

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Prakash Thambre

Issue 60 October 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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Issue 60
October 2026

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

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Triveni Haikai India: www.trivenihaikai.in

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Our heartfelt thanks to:

Gauri Dixit, Teji Sethi,
Fatma Zohra Habis,
and Lev Hart,

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

Prakash Thambre
for her brilliant watercolour painting,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Editors' Choice Commentary: Sanjuktaa Asopa

Editor's Choice: *I am* by Mona Bedi

I am now the oldest winter rain

Mona Bedi

A one-line haiku relies heavily on minimalism and juxtaposition. This deceptively simple juxtaposition makes this seven-word poem so effective.

The stark opening phrase, “I am now the oldest”, sets the tone. Perhaps the poet was once among the youngest in a family, surrounded by parents, grandparents, older siblings, uncles and aunts. One by one, they have all passed, and the poet suddenly realises that the position has shifted ... almost unnoticed.

The poem avoids sentimentality or elaborate metaphor about growing old or facing mortality. Does the poet feel the weight of being the oldest? Maybe, but the question remains unanswered. Instead, the poem gracefully sidesteps the concept by placing the statement alongside a mundane weather event, winter rain, which evokes not only a sense of season but also the inevitable and irreversible passage of time.

Just as becoming the oldest implies that a generation or cycle has passed, the dark, cold winter rain likewise marks the end of the annual cycle. This juxtaposition evokes a poignant awareness of the poet's place within the fabric of time's transience.

The poem never names grief, yet it is palpable, and a profound desolation lingers in the space between the two parts. The beauty of the haiku is that it allows the reader who has experienced that particular moment to bring their own losses into the poem.

Kudos to the poet for this beautiful commentary on loss, loneliness and ageing.

haiku

a straw hat
covers my bald spot
red leaves

Alfred Booth

mountain air
so easy to forget
city noise

Alfred Booth

tundra —
a cabin leans
into winter wind

Alicia Samson

north wind –
hardened resin
in the tree rings

Artur Zieliński

haiku

evening mist
on the subway steps
steaming fries

Artur Zieliński

cherry blossoms
the sleeves of a child's coat
short again

C.X. Turner

shared silence
one of us turns
the mug around

C.X. Turner

shoebite —
the stiff friction
of our words

Debarati Sen

haiku

tharavad* visit
dust-covered grandfather clock
still ticking

Govind Paliath

cupping rainwater —
the whole sky trembles
in my hands

Jacek Margolak

moon-viewing —
the child watches
the grown-ups watch

Jacek Margolak

spring cleaning —
I move the clutter
room to room

Jacek Margolak

*ancestral home in Malayalam

breezy summer
the treetop swings
in all directions

Kalyanee Arandhara

the busker's
fingerless gloves —
winter wind

Kanjini Devi

dwindling woodpile
by the shed
bluebells

Kanjini Devi

dentist's drill
the bamboo screen
shudders

Kavita Ratna

haiku

beach walk
the child plays hopscotch
over each footmark

Lakshmi Iyer

winter sun
a downtown street
deep in shadow

Lev Hart

lunar eclipse —
someone upstairs
moves a chair

Lori Kiefer

bihu bonfire ...
snuggling my numb nose
into mother's shawl

Malabika Mitra

the shuffle
of solitaire
autumn evening

Marilyn Ashbaugh

fields of melon rinds
near a gravel road
summer's end

Marilyn Ashbaugh

winter snow —
another toenail loses
its colour

Mona Bedi

blue mountains ...
the many futures
of this body

Nicholas Klacsanzky

haiku

depth of winter ...
the needle pokes again
to find a vein

Raji Vijayaraghavan

conch shell
our perfect sunset
on the bathroom shelf

Robert Kingston

tailor's stool
his patent shoes lost
in his bell bottoms

Robert Kingston

sea bathing
the smell of prawns
left to dry

Sumitra Kumar

flip side
of my suffering
a nightingale's song

Tejendra Sherchan

softening
the night
a lyric cicada

Tejendra Sherchan

prasad
as I leave the forest ...
a wild raspberry

Vikram Kolmannskog

one-line haiku

how many years before it's old comfy shoes

Alan Summers

still the goosebumps first kiss

Alfred Booth

the wind wearing my footprint thin

C.X. Turner,

googly the dragonfly's air-bounce at cover point

Dipankar Dasgupta

one-line haiku

tilted nameplate on her closed door termites

Dipankar Dasgupta

I am now the oldest winter rain

Mona Bedi

patched jeans remembering each bruise

Robert Kingston

four-line haiku

a tui's call
in a swirl of wind
my foot slips
on mossy roots

Disha Upadhyay

concrete haiku

plum
petals
on
a
slope
dripping
moss

Kanjini Devi

haiga



image and ku: Marylyn Ashbaugh

each year
the trees grow taller
and fuller
each year you reveal secrets
that add shadows to my heart

Alfred Booth

we watch winter
melt into blossoms
the bus driver
whistles bird songs
while my cancer vanishes

Alfred Booth

sequoia forest
with the lowest branches
still out of reach
how I dreamed of your arms
wanting to hold me

Alfred Booth

tanka

green moss
in the crook of a bough
cradling
the knitted blanket
that once swaddled you

Alicia Samson

tailless, a lizard
on the porch
of my childhood days
stirs old memories -
tales with no end

barbara olmtak

peace talks
I fold the tea towel
into smaller squares
until there is nowhere
left for my hands

C.X. Turner

the tears they shed
a night before her wedding
sixty years onward
the southwest monsoon
departs again

Dipankar Dasgupta

to ease the sorrow
I breathe in, breathe out ...
fifty years later
I make a flute to turn
my breath into song

Fatma Zohra Habis

my mother's voice
lowered to a whisper
when the men entered —
i am still unlearning
how to bow

Jacek Margolak

what I call home
she called home too —
the same crack
in the plaster
above her bed

Jacek Margolak

old map —
my grandmother's town
in another country
the apple tree
still drops its fruit

Jacek Margolak

decades
on two adjacent sofas ...
the seesaw
of emptiness settles
into a quiet balance

Kavita Ratna

a brace
on each limb
yet the plum's leaves fall
I sign the doctor's form
to let mother go in peace

Marilyn Ashbaugh

at fifty
I embraced myself —
the freedom
of looking into his eyes
when I say no

Mona Bedi

the mango tree blooms
beside our empty home
a summer wind
keeps opening the gate
against its rust

Nalini Shetty

tanka

an etched
reminder of his absence
a scuff mark
where father's recliner
used to be

Priti Aisola

I buckle under
the weight of wingless words
each morning
a blackbird alights with grace
on my flower bed, takes wing

Priti Aisola

her glance glides
past me to the sapota tree ...
her concern
that it bears no fruit
surpassing everything else

Priti Aisola

the wind
leading a sail ...
the past
an undercurrent
in the current

Raji Vijayaraghavan

moonglade
on the lake —
i take
a rickety bus
to the hills

Rashmi Buragohain

occupied
with the rolling traffic
the toddler in a buggy
rolls her eyes
each time I pass

Robert Kingston

breaking dawn
a skein of geese northbound
at the horizon
tightened chevrons laid flat
at the car's wrong turn

Robert Kingston

blood moon
among the red hills
of a gnat's journey
why did it have to choose me
with my lightning reflexes

Robert Kingston

fifteen years
the cat and i
as best friends
love was to feel your heart
more than i ever felt mine

Rupa Anand

every night
she eats leftovers
in a cold corner
the lantern flickers
near the porch

Sathya Venkatesh

an old window
holds the evening light ...
she feels
even a few days away
is a betrayal

Sathya Venkatesh

what does she see ...
mother hallucinates
her thin body
shivering under the sheets
as we both stare at nothing

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

tanka

coal smoulders
in the dying fire
sparks fly
in this fleeting life why didn't I
hold on to your hand

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

nothing happened
in the blink of an eye
it was a simmer
that finally boiled over
and scalded us both

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

I don't know
how much longer
I have ...
my ash tree's infested
with emerald ash borers

susan burch

a rock
worshipped
as the God ...
my envy when it receives
all the flowers

Tejendra Sherchan

as the wind blows
through flags on Mount Kailasa
prayers disperse
reaching the pilgrims
who have lost their way home

Teji Sethi

wild west
chasing the long shadows
at twilight

Pic/Ku:Sreenath

Fatma Zohra Habis



Bitter Ground

The agreement is rewritten on the same page where yesterday's clause was erased.

The nurse counts the bodies on her fingers, as if reciting prayer beads. At the seventh, she stops, pulls off her glove, and slides her bare hand into the pocket of a small coat hanging on a rusted nail. She finds a wrapped piece of candy, still sealed. She tucks it into her apron pocket and keeps counting.

under the ash
a small almond sapling
opens one petal
folding its edges shut
each time dusk arrives

Jacek Margolak
~

The Unsent Letter

The border train was delayed in the fog, its engine humming low. Opposite me, an old man in a threadbare coat carefully peeled an apple with a pocketknife. Without a word of a shared language, he divided the slices and offered half on a piece of greaseproof paper. Decades later, with the border long gone, the sharp scent of that apple comes back with the first October chill.

an unknown face
passing through autumn fog —
years later
a single oarsplash
somewhere on the lake

Jacek Margolak
~

The Wooden Bench

The train slows as it approaches the platform. Through the open window come the scents of pine resin, cold river mud, and damp lime. Gravel crunches under the wheels. Twenty years have passed, and nothing has changed, yet everything seems slightly smaller.

The old wooden bench is still there, its green paint peeling under my fingers. I sit for a while before the train moves on.

the same step
the same slowing down
before the gate —
my feet remember
what I came here to forget

Jacek Margolak

Fading

We drew a line down the middle of the room when we were twelve, my sister and I. Chalk on the floorboards. Her side: posters of film stars, a pink rug. My side: books stacked against the wall, a blue blanket. We slept with our backs to the line for three nights. On the fourth, her puppy crossed over and slept on my pillow. We never spoke about the chalk again, but it stayed there, fading into the wood, until we moved out ten years later.

the attic trunk —
her pink ribbon
tangled
with mine
still

Joanna Ashwell



Without a Scribe

I fumble inside my bag for a pen. Nothing. I turn to my mother, hers is lost. My father just shrugs. A teenager holding a magazine as if it were gold. How trivial this seems now. Longing to write down an address for a fan club with no ink to do so. Then he steps forward, with a biro for my crumpled paper. Smiling as he reads the relief on my face. Thank you is said many times as I twirl away, clutching the address.

a random kindness
passes through shadow
to light the way
those simple stitches
hemmed to the heart

Joanna Ashwell



Settlement

The town I was born in nestles in the countryside foothills. The castle on the riverbank began construction in 1093 with Guy de Balliol. Bernard de Balliol and his son Bernard II expanded the site from 1125 to 1185 and gave the surrounding town its name. Barnard Castle, as it became known, has a signature round tower but suffered damage in a siege after 1569; by the early 17th century, it was largely a ruin. Often, when I walk through the woods over what locals call the Silver Bridge, I can see the castle at the river bend. Only when I speak to visitors do I realise this landmark is steeped in my bones. Taken for granted like the lean of an old tree at the garden edge.

castle ruin
bound with moss
and creeping ivy
with each return home
I look for the walls

Lakshmi Iyer

Soham

I attend my first yoga class. The teacher gives me a series of instructions for the exercises. I'm a bit confused. I have seen my dad do his shirshasana. One, two and three - he would raise himself up against the wall. I would watch, thrilled.

I later realise I need to loosen up a bit. My stiff legs are just not obeying the counts. I start to walk fast, do stretches and push-ups, bend forwards low, bend sideways, etc.

The yoga teacher is impressed by my enthusiasm as I persist with the warm-up exercises. I begin to lose weight. We are transferred to Bengaluru. The weather hits me hard, and I'm back to square one. My joints stiffen. My lungs take time to adjust to the pollen in the air. Then I come across a newspaper article about breathing exercises. That opens my eyes, and I restart the process.

a hummingbird darts
past the coconut tree ...
a folk song
carries the washermen's breath
across the soapy tides

Marilyn Humbert



Payday and Promises

We learn to creep like mice when da' picks up his wages.
Many years later, I confess to Mum that the man I married has become a stranger.
Her advice was that the heart loves who the heart loves.
Again, the morning after payday ...

his gift
a rope of pink pearls
I roll each bead
between finger and thumb
and yet ...

Marilyn Humbert



Emily

At midnight, we're driving through the streets of a rundown industrial park, dodging potholes. Next stop is across town, at the roadside byway where trucks pull over before the airport exit. The last call on our run is the bridge road park beside the river.

We ladle out cups of hot soup, hand out packets of sandwiches, and distribute cups of tea or coffee with a side of cellophane-wrapped biscuits and comforting words from the back of our van every night, but nothing relieves the pain of loss.

on the corner
a spent streetlight's
shifting shadows
the girl in gold Kylie shorts,
needle tracks in her arms

Mona Bedi



The Perfect Smile

I love wearing lipstick. Today, I choose Diva by MAC. I turn the mirror to its magnifying side and carefully line my lips before filling them in with colour.

In the mirror's reflection, my eyes alight on a photograph of my late sister. She always told me I overdid my make-up. It had been a small but recurring bone of contention between us.

I take one last look at my face before heading out.

Once inside the car, I remove the lipstick and replace it with a touch of lip gloss.

family home
playing tic-tac-toe
on weathered walls —
all the little victories
I never truly earned

Raji Vijayaraghavan

Seasoned

Turning the key in the front door, I step into the foyer, and the scent of a rain-drenched, fresh meadow lingers every time. Be it Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore or Gujarat, this sense of wonder lingers ...

a chirp
through the predawn hush ...
the moon
filters through to fill
this empty nest

Rupa Anand



The Change

It's midsummer, and an orange alert has been declared in the city. There's a heatwave, and I'm overseeing the placement of clay water bowls in the neighbourhood park.

Some women are walking there. "Why does the park have so many strays?" one asks. "We should get rid of them." I refrain from answering. Bending low, I scoop up a newly fledged green pigeon from the leaf litter. Unable to locate its nest, I bring it home and call the Wildlife SOS lifeline.

How does one survive in a world governed by greed, narcissism, selfishness, and a total disregard for the planet, the environment, and other beings?

The trees seem to sense this inner conflict as I find myself at peace amidst animals, gardening and birdsong. I trust the paradigm shift will be restful in the short term.

an autumn wind
propels me towards
transformation
much like wings
exiting a chrysalis

Sathya Venkatesh

Circling Back

Born and brought up in Coimbatore, I eventually settled here. With its pleasant climate, clear water, beautiful nearby hill destinations, excellent food, and warm, respectful people, this city has given me countless memories and a deep sense of belonging.

People sometimes ask if I ever get tired of staying in the same city. I honestly never have. Even when I travel, the excitement of discovering new places comes with a longing to come back. Perhaps that is the nature of home: no matter how far one wanders, something deep within draws one back, like a child returning to a familiar embrace.

winding through
hills and valleys
the mountain stream
meets the river
once again

Sathya Venkatesh
~

What Endures

On February 14, 1998, a bomb exploded close to our home in Coimbatore. The windows of our home came crashing down, and the dead outside were carried away. Soon we learnt that a car bomb had been planted nearby and that its detonation could wipe out the entire area. As a young adult, I could do little but pray as a military officer ordered us to leave. We left our beautiful, spacious home and stayed with friends, taking only what we could carry. For four agonizing days, we waited until bomb experts from Pune successfully detonated the bomb. When they completed the job, people from the neighbourhood folded their hands and fell at their feet in gratitude. I returned home with a profound sense of what it meant to be displaced, and with a new understanding of how fragile ordinary life can be.

beneath the fallen tree
new shoots emerge
after the storm
i gather what remains
and call it enough

Amrutha V Prabhu
〜

as I walk home ...

running
toward an unseen end —
all our plans
as though we knew
the rules of this game

gembun with tanka

Sumitra Kumar
~

at home

a stray cat
napping on the fence
carefree
about falling
in its sleep

Tejendra Sherchan
~

Robert Greene's 15th Law of Power states to crush our enemies totally.

I fight
losing battles
with the cockroaches
they keep
outnumbering me

Sumitra Kumar



you tunnelled
into the haystack ...
in a hospital gown
grandpa recalls
my first driving lessons

A year after, he forgets it all.

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

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

Team: *haikuKATHA*