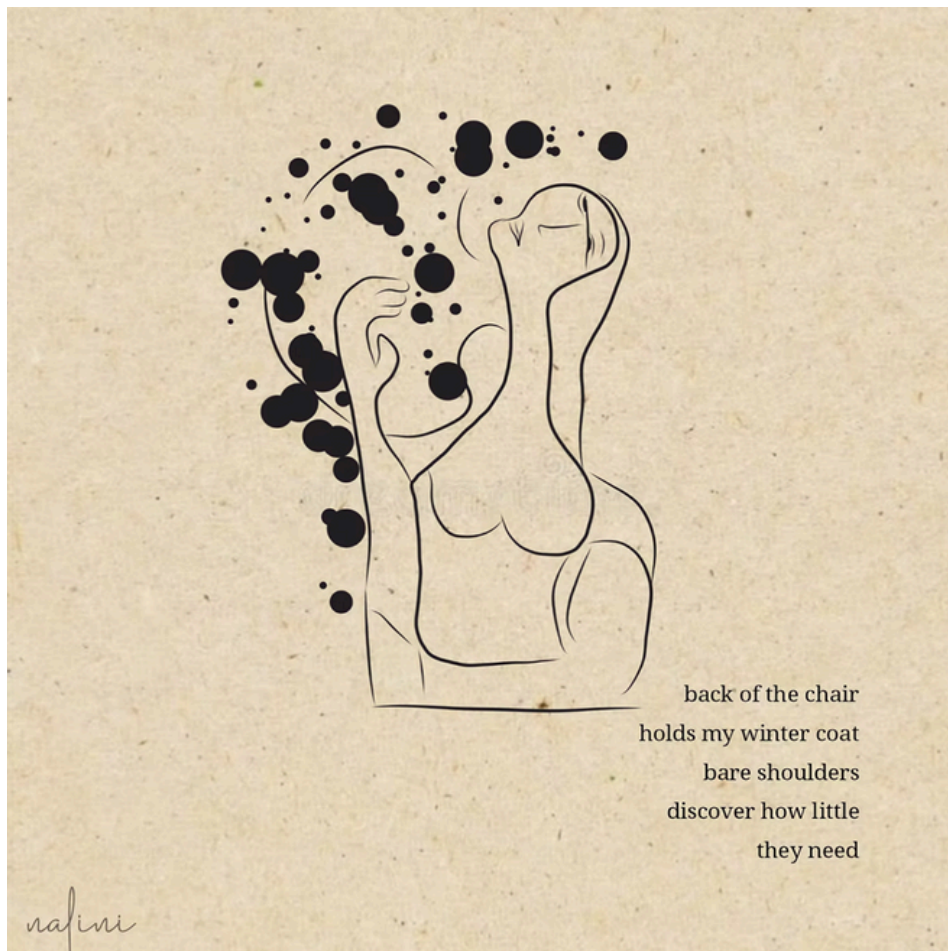
Nitu Yumnam

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



back of the chair
holds my winter coat
bare shoulders
discover how little
they need

nalini

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

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

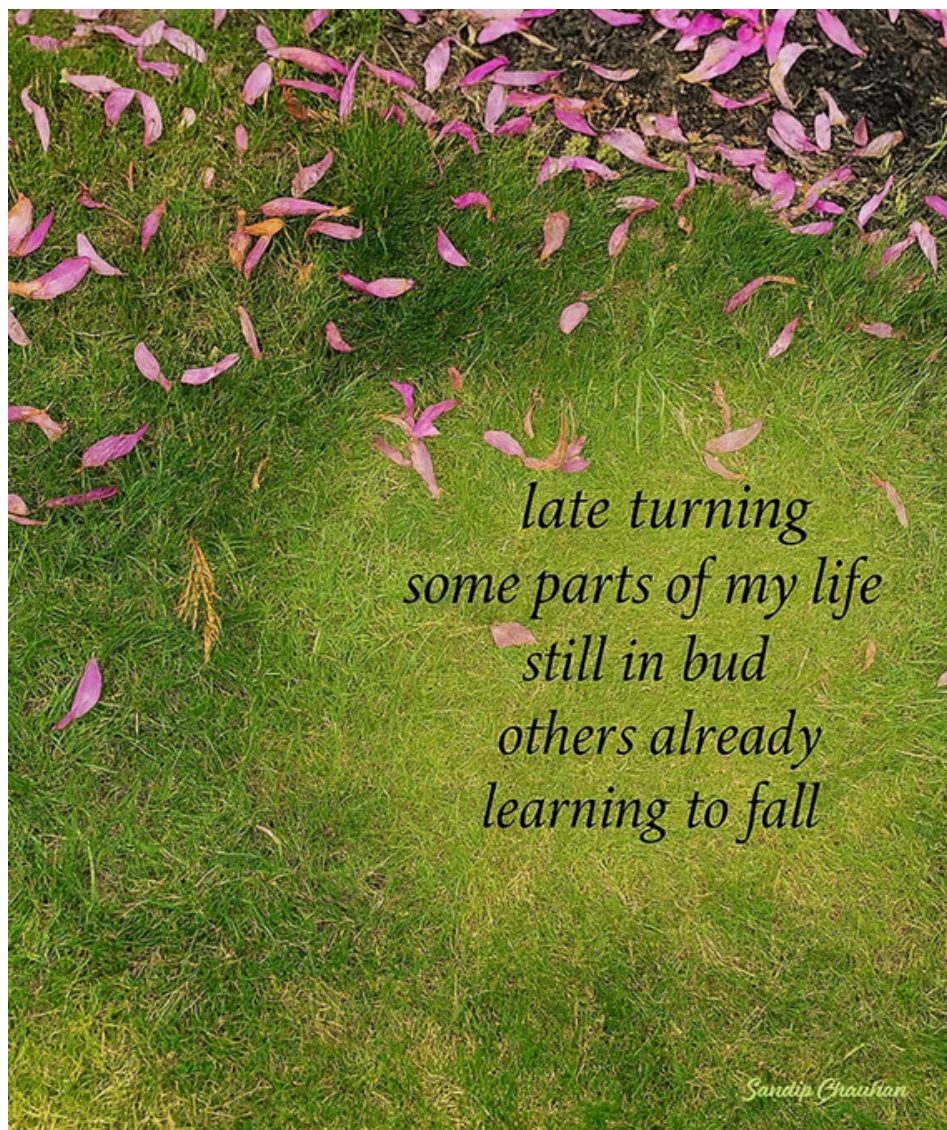
Robert Kingston

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



*late turning
some parts of my life
still in bud
others already
learning to fall*

Sandip Chauhan

Image and tanka: Sandip Chauhan

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

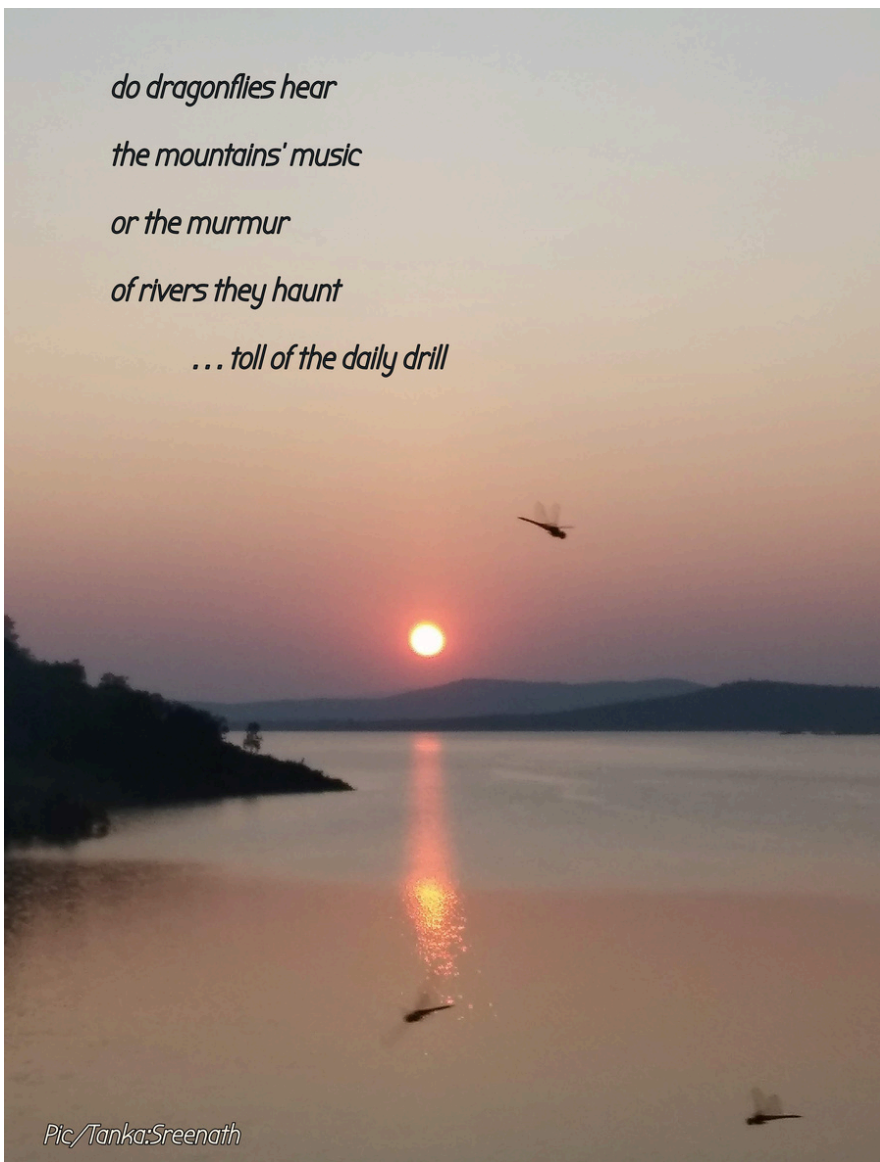
Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

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*