

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Priti Aisola

We turn 50 today!
"We don't grow older, we grow riper."
—Pablo Picasso

Issue 50 December 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 50
December 2025

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

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CONTENTS

Editor's Choice Commentary: by Suraja Menon Roychowdhury 1-2

Editor's Choice: tanka by Bryan Rickert

haiku

Alfred Booth 3
Anjali Warhadpande
Ashish Narain

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt 4
Barrie Levine
Billie Dee
Bryan Rickert

haiga by Kala Ramesh 5

Bryan Rickert 6
C.X. Turner
Fatma Zohra Habis
Geetha Ravichandran

Geetha Ravichandran 7
Joanna Ashwell
K. Ramesh

haiga by Marilyn Ashbaugh 8

Kanjini Devi 9
Lakshmi Iyer
Leena Anandhi
Lorraine Haig

CONTENTS

Marilyn Ashbaugh 10
Meera Rehm
Milan Rajkumar

haiga by Marilyn Ashbaugh 11

Nalini Shetty 12
Raji Vijayaraghavan
Robert Kingston

Sandip Chauhan 13
Srinivasa Rao Sambangi
Sumitra Kumar
Vaishnavi Ramaswamy

haiga by Milan Rajkumar 14

one-line haiku

Radhamani Sharma 15
Ron C. Moss
susan burch

concrete haiku

Kala Ramesh 16

haiga by Nalini Shetty 17

CONTENTS

tanka

Alfred Booth 18
Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

Barbara Anna Gaiardoni 19
Barbara Olmtak
Bryan Rickert

C.X. Turner 20
Cynthia Bale
Dinah Power

haiga by Ron C. Moss 21

Florence Heyhoe 22
Geetha Ravichandran

Gowri Bhargav 23
Kala Ramesh

Kala Ramesh 24
Kanjini Devi

haiga by Sankara Jayant Sudanagunta 25

Kanjini Devi 26
Marilyn Humbert

Mona Bedi 27
Nalini Shetty

CONTENTS

Nitu Yumnam Padma Priya Priti Aisola	28
haiga by Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta	29
Priti Aisola Raji Vijayaraghavan Reid Hepworth	30
Reid Hepworth Robert Kingston	31
Robert Kingston Sandip Chauhan Sangita Kalarickal	32
tanka-art by Kala Ramesh	33
Suraja Menon Roychowdhury susan burch Tejendra Sherchan	34
tanka-art by Sreenath	35
tanka prose	
<i>Willard's Creek</i> by Billie Dee	36
<i>Before the Wave Breaks</i> by C. X. Turner	37
<i>The Yellow Brick Road</i> by Florence Heyhoe	38
<i>Pebbles</i> by Joanna Ashwell	39
<i>Time and Space</i> by Mohua Maulik	40

CONTENTS

<i>Continuum</i> by Mona Bedi	41
<i>Cusp</i> by Nalini Shetty	42
<i>Street Dust</i> by Nalini Shetty	43
<i>Tinned Delight</i> by Nalini Shetty	44
<i>Blithe Spirit</i> by Vaishnavi Ramaswamy	45

Our heartfelt thanks to:

Billie Dee, Gauri Dixit,
Neena Singh, Reid Hepworth,
Mohua Malik
and C.X. Turner,

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

Priti Aisola
for her powerful ink sketch of the shaheen falcon,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Editors' Choice Commentary: by Suraja Menon Roychowdhury
Editor's Choice: tanka by Bryan Rickert

putting another
seed in the ground
I pat the earth
saying a little prayer
for both our sakes

— Bryan Rickert

The year is drawing to a close, and it becomes a time for reflection, prayer, and hope. A quiet moment, when we slow down and return to *being*, rather than constantly *doing*. To me, Bryan's deceptively simple tanka captures that moment of stillness.

Here is an ordinary moment between the poet and the earth. He has just planted another seed in the ground and has paused to pray *for himself and for the earth*. The mention of another seed suggests this is part of an ongoing activity, something that has been done before, the cyclical rhythm of planting, nurturing, and harvesting. Or perhaps this is a new crop he is planting. Either way, he wants to give it his best shot. There is hope, perseverance and a belief in new beginnings — a literal and metaphorical seed containing the whole within itself.

L3 is a tender line. *I pat the earth*. There is a gentleness in this action, a sense of ritual and blessing. Is the poet blessing the earth? Thanking the earth for nurturing him? Or is he placating the earth? An apology? After all, we humans seem to leave no stone unturned (pun intended) with our greed and exploitation of natural resources. And the earth roars back with floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other natural calamities.

Perhaps this is why the poet then says '*a little prayer for both our sakes*'. A small prayer, the seed takes root and sprouts, and there is a harvest. That the seed of hope still alive in the human heart is nourished and can flourish. Or perhaps a prayer of penance for the ongoing wrongs, with perhaps a pledge to do better next year. Beseeking the earth to be kind, to continue nourishing, to contain her rages. *This is a prayer for coexistence.*

A seed was planted five years ago, with prayers for the birth, growth, and sustenance of this wonderful organization, trivenihaikai.in, and its collective voice, embodied by this precious journal of poetry. The 50th edition of *haikuKATHA* is a proud moment for us to pause, reflect, and say a prayer for its continued success.

haiku

how it dims
into a memory
autumn light

Alfred Booth

café au lait
will there be enough snow
for my footprints?

Alfred Booth

sunset shadows
the long
and short of it

Anjali Warhadpande

dressed for travel
four geese
so close to the sky

Ashish Narain

haiku

persistent flies ...
I refuse to share my sweet
with my brothers

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

pebbles in a pail ...
the neighbor's kids
invent a soup

Barrie Levine

Thanksgiving Day
nobody prays
for the turkey

Billie Dee

the prison bars
of long tree shadows
these shorter days

Bryan Rickert

haiga

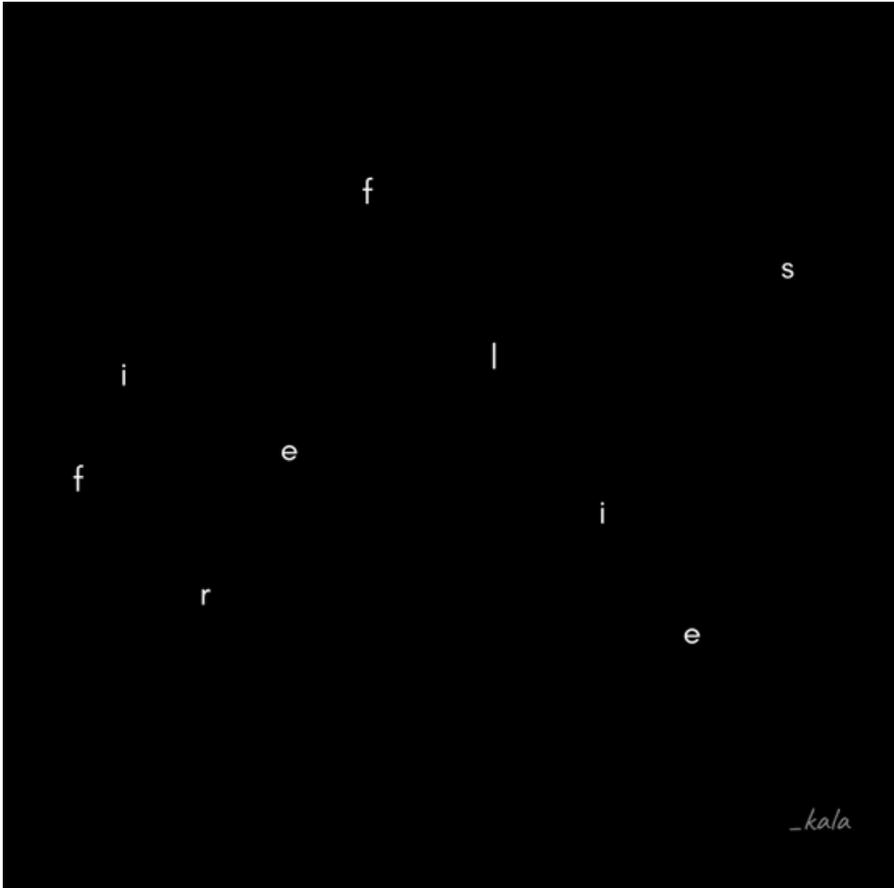


image and ku: Kala Ramesh

haiku

autumn leaves
what color will I be
upon dying?

Bryan Rickert

first heatwave
a garden ant wrestling
the cherry stone

C.X. Turner

choosing the broken conch
abandoned by others
early autumn

Fatma Zohra Habis

still lake
shadows of trees
plumb the depths

Geetha Ravichandran

haiku

drenched
under an umbrella
two giggling faces

Geetha Ravichandran

a space
to simply be
starlight

Joanna Ashwell

houses at the foothill ...
the voice of someone
calling another

K. Ramesh

old songs of Illayaraja ...
I settle down
in the salon chair

K. Ramesh

haiga

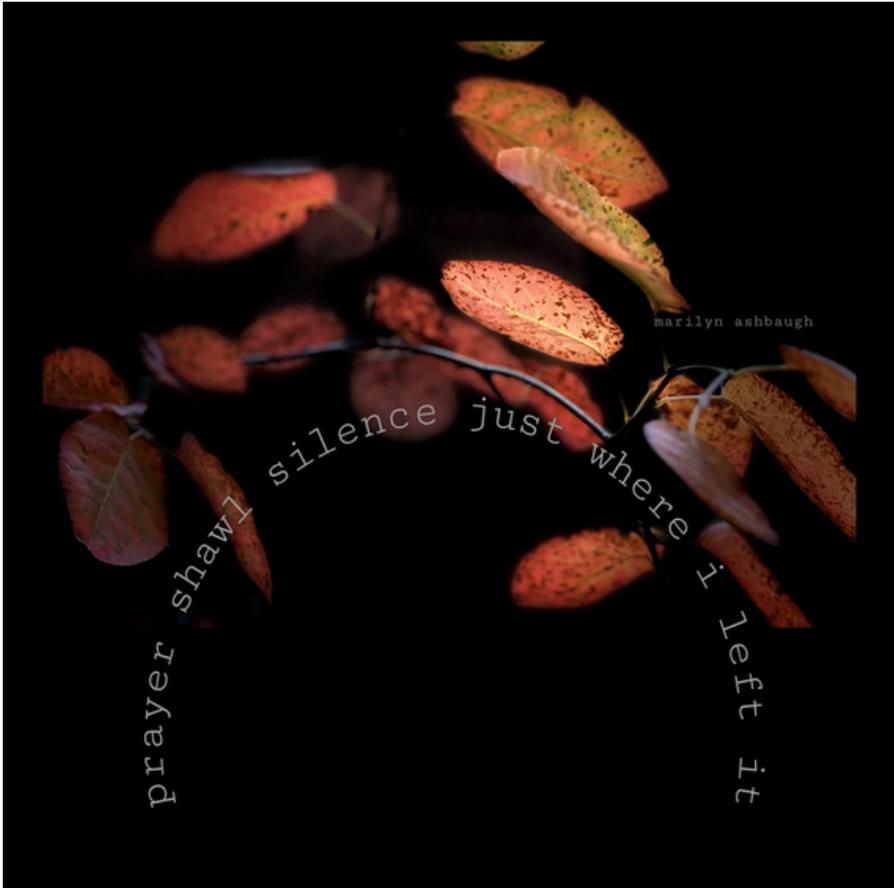


image and ku: Marilyn Ashbaugh

haiku

elephant grass
the row of sparrows
on one blade

Kanjini Devi

winter begins
the shape of a crow's beak
in a fallen papaya

Lakshmi Iyer

muted sun
the mustard field
in full bloom

Leena Anandhi

overnight snow
footprints circle back
to the fox

Lorraine Haig

haiku

anniversary
a handful of pine needles
rekindles the flame

Marilyn Ashbaugh

evening snowfall
a steaming plate of rice
for one

Meera Rehm

autumn evening
stacking cow-dung sticks
near the stove

Milan Rajkumar

first snowflakes
the postman passes by
leaving a track

Milan Rajkumar

haiga



image and ku: Marilyn Ashbaugh

haiku

thinning light
what we don't say
grows roots

Nalini Shetty

fresh burdock
the terrier arrives
with half the field

Nalini Shetty

misty morning
the sound of spring
in the waterfall

Raji Vijayaraghavan

notched doorpost
grandma returns
to her age twelve height

Robert Kingston

haiku

frosted field
a wagon of lights
tethered by the reins

Sandip Chauhan

monsoon rain
a boy changes the tune
with a bucket

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

a plastic bag
on the flower seller's head
autumn rain

Sumitra Kumar

autumn damp
a squirrel watches me
scurry home

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy



winter evening
the fisherman catches
a teal's fading whistle

milan rajkumar

one-line haiku

echoing his thrombosis night bridge

Radhamani Sarma

walking with grief the rain is everywhere

Ron C. Moss

Botox-ic

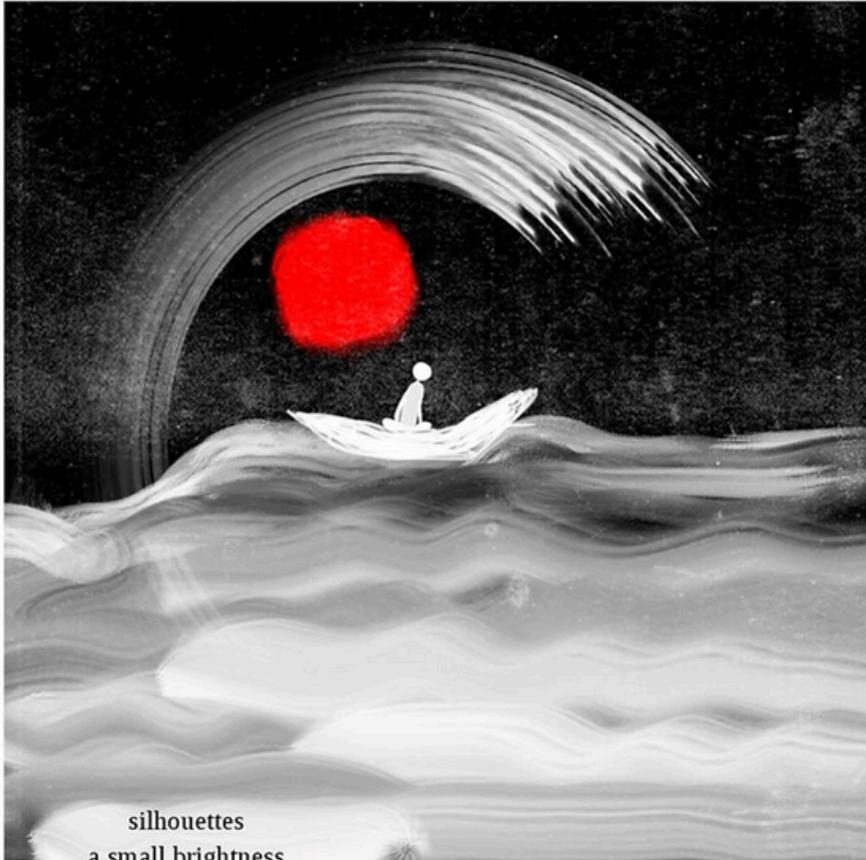
Susan Burch

concrete haiku

dust
devils
rising
 sounds
of
 oohs
and
 ahs

Kala Ramesh

haiga



silhouettes
a small brightness
between them

nalini

image and ku: Nalini Shetty

tanka

mixing enough paint
for an evening still-life
of lavender
tomorrow the waning light
may contain more blue

Alfred Booth

when we go out
mum holds my arm
these days
how different the geography
of her hands

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

she waits
for his snores
before going to the kitchen
to feed her feelings —
this nightly ritual

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

tanka

vegan dinner
I settled for a slice
of cabbage
small gestures
of kindness

Barbara Anna Gaiardoni

after the diagnosis
left with worries
how fragile life
a winter tree trembling
under the restless wind

Barbara Olmtak

putting another
seed in the ground
I pat the earth
saying a little prayer
for both our sakes

Bryan Rickert

tanka

burnt incense
and morning rain —
I learn
how beauty stays
by leaving

C.X. Turner

under this book's
illuminated letters
fish scale glue
ties the gold to the Gospel:
the unseen sacrifices

Cynthia Bale

in winter's frost
increasing shades of grey
a change from
the black and white
of youth

Dinah Power

haiga



image and ku: Ron C. Moss

tanka

once more
my foot in a rock pool
such clear water ...
and yet the truth of things
not always visible

Florence Heyhoe

the song
she always sings
at family gatherings
a single bloom
on our rose bush

Geetha Ravichandran

peering at the newspaper
through her glasses
at ninety- four
mother arms herself
for electoral debates

Geetha Ravichandran

tanka

yet again
i bookmark the page
with the wilted rose —
that chapter never
ends for me

Gowri Bhargav

the iron gate
 opening
and closing
wings of a butterfly
each pulse beckons the quiet

Kala Ramesh

the light
from an earthen lamp glows
till the oil runs out ...
for years mother's been praying
for a peaceful end

Kala Ramesh

tanka

that note
before the songbird
is lost
in the cacophony ...
I carry the tune home

Kala Ramesh

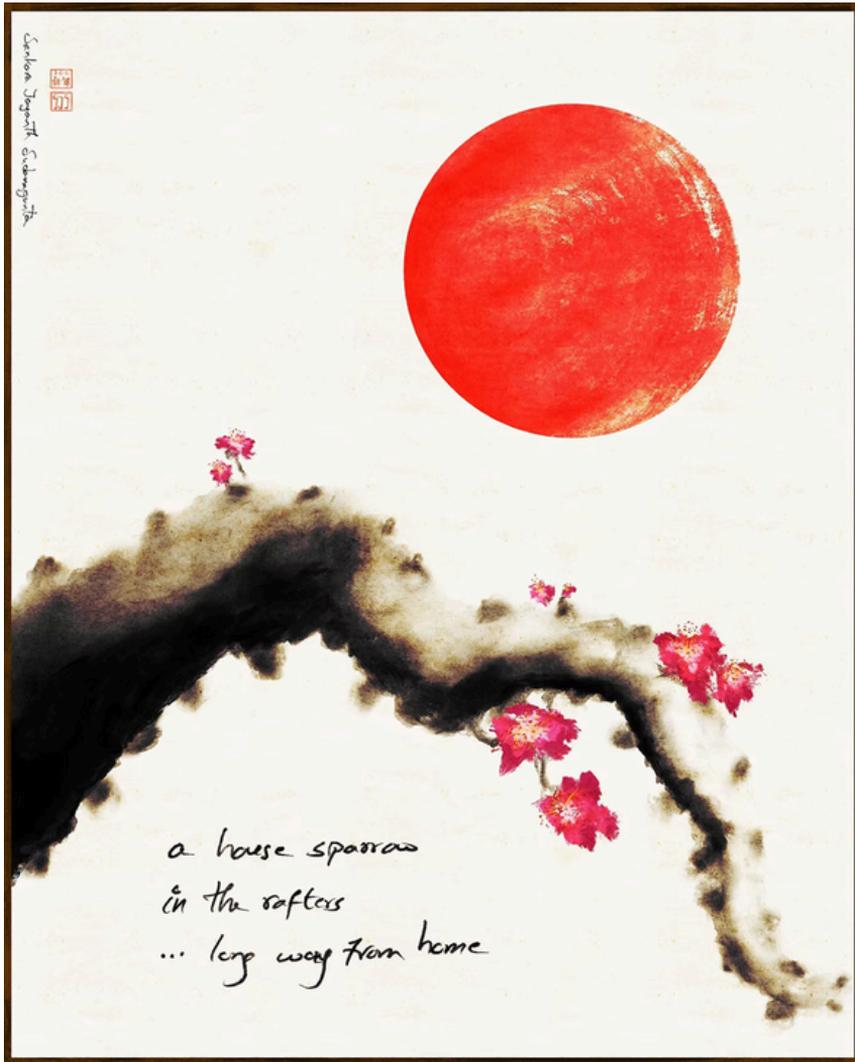
mountains
shrouded in mist
while I wait
the tap-tap of a blackbird
smashing shells

Kanjini Devi

vintage teapot ...
all the gifts not enough
to substitute
the careless handling
of my heart

Kanjini Devi

haiga



a house sparrow
in the rafters
... long way from home

image and ku: Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta

tanka

the older I get
the simpler my reasons
for joy
rescued hens in sunshine
sandbathing

Kanjini Devi

a king tide
undercuts the foundations
of our home
teetering on the edge ...
we discuss divorce

Marilyn Humbert

sailing
the narrow straits
of this marriage ...
cliffs on either side
cast long shadows

Marilyn Humbert

tanka

frost moon peeks
through the cracked skylight
season after season
I nurse the slow healing ache
of my broken dreams

Mona Bedi

the day ends
without resolution
again
I turn the last page
without really reading

Nalini Shetty

autumn wardrobe
I keep the red scarf
you bought me
for the days
that need colour

Nalini Shetty

tanka

a button
between your fingers
how tenderly
you hold
the broken parts of me

Nitu Yumnam

I invent stories
like *Scheherazade*
every day ...
howling white
this winter storm

Padma Priya

a lavender kurta
and dabs of lavender water
on her cheeks ...
sometimes this is all it takes
to soften the day's creases

Priti Aisola

haiga

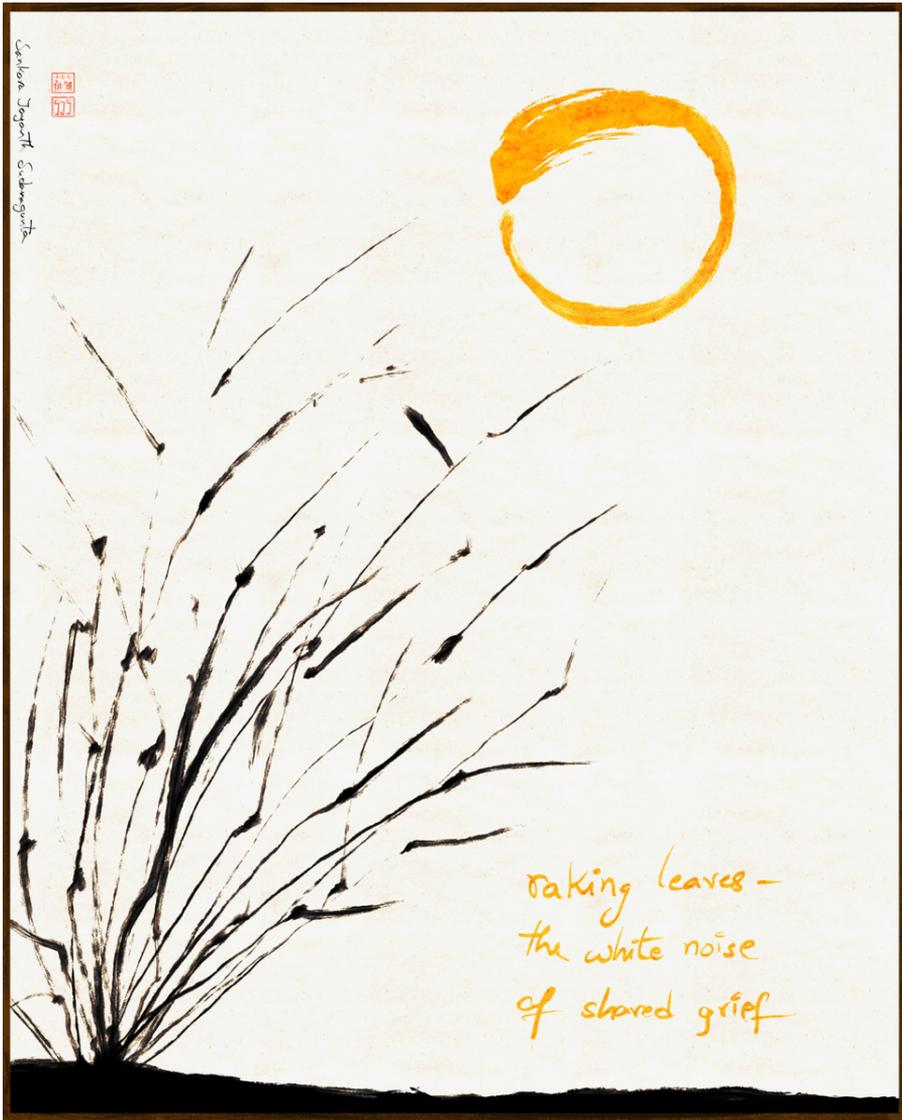


image and ku: Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta

tanka

dry branches snap
in a sudden summer wind ...
seeking wholeness
I dismantle the neat pile
of father's shirts

Priti Aisola

the white
pages of our life
filling up
with the few syllables
you add to our quiet bond

Raji Vijayaraghavan

what kind of sorcery
is this, you weave words
out of thin air
place them in my heart
and leave me craving more

Reid Hepworth

tanka

the trees know
the snow is too early
and like me
they will hang on
to the bitter end

Reid Hepworth

drifting home
the sea shanty
in full flow
a hammerhead's fin
appears to disappear

Robert Kingston

weaving through
the yew tree maze
I spend the morning
questioning possibilities
at each dead end

Robert Kingston

tanka

a pirouette
is all it takes
I am back home
among the dockside cranes
dancing in the rain

Robert Kingston

in better days
I rose before sunrise
to meet the tide —
now I sit by the window
waiting for its sound

Sandip Chauhan

winter fog
settles deep
into the skin
how cold the ice walls
that form around our hearts

Sangita Kalarickal

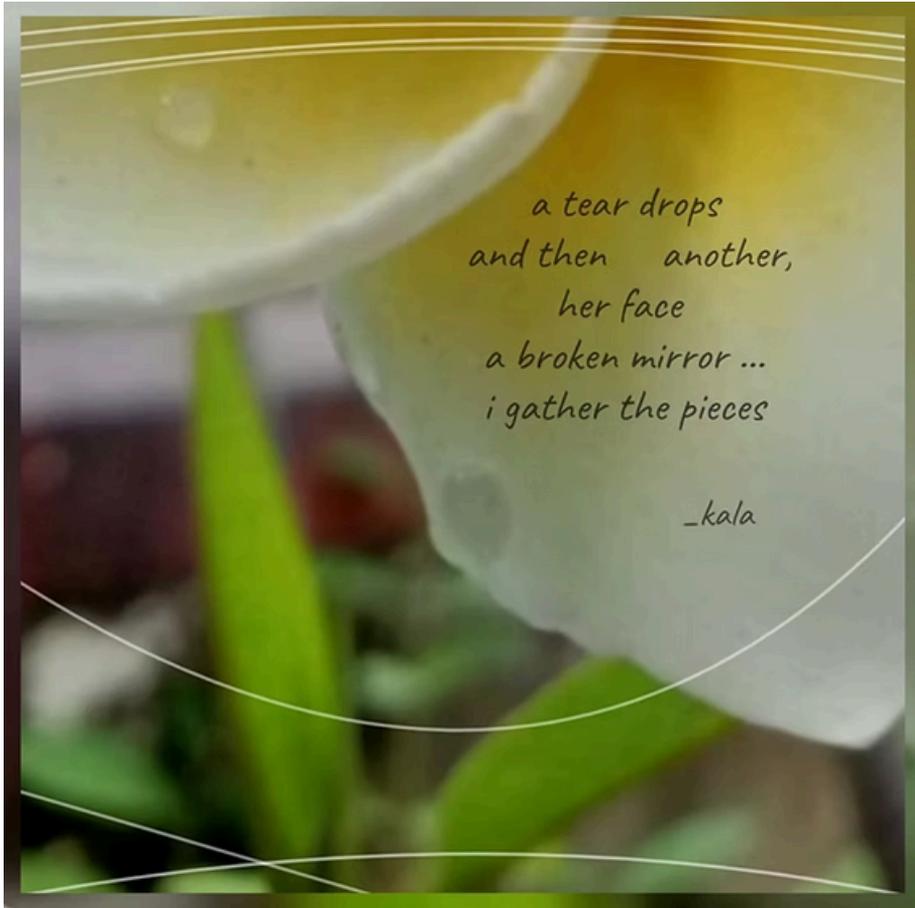


image and ku: Kala Ramesh

tanka

by the fjord
with four bottles of beer
two young men
they will never know
we once shared a sunset

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

only the moon
and I
these nights
at the bottom
of the barrel

susan burch

a tiny virgin jungle
on top of a towering cliff
over my native village
I know I will never
get to tread it

Tejendra Sherchan

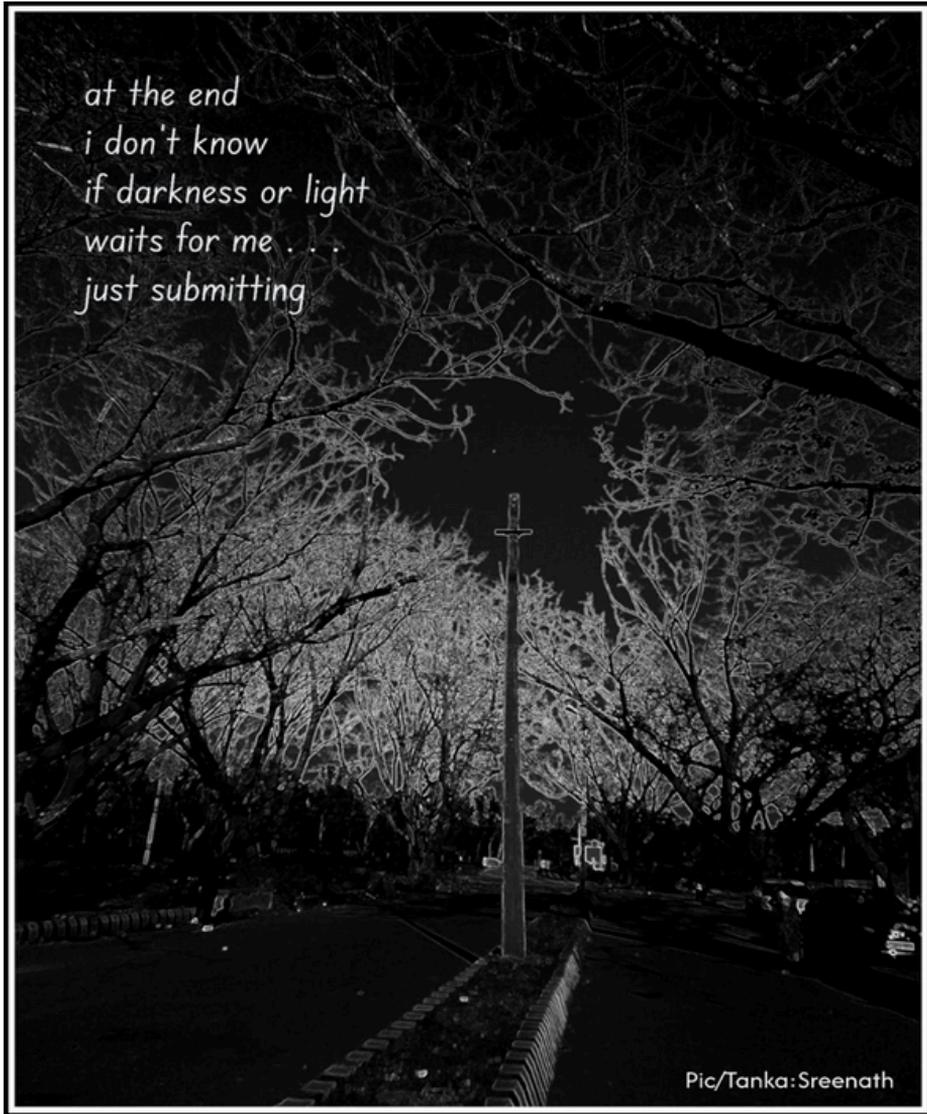


image and ku: Sreenath

Billie Dee
~

Willard's Creek

In the shallows a mink teaches her young
to turn rocks for hellgrammites, summer fur sleeked
to her sides so the ribs show. Sunrise kindles a nimbus
around her head.

Casting a glance in my direction,
she chucks to her kits. Smooth as a school of minnows,
they flow over the bank into the willows —
eyes gleaming like onyx beads.

gnawed stumps
of the beaver dam meadow
overgrown
with lupine and paintbrush ...
where Daddy had his stroke

C.X. Turner

Before the Wave Breaks

Some days arrive thin and brittle, the kind that crack at the edges when touched. I move through quiet rooms, windows fogged from the night's cold, the robin lifting its throat into the thaw. The familiar weight settles across my shoulders, the slow ache of a life held together by duty, care, and routine.

Outside, the world keeps turning, but inside something leans towards a horizon just out of sight ... a door not yet opened, a tenderness waiting beyond the now. I feel the warmth of it graze my palms, and yet it stays just far enough to make me wonder if I dreamed it.

late tide
pulls at the pilings
then slips away
I stand wanting more
than this half-lit shore

Florence Heyhoe

The Yellow Brick Road

I dip my brush into yellow, catch the drips and apply the first stroke on the ghost train walls. No more clinging to spider webs. All the paraphernalia associated with this place is now gone. Only the walls hold stains.

Cadmium yellow, strong assurance over the greys of tears and fears. Primrose yellow, a tender touch covering the smouldering blue-greens; daffodil yellow bringing spring to the greys of helplessness.

almost done
strimming in the graveyard
the spread of morning
over headstones
of the departed

Joanna Ashwell
~

Pebbles

I now have a pocketful. They are small and large. Rounded, chipped, square and triangular. Many colours shimmer and dance within my palm. I spread them across the sand. Grouping the greys, the blues, the whites, the all-sorts. My concentration is interrupted by a swooping gull. The tide is getting closer. I sigh, picking them all up again.

the evening tide
with a melody
of water notes
I imagine each find
a treasure trove

Mohua Maulik
~

Time and Space

Today, we finally bite the bullet and send off our decrepit sofa for refurbishing. Shifting the remaining furniture about the living room, the emptiness is barely noticeable.

stretching out
in the sun on Dad's armchair
i dream
of his smile as he backtracks
to grab the forgotten shirt

Mona Bedi
~

Continuum

sand slips
through my fingers
I press against
the tidal pull of regrets
from a life long gone

I study each photograph slowly, unable to part with the old album I stumbled upon while cleaning my cupboard. My hand drifts across the black-and-white scenes of childhood, stirring a smile I hadn't felt in years. It has been so long since I last heard Dad's full-throated laughter.

scudding clouds
travel across mountains
somewhere far
rain eases the thirst
of a parched land

Nalini Shetty

Cusp

Autumn enters the city through a shift in the air — light turning precise, sounds thinning at the edges. Buildings seem rinsed though no rain has passed. On a narrow lane, the tar holds a muted gleam. A municipal worker sweeps dry leaves; they rise and settle as if listening for something.

Above, abandoned cables hang in loose arcs, faint echoes from another time. A myna steps along them, its sharp call falling into the hush. At the chai counter, the flame stays steady. Warmth gathers in chipped cups. A tune escapes someone's breath, then disappears into the traffic hum.

drying saris
their shifting colours breathe
in slow waves
as the long season
turns its unseen hinge

On the walkway, the scent of parijat drifts and fades — present, then not. Below, vehicles move in slow currents. A delivery scootérist tightens a strap. A stray dog rests, unbothered, watching nothing in particular.

Across the road, political banners snap in the dry breeze. For a moment, their faces blur, then settle back, holding a stillness that feels borrowed.

evening crossroads
the signal's red bloom
flares softly
touching the dust
the day leaves behind

Nalini Shetty
~

Street Dust

At noon, the traffic thins and sunlight threads through gaps in the skyscrapers. A dog sleeps in the shade of a shuttered shop; a vendor rearranges his baskets of eggplants, though no one is buying. Nothing remarkable happens; yet the stillness feels like the city pausing long enough to show its bones. I move through it quietly, aware that even this small, unguarded moment is already slipping out of reach.

slow breeze
lifting the corner
of a billboard
its colours fading
with the afternoon light

Nalini Shetty
~

Tinned Delight

The man walks slowly down the shaded street, a tin box of nankhatai and khari balanced on his head. The scent drifts in the heat — faint, familiar. Years ago, my mother would have called him over, bargaining with that easy laugh I still hear sometimes. Today, only the trees move, their shadows shifting across parked cars.

distant koel's call
how easily the heart
reaches back
to moments we thought
we'd outgrown

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy
~

Blithe Spirit

Shy smiles on his stubbled face replace his once dimpled laughter.
The togetherness of bedtime stories has given way to solo mealtimes. Constant
chatters withdraw into a silent reserve. There is an emerging newness to his
voice that feels unsettling; nobody's to blame. It's just that my son is
growing up ...

how do i grasp
this butterfly
in a spring breeze
leaving behind
an empty chrysalis

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

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

Team: *haikuKATHA*