

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Prakash Thombre

Issue 57 July 2026

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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 57
July 2026

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

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Our heartfelt thanks to:

Prompters for June, 2026

HAIKUsutradhar: Gauri Dixit

haikaiTALKS: Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

thinkALONG: Sathya Venkatesh

Tanka Take Home: Tracy Davidson

The Haibun Gallery: Lakshmi Iyer

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

Prakash Thombre

for his brilliant ink sketch of the man with an umbrella,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Editors' Choice Commentary: by Ashish Narain
Editor's Choice: one-line haiku by Alann Summers

near empty mall the heat still books a table

Alan Summers

Living in a tropical country, summer is the hardest season to get through. Indian culture is replete with poems and songs about the difficulties of the season and about waiting for the rains that mark its end. This haiku brilliantly captures the inescapable nature of summer heat.

The poem is set in an urban shopping mall. These retail paradises are typically air-conditioned to attract consumers fleeing the weather outside. By describing it as "near empty," the poem evokes a midday lull, in which even malls feel drained of life. Together with the heat, this conveys the sense of lassitude I associate with summer afternoons. With just these words, the poet sets the scene for the second half of the poem.

The second half personifies the heat. While some frown on this technique, it is used to good effect here. The sun, coming through a glass roof or a window perhaps, becomes another customer, claiming a table and keeping others away. An everyday scene we've all seen before. However, what elevates the scene is the use of the word "books". It shows that the action is not accidental but well thought out and planned. It leads the reader to consider how climate enters human spaces deliberately, despite our best efforts to keep it out.

The heart of a good haiku is juxtaposition. Here, it is used to great effect, contrasting human effort with nature's untamable force. Even the best AC can't fight summer. With the planet experiencing record temperatures this year and an impending super El Niño, the thought is both humbling and terrifying.

Alan is an award-winning poet. This poem is a fine example of how Japanese poetry should be written. It is Triveni Haikai India's honour that Alan not only actively participates in the forums but also guides other poets. Our heartfelt thanks!



image and ku: Marylyn Ashbaugh

winter morning –
the planner page
covered in crayon

Artur Zieliński

morning riyaz
breeze-blown petals
swirl at your doorstep

Arvinder Kaur

adagio for strings ...
i was but a fiddle
in his hands

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

the scales
in a constant see-saw
war & peace

Dinah Power

thinking
outside the box —
this vast sky

Fatma Zohra Habis

autumn haze —
the red back of a bus
fades into grey

Jacek Margolak

sand dollar
the ocean beginning
a fresh scroll

Joanna Ashwell

emergency ward
a young mother-to-be
hanging on time

Kala Ramesh

hopscotch
pigtails grow
wings

Kavita Ratna

twilight hour
the silhouette of crows fades
caw by caw

Lakshmi Iyer

Kathiri Veyil ...
the leather jacket peels
off its odours

Lakshmi Iyer

neon-lit alley
a folk song of her village
in the breeze

Milan Rajkumar

haiku

a drop of red ink
on the blotting paper ...
sunrise in winter mist

Padma Priya

the Mekong at daybreak
a motorboat
cleaves the calm

Priti Aisola

blue shades ...
the length
of a summer day

Raji Vijayaraghavan

broken olive branch —
summer siesta
lost to news

Rashmi Buragohain

dusk —
a toy dinosaur guards
the porch

Sathya Venkatesh

where
will

those
parachutes
land

exploding
kapoks

milan rajkumar



one-line haiku

sweat as a film the fan points all compass points

Alan Summers

near empty mall the heat still books a table

Alan Summers

chainsaws out hacking blackbird's song

Alicia Samson

one-line haiku

night fog tart apples somewhere in the orchard

Jacek Margolak

no more together I meet you outside of now

Kala Ramesh

runaway goat the camouflage of cattle

Kanjini Devi

one-line haiku

a radio somewhere fading lilies

Lorraine Haig

powder snow thinking about not thinking

Nicholas Klacsanzky

the valency of time brahmamuhurta

Shloka Shankar

one-line haiku

first frost frosting the tea cake

Rashmi Buragohain

the sway of a night train murmuring thunder

Ron C. Moss

abandoned swing still carrying summer

Sathya Venkatesh

peace talks in the trash bin all the leftovers

Srinivasa Rao Sambangi



two-line haiku

morning yoga
the blackbird's gaze

Artur Zieliński

summer cloud —
all the excuses

Fatma Zohra Habis

empty station
the smell of warm rails

Jacek Margolak

morning yoga
my cat refuses downward dog

Jennifer Gurney

two-line haiku

gun emplacements
the jungle takes its time

Lorraine Haig

picked blackberries
night stains an early moon

Ron C. Moss

four-line haiku

heatwave diminuendo
how much wobble
is acceptable
in an old vinyl record

Alan Summers

sipping apple mead ...
a hint of mischief
in the scent
of a bonfire

Marilyn Ashbaugh

old songs on a phone
the hooting owls deepen
an autumn night

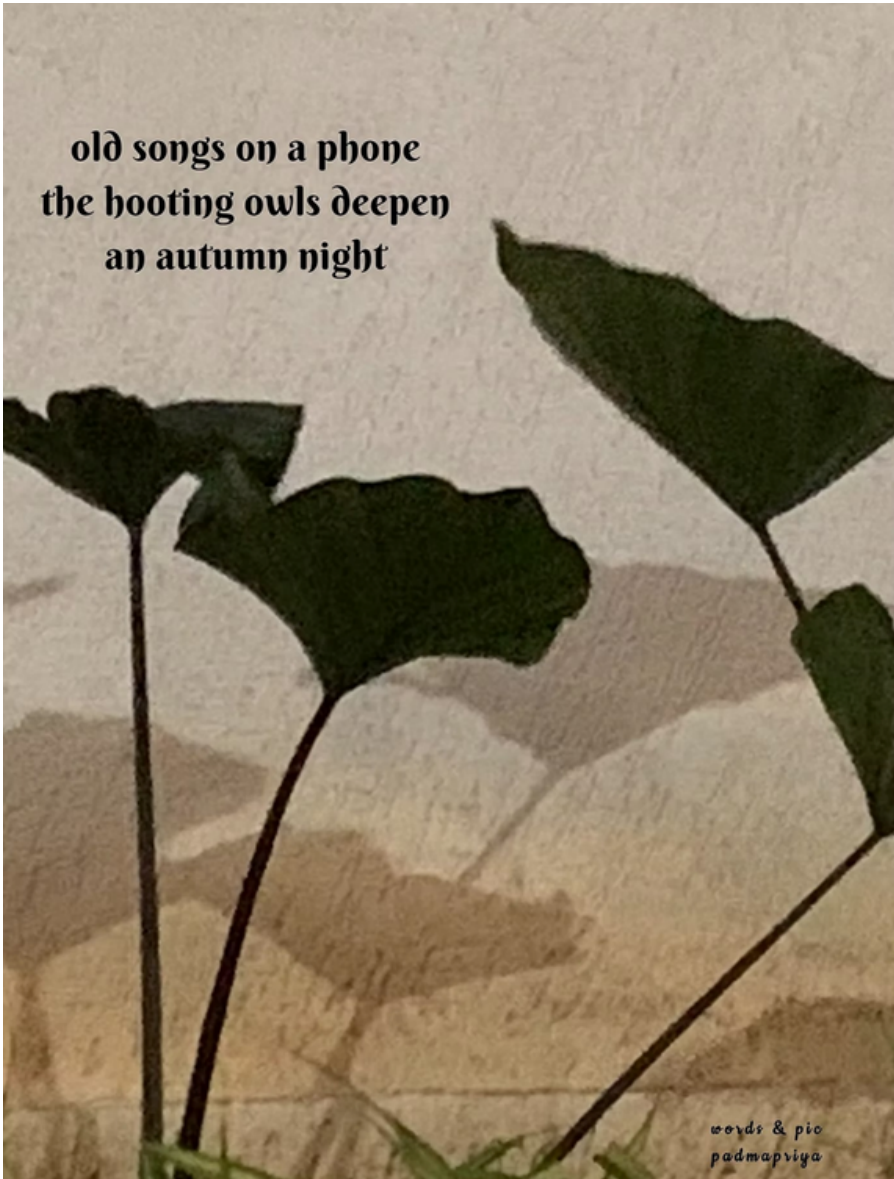


image and ku: Padma Priya

did he wonder
why I always sent
a valentines card
two male penguins in the zoo
raising a chick

Alfred Booth

word by word
you dissect the lab report
with Google
how I wish we grew old
without these threats

Alfred Booth

on the lake
mallards tearing apart
clouds
the letters on my lap
blur into grey

Alicia Samson

ligament surgery —
"shall i carry you?"
asks my three-year-old
her tiny hands
bearing the weight of pain

Amrutha V Prabhu

flowers and stones
in sheets of rain
so deeply salty ...
the old floor creaks
remembering your footsteps

Artur Zieliński

chiaroscuro
on the pathway —
my grandson asks
do shadows ever
leave us behind

Arvinder Kaur

a box
full of handmade
Mother's Day cards ...
now how do I
save these texts

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

night after night
i pour myself
into the darkness
through song —
daybreak takes my voice away

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

sleeplessness again ...
which means
another night
replaying
my life's greatest misses

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt



*words pour
from your mouth
among them
the faint pollen
of other voices*

AMRUTHA V PRABHU

always too late
there is no way
to make it linger
the life of a flower
already in full bloom

Fatma Zohra Habis

bound to earth
yet the drifting clouds
beckon me
chasing achievements
I forget to daydream

Fatma Zohra Habis

in our orchard
an old olive tree
bears no fruit
I rest beneath its shade
and remember my roots

Fatma Zohra Habis

at midnight
this email address
gets deleted
I wonder
if the signature stays

Gauri Dixit

hospital corridor —
my father smooths
the same newspaper
for the third time
without reading it

Jacek Margolak

power out —
my son asks whether stars
grow old
the flashlight trembling
between our faces

Jacek Margolak

each rose
past its
full bloom
making room for more
I deadhead my goodbyes

Jennifer Gurney

keepsakes ...
the silence at dusk
or the light at dawn
when words are offered
without expectation

Joanna Ashwell

the bell
that rings
the bell ...
mother's flashbulb memory
Gandhi ji's *Hey Ram*

Kala Ramesh



garden mint
slightly crushed
after the rain
a scent of forgiveness
at dad's funeral

marilyn ashbaugh

a whorl of thoughts
 rising forever
is there
a way to practice
mind feng shui

Kala Ramesh

do lakes
long for swallows ...
I tidy up
the rooms, counting the hours
when you'll be back with us soon

Kala Ramesh

tucking away
the jackets and jumpers
i say to winter ...
hope i'll be there
when you visit next

Kalyanee Arandhara

tanka

her twinkling eyes
blink no more
in a forever land
she remains
my best friend of all

Kalyanee Arandhara

transit lounge
I roll out my yoga mat
from different angles
the various poses
of passengers snoozing

Kanjini Devi

tall grasses
the wind weaves
a labyrinth ...
this grief wanders
hidden pathways

Marilyn Ashbaugh

tanka

tornado gone
power gone
internet gone
the oaks and i
rest in birdsong

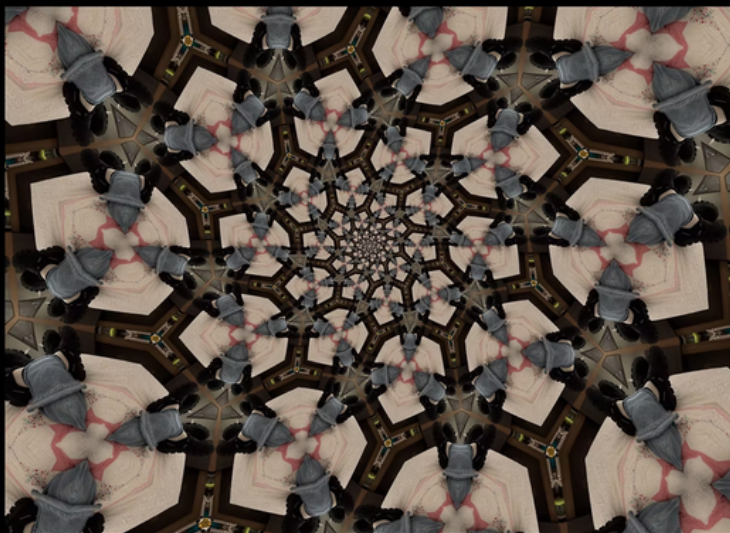
Marilyn Ashbaugh

periwinkles
growing along the cracks
in the balcony
mother's magic of creating
something out of nothing

Mohua Maulik

drawing the curtains
tight against the blazing sun
i resign myself
to a repeat telecast
of yesterday's drama

Mohua Maulik



you called me
your little sufi
convent school girls
dancing ourselves drunk
reciting Rumi to the stars

marilyn ashbaugh

unnecessarily
we curse them —
returning
from the gynae's
not one crow

Nitu Yumnam

new asphalt road
slicing old woods into two
the animals
slowly learn the norms
set by men in zipping cars

Padma Priya

the mirror
throws back splintered
faces at her ...
after the break up
she trudges back to herself

Padma Priya

a quilt
on her frail form,
a heating pad
under her back ...
still cold to the bone

Priti Aisola

small talk
winding down
to judgement —
a crow caws
from the mango tree

Rashmi Buragohain

she asks me
if I'm only a homemaker
after a lifetime
spent raising other lives
i go unnamed

Sathya Venkatesh

polished floors —
beyond the painted gate
heaps of litter
how quickly "our home" ends
at the property line

Sathya Venkatesh

summer breeze
as the tourist bus turns
at the bend
i remember my scarf
left in the seat pocket

Sumitra Kumar

somewhere
in a crease on your palm
is our destiny
a lifetime of songs
sung to different beats

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

tanka

snow settles
here today gone tomorrow
like the news
that you came into town
that you didn't call me

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

this is how
it always is - your footsteps
walking away
leaving a chill behind
fading echoes of spring

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

hopeless attempts
to mend
my wounded heart ...
how the army of ants
marches into our bedroom

Tejendra Sherchan

*she stays awake
counting the stars
this dark cloudy night
mother breaks her promise
to stay off sleeping pills*

Pic & ku : Mona Bedi

Alfred Booth



Born in the Tornado Belt

I would have left you in a nursing home, in the harsh hands of those who quickly learned what lay in your soul. My sister was by your bedside in your empty home when your last rasping breath failed you. The silence finally overlaying a lifetime's shrillness of "do-better" and "that's-not-enough"..

night storms
have rattled every window
left in rubble
no amount of tears
will peel back these thorns

C.X. Turner



The File

I had been qualified five years. The report listed injuries in clinical language. Posterior rib fracture. Healing. Recent. Non-accidental injury.

The baby was three months old.

I understood the words individually. It took longer to understand what they were asking a mother to believe.

Outside, someone was mowing the grass.

waiting room
someone empties
the bin
she asks me to read
that page again

Jacek Margolak
~

Credit

The visitors gathered around the painting while the guide spoke about its history. Cameras flashed. People nodded and moved on. Only after the room emptied did I notice a second plaque, tucked beside the frame where no one seemed to have looked.

after the rain
a snail's silver trail
across the stone —
already fading
from one end

Joanna Ashwell



The Sorting Hat

It's the way we're shuffled into the corner, a wag of the finger before we've spoken. There's a hierarchy and we're not first. Wait your turn, be polite, suffer in silence, will you be believed, don't make a fuss. You know how it goes, or do you?

too girly
in the pink sweater
boots knee-high
all the faults
we're told are ours

Kanjini Devi



Beyond The Five Senses

That faint scent of sandalwood, and possibly a touch of patchouli. Still engaged in conversation, my attention shifts to the steady footsteps approaching closer from behind. My breath deepens and the light in the room brightens. Then gently, a hand warm on my shoulder. My body does not flinch. How did I know it's you?

finding the one
that feels like home
wanderer
all seafaring birds
return to roost and rest

Lorraine Haig



Without You

I've been here before with you. It seems like another lifetime, you, holding my hand as we climb the steep, winding pathway. The hot day pouring into us. We stop to explore the little shops carved into the cliff. Today, I'm wearing the scarf you bought me. Green silk so light, it lifts in the breeze. At a steep bend I rest and gaze over the old town. The twisted tiled roofs. Those winding streets a maze I plan to explore.

a table
in a small café
sipping coffee
while the waiter flirts
with a customer

Mohua Maulik



Entwined Fates

Sewing on a button, I prick myself. Sucking on the oozing blood, I think of Ma who is undergoing a fourth injection into her eyeball.

the fragrance
of heirloom sweet peas
from dad's chair
how did mom inherit
his blindness

Reid Hepworth



Changing World View

Far from the sea, a seagull lands on my neighbour's lawn. It walks the fenced perimeter, poking at green grass here and there before flying on top of the bird feeder. A proverbial king upon his throne.

The gull's mate, on the other hand, lands on the washing pole before swooping down onto the shed roof. A quick survey of the landscape ... green only green, not a crab or clam in sight.

From the dining window, I watch these antics and wonder what has brought these seafaring birds so far from home. Perhaps like my partner and I, they have been priced out of the market. Their home no longer their own.

near silence
in the deep-blue sea
day after day
emaciated grey whales
strand the shore

Sathya Venkatesh

Fractured Calm

The instructor asks us to focus on our own practice. Around me, though, the room hums with comparison — who bends deeper, who holds longer, who has improved, who hasn't. Even after class, the conversation drifts toward other people's shortcomings. I leave wondering why self-observation is so much harder than observation itself.

still pond —
every ripple
pointing outward
the broken moon
in each of them

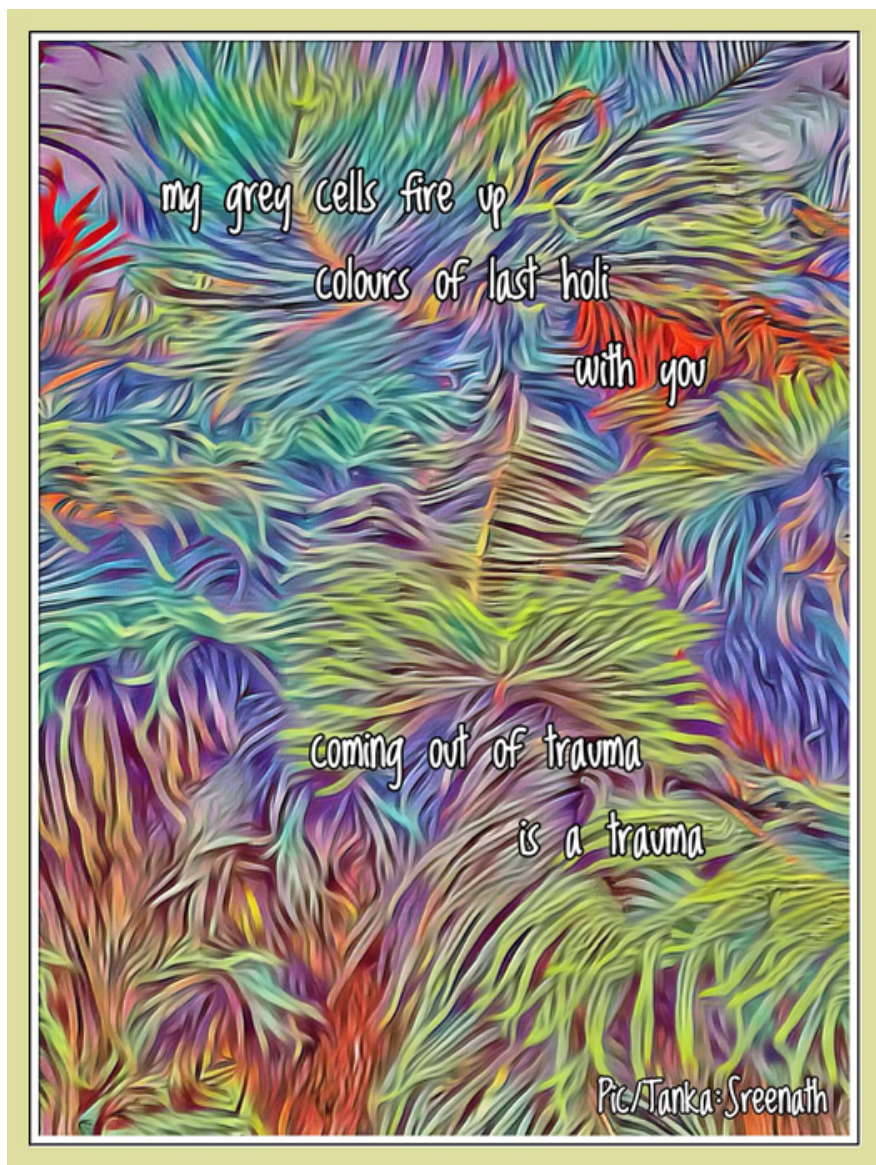
Sathya Venkatesh



The Sound of Waiting

The signal is red. Every vehicle is stopped. Yet the waiting is drowned out by a chorus of horns from vehicles that cannot move. One driver leans on the horn, then another joins, until the junction becomes a contest of impatience. No one moves an inch faster — only the noise advances.

roadside pond —
a dragonfly lifts
from still water
its reflection
breaking apart



Sathya Venkatesh



A Wider Sky

For years, I measured your growth against doorframes, school terms, and seasons. Now the suitcase stands by the door, filled with more than clothes. I want to tell you all the things the world may forget to say: eat well, call home, trust your instincts, be kind. Instead, I fold these words into a smile and watch you step toward a horizon that no longer includes me in every frame.

first light —
the young heron
lifts from the marsh reeds
circling once
before finding its own sky

Amrutha V Prabhu
~

echoes of this rain

kissing
kissing my feet
again and again —
waves at the shoreline
turning back

Mona Bedi



years later he still feels like a stranger to her

lost and lonely
in a long marriage —
a missing note
among the rusted strings
of the old guitar

Sumitra Kumar



This larger-than-life banyan tree ...

great-grandpa's
descendants scattered
around the world ...
how my fancy conjures
cousins' faces in every crowd

susan burch
~

Breaking News: AI starts suffering existential crises

picking
the right pictures -
the robot's confusion
when he proves
he's not a robot

Kanjini Devi

leaving you
out in the cold rain
how could she ...
these waves of regret
over and over again

but she promised, she promised to look after you

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

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

Team: *haikuKATHA*