

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Prakash Thombre

Issue 58 August 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.

**

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within

Issue 58
August 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

Copyright © haikuKATHA 2021

All rights revert to the author upon publication. Works may not be reproduced in any manner or form without prior consent from the individual authors.

Triveni Haikai India: www.trivenihaikai.in

CONTENTS

Tejasvat Award - Sathya Venkatesh	1-4
Editor's Choice Commentary: by Shalini Pattabiraman	5-7
Editor's Choice: <i>Lie to Me</i> , a haibun by Roberta Beary	
haiga by Dinah Power	8
haiku	
Alan Summers	9
Alfred Booth	
Alicia Samson	
Biswajit Mishra	
Bryan Rickert	10
Jacek Margolak	
Jennifer Gurney	11
Joanna Ashwell	
Kanjini Devi	
Keiko Izawa	
Lakshmi Iyer	12
Lev Hart	
Lorraine Haig	13
Malabika Mitra	
Marilyn Ashbaugh	
Milan Rajkumar	14
Mona Bedi	
Nalini Shetty	

CONTENTS

haiga by Milan Rajkumar	15
Nicholas Klacsanzky	16
Raji Vijayaraghavan	
Robert Kingston	
Ron C. Moss	
Ron C. Moss	17
Shloka Shankar	
Soumya Mukherjee	
susan burch	18
Vikram Kolmannskog	
one-line haiku	
Dipankar	19
Lev Hart	
four-line haiku	
Jennifer Gurney	20
haiga by Milan Rajkumar	21
tanka	
Alfred Booth	22
Alicia Samson	
Bryan Rickert	23
C.X. Turner	

CONTENTS

Dinah Power Gauri Dixit Jacek Margolak	24
Jennifer Gurney Joanna Ashwell Kala Ramesh	25
Kala Ramesh Kanjini Devi	26
Lakshmi Iyer Mohua Maulik Mona Bedi	27
Nalini Shetty Nancy	28
Padma Priya Priti Aisola	29
Priti Aisola Reid Hepworth Rupa Anand	30
Sathya Venkatesh Suraja Menon Roychowdhury	31
Suraja Menon Roychowdhury susan burch Tejendra Sherchan	32
Tejendra Sherchan	33

CONTENTS

haiga by Mona Bedi	34
 haibun	
<i>Dirty Dancing</i> by Alan Summers	35
<i>Holy Matrimony</i> by Anju Kishore	36
<i>Anopheles</i> by Billie Dee	37
<i>The Persistence of Dreams</i> by Bob Lucky	38
<i>Twenty-Seven</i> by C.X.Turner	39
<i>Rooftop View of My Life</i> by Chen-ou Liu	40
<i>Midnight Metronome</i> by Colleen M. Farrelly	41
<i>Voyage</i> by Diana Webb	42
<i>Twilight</i> by Geetha Ravichandran	43
<i>A Book by Its Cover</i> by Glenn G. Coats	44
 haiga by Ron C. Moss	
<i>Under the Blue Sky</i> by Hifsa Ashraf	46
<i>Lost days . . .</i> by Jenny Ward Angyal	47
<i>sensations of now</i> by Kala Ramesh	48
<i>Towel</i> by Kat Lehmann	49
<i>Romancing the Moon</i> by Lew Watts	50
<i>Estuary Fisherman</i> by Lorraine Haig	52
<i>Devil in the Details</i> by Marilyn Ashbaugh	53
<i>Towpath</i> by Melissa Dennison	54
<i>Interlude</i> by Mona Bedi	55
<i>A Long Day</i> by Neena Singh	56
<i>Recycling</i> by Radhika De Silva	57
<i>Lie to Me</i> by Roberta Beary	58
<i>bound by the hour-glass</i> by Sangita Kalarickal	59
<i>The Afterglow</i> by Sathya Venkatesh	60
<i>Umwelt</i> by Shiva Bhusal	61
<i>Flowers That Come and Go</i> by Suraja Menon Roychowdhury	62
<i>Offerings</i> by Vidya Premkumar	63

CONTENTS

tanka-art by Amrutha V Prabhu 64

gembun

One phrase by Bob Lucky 65

An old lover's passport by C.X. Turner 66

A heavy fly by Jacek Margolak 67

A window ledge by Joanna Ashwell 68

Love measured by Marilyn Ashbaugh 69

Where I am by Matthew Caretti 70

Who else will by Roberta Beary 71

Power outage by Sathya Venkatesh 72

When people nearby by Sumitra Kumar 73

Sunlight dancing by Vishal Prabhu 74

tanka-art by Sreenath 75

tanka-prose

The Journey Home by Alicia Samson 76

The Music of the Unseen Dance by Amrutha V Prabhu 77

Sediment by C.X. Turner 79

Current by C.X. Turner 80

Aplastic by Dipankar Dasgupta 81

The Open Ending by Fatma Zohra Habis 82

Another Thursday by Fatma Zohra Habis 83

Deeper Channel by Fatma Zohra Habis 84

Where the Water Remembers by Jacek Margolak 85

tanka-art by Suraja Menon Roychowdhury 86

Colour Palette by Joanna Ashwell 87

Cocoon by Joanna Ashwell 88

Forebears by Kanjini Devi 89

CONTENTS

<i>Namakaranam</i> by Lakshmi Iyer	90
<i>Like water willy nilly flowing</i> by Padma Priya	91
<i>At Ninety</i> by Raji Vijayaraghavan	92
<i>Beyond the Spotlight</i> by Sathya Venkatesh	93
<i>Thresholds</i> by Sathya Venkatesh	94
<i>“What They Left Behind ...”</i> by Sathya Venkatesh	95

gembun with tanka

<i>results in an hour</i> by Sumitra Kumar	96
--	----

indianKUKAI #54 Results	97-99
--------------------------------	-------

Our heartfelt thanks to:

Lakshmi Iyer, Lev Hart,
Jennifer Gurney, Rebecca Drouilhet
and Mona Bedi,

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

Prakash Thombre
for his brilliant brushstrokes and that intensity of expresion,

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

Sathya Venkatesh

for her poignant and well-written tanka
and tanka-prose

Tejasvat Sathya Venkatesh

Triveni Haikai India

monsoon evening —
beyond the flashing lights
and blaring music
I follow the curling steam
from an aluminium kettle

I collect the shells
the ebbing tide
has left ashore ...
some losses
leave gifts behind

Thresholds

It had begun with a few harsh words, but pride gave them a life of their own. Years passed without a visit, a phone call, or even a note. The distance between their homes could be walked in ten minutes; the distance between their hearts remained uncrossed.

late autumn —
the path
between two gates
beneath
fallen leaves

Tejasvat Sathya Venkatesh

Triveni Haikai India

Beyond the Spotlight

Every morning, I notice the woman sweeping the street before the shops open, the watchman greeting familiar faces at the gate, the gardener tending the same patch of earth long after the flowers have bloomed, the milkman cycling through empty lanes before sunrise. Their days rarely make headlines. Yet much of life seems to rest on such quiet constancy.

another dawn —
the sun follows
its ancient path
nourishing
the waiting fields

Tejasvat Sathya Venkatesh

Triveni Haikai India

What They Left Behind

Rows of agraharam houses lined the street, their doors always open. Children drifted from porch to porch as elders shared stories and gentle advice. Sunlight filled the central courtyard, and a wooden ladder led to the attic, where jars of pickles, homemade jams, and savouries were stored for every season. A birth or a festival belonged to the whole street, and no one was ever left to celebrate or grieve alone. My ancestors taught me what it meant to belong.

dusk —
crows settle
on the tamarind
filling every branch
one by one

Roberta Beary

Lie to Me

tell me you'll call as soon as you get home
tell me you think of me the whole time you're away
tell me you can't sleep because my face is everywhere
even in your dreams

 beneath orion's belt
the plum tree's purple
 h
 a
 z
 e

tell me it hurts you more than it hurts me
tell me you'll remember only the good parts
tell me it's over and you see my face everywhere
even in your dreams

Lie to Me

There is a very thin line between self-awareness and self-deception. Coloured by yearning, a person chooses deception over awareness to avoid facing the challenges of our realities.

Beary's haibun 'Lie to Me' evokes the all-too-familiar feelings of intense love, its loss, and the self-deception that follows this cycle. Beary, whose body of work often bears witness to themes of love, loss, and betrayal, finds a fresh way to explore them in this haibun.

The use of anaphora creates a lulling sensation, one that leads the reader to reflect on first love, flush with the arrival of intensely emotional feelings that take over everything. That euphoria is structurally presented in the first half of the haibun, before the concrete haiku creates the illusion and the physical descent into self-delusion and escapism in the second half.

'Haze' mirrored as a staircase suggests that self-deception or delusion is a path leading us into purgatory. This visual fracturing perfectly mirrors a mind fracturing under grief or descending into a dream state. Love, when betrayed, brings its own hell, and there's no escape once one reaches the pit. 'Purple haze' might also remind a certain generation of the iconic Jimi Hendrix song about feeling dazed. Prufrock-like, we, as readers, descend into our own versions of hell, making it a contemporary condition.

This arrested position, which neither resolves nor ends the misery, is also explored by Carol Ann Duffy in her collection 'The World's Wife', where she adopts the voices of mythical, historical and literary characters — women who were never given the chance to tell their own version of the narrative. By giving them a voice, Duffy subverts the narrative traditionally rendered by male writers. Beary too subverts traditional expectations within the haiku. While the kigo of the plum tree traditionally symbolises spring renewal, placing it beneath Orion's belt evokes a cold, harsh winter sky. By clouding this landscape in a descending "purple haze," Beary turns natural renewal into an inescapable, dazed state of emotional suspension.

I think Beary also shows that, ultimately, self-deception is a chance to take control of the narrative and shift it so that it hurts less than reality.

Perhaps reality is never one thing. This is evident in Carol Ann Duffy's poem 'Havisham' (from her collection 'Mean Time'), which adopts the persona of Dickens' famous jilted bride. Her opening lines, 'Beloved sweetheart bastard', show that love and hate are entwined and difficult to separate, just as awareness and self-deception are.

The anaphora in the second half of Beary's haibun takes a sharp turn, creating a brilliant link and shift. What was once a benign plea for affection becomes a vengeful desire to hurt the other as much as the self: 'tell me it's over and you see my face everywhere even in your dreams'.

Perhaps escapism is not just an individual condition. Over time, collectively as a society, we are choosing self-deception over awareness in all spheres of our lives and lying to ourselves. What do you think?



*olive tree trunks
growing old
takes many shapes*

*photo & ku
Dinah Power*

haiku

not just now
and not just always ...
the first snowflake

Alan Summers

conch shells
searching for that summer
in Corsica

Alfred Booth

midnight sun
the worms go deeper
than the spade

Alicia Samson

afternoon heat
in the farmlands
farmlands

Biswajit Mishra

haiku

getting to know
a new walking stick
these shorter days

Bryan Rickert

old picture book —
the dragon
smaller than I remember

Jacek Margolak

midday asphalt —
a stray dog chooses
the shadow's edge

Jacek Margolak

family photo
everyone smiling
in different directions

Jacek Margolak

haiku

the smell of smoke
on my patio
all the way from Utah

Jennifer Gurney

buckets of sand
a world waiting
to shape the tide

Joanna Ashwell

bougainvillea
the barn tilting
in midday sun

Kanjini Devi

summer haze
the spot
where Fuji should be

Keiko Izawa

haiku

autumn winds ...
a lingering smell of phenyl
in the old age home

Lakshmi Iyer

winter dusk ...
roasting corn
on the coal stove

Lakshmi Iyer

a cloud
around the dung hill —
butterflies

Lev Hart

autumn's end
i won't live long enough
to stop missing her

Lev Hart

evening cool
the ripple of laughter
from a passing ferry

Lorraine Haig

twenty nineteen ...
that christmas eve
of nonstop rain

Malabika Mitra

in the lining
of my swimsuit ...
grains of sand

Malabika Mitra

50th school reunion
the moth holes
in our stories

Marilyn Ashbaugh

haiku

marriage season
mother's silk phanek
on my wife's waist

Milan Rajkumar

the glow
on a Bedouin girl's skin —
sunbaked dunes

Mona Bedi

washing rice
clouds gather
in the bowl

Nalini Shetty

new phone ...
the scent of sandalwood
won't upload

Nalini Shetty



image and ku: Milan Rajkumar

haiku

subway ride ...
carrying the scent of strangers
to my cubicle

Nicholas Klacsanzky

heavy rain ...
tape over
the torn net

Raji Vijayaraghavan

fuchsia blooms
those little dancers
caught in a breeze

Robert Kingston

cemetery fog ...
a stonemason grinding
in clouds of dust

Ron C. Moss

haiku

mountain trail ...
i touch a twisted pine
to remember

Ron C. Moss

threading the echo
of a songbird's last note ...
late winter sun

Shloka Shankar

color of dusk
everything
pumpkin-spiced

Soumya Mukherjee

nor'wester
the loot
of raw mangoes

Soumya Mukherjee

haiku

Parkinson's puppet
how you pull
my dad's strings

susan burch

Oslo summer
a mango tree
tattooed on my arm

Vikram Kolmannskog

one-line haiku

Heathrow I smuggle out a memory

Dipankar Dasgupta

the air shining with dragonflies my wife's last photo

Lev Hart

four-line haiku

midway
between dawn and dusk
my iced tea
sweats on the porch

Jennifer Gurney



image and ku: Milan Rajkumar

tanka

the ritual
of looking for monsters
under the bed
a night light quickly brought
grim shadows from the corners

Alfred Booth

what you must have felt
to wear boys clothes to school
that first day
but I didn't know your stories
or your brother's early death

Alfred Booth

raven wings flash
beyond the crag
sunlight catches
a spider weaving
a little distance between us

Alicia Samson

the neighbor
spraying weed killer
on his lawn
all of my wishes
from last year dying

Bryan Rickert

into twilight
a single robin sings
I thank god
for a love that hasn't
given up on me

Bryan Rickert

third morning
our toothbrushes
side by side —
when did this begin
feeling like home

C.X. Turner

gold's value
reaches new heights
in global chaos
is the Midas touch
revived

Dinah Power

a yellow butterfly
settles on a pink bow
worn by the little girl
on the hoarding ...
I almost wave

Gauri Dixit

first frost —
your breath
on the window
mine
behind it

Jacek Margolak

the middle
of five living generations
I discuss
becoming a grandma
with my grandma

Jennifer Gurney

within the blooms
of a walled garden
ladybirds lift their wings
I count each wish
in sun-beats of air

Joanna Ashwell

sitting in vajrasan
totally at ease, she pours
jasmine tea
into each cup ... the fragrance
of an evening held intact

Kala Ramesh

I thought that plate of rice
would seduce and sedate me
 into sound sleep
if life's so short
why are nights so long

Kala Ramesh

after sundown
even shadows slip away
in the silence
 his words
come back to haunt me

Kala Ramesh

at age twelve
i begged my mother
to pack our bags —
a willow branch may bend
but it may also break

Kanjini Devi

sixty seasons
with the sun, moon and stars
this Guru Purnima
I acknowledge the electrician,
the farmer and the milkman

Lakshmi Iyer

laughter cut short
by a gust of gritty wind ...
spilling my guts
i regret the words that reveal
rather than heal

Mohua Maulik

wildflowers sway
in the cemetery breeze —
mother's name
disappears beneath
a layer of moss

Mona Bedi

copperpod petals
across the courtyard
my mother
folds the same towel
twice

Nalini Shetty

a pigeon
sits on a mango tree
tilting its head —
something in its pause
feels like my own

Nancy

mother's dawn
starts with a rangoli
at the door
the last curve
left unfinished

Nancy

tanka

even as a child
she could sense thundering clouds
roll between them ...
a thick fog seems to hug
the rocky cliffs forever

Padma Priya

as soft as mizzle
His assurance, why fear
when I am here ...
your words drum
a battle call today

Priti Aisola

a lone hibiscus
in a crowd of daisies
standing tall
when their arguments
outnumber hers

Priti Aisola

tanka

grey rooftops
draped in mist ...
your gaze
so direct, it lays bare all
that I had hoped to conceal

Priti Aisola

coming to terms
with the mother I wanted
and the one I had
the lone honeybee settles
on a single-petaled peony

Reid Hepworth

near my rattan chair
two fearless mynas come
closer and closer
screeching for cat kibble
i smile at their playfulness

Rupa Anand

monsoon evening —
beyond the flashing lights
and blaring music
I follow the curling steam
from an aluminium kettle

Sathya Venkatesh

I collect the shells
the ebbing tide
has left ashore ...
some losses
leave gifts behind

Sathya Venkatesh

I'll draw you
in chalk he said
easier to erase
when you leave - just the dust
of your touch on my fingers

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

tanka

trying
to fill this hollow space
with song
a bee buzzes
inside a foxglove

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

the top soil
that washed away
took nutrients too ...
is there more to life
than just surviving

susan burch

this sickness
of spending a day
without a glimpse of her ...
the bird-of-paradise
that doesn't belong to me

Tejendra Sherchan

billions of liters
of monsoon rain
flood my homeland ...
the ginger lilies won't allow
me to despair

Tejendra Sherchan

the farmers
deserting their lands ...
members of parliament
raise their voices
to exterminate the monkeys

Tejendra Sherchan

light rain the burden of small things



Pic & ku : Mona Bedi

Alan Summers



Dirty Dancing

It wasn't the movie, it wasn't the right evening, it was fast-forwarding to Stupid O'Clock. It was legal, liquid substances, golden in hue and tone, a few James Bond martinis. A growing-out-of-favour-band at a Student Union bar.

And an ex-girlfriend.

It wasn't romantic. It was young but it wasn't pretty.

It was a fireman's lift though not a rescue. It wasn't Elvis that left the building.

James Bond is a bad influence. Thankfully we survived another spy caper.

a bow tie floats
shaken
and a little stirred

Anju Kishore

Holy Matrimony

The first thing I noticed about him was his shapely hands.

sculptor's blueprint unfolding cloudless sky

The occasion was the girl-seeing ceremony, an integral part of arranged marriages in those days. When I made my entry with a tray of kaapi and snacks, the only vacant seating space was right opposite him. I set the tray down and settled into the chair, trying not to stare at his pink nails and tapering fingers.

gender divides the sculpted choosing green

When my mother urged him to have the kaapi and try the 'handmade' murukku, he picked up the snack plate and offered it to his sister first, his brother-in-law next, and then took one for himself. The same with the coffee in spite of Amma reprimanding me to serve them. She nearly swooned when he appreciated the texture of the murukku and the flavour of the coffee.

the flame of a lamp dancing stone god

Fifty years down, we have lost count of the number of nights he has sat up with the kids and ailing elders. Today, when my grandson serves us a meal with the attentiveness of a mother and the charm of a wife, nobody throws a fit.

asleep in some awakening Ardhanareeshwar

Billie Dee
~

Anopheles

Sweat beads on our arms as we climb the switchbacks. By the time we reach Delphi, the day's heat is trapped in the stones. I think of the ancient Oracle seated above the chasm — how little chance Oedipus had.

Silence settles between us. The ruins darken.

mosquito hour
a fevered lament
in my ear

Bob Lucky


The Persistence of Dreams

When my wife's asleep, instead of building birdhouses in the garage to sell at the monthly craft market, I fantasize about writing a fictional travelogue of all the places I wanted to visit but never did because I ran out of time or money, or both. And I'd organize it alphabetically because I'm lazy.

Chapter 1:
Afghanistan, 1979, before the Soviet invasion.

If I make it to the chapters on Yemen and Zambia, it could be a big book.

hallway nightlight
following my shadow
to the toilet

C.X. Turner



Twenty-Seven

In the pale morning light, the car looks freckled with damage. Not dramatic. Not enough to stop a journey.

Small crescents pressed into the silver paint, each one cupping a shadow. The shallow dents are almost evenly spaced, as though someone stood there a while, letting a door swing open.

Again and again.
Never noticing the impact.

Late summer. A warning light. The engine loses power. I steer onto the hard shoulder. Heat rises. Lorries pass. I hold my breath.

I sell it before winter.

gannet's plunge
the sea takes back
its colour

Chen-ou Liu
~

Rooftop View of My Life

Tar sticks to my sneakers. Below, the grid of this city is a circuit board of silver, yellow, and red LEDs. A siren wails from afar, then is swallowed by the concrete canyons. Up here, a place of my own: the city noise thins to a hum.

clothesline
a damp sheet snaps
at my cheek

Colleen M. Farrelly



Midnight Metronome

Thunder grumbles against my windows, shaking me awake. I try to close my eyes again, but dark shadows dance across the wall, a waltz of lighting, headlights, and live oak leaves. My childhood demons dip to the floor.

I reach for his side of the bed, for his warmth to wrap around me. Another peal of thunder jolts me from bed.

allegro furioso
a widow's tap dance

Diana Webb



Voyage

If you could dip your brush, John Constable, into every raindrop on my pane,
would you be able to magic a smidgen of blue to patch a sailor's trousers, so you
could be that well-clad voyager and sail the seas to make your seascapes into
cloudscapes?

azure paper
for my origami boat
so many folds

Geetha Ravichandran



Twilight

Every evening there is a tug-of-war between us sisters for the garden- hose. It makes us feel important — greening the courtyard. The hardy trees — lemon, neem, coconut and mango — are forever thirsty on a hot April evening. The bushes of white jasmine and coral jasmine, which bloom at dusk, receive our special attention. They wrap us in their fragrance. The fun part is, of course, splashing jets of water all around and drenching ourselves in the process. Now, the dispute over who is responsible for the overwatering that killed the ixora saplings will remain unresolved.

cracked roof...
the drip-drop
of distant memories

Glenn G. Coats



A Book by Its Cover

The tents all have names and this one is called Tavern on the Green. The place is packed and we are squeezed in up front — close to where a Celtic band from Toronto is performing. My daughter steps on the floor in her plaid jumper and begins dancing. The lead singer — hair bright as fire — gives her a wink. A group of young men all dressed in black cross our paths. Chains dangle from their jeans. I pull my daughter back as they all sit cross-legged in front of the stage. Voices murmur behind us. The next song is a jig and each boy pulls out a penny whistle and begins to play.

wings at dusk
the brush of drums
on a slow song



king tide
all of the river
in a heron's eye

Ron C. Moss

Hifsa Ashraf
~

Under the Blue Sky

I play hopscotch across the drought-scarred land of my family. The sound of crickets rising from the cracks is somehow soothing to my ears.

Abu sits quietly on a clay mound, watching me and the land that has fed our family for generations. The furrows on his brow deepen with each passing season, yet he keeps a soft smile on his face.

This is the second year without enough rain to soften our soil. Whenever clouds drift over our land, we follow them with hope in our eyes until they disappear.

uneven trail —
we stumble over
our own shadows

Jenny Ward Angyal

Lost days . . .

Do they ever return, circling like a great blue heron before she settles to spear
the silver flash of a moment?

Where do they go, then? Do they sit forever in some mustard-colored waiting
room, head in hands, listening for a voice to call their long-forgotten names?

Or do they simply vanish without a trace into the slipstream of stars?

sun salutation —
thistledown drifts
on the wind

Kala Ramesh



sensations of now

incoming —
squeals of laughter

receding —
crabs scuttling sideways

incoming —
a sailboat in silhouette

receding —
a large chunk of sand caves in
I regain my lost equilibrium

the moon
on an ever-ending journey
dawn breaks

Kat Lehmann



Towel

It's mostly a time saver. Stand there long enough, and you will dry off without one. The same way, water evaporates from it as it hangs on its hook. But if it doesn't dry thoroughly enough, it will get musty. Moldy-ish. I'm the only one who can smell it, so I go around the house changing them. Not so much a time saver!

cotton blend
the unsaid parts
woven together

Lew Watts



Romancing the Moon

estate sale
the Old Spice scent
of a dressing gown

To Ms Ayshen,
Forgive me for not replying sooner. My suit was indeed tweed, a strange choice I would admit for high-summer. Please thank Tom for sharing my address. I do hope we will meet again soon.

To Ms Imogen Ayshen,
How lovely to finally learn your first name. I believe it is Celtic, is it not? Very much looking forward to seeing you on New Year's Eve.

Dearest Imogen,
Oh, no! My dear, it wasn't anything you said. I simply felt a little nauseous and left before the last dance. Would you care to try again sometime?

My Dearest Imogen,
I felt the same way, and it was so hard to say goodnight. But the stars stayed out, and I skipped the whole way home with those foxtrot steps you taught me. This Friday, again?

My Darling Imogen,

No, it's me who should be grateful. That you were born. That you walk the earth. That you chose to let me kiss you goodnight. Will you be my Valentine?

Dear Imogen,
I understand.

silver bows —
the bundles of letters
he never sent

Lorraine Haig



Estuary Fisherman

Sunlight glints off the blade. The catch is filleted and packed in the freezer. There's enough to eat for a couple of months. The fish frames, he layers with salt in an old bath under the house to molder in a blood-soaked brine. He'll string them on a line to dry in the sun to use as bait for his crab pots.

river of stars –
channel markers flash
red and green

He sets his net on the running tide. Lighting a cigarette, he pours coffee and waits, comforted by the smell of mud and mangroves. Sitting here gives him time to think about his future. Perhaps this is a young man's profession. The moment draws him back. There seems to be a lot of activity. Watching the cork line as it dips beneath the surface tells him the mullet are there. When at last he starts to haul in the net, he's surprised to see quite a few baby sharks. At last, it's in, and the catch is flapping in the hull. It's then he feels the boat rocking and shines his light to the water. She rolls on her side; her big dark eye stares at him. Longer than his wooden skiff, she's there for a reason. As quickly as he can her babies are returned to the water.

first light
the cry of curlews
over the mud flats

Marilyn Ashbaugh



Devil in the Details

Aunt Mabel no longer has a crush on Father Murphy so she stops her Saturday visits to the confessional and her Sunday visits to church services. When too many sins weigh on her soul, she jumps ship to an evangelical tent revival. The minister there assures her of lasting salvation, provided she donates all her money.

offertory
a cockroach scurries
between church pews

Melissa Dennison



Towpath

A mayfly, then another and another, rising from the long grass where buttercups encroach on daisies. They leap and bounce, leap and bounce, over and over in a dance nearly as old as water.

three hundred million years distilled into now

geese gone ...
the patience of a heron

Mona Bedi



Interlude

Lights flicker in the distance. Their shifting glow sends shadows dancing across the ceiling. The rhythmic thud of a wooden stick reverberates through the darkness.

autumn gust
reeds shiver
at the river-bend

At intervals, the night watchman patrolling the narrow lane outside our house breaks the silence with a loud call: “Jagte raho!”

That familiar cry lulls me into a deep, peaceful sleep.

Neena Singh

A Long Day

A pigeon drops out of the afternoon as if the sky has let go of it. One wing slackens; its body trembling against the balcony tiles.

My grandson brings water in a shallow lid, scatters a few grains and pieces of apple nearby. It does not stir nor peck. Only its eyes—dark, unblinking, follow the smallest movement.

Two pigeons sit on the condenser of the air conditioner.

By the time the paramedic arrives, the stillness has deepened. The small body no longer resists the air.

A quiet helplessness, then, an unnameable grief tugs at my heart.

My ten-year-old grandson looks at the pigeon, then at me, and shrugs gently. “Daadi, don’t be sad, it’s a life cycle,” he says.

summer heat
a line of black ants
finds its way

Radhika De Silva



Recycling

The lantern we made for Vesak in the month of May is still hanging from the verandah roof. Despite regular cleaning, dried leaves litter the floor beneath. Looking up, I see the artisans, two drongos weaving a nest at the base of the lantern.

new tenants
in the old house
powdery breeze

Roberta Beary



Lie to Me

tell me you'll call as soon as you get home
tell me you think of me the whole time you're away
tell me you can't sleep because my face is everywhere
even in your dreams

 beneath orion's belt
the plum tree's purple

h

a

z

e

tell me it hurts you more than it hurts me
tell me you'll remember only the good parts
tell me it's over and you see my face everywhere
even in your dreams

Sangita Kalarickal

bound by the hour glass

I see them sometimes sailing thermals in an aerial waltz. A click of the mouse and I spy them with their hatchlings on the EagleCam, white manes yet to emerge.

Bald eagles pair up for life.

Once the eaglets learn to fly, they focus on their partner. They migrate together for winter in a love dance through the seasons.

crocuses and sunflowers
the repeating patterns
of cobblestone paths

I see them every day screaming with glee, playing catch or chasing each other down the neighborhood. In our respective homes, we continue with our chores, with one eye on their games.

Human parents brood for life.

These kid-worries stick fast in one's daily routine, in the air one breathes, in the pores of one's skin. Until one doesn't remember anything anymore.

sea froth ...
the horizon
so distant

Sathya Venkatesh

The Afterglow

In our Mysuru summers, Narayani Paati led ten granddaughters through parks and crowded bazaars, buying us charumuri in paper cones while teaching us to walk through life independently. Married at seventeen and widowed at twenty-five, she raised seven children and educated her brothers' children too, holding together the remains of my grandfather's pharmacy business with fierce discipline. She believed girls must earn, drive, save, and never drown in self-pity. Even now, when life feels uncertain, I unfold the deep violet nine-yard sari she gifted me for my wedding. Remembering her quiet strength, I meet work with steady hands.

morning breeze —
the bamboo bends
then rises

Shiva Bhusal
~

Umwelt

The Swayambhunath Stupa in Kathmandu was once a lotus flower that rose from a giant lake. Bodhisattva Manjushree worked tirelessly to take care of it, keeping his hair wild and uncut. Lice took refuge in his hair, a few fell on the ground and took the form of monkeys. They now circle the Stupa, gazing sometimes at the sky, sometimes at the visitors, and sometimes at each other.

almost cousins —
negotiating contract
with a ripe banana

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Flowers That Come and Go

We went 'native' with our garden, replacing the boring part of the lawn with pollinators and other local plants. Early spring, and sweet woodruff springs up—a vibrant green, with small white star-shaped flowers and a gentle fragrance. The oaks start budding and casting shade. Various green things start sprouting. I'm learning their names.

Solomon's Seal, with its wide leaves and rows of flowers hanging like necklaces, erupts overnight. I love the unostentatious blooms, like a string of pearls. A flood of geraniums are next—not the flashy kind seen in window boxes, but joyful, fluttering white and pink in the breeze. Catmint blooms in wide swathes of purple, their peppery scent perfuming the air.

They come in droves. The birds, bees, butterflies.

hovering
on the keyboard –
hummingbird haiku

Vidya Premkumar



Offerings

Woken by a weight on my chest, I open my eyes to a twinkling light. For a moment, I think I am dreaming of a distant lighthouse. Then two yellow eyes appear behind it. Bimbim stands on me, a firefly flashing between his white teeth, held in perfect gentleness. I touch the luminosity of its bottom and free it, and we watch it make its way to the vent and vanish into the darkness from which it has come.

He turns and looks at me.
I stroke his fur.

harvest moon —
leaving some orchard fruits
for the birds

cloud
upon water—



between
sea and sky

Amrutha V Prabhu

Bob Lucky
〜

one phrase leads to another world

ek dum
a rose is not
a rose

C.X. Turner
〜

an old lover's passport

spare photo
tucked between
the visa pages

Jacek Margolak

a heavy fly circles the kitchen table

the first click
of pipes
in the dark

Joanna Ashwell



a window ledge

once more
all the weight
of moonlight

Marilyn Ashbaugh
〜

love measured in stitches per inch. . .

sewing bee
unspooling
a flower moon

Matthew Caretti
~

where I am where the storm makes landfall

off the map
swift scribblings
of my pen

Roberta Beary
~

Who else will call you by their mother's name when death comes calling?

all his affairs down to the marigolds

Sathya Venkatesh
〜

power outage

the neighborhood
rediscovering
the stars

Sumitra Kumar
~

when people nearby don't wait for you to end your call

his pretence
of not hearing my girlfriend's
sing-song yawn

Vishal Prabhu
〜

sunlight dancing around the shoji

a book
I continue
reading



Alicia Samson



The Journey Home

Sitting at our kitchen table, we remove the stalks and pits.

As we tip the fruit into a large black pot, my mother tells me about her mother, Ma. When Ma was a little girl, her father took her from Cape Town to Basutoland.

As the jam bubbles, she tells me about Ma's parents. "Ma's mother had worked as a servant. Her father was a white man."

I ask how Ma found her way home.

My mother folds and unfolds the dishcloth in her hands before answering.

"It took my granny eighteen years to save for the journey home."

by the red fence
wild cherries
a butterfly
in an empty chest
veiled with spiderwebs

Amrutha V Prabhu



The Music of the Unseen Dance

There was something quietly magnetic about her. Perhaps it was her smile. Perhaps it was the ease with which she remained untouched by the room's most celebrated presence.

He walked over and spoke at length about himself, hoping to be noticed. She listened with her usual attentiveness, smiled, and returned nothing more.

Soon he was surrounded by admirers again.

The growing noise of the party unsettled her. She slipped away into the garden and sat beside a fountain, where the music of water drowned the conversations she had left behind.

Later, carrying a glass of wine, he wandered to the edge of the rooftop terrace for a breath of air. Looking down, he found her alone, listening to the night.

As she lifted her eyes toward the stars, she noticed him watching.

His gaze lingered.

She looked away.

To those eager to weave stories, it seemed she wished to climb toward him while he longed to descend to her.

Nothing happened.

tanka-prose

Everyone remained in their own world.

Yet somehow, the evening was filled with romance.

one within
the other —
Shiv-Shakti
beyond the rainbow
colours unseen

C.X. Turner



Sediment

A blackbird lies spread-eagled on the dry grass, wings open to the sun. Your name appears on my screen.

It's been eighteen months since we last spoke. You ask me a question only I would know how to answer. My reply runs to several paragraphs.

I sip iced tea through a glass straw.

You tell me about your life. Much more than I ask. Less than I want.

I tell you of a change in mine. Nothing more.

I look up. The blackbird is still there.

before waking
the warmth of your mouth
against mine —
all day I carry
what never happened

C.X. Turner



Current

The gate catches halfway. Lift the latch. Lean in. A sharp nudge with the hip before it gives.

I duck my head and walk down the narrow steps into the passage behind the house. The movement comes without thinking. I can't remember when I first learned it, only that my body already knew.

This gate catches too. As I shove it open and drag the broken bin past two cars parked wide apart, nothing about the movement feels new.

late summer
the river
returning
to its deeper channel
beneath the reeds

Dipankar Dasgupta



Aplastic

Midway through the taan, a string snaps. A metallic crack splits the air. The percussionist stops. A polite groan from the dark auditorium replaces the steady drone on the stage.

The elderly sarodist smiles apologetically and puts on his reading glasses to mend the string. Soon fresh music begins. The same musicians ... the same notes ... but not quite the same music. A broken bridge.

I recall
the rainy eve with you
under one umbrella ...
the taste of your perfume
lingers through autumn

Fatma Zohra Habis



The Open Ending

Every night I open a door that doesn't close. I never finish the story, I leave it hanging at the sword's edge, so morning is postponed another night. The sultan waits for an ending I never bring. I am not fleeing death, I am slowing it story by story.

a pearl necklace
bead by bead
comes undone in the dark
no one knows
where the thread ends

Fatma Zohra Habis



Another Thursday

My mother hung out the laundry every Thursday, and I'd watch her from the window. She once told me that the things we hold on to most tightly are the first to slip away. I didn't understand then.

Now, as I fold my young son's shirts that no longer fit him, I remember her.

wings tremble
over the cornfield
every step I take
toward what I'll never hold
teaches me how to leave

Fatma Zohra Habis



Deeper Channel

The water table drops every August, and still the reeds don't move. My grandmother used to say a river never forgets its first bed, only wanders from it a while.

I stand on the bank where the current has thinned to a trickle over stone. Something underneath is shifting anyway, a pull I can't see, only trust.

where I was planted
a voice says
bloom
it comes from where the water is
and keeps flowing

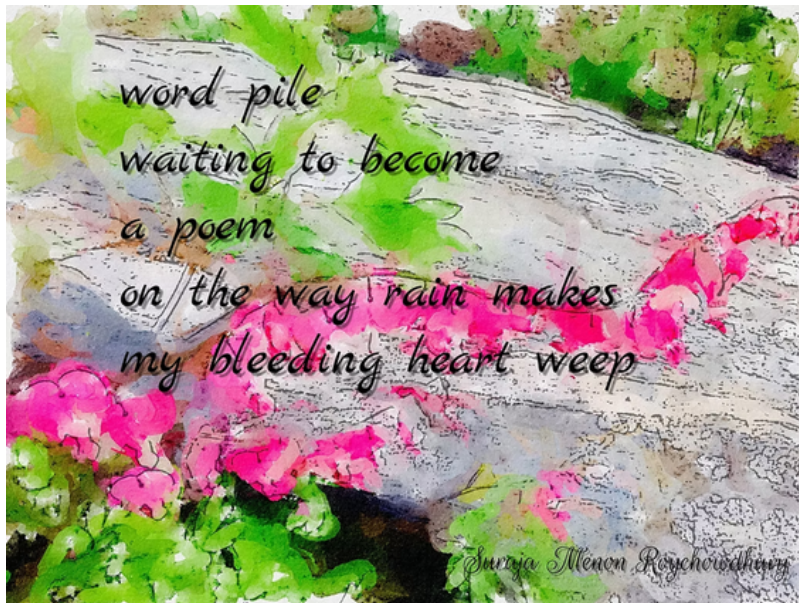
Jacek Margolak



Where the Water Remembers

We walked the shoreline where waves have no memory, and the sand holds no grudges. I always thought the place was only landscape — until I saw how it changed when you walked beside me.

when you fall silent
the sea becomes
more itself —
and then I know that quiet
has its own depth



Joanna Ashwell



Colour Palette

What if I mix the green with a hint of purple? If I dip my toes into the moonlit tide, will I feel refreshed or fearful? These tent pegs won't fit the holes, so should I winnow a new set to suit my needs? The guidebook has no chapter on indecision.

variables
in a rain cloud
of shifting grey ...
if I squint and blink
silver seams my way

Joanna Ashwell



Cocoon

The air fizzes with expectation. There is a softness to the sky as the first rays of sun dapple each blade of grass. I follow the roadside to a meadow edge. A stile leans into a drystone wall. Sheep are grazing with no care for my first steps through their world. These are the crystalline hours, where the day unclasps itself from shadow. Slowly revealing each cornerstone of cap-light.

hoarding the hours
in my memory
Queen Anne's Lace
catches my hem
with umbrella spores

Kanjini Devi



Forebears

It's only a little walk, some bitumen, mostly gravel. At the bridge, I stop to savour the sight of a stream sparkling in sunlight. My feet feel anchored to the ground. A reverberation starts from below, intensifying as it permeates my bones. Unable to stop my tears, I am reminded of something very familiar. Then I hear them – a thousand voices calling me home.

this marae
nestled in the hills
a portal
which allows me to relate
with those who have gone before

Lakshmi Iyer

Namakaranam

Once upon a time more than eighty years back ...

My great-grandfather was a renowned pundit and owned huge acres of land in those days. Many scholars would attend the special puja at the ancestral house in Palakkad. It involved chanting of the Vishnu Sahasranamam, not once but a hundred times daily.

A thousand brahmins would gather each morning. Each brahmin would be called forward, and their feet would be washed piously by my grandparents. Then, my great-grandfather would offer two grams of gold and one para of rice. They would be sent off with a sumptuous meal. This continued for ten days. The number reached 10,000, which in Sanskrit is termed 'Ayutha'.

Just after this ceremony, a grandson is born to him, who happens to be my dearest father. They name him Ayuthanaman - a rare name not often found anywhere!

sixtieth season —
the Bharatpuzha meanders
through our backwaters
the tide carries away
our memories

Padma Priya



“Like water willy nilly flowing ...”

over the rocks
with the gushing river
I flow
wherever your tinkling song
takes me in this bristling wind

You passed long ago. You broke away from the threads of the quagmire you were going through — forgetting yourself and losing your memories. A slice of me went with you when you passed.

I wonder which part of me went with you, and which part of you stayed with me? Everything seems to be shrouded in hues woven together like the warp and weft of a pashmina shawl.

I feel no one passes — they just become the invisible strings connecting generations.

draped in
mom's *kanjeevaram* saree
on my 60th birthday
I become a little girl
once again

**The title is part of a line from a Rubai/poem of Omar Khayyam, translated into English by Edward FitzGerald*

Raji Vijayaraghavan

At Ninety

Mom still climbs to her room on the first floor, choosing the quiet, the space and the terrace breeze. Her granddaughter's stay with newborn twins has given her fresh energy. She helps as she can with a bit of cooking, cradling the babies, and sharing a quiet connection with her son.

an easy smile
to go with her straight stance ...
she walks
along the fine thread
of living each day

Sathya Venkatesh

Thresholds

It had begun with a few harsh words, but pride gave them a life of their own. Years passed without a visit, a phone call, or even a note. The distance between their homes could be walked in ten minutes; the distance between their hearts remained uncrossed.

late autumn —
the path
between two gates
beneath
fallen leaves

Sathya Venkatesh

Beyond the Spotlight

Every morning, I notice the woman sweeping the street before the shops open, the watchman greeting familiar faces at the gate, the gardener tending the same patch of earth long after the flowers have bloomed, the milkman cycling through empty lanes before sunrise. Their days rarely make headlines. Yet much of life seems to rest on such quiet constancy.

another dawn —
the sun follows
its ancient path
nourishing
the waiting fields

Sathya Venkatesh

What They Left Behind

Rows of agraharam houses lined the street, their doors always open. Children drifted from porch to porch while elders shared stories and gentle advice. Sunlight filled the central courtyard, and a wooden ladder led to the attic, where jars of pickles, homemade jams, and savouries were stored for every season. A birth or a festival belonged to the whole street, and no one was ever left to celebrate or grieve alone. My ancestors taught me what it meant to belong.

dusk —
crows settle
on the tamarind
filling every branch
one by one

gembun with tanka

Sumitra Kumar

results in an hour ...

heads or tails
with a falling leaf
and this one
reclines
against the tree trunk

Results of indianKUKAI #54

hosted by Amoolya Kamalnath, Kashinath Karmakar, Neena Singh,
& Rohan Kevin Broach. Certificates designed by Teji Sethi



54th
indianKUKAI



first summer rain . . .
the scent of a mud cup
in my ginger tea

LAKSHMI IYER
INDIA

FIRST PRIZE

THEME : petrichor
JULY 2026

HOSTS
Amoolya Kamalnath, Kashinath Karmakar, Neena Singh and Rohan Kevin Broach

organised by
TRIVENI HAIKAI INDIA



54th
indianKUKAI



petrichor
a garden lizard
spreads its tongue

SRINIVASA RAO SAMBANGI
INDIA

SECOND PRIZE (TIE)

THEME : petrichor
JULY 2026

HOSTS
Amoolya Kamalnath, Kashinath Karmakar, Neena Singh and Rohan Kevin Broach

organised by
TRIVENI HAIKAI INDIA



Results of indianKUKAI #54
hosted by Amoolya Kamalnath, Kashinath Karmakar, Neena Singh,
& Rohan Kevin Broach. Certificates designed by Teji Sethi



Results of indianKUKAI #54

hosted by Amoolya Kamalnath, Kashinath Karmakar, Neena Singh,
& Rohan Kevin Broach. Certificates designed by Teji Sethi



Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

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

Team: *haikuKATHA*