

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Priti Aisola

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

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

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

Priti Aisola
for her brilliant ink sketch,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Editors' Choice Commentary: by Priti Aisola
Editor's Choice: *the longest day* by Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

the longest day
draws its last breath
as spring ends
she finds at the shoreline
she's become ... invisible

Suraja Roychowdhury

Suraja's beautiful tanka: I read it aloud several times and enjoyed the euphony that is innate to its composition. The interplay of the 's' and the 'sh' sounds gives the tanka its music and the reflective mood that has a hint of sadness in it.

Summer solstice, 'the longest day', is seen as drawing 'its last breath', marking the end of spring. The personification of this day is done with a subtle and light touch. There is an undercurrent of pathos in this vivid image of the day taking its last breath as dusk sets in. The end of spring always fills one with wistful longing and anticipation for the next one. However, in many parts of the western world, with severe winters and not always mild springs, summer is generally greeted 'warmly' (unlike in the tropics) — a cheery invitation to be outdoors and enjoy outdoor sports, parties, and picnics. (I am aware that climate change has affected weather patterns everywhere and some parts of Europe are experiencing a heat wave now.)

What has the longest day been for the woman in this poem? One of tasks satisfactorily completed? A languorous day or one filled with creativity and zest for accomplishing something? Whatever it may have been, at the end of it, she goes for a walk by the seashore and 'finds at the shoreline, she's become ... invisible'. The last line is brilliant. The reader pauses after 'she's become' because of the ellipsis, wonders what will follow and is taken by surprise to encounter this word, this revelation: 'invisible'. Has the woman merged into the crowd on the beach?

Or, moved away from the people and, as her feet trace a minuscule segment of the shoreline, dwindled into a tiny figure soon to be enveloped by the gathering dark? Or, does she realise her own isolation from everyone, senses that no one notices her presence, almost as if she is invisible to them. Or, is she suddenly aware of her insignificance and ordinariness amidst the people at the beach and her role in the complex drama of life? She is not visible to the people. No one gazes at her, notices her, but is she at least visible to herself?

Perhaps, I am trying to read too much into the lower verse. However, there is no doubt that this is a lovely tanka, worth revisiting several times: a well-composed one, where 'as spring ends' serves as a brilliant pivot, enhancing the interweave and meaning of the upper lower verses with fluid ease.

Enjoy Suraja's tanka as much as I did and immerse yourself in its partly glimpsed story and gently intriguing mood.

haiku

relocating
the wails of a child
in a dust cloud

Arvinder Kaur

telling my mother
she is my mother ...
half a spoon of porridge

Arvinder Kaur

cold morning
the hat she knitted
too soft for this sky

C.X. Turner

fireflies
already blinking
back into darkness

Joanna Ashwell

haiku

hitching her skirt
higher than allowed
runaway daisies

Joanna Ashwell

summer vacation ...
bubbles rise up
from the bicycle tube

K. Ramesh

bonfire night
warming my palms
then his

Kalyanee Arandhara

first light
the tūi's brush-tipped tongue
in flax flowers

Kanjini Devi



image and ku: Gauri Dixit

winter harvest ...
the first ponk fritters
around the bonfire

Lakshmi Iyer

clinging to
dad's khadi shirt
ragi sprouts

Leena Anandhi

wisps of fog
rise from the mountain
daffodils wilding

Lorraine Haig

mountain track
mint bush and pepper berry
scent the rain

Lorraine Haig

haiku

morning glories
climbing three flights
to catch the sun

Marilyn Ashbaugh

monsoon again ...
armoured vehicles cut through
flooded village roads

Milan Rajkumar

steep stone steps —
a stone Buddha clad
in stone cloth

Milan Rajkumar

office skylight
a lone cumulus gathers
my gloom

Mona Bedi



image and ku: Marilyn Ashbaugh

haiku

autumn gusts —
the shift
in father's voice

Nitu Yumnam

Teacher's day ...
single-stemmed roses queue
at her door

Padma Priya

hospital corridor
strip lights flash
above the gurney

Robert Kingston

midway up
the mountain
shows its dark side

Robert Kingston

haiku

canary trill ...
tree by tree this vista
fades to grey

Robert Kingston

chemo rounds
the things I keep
in velvet pouches

Sandip Chauhan

hunter's moon
the axe head wedged
deep in oak

Sandip Chauhan

deepening dusk
the man draws darkness
from a well

Tejendra Sherchan



image and ku: Marilyn Ashbaugh

one-line haiku

this speck of dust departing summer geese

Alan Summers

open shutters the generations of women war by war

Alan Summers

grey window skies an itch beneath bandages takes over

Alan Summers

sunlight overkill a Lapis Lazuli kind of blues

Alfred Booth

bright as traffic cones marigolds peeking through thyme

Billie Dee

one-line haiku

bramble scratches where i almost

C.X. Turner

the night swarms around fireflies hitchhiking

Kala Ramesh

he no longer asks to be lifted early green

Nitu Yumnam

bookshelf I reopen an old love story

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

slightly open bits and pieces of a w r b e 's song

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury



image and ku: Nalini Shetty

morning sun
and the auburn notes
in your dark hair. . .
a wallet-worn snapshot
of us among the lilacs

Billie Dee

last year's thorns
still circle the garden wall
I carry
what once cut deep
a little differently now

C.X. Turner

birds' chatter
drifts into silence
after sunset —
your love poems paused
before their first word

Fatma Zohra Habis

tanka

when will it end,
she asks in silence
above the rubble
dreams of a blue sky
without hunger or war

Fatma Zohra Habis

around the table
words slice
through silence
battle scars
served on empty plates

Gauri Dixit

this gloomy evening
I walk to the fridge
not for food
but for the light
that welcomes me

Gauri Dixit

haiga

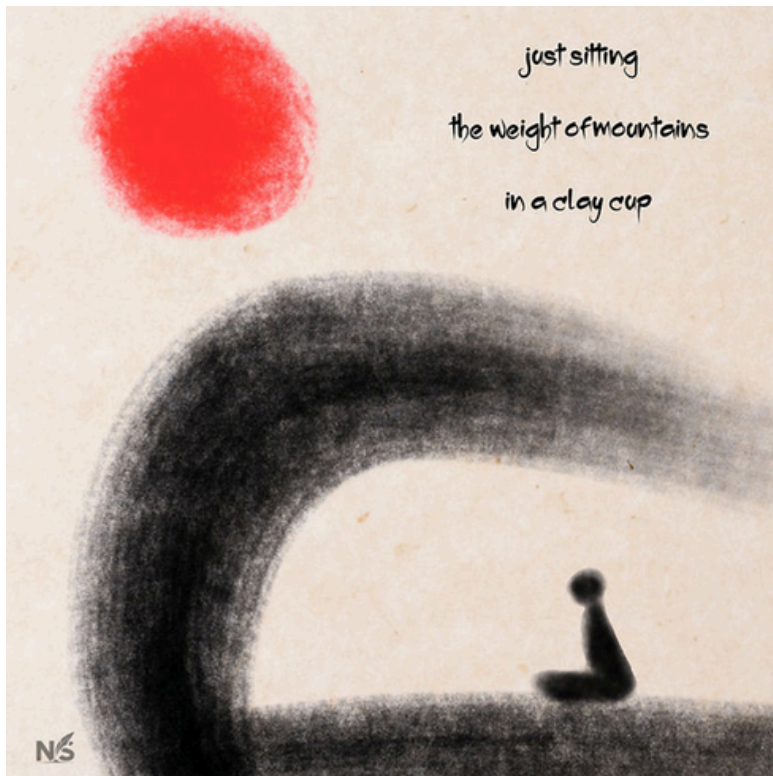


image and ku: Nalini Shetty

tanka

dense mats
of water hyacinth
unable to find
a single thing to wear
in a cupboard full of clothes

Geetha Ravichandran

morning tv show
an astrologer lists
afflicted sun signs
now she can blame
her mood swings on the stars

Geetha Ravichandran

turning the page
on another novel
the magnolia buds
no longer framing
her open door

Joanna Ashwell

tanka

nine months
I swam in a womb
now trying
 to keep afloat
in this ocean called life

Kala Ramesh

lilac clusters
adorn the jacaranda
we planted
if only you could see
all that you have given

Kanjini Devi

livestock truck
overturned on the road
paramedics rush
past a bleeding bull
to rescue the driver

Kanjini Devi



image and ku: Ron C. Moss

growing stronger
as the years pass
but grief cuts
deep on the path
I must walk without you

Kanjini Devi

i raise my voice
for what is right ...
the hidden scent
of the neelakurinji colours
these dark-hued mountains

Lakshmi Iyer

growing old is not
the end of our lives
I have just begun
to breathe the green expanse
under the blue wind

Lakshmi Iyer

I cast my net
where the river meets
an ocean
hoping to catch the one
that got away

Lorraine Haig

a long queue
winding towards the stench
corpse flower
the way we tune in
to every wicked thought

Mohua Maulik

a leafless tree
stands alone and bent
in the gusty winds
I long for the delicate grip
of a child's hand

Mona Bedi



image and tanka: Mona Bedi

tanka

drifting apart
without harsh words
just this
unwatered basil
on the windowsill

Nalini Shetty

he asks
if I miss being young —
on the windowsill
a moth's steady beat
against the dark

Nitu Yumnam

I set out the cups
by habit —
steam curling toward
the empty chair
as if you might still answer

Nitu Yumnam

faint echoes
by the graveyard
all day long
this killing silence
for someone i don't even know

Nitu Yumnam

the wind
stirs the leaves
tossed
this way and that
by a wayward destiny

Priti Aisola

planes flying
close to our Airbnb
the roar
that used to thrill
now fills with fear

Priti Aisola

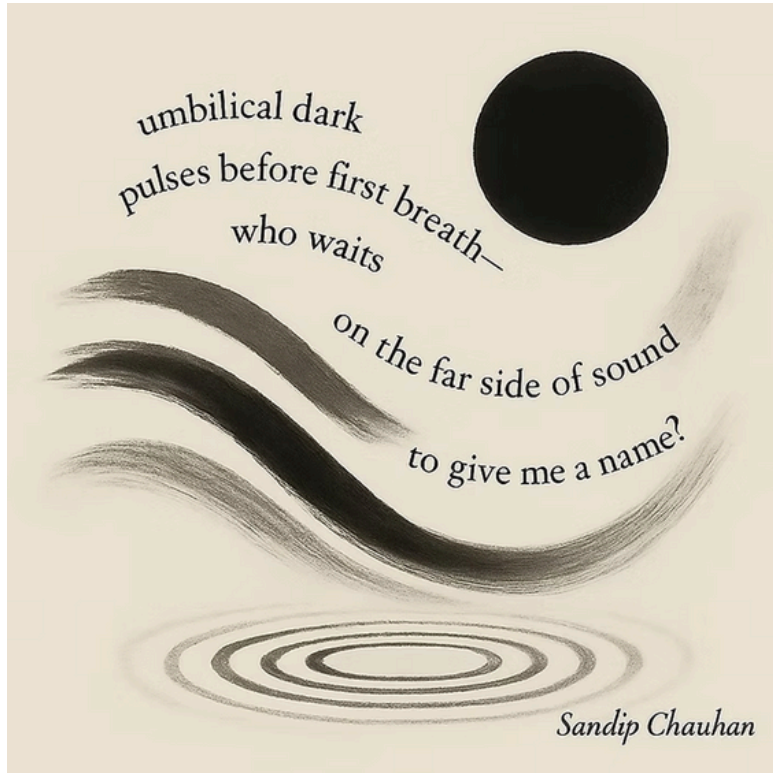


image and tanka: Sandip Chauhan

tanka

pain drilling
through my head
yet respite
from all the words
that cut to the quick

Priti Aisola

between worlds
a voice calling my name
those moments spent
wondering which light
I was moving towards

Robert Kingston

a baby bird cheep
from the dense fig tree
no frills
for the family holding
their fourth girl-child

Rupa Anand

dew in the hulls
of a split tamarind pod —
still no sound
from the bird I fed
each morning last year

Sandip Chauhan

on the hill
so many rivulets
coming alive after rains ...
bridal makeup with jasmine
woven on the braids

Sreenath

sunshine
outside the hospice
inch by inch
a willow tree
darkens the window

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

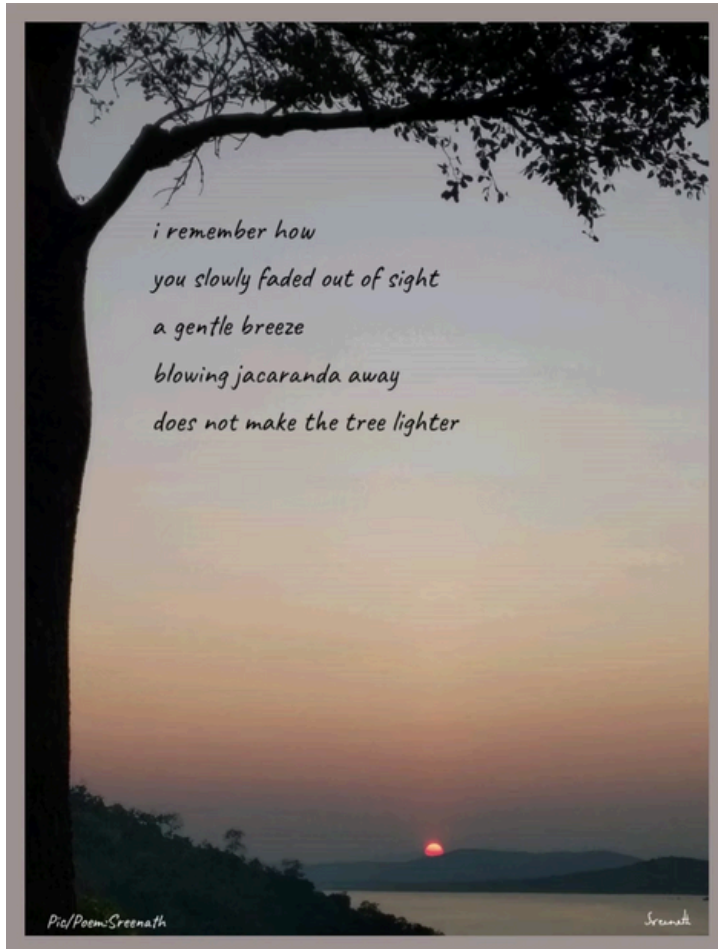


image and tanka: Sreenath

the longest day
draws its last breath
as spring ends
she finds at the shoreline
she's become ... invisible

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

roses bloom
profusely this spring
your beauty
still so intoxicating
has now become ... *commonplace?*

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

not much
has changed, poet ...
the toad's warts
and the poisonous stings
of despots

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

tanka

acid burns –
the low pitched notes
of your raga practice
on the day
of my miscarriage

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy

Alfred Booth



Answers to Unspoken Questions

Easter Sunday
I never wondered
if the garden weeds
could flower
beyond the lawnmower

Music counterbalanced the violence of family life. She always said, "Why do you play such sad music?" Hands on the keys until the last reverberations fade. Then true silence. Don't be quick to gather applause. A bouquet of roses is always a surprise gift. Any answer I might have dared to give was always quickly disqualified with a curt "Don't talk back to me." I'm not sure she ever learned the finesse of honest conversation. The one dictionary and the 24-volume Universal Encyclopedia were only reserved for our schoolwork. I never once saw her open a book, not even the Bible, between Sunday services. Decades later, when I thought we could finally have an adult conversation, I answered that question. "Your top-of-the-lung threats that big boys don't cry said it all. My soul learned to weep because it could do so silently." With pursed lips, she only mustered a whispered "Well, they don't."

Clementi writes
"slow and pathetic"
is this the murmuring
of an unfurling
moonflower

Billie Dee



Olympic Range

I take our familiar turnoff — just a faded campground sign
and the scent of brine. The trail beyond the parking lot
winds through cedar and bracken, opening onto a cove
littered with tidewrack.

that afternoon
driving the coast in silence
a lab report
neatly creased in your lap ...
the things we should have said

Crouching at water's edge, I trace the ridge of an oyster shell —
sharp in places, worn smooth in others. Soft, soft lapping waves.

storm clouds
over the distant mountains
 an osprey
 trims and folds, plunges
 into the bay

Billie Dee



Lazy

Too old to freshen, Grandad's favorite Guernsey
chews cud in the shade of a walnut tree — breath
rhythmic and measured, as if summer itself
had steeped her bones. The one crooked horn
only adds to her dignity.

just enough breeze
to ripple a day moon
in the trough
windmill blades churning
a buttermilk sky

C.X. Turner



Last Season

She hurries past the mannequins — headless, glossy, half-undressed — without stopping. The street's mossy bruises still cling from morning rain, and the cold has settled in, unforgiving.

January sales signs flap like worn bunting. Inside, fluorescent lights make everything look colder. She traces the velvet jacket marked down to eight pounds and thinks of her father's old coat: frayed at the hem, buttons softened by years of winter.

the rust
along the rim of her tin
catches light —
no one bothers now
to mend what might unravel

Lorraine Haig



Phobophobia

A lonely track circles the ridgeline. I walk here most days but today I have an uncomfortable feeling. The recent murder of a woman out running is playing through my mind. I continue my pace, but I'm not listening to the wattlebirds, magpies and parrots. My ears are tuned to any rustles in the surrounding bush. The crunch of gravel. Up ahead a figure morphs into a tree.

through the tangle
of undergrowth
and abandoned middens
the moan of voices
in a melaleuca wind

Priti Aisola



Finding Wings

Leela has just turned two. She will soon have a sibling. The parents have been preparing Leela for the new baby, who she calls 'lala'. Every morning she gently kisses her mother's belly and says, 'Good morning, lala.'

Towards the end of the ninth month, Leela's grandma visits them — to help out after the baby is born. One morning, around 3 a.m. Leela's mother goes into labour. The parents rush to the hospital, leaving Leela in her grandma's care.

Leela wakes up at 7 a.m. and calls out to her mama and papa from her bed. Grandmother hurries to her room to help her out of her bed. She is perplexed and lost. Grandma explains, 'Mama and papa have gone to the hospital because lala is coming.'

After being lifted out of her bed, Leela promptly heads for the closet in the foyer, pulls out her shoes, wears them, turns down the handle of the main door with some effort, opens it, steps out and tells her grandma, 'Leela go hospital. Leela see mama, papa ... lala.' Now very concerned, grandma asks Leela, 'Do you know the way to the hospital?' Leela starts crying inconsolably.

a kitten's leap
to the frangipani tree ...
this tingle
in the morning air
as never before

Vaishnavi Ramaswamy



Full Circle

i feed
the crow
a ball of rice
year after year,
my ancestor

It is a fragmented evening with fractured feelings. An oil lamp is lit. A rose-scented incense pervades the hall. The chant of a thousand divine names begins.

Silence.

My lifeless grandfather ...

Collective pain. We all sit by each other with our emotions; each unto his own. One last time, I drop a few grains of rice into his mouth to appease his hunger.

offering
at the temple -
a lamp in prayer
for the infant's
first meal

Billie Dee
~

lullaby for Little Boy, White Sands, New Mexico ...

hush now, Love
may the Earth remember
even the softest
 heartbeat
 we leave behind

gembun with tanka

Sumitra Kumar



My fingers finally find the elusive tune's perfect chord.

sliding up a rock
to fall again
these tidal waves
no different from us
and the itsy-bitsy spider

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

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

Team: *haikuKATHA*