

# haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Prakash Thombre

Issue 53 March 2026

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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

unfolding the story within

Issue 53  
March 2026

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

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Our heartfelt thanks to:

HAIKUsutradhar: Patricia J. Machmiller

haikaiTALKS: Keiko Izawa

Tanka Take Home: Neal Whitman

The Haibun Gallery: K. Ramesh

thinkALONG: Shloka Shankar

,  
for providing the weekly challenges  
for the month of February 2026,

Prakash Thombre  
for his brilliant ink sketch of a couple walking  
into their future,

our contributors  
for sharing their poems.

# **Tejasvat Award**

Triveni Haikai India

Tejasvat in Samskrit means shining bright  
with strength and excellence just like the sun.

The tanka editors,

Firdaus Parvez, Kala Ramesh,

Priti Aisola and Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

are pleased to present

the

## **Tejasvat Award**

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 honour

## **Jacek Margolak**

for his five outstanding tanka and gembun.

# Tejasvat Jacek Margolak

Triveni Haikai India

blizzard warning  
the power goes out  
mid-sentence  
for once we finish  
each other's thoughts

after all these years  
the café hasn't changed  
except  
the chair across from me  
no longer empty

lights out —  
beneath the blanket  
the child's flashlight  
makes a small sun  
and nothing else

# Tejasvat Jacek Margolak

Triveni Haikai India

winter blackout —  
the refrigerator hum  
cut off mid-breath  
outside sirens  
take over the night

gembun:

the blizzard erases the street, the cars, even the steps to our door

whiteout —  
the kettle  
begins to sing  
we draw our chairs closer  
to where the window was

## haiku

first crocus  
the traces of a rake  
in the grass

Alfred Booth

spring dawn —  
moss softens  
the stone steps

Alfred Booth

open only  
for the winter wind  
hilltop shrine

Anju Kishore

shorter days  
walkers slowing down  
on a patch of sun

Anju Kishore

## haiku

shattered bridge  
among ducks  
a drifting helmet

Artur Zielinski

wishing well —  
making do  
with a peach pit

Billie Dee

petrichor ...  
yellow tulips  
cupping the sky

Billie Dee

hailstorm ...  
how easily  
the pond heals

Billie Dee

## haiku

spring again  
father's old ball cap  
a perfect fit

Bryan Rickert

puddle  
at the canal's edge  
winter rain

C.X. Turner

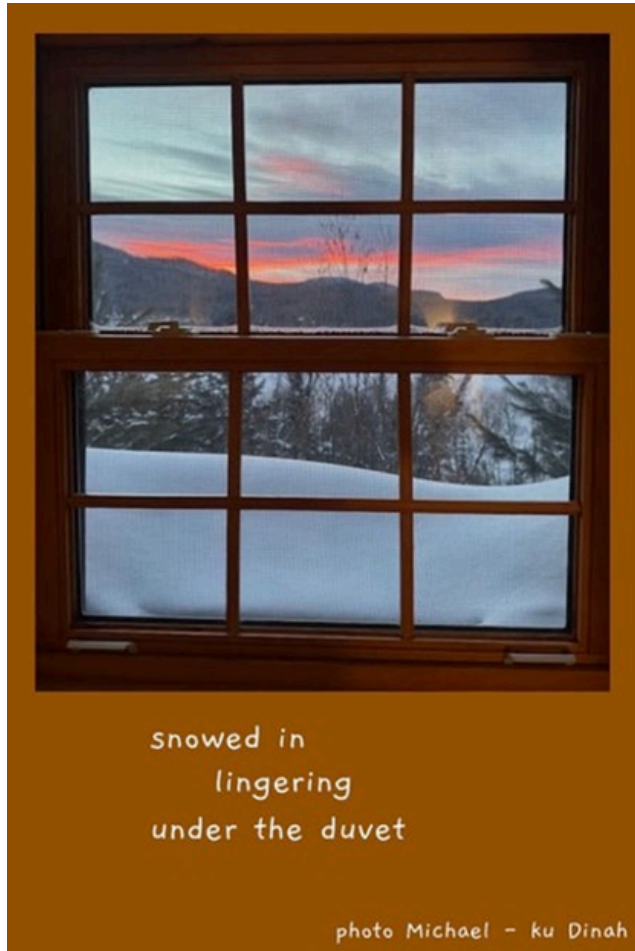
a rusted plow  
among the weeds ...  
late summer

Dinah Power

caged bird —  
I was imprisoned too  
for a single tweet

Fatma Zohra Habis

haiga



snowed in  
lingering  
under the duvet

photo Michael - ku Dinah

## haiku

evening bell  
the frayed pull-rope  
dark with touch

Jacek Margolak

lights out —  
something small  
crosses my pillow

Jacek Margolak

first warm day —  
the garden hose  
coils and uncoils

Jacek Margolak

on the edge  
of dusk  
snowdrops

Joanna Ashwell

## haiku

falling leaves  
the spic-and-span house  
no longer home

Kala Ramesh

signs of spring —  
the harbor benches  
with new boards

Keiko Izawa

spring park  
my breath  
in the girl's rope

Keiko Izawa

hot summer breeze  
the temple elephants  
deep in backwaters

Lakshmi Iyer

## haiku

neighbour's backyard ...  
smell of burnt leaves lingers  
in the folded clothes

Lakshmi Iyer

old friend  
the times we've shared  
since you died

Lev Hart

spring sun  
my birthday already  
in India

Lev Hart

quarry  
broken edges  
blurred with moss

Lorraine Haig

haiga

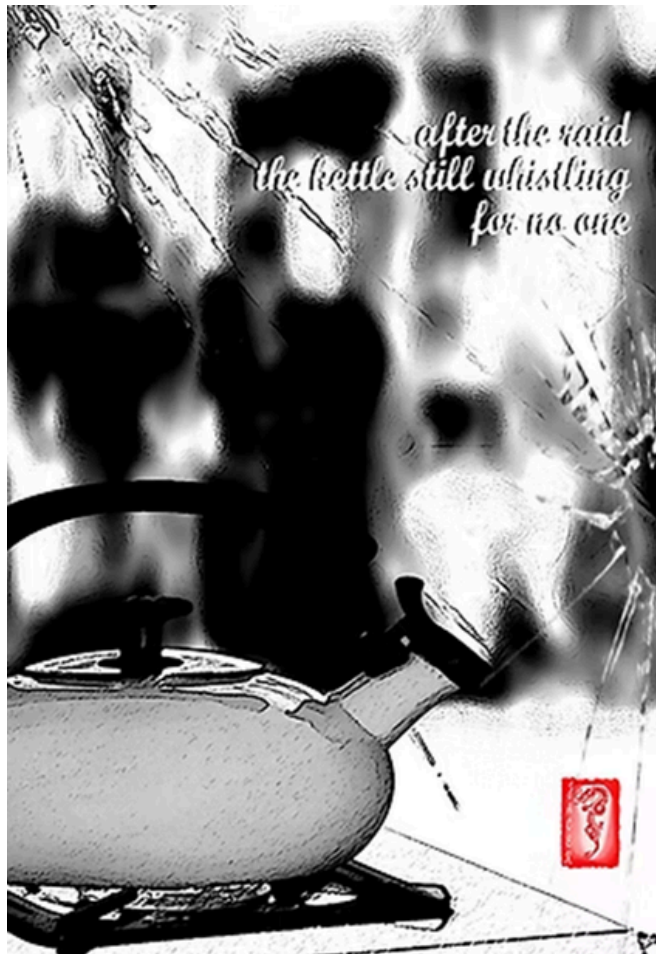


image and ku: Jacek Margolak

## haiku

movie date  
continuous snacking  
on my blood

Mohua Maulik

school picnic  
breadcrumbs scatter  
on summer grass

Mona Bedi

spring break  
the professor's out  
for repairs

Nalini Shetty

family album  
mother's mischievous smile  
I never knew

Padma Rajeswari

haiku

summer heat —  
the old gardener's lunch bag  
on a worn log

Raji Vijayaraghavan

siesta time --  
the waiter's spine  
finding its length

Sandip Chauhan

monsoon morning –  
papers flutter  
in the classroom

Sathya Venkatesh

harvest moon —  
a squirrel turns  
the almond

Sathya Venkatesh

## haiku

whose tongue  
is a richer purple  
jamun pickings

Sumitra Kumar

long ago  
when I felt beautiful  
coral lipstick

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

bitter chill  
a pigeon snuggles  
into a temple niche

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy

haiga



image and ku: Sandip Chauhan

## one-line haiku

picking up our pace a break in the clouds

Bryan Rickert

rain in the child's eyes empty playground

Robert Kingston

as if there's no tomorrow rolling mustard fields

Rupa Anand

if today is all I have wild poppies

susan burch

## concrete haiku

crossing      windshield      cold  
                 the                      sideways      rain

Lev Hart

haiga

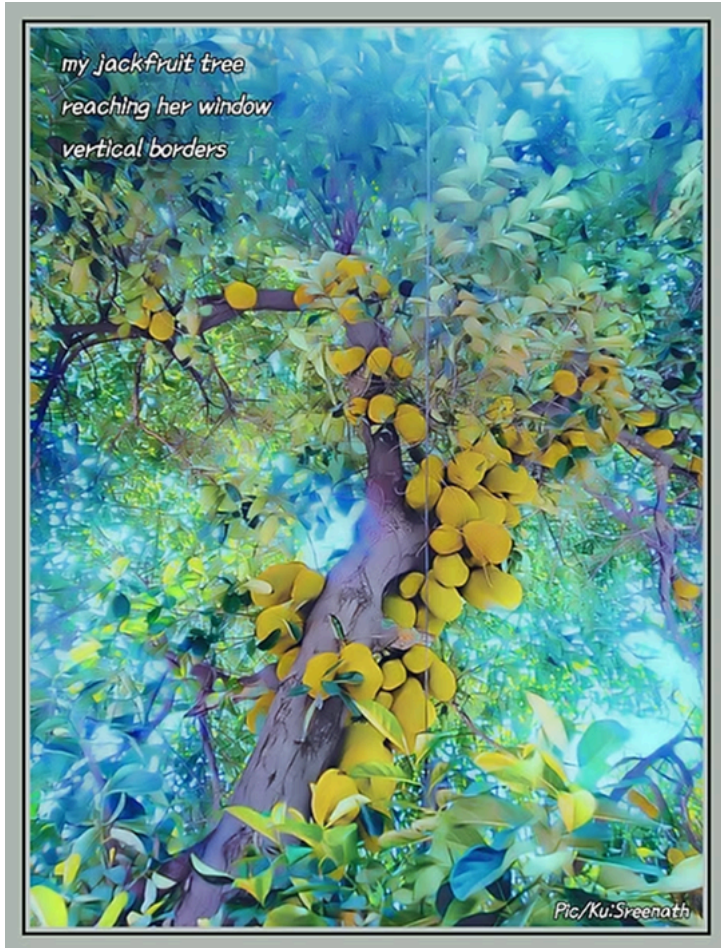


image & ku: Sreenath

tanka

I set the easel  
in a rare patch of dry  
the plains below  
a study in mud water  
and stagnation

Alfred Booth

at the circus  
I am a clown tripping  
on oversized shoes  
yet my heart is with Pierrot  
hiding the tears of my falls

Alfred Booth

I lost the daring  
of that bright pink shirt  
one day a friend  
gave me an orange scarf  
and that youthful me returned

Alfred Booth

tanka

a bag of old letters  
sits in the back  
of my cupboard;  
perhaps they'll remind me  
how i was once loved

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

watching the swans  
glide about the lake  
as the sky turns purple,  
i finally let out the sigh  
i didn't know i was holding

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

walking into  
an empty apartment  
with a single light on ...  
this is what I couldn't  
wait to grow up for?

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

tanka

tear upon tear  
Mozart's Lacrimosa  
falling like quiet rain  
I used to carry others' sorrow  
as if it were my own

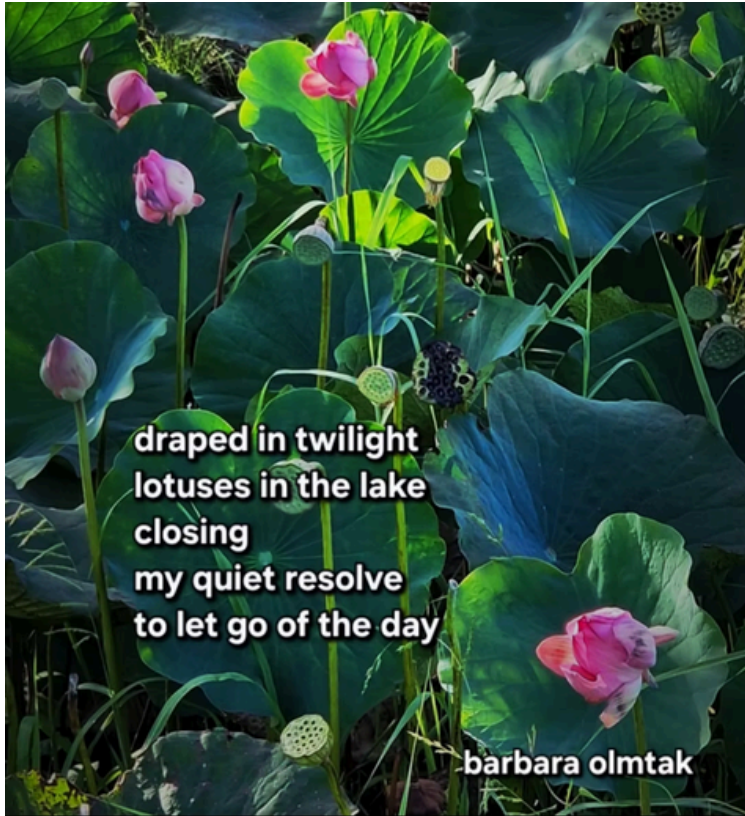
Barbara Olmtak

first mosquito  
a tinge of remorse  
in the crimson  
smear on my bare arm,  
..... .... and yet ...

Billie Dee

a thousand starlings  
all looking the same  
in this big world  
knowing there is nothing  
special about me

Bryan Rickert



draped in twilight  
lotuses in the lake  
closing  
my quiet resolve  
to let go of the day

barbara olmtak

tanka

a talisman  
from ninety years ago...  
the four-leaf clover  
mom carried down the aisle  
inside her satin shoe

Cherie Hunter Day

hospital bracelet  
cut from my wrist  
home again  
plates rimmed with dried milk  
along the counter

C.X. Turner

rhubarb crowns  
invisible under frost  
moonlit soil  
I know where they are  
without needing to see

C.X. Turner

tanka

birds flock  
and fish school  
i stand alone  
my childhood  
shaped me so

Dinah Power

awake in the wee hours  
to toss and turn  
pupils widen  
i stumble to the kitchen  
for an edible that soothes

Dinah Power

blizzard warning  
the power goes out  
mid-sentence  
for once we finish  
each other's thoughts

Jacek Margolak

tanka

after all these years  
the café hasn't changed  
except  
the chair across from me  
no longer empty

Jacek Margolak

lights out —  
beneath the blanket  
the child's flashlight  
makes a small sun  
and nothing else

Jacek Margolak

winter blackout —  
the refrigerator hum  
cut off mid-breath  
outside sirens  
take over the night

Jacek Margolak



tanka

troubled  
by the day's happenings  
I sit with the river  
the ripples  
          the ripples  
Kala Ramesh

scrambling  
for scattered beads  
from my necklace  
I wish I could gather  
careless words just as fast

Kala Ramesh

the little one  
asks me my name  
this wish to tell her  
one day only the name remains  
all else will pass

Kalyanee Arandhara

tanka

that picture  
of a solitary hut  
in the jungle  
oh this urge to leave all  
and be with myself alone

Kalyanee Arandhara

the sun beating down  
on my bare arms  
at the gate  
grandma arrives sans glasses  
and says *go away salesgirl!*

Kanjini Devi

the density  
of your dark mood  
so relentless  
even a child's laughter  
recedes into a corner

Kanjini Devi

tanka

I was told  
to hold back my words  
in a joint family  
their glances follow my shadow  
at lightning speed

Lakshmi Iyer

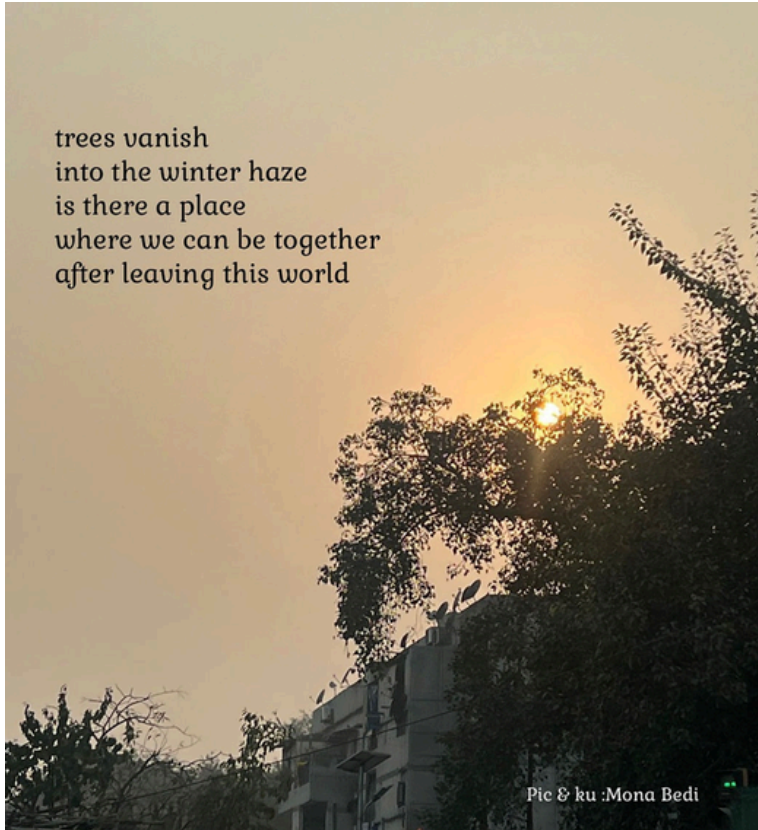
we watch  
climbers transverse  
the pitch  
in a serpentine line  
...shifting colours

Marilyn Humbert

late summer  
in the cooling air  
cicadas  
chittering grows softer...  
your cough intensifies

Marilyn Humbert

trees vanish  
into the winter haze  
is there a place  
where we can be together  
after leaving this world



Pic & ku :Mona Bedi

tanka

in hot water  
the rising tea leaves create  
an amber pool  
in these uncertain times  
i turn to tasseography

Mohua Maulik

bats dart  
about the pipal tree  
at midnight  
my fears sprout  
wings and fangs

Mohua Maulik

mating dance  
of black-necked cranes  
by the sangti river  
once again we come close  
to parting ways over nothing

Mohua Maulik

tanka

dust gathers  
on kitchen shelves  
in our empty nest  
cupboards full of cereal boxes  
past their expiry date

Mona Bedi

three days of rain  
the fungus on the wall  
advances boldly  
at least something here  
thrives without effort

Nalini Shetty

power outage  
the ceiling fan slows to a sigh  
in thick heat  
moving our chairs to the porch  
we borrow the wind

Nalini Shetty

tanka

what's love  
after years together —  
wrinkled hands  
still finding each other  
in the dark

Nitu Yumnam

my husband's selfie  
with a blue-eyed lass  
how soon  
the moon dims  
to nothing

Padma Rajeswari

this home  
houses layer upon layer  
of memories ...  
the crevices of its facade  
encrusted with dirt

Priti Aisola

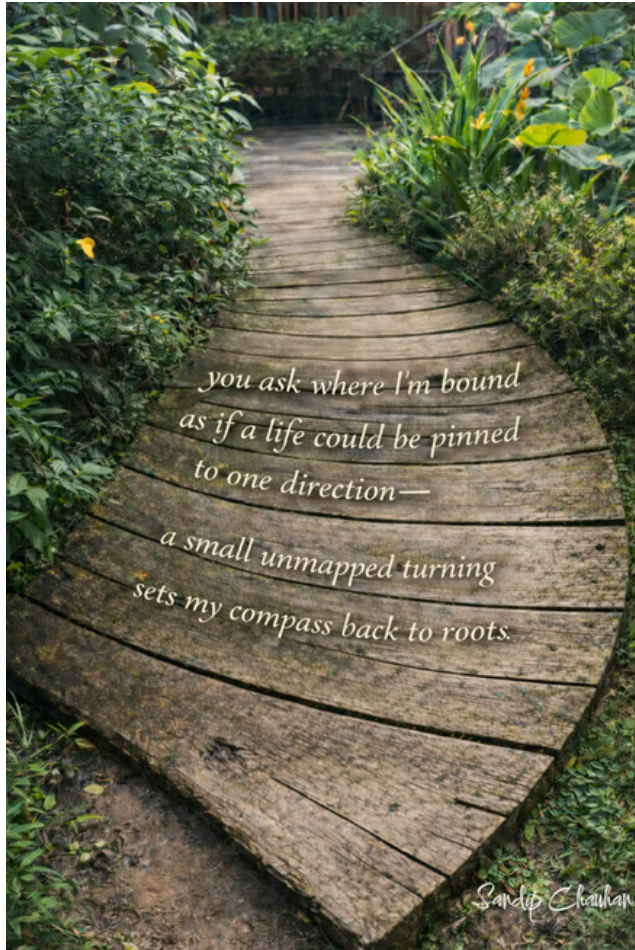


image & ku: Sandip Chauhan

tanka

the fragrance lingers  
long after the vetiver incense  
is just ash ...  
savouring the stillness  
though you are gone

Priti Aisola

waking up  
i walk around in the dark  
your presence  
is an essence  
lighting up our hours

Raji Vijayaraghavan

piercing  
rustle of pines —  
a midnight paean  
overwriting  
lost love

Rashmi Buragohain

tanka

a recording  
of forty-four days of rain  
the same  
distorted puddle holds  
a passing moment

Robert Kingston

between counting  
calories and steps  
he reels off health tips  
to his parents  
well past eighty

Sathya Venkatesh

desert cactus  
holding last night's rain...  
even this abrasive me  
keeps a little kindness  
deep within

Sathya Venkatesh

tanka

with no one around  
she lives without complaint  
extending warmth...  
honey flows on  
from an empty hive

Sathya Venkatesh

buried  
under snow drifts  
amber leaves  
my inner child thaws  
to build a snowman

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

copper vessels —  
toys from my childhood  
when we played  
under umbrella houses  
that leaked laughter

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury



tanka

is it the moon  
shrouded at my window  
on this icy night  
wondering if i should  
let the stranger be

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

for the heartache  
I've caused you  
I'm sorry  
I can't put the lava  
back in the volcano

susan burch

bleeding again  
from an open wound  
how can I heal  
when you keep picking  
at the scab

susan burch

tanka

scorching summer –  
the sun-kissed laughter  
of children  
folds into layers  
of dried mango pulp

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy



C.X. Turner

When Night Was A Place

The power cut comes just after four. One click, and the house folds into itself. The windows turn to mirrors; the garden disappears. I stand still long enough to hear the small sounds return — the tick of cooling pipes, a car passing beyond the hedge, my own breath slowing into rhythm.

In the dark, edges soften. The unfinished washing on the chair gathers into a low form, as if the room has begun rearranging its own distances. The hallway opens — a cave mouth holding the day's last warmth. I am suddenly a child during storms, when night felt almost touchable, as if the world had weight and I was held inside it. Glow-in-the-dark stars pressed into the ceiling above my bed.

When the lights do not come back straight away, I light a candle. It does not flicker, only breathes. Shadows climb the walls, leaf-shaped from the spider plant at the sink, until the cupboards recede and the ceiling lifts. For a moment, I am standing in a forest that remembers being a kitchen. I try to keep still, but the quiet keeps rearranging itself.

Outside, winter presses its long palm to the glass. Somewhere under the ground, bulbs divide quietly, working by feel.

blankets tent the air  
torchlight builds a private sky  
dust turning to stars  
I lie awake, only watching  
the dark ease back like a door

Joanna Ashwell  
~

### A Thousand Apologies

The porch has already left the ground, riding through the storm. A loose plank lands here and there. One flattens a whole crop, another scatters a herd. The pictures that were straight on the wall, now fly corner to corner, shattering, scattering the family apart.

The old sofa has seen better days, but no matter, it's now left through a window, deposited downriver with an upturned boat. The curtains really needed airing but now they are upstanding within their own thermals. A favour really for laundry day. Those books that needed clearing have found a way into the chimney, at least the fire wasn't burning. The ornaments that we inherited have mercifully smashed and are now much improved. I always wondered what it meant to fly, now I have left a bit of a mess in the tornado's wake.

close your eyes  
and click three times  
perhaps it's not as bad  
the sky is clearing  
ready for a new day

Joanna Ashwell  
~

Flocking

Which type would I be? A charm of finches bewitching the dawn, waxwings foraging this way and that through the winter months or perhaps a wader paddling on the fringe of an estuary, a long-tailed tit entertaining a household through the falling autumn dusk, or will I ruffle the walker with my raucous chatter in a bold strike of corvids, or the sweep of a murmuration meshing the sky in a spectacular display? I'll leave a card with space for each choice.

sometimes this curve  
so heavy in my back  
this weight of wings  
I borrow a note and a feather  
from each avian charm

Mona Bedi  
~

The Empty Space

I have just lost my sister.  
Grief arrives in many forms.  
Some mornings, it is endless tears.  
Some afternoons, a long-unbroken silence.  
I open old albums and trace her smile with my fingers.  
There are days I choose solitude.  
I listen to sad songs ... and cry again.  
And in the quiet that follows, I write.

peeling paint  
on our ancestral house —  
now lost in time  
the anecdotes we once  
scribbled on old walls

## tanka-prose

Mona Bedi  
~

Before the End

The Haridwar Ghat is teeming with people. An old man holding a brass urn is quietly sitting in a corner. On the steps descending to the Ganges, a family of four sobs onto one another's shoulders. Tourists — mostly foreigners — stand, clicking pictures of those gathered for asthi visarjan.

A pandit approaches me and, in a businesslike manner, asks, "Any last rites to be performed?"

I open my backpack and take out my sister's remains.

a familiar wind  
blows across town  
is it your scent  
or just the frangipani  
in bloom

Nalini Shetty  
~

Inventory

I arrive from the airport in a hired car. The old lanes have widened into expressways; flyovers lift the city out of reach. Nothing is where I remember it. The driver follows a map while I try to follow what remains and fail.

The house stands at the end of the street, smaller than before. The mango tree has been cut back; the gate repainted a startling blue. Inside, a film of dust. Cobwebs gather in the ceiling corners, stitching wall to wall. On the dining table a brown envelope waits, property papers held beneath a shell-shaped paperweight. I note what is visible — deed, passbook, keys — and what resists accounting.

She looks at me with a visitor's courtesy and asks my name. Somewhere in the house a pressure cooker whistles. I move from room to room checking damp patches, a cracked tile, the slow leak beneath the sink. I wait for something to rise — regret, tenderness, anger — but what comes is quieter, almost blank.

back after years  
the sea keeps arriving  
without fail  
I place my palm in hers  
and feel only her bones

## tanka-prose

Nalini Shetty  
~

### Last Showing

The cinema at the end of the street is closing. This afternoon a man in a faded uniform peeled letters from the marquee, one by one, until the title no longer held together. A few people still went inside, sitting through a film whose ending no one needed to be told.

empty lobby  
a strip of carpet  
paler  
where the queue  
once stood

## tanka-prose

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy



Claustrophobia

Placing your canvas under an incandescent bulb, you paint your portrait in shades of grey. No palette, no colours. Just monochrome, flat, in two-dimensional brush-strokes. Heavy, dull and dark. Walls struggle to breathe in this stagnant heat of nicotine, as you call me in, your fingers curling around my wrist . . .

curls of smoke  
rising from your lips  
Vantablack  
saturating my lungs  
with cold residue

## tanka-prose

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy  
~

### Green Light

In 1985, my cousin received a silicon Gloworm for her fifth birthday, a toy that felt rare then, almost charmed. At night, she would darken the room and lift it toward me, its radiance breathing softly in her hands. We played often, but I learned early not to ask for it. She guarded that glow as if it were part of her.

night deepens —  
thought takes on colour  
inch by inch  
children discover  
what cannot be held

The Gloworm disappeared one night. Drawers were emptied, beds overturned; the house returned nothing. For weeks, my cousin cried herself into sleep, calling for it in dreams, as though the dark might answer.

a night's hush  
elongates into years —  
i lie awake  
guilt, a green shimmer  
under radium light

gembun with tanka

Jacek Margolak  
~

the blizzard erases the street, the cars, even the steps to our door

whiteout —  
the kettle  
begins to sing  
we draw our chairs closer  
to where the window was

## gembun with tanka

Mona Bedi  
~

DNR\*

that moment  
when the breath dies  
the light fades  
she is reborn  
in a different world

\*Do not resuscitate

Dear Readers  
thank you for being with us.

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

Team: *haikuKATHA*