

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Milind Mulick

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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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haikuKATHA

third anniversary issue

we've been fortunate to have you
as our patrons for the past three glorious years
thank you

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haiku, tanka, haibun, tanka-prose,
gembun with tanka and haiga

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haiku, tanka, haibun, tanka-prose
and haiga

Our heartfelt thanks to:

Linda Papanicolaou, Billie Dee, Marjorie Buettner,
Alan S. Bridges, and Lev Hart,

for providing the weekly challenges
for the month of October 2024,

Milind Mulick
for his brilliant watercolour painting,

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 haiku editors,
Kala Ramesh, Ashish Narain,
Sanjuktaa Asopa and Vandana Parashar
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'll be honouring

C.X. Turner

for her five impressive haiku.

Tejasvat
C.X. Turner

Triveni Haikai India

family photo —
one smile already fading
as the shutter clicks

the old fence leans
with the wind —
so do I

rising stock —
a city's skyline
buys more sky

she leaves me feathers caught on wire

drifting fog apples sink into soft earth

Results of indianKUKAI #47

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

The winner is **Daniela Misso** with 29 points!

her memory
comes and goes ...
fog moon

Daniela Misso
Italy

In the 2nd place is **Eleonore Nickolay** with 27 points.

last quarter moon
the rest of the way
without you

Eleonore Nickolay
Vaires sur Marne, France

In the 3rd place is **Cristina Apetrei** with 24 points.

street puddle
an origami boat
crosses the moon

Cristina Apetrei
Săveni, Romania

Editors' Choice Commentary: Vandana Parashar
Editor's Choice: *rising stock* by C.X. Turner

**rising stock —
a city's skyline
buys more sky**

C.X. Turner

The reason I chose this haiku for commentary is not only because of how brilliantly it juxtaposes economic and natural imagery but also how the poet has used sibilance without it feeling heavy on taste.

The haiku starts with “rising stock”, which can apply to the stock market as well as high-value real estate, which necessitates building more high-rises. Over the past few decades, the mushrooming of skyscrapers has drastically transformed the skyline.

L2 of the haiku brings our focus to this ambitious urban development which extends vertically in pursuit of more space capturing the relentless expansion of the urban landscape and the forces driving it.

L3 works on a deeper level by highlighting mankind's insatiable desire to claim more territory. As if the earth wasn't enough, man now attempts to own the sky as well. This haiku underlines a sense of encroachment into realms that once felt distant or unreachable. On the one hand, it shows the glamour of modern cities where upward growth symbolises prosperity, and on the other, it also raises questions about the limits of expansion and the costs that come with it. The phrase “buys more sky” is striking and highlights man's ambition to control the infinite.

Editors' Choice Commentary: Vandana Parashar
Editor's Choice: *rising stock* by C.X. Turner

True to the essence of haiku, without being explicit, it raises some thought-provoking questions:

1. At what cost does progress come?
2. Where will this greed, this territorialness end?
3. What's the impact of urbanization on community and individual well-being?

It's our instinct to look heavenwards to show our gratitude for this life and also ask for help when in trouble. The endless sky fills us with awe and helps to put things in perspective. What if that dwindles over time because human beings are so obsessed with expansionism?

C.X. Turner deserves applause for this wonderfully crafted haiku.

haiku

a mouse
scurries from a pile of leaves
autumn moor

Alfred Booth

no epitaph
my ashes will nourish
an oak tree

Alfred Booth

smashing garlic
with the flat of her blade —
lies lies lies

Barrie Levine

still
in stillness ...
the blue heron

Kala Ramesh

haiku

last day in paris
saying good-bye
to the macaron moon

Keiko Izawa

not as I hear it
the skylark's song
for skylarks

Keith Evetts

autumn rains ...
mother scrubs the black stains
off the brass lantern

Lakshmi Iyer

family tree
a red circle around
the adopted son

Lakshmi Iyer

haiku

the sharp angles
of an old Jersey cow
morning frost

Lorraine Haig

lambing
the slow descent
of a raven

Lorraine Haig

push and shove
in the temple line ...
a prayer for shanti

Namratha Varadharajan

blue moon diamonds
the dark waters ...
bare-footed beach walk

Namratha Varadharajan

haiku

the way i sit
with you after you leave
jasmine blooms

Ranu Jain

monsoon —
the wayward drift
of a small prayer

Rashmi VeSa

distant sirens
a guide dog tugs gently
at the curb

Sandip Chauhan

opal skies
the seamstress measures
another wedding day

Sandip Chauhan

haiku

next door
to the last house on the street
spring meadow

Saumya Bansal

sunflower fields
the citybound clouds
take a detour

Saumya Bansal

small town sweet shop
I get two orange candies
as change

Srini

midnight pit stop
old songs sweeten
the sugarless tea

Srini

haiku

frost-bit flower
sometimes it's easier
to talk to a stranger

Vandana Parashar

mother of teens
summer sea calmer
than me

Vandana Parashar

one-line haiku

shades of wildflowers the class of gen z

Devoshruti Mandal

a herd of camels on the run thunder moon

Lorraine Haig

sitting around the table four phones

Namratha Varadharajan

a koel's song lengthening my stroll

Srini

four-line haiku

firelight
the scratch of a quill pen
pulling pushing
its shadow

Linda Papanicolaou

concrete haiku

not there not there there!
third-day crescent
between two branches

Kala Ramesh

one-word haiku

(go)ogling

Dipankar Dasgupta

tanka

can I ever
go away from you
even the leaves
that fall in fall
rest near their tree

Arvinder Kaur

crows touch down
at the corners of my eyes
when I smile
it's the proof
I am still a shiny thing

Cynthia Bale

release my birds
from the cage
my heart adrift
in the ash-grey sky
of endless wars

Fatma Zohra Habis

tanka

menacing wings
across the old mill wall
shrink to nothing
pigeons on the roof
sitting on shadows

Florence Heyhoe

the way your eyes
carry the sky
of the finest blue
even the kingfisher
pales beside you

Joanna Ashwell

park warden's whistle ...
an elderly couple
getting up
from the bench
slowly walk into twilight

Kala Ramesh

tanka

childhood dream
of a fancy car and
a plush home
oblivious to the world
the woodpecker at its chore

Kalyanee Arandhara

no complaints
these past ten years without dad
season after season
don't know why I hesitate
to hug you, mother

Lakshmi Iyer

beneath
the dark surface
there's a song
let me sing to you
in the voice of a selkie

Lorraine Haig

tanka

how do I leave
to face the unknown ...
a kookaburra
on the overhead wire
remains immobile

Marilyn Humbert

two yellow butterflies
flit through pink wild roses
the moment
i catch myself worrying
about not worrying

Mohua Maulik

on the plaque
of a seaside bench
some child's name —
a sudden wave of grief
for someone i never knew

Priti Aisola

tanka

vedic chants
from the pandal ...
my niggling voice
of worry drowned
in the deep resonance

Priti Aisola

that lonely spot
by the stream
its murmur
silencing the murmur
of my mind

Sreenath

dusk settles
and shadows deepen
ever so gently ...
flickering diyas reflect
in the sadness of her eyes

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

tanka

the tiny arms
of a tyrannosaurus rex
how you like to
point out
my insecurities

Susan Burch

avoiding
the assembly line
I refuse to be
a carbon copy
of you

Susan Burch

a blue sky
with cloud
after puffy cloud ...
how will I ever
get anything done

Susan Burch

Alfred Booth
~

“There is always another path”

The epitaph I wanted on my tombstone years ago has been revised again. “There is still time”. The poet in me, at once depressive and euphoric, changes muse every few months. My definitive ecological decision is for my ashes to be placed in the ground with a ginkgo tree seed and I hope my soul will nourish the soul of my small legacy.

birds in flight
their delicate bones
soon forgotten

The last time I flew from Paris to San Francisco, I confronted my demon: a drug-laced old woman who from all accounts thought I should have died in childbirth like my twin brother. I still speak with him daily. From his untroubled world, he has never shared even one here-and-beyond secret to vanquish my anxiety. Hopefully, his existence beyond life is pain-free.

a thunder’s echo ...
life blooms
between your words

My dear friend Pascale, *une âme-sœur*, lives near Montmartre. She suffers from severe thyroid problems. She often speaks of her days outside of Calcutta in various Ayurvedic retreats. Ancient medicines and daily yoga have kept her alive, but every year her body weakens. We never speak about ‘afterwards’. The light in her eyes is like the silent prayer in my brother’s words.

dawn to dusk
from these lush gardens
I want it all

Author's Note: Inspired by three selected phrases or words from "From Smoke and Ashes" by Abir Mukherjee.

Alfred Booth
~

to die a happy man

how i wish the steadfastness of a forest would calm and un-tether my spirit —
unsure of every footstep, of every direction, of every verb and noun — and allow
me to define love and life once and for all

moss and lichen
reach for the canopy light
a gentle path

Alfred Booth
~

The call of darkness

Maybe these dreams have always been about my childhood closets, when their loud voices boomed like devils let loose and I hide here behind boxes filled with out-of-season clothes. I disappear deep into these shadows, invisible, hoping never to be found. I fear not being able to breathe, huddled underneath clothes that will seem like I don't keep my closet tidy should someone eventually look. Would they miss me if I died here? Would they at last fall into each other's arms and weep?

on the porch
no one comes or goes
snowfall

Anju Kishore

The Churning for Nectar

It's hardly 6 am. The Sri Ranganatha temple in Srirangam is up and buzzing in preparation for the Viswaroopa Darsanam — the auspicious up-close viewing at the dawn of the 6-metre-long Lord Vishnu in His magnificent reclining pose.

oceanspray

I am in the queue with an online ticket. To my left, ticketless devotees are racing towards a swelling free darsanam. After a security check, a temple official waves me into a long, grilled enclosure that winds around towering pillars of sculpted rock. I hurry towards the sanctum following my queue. The other crowd just outside our enclosure is also moving fast. Despite the haste to get there on time, our bare feet are noiseless on the cold, stone floor.

rivers culminating

We reach the outer entrance. Behind and around me, humanity surges forward, inch by inch. At last, I find myself facing the sanctum sanctorum. Two tall brass lamps cast a soft glow in the darkness. The air suddenly sheds the restless babble of the crowd. The priest instructs me to gaze upon the Lord and seek fulfilment of my desires. I gaze upon the Lord and swallow my tears.

in a sip

C.X. Turner

In the Space Between

The radio crackles softly. Lettice adjusts her straw hat, hands deep in the cool soil of her allotment. Her world is measured by seasons and the steady pulse of earth. She hears the rustle of leaves. There, by the raspberry canes, a hedgehog shuffles, searching for its supper. She smiles, brushing dirt from her hands. The war may be over, but in the soil, some things never change.

shimmering fields –
dreams ripen beneath
the grain moon

Zac floats in the silence of space, the stars' endless pinpricks beyond the station's windows. His stomach rumbles, a reminder of the last meal: a slice of homemade carrot cake from Earth. The fruit-flies, part of an experiment, hover in their tiny enclosure, unaware of the vastness around them. Zac wonders if they miss the planet's gravity as much as he does. Outside, the universe stretches, vast and indifferent.

melon rind
abandoned in the sun
the way you left me

C. X. Turner
~

There's Something Warm About the Rain

Louis paces the creaking floorboards of his cramped London flat. A saxophone solo winds through the walls, but his thoughts remain tethered to the wooden box his grandfather left behind. The key is long lost. His fingers follow the worn edges of the wood, wondering if the contents still hold any meaning. A shadow sweeps the sky, and he looks up to see an eagle, wings cutting through the bruised horizon. The silence presses against the years, thick and heavy, like a presence in the room.

from the window –
even the dust inside
refuses to shift

Lora stands at the bow, gazing across the empty Pacific. Weeks have passed since they buried the time capsule beneath the coral reef – a gift for a future that feels out of reach. The ship slices through rough waters with ease, but the world feels hollow, like the muted hum of a forgotten melody. She watches a snail inch along the deck, its slow path echoing her own uncertainty. The ship moves forward, but she remains adrift, suspended between what was and what might never return.

plunging seabird –
the storm tears apart
what hands once held

C.X.Turner
~

Out of Step

Between mirrored high-rises, a man in a worn checked coat counts coins on the curb. A young woman strides past, her heels ringing out against the pavement in a rhythm he can't match. She pauses, glancing at her reflection, then lifts her gaze to the skyline's shimmer, face framed by steel and glass.

city shadows —
the glint of silver
caught in his hand

haibun

Florence Heyhoe

Heaven's Gift

We meet for the first time on the island where she lives. We talk about writing poetry and singing songs, having participated in both that afternoon. The following day, I meet her again. She is walking with her son and a wiry dog. In the wet and windy weather, I invite myself for coffee.

eider ducklings
in the harbour
a swooping gull

As she busies herself in the kitchen, I look around trying to build up a picture of this woman. A guitar and violin hang on the wall and there is interesting artwork dotted about. She talks about her mother and children, island life. Some locals have developed a defensive deafness.

tipping point
a volcano
spewing hot lava

Her words travel into merry-go-rounds and cul-de-sacs. I lose direction as the details flow. Anchored to so many internal fragments all calling for my attention, I cannot focus. But I feel the pull of tentative threads between us.

holding hearts
the hammock swings
between two poles

At home again, my pilgrim heart is failing. Once more, she has emailed words which wrap me with understanding. Her capacity for knowing just what will fit is quite remarkable.

hungry for depth
the gannet surfaces
with a fish

Joanna Ashwell

Selection Points

I sit at the window and watch the birds. The pigeons are first, then the crows. Two ring-collared doves attempt to land but are chased by the pigeons. A blackbird winds his way to the seed below the feeder. It is under the radar of the flap of wings and the peck of the nodding few. A robin lands precariously on the rosebush, narrowly missing the thorns. Nuts are now scattered as a rook dive bombs the hanging feeder. Some days they all dine together and other days there is a defined pecking order.

border crossing
the same moon
on either side

Kala Ramesh

First Rains

water has no shape but shapes

everything

in this cracked riverbed of being

brain

heart

wilting rose

yearning

haibun

Kanjini Devi

Hands of Light

Drifting in and out of consciousness, I can hardly keep my eyes open. It has been an exhausting day; my body and mind are depleted. My emotions are a frizzy tangle.

I hear two soothing voices, of a male and a female. I can just about make out the ghostly figures gently moving around me. They tell me everything will work out and encourage me to trust the unfolding of my own path.

I lie perfectly still, descending into deep slumber.

downstream
after the storm
a bevy of swans

Kanjini Devi

Alnitak

The sun is shining, the bay a richer blue than the sky. Someone is talking about The Beach, which was apparently filmed here. I pay little attention, and casually untie my sarong, keen to show off my brand-new orange bikini.

As I'm not known for my swimming skills, I make a point of staying in the shallows. I float on my back, breathing in the warmth. Before I know it, I find myself caught in a current, my feet unable to feel sand. I frantically wave to my friends at shore who wave back, oblivious to my plight.

I continue to flail, salt water rapidly filling my nose and my mouth. Is this what they call a riptide? Every time I manage to get my head above water, I glimpse a shore that keeps moving further away, until I can no longer make out the figures.

A sudden motion starts to swirl under my feet, building momentum as it coils around my body: lifting, turning, lifting, turning ... I say to myself this is the end, surrendering into the coils of cobalt. When I open my eyes after what feels like a long time, to my surprise and relief, I find myself close to shore.

the myth
of mermaids
angels among us

Keith Evetts

Prelude

Flat calm. Bird calls. From time to time, a cricket. Herons carved into the reeds. A hint of straw perfuses the still air. Quiet voices carry clear across the surface. The first terns have arrived inland, mewling, mewling ...

windless sky
a pochard pops up
in the floating world

On the bank, a pair of swans *en garde*, necks extended, their seven brown cygnets spread widely, grown and moulting. I cycle past, slow and wobbling ...

cusp of autumn
balanced on the thinnest twig
lesser egret

Who wouldn't think that time has stopped? Yet in the evening there will be a chill mist.

acid grassland
a jackdaw bounces and stabs
again and again

Lakshmi Iyer

Under the Stars

Some marine creatures reside in the homes of other empty shells. The empty oyster shell is a platform for snail eggs. The scallop's home hosts a cluster of scorn barnacles.

sudden rains
a stray dog waits inside
a make-shift shed

Lorraine Haig

Trapped

He slices through the pristine reflections in his tinny. It's high tide. Zipping up creeks like a dragonfly, he slides on the slick surface, planes over submerged logs and vanishes into the high reaches to empty and bait his pots. He works fast or he'll remain stranded on the dropping tide.

Meanwhile, I'm taking our three-year-old daughter on a bus to attend weekly therapy classes. First, it is speech. After that, plastic shapes are strewn across the table. Her hands spasm as she tries to push the blocks through matching holes.

Hauling a trap to the surface among the mangrove's smooth limbs, he hears the click of their breathing. In the pot five startled crabs cling like rock climbers, their eyes swivelling in fright. He shakes them out to scatter about his bare feet, re-baits and lowers the pot overboard.

It's the last session, she fears the most. The swing spins to a stop. The therapist steadies her head and stares into spinning green eyes. She's relieved when it's over and we catch the bus for home.

Pinning each crab under his big toe, he straitjackets the claws. Scuttling sideways they hide under the wet sacks in the bow. He pours coffee and lights a smoke, watching the water rise and fall like the lungs of his sleeping child.

depth of blue
a stingray circles
the aquarium

haibun

Lorraine Haig

Fading Light

I'm at sea, clinging to a raft, unsure of where I am or how I got there. As you drift past, I stretch out, but you slip through my fingers holding someone else's hand.

moonlight
through the window
slow breathing

Outwardly I seem calm, but my insides are trembling. I go early and sit with you, aware the day will pass without you waking. The drugs keep you tethered to this world in a dream state.

They have moved you to a mattress on the floor. It is comforting to see you down there closer to the earth.

I talk to you and hold your hand. The curtains are closed, and the television is off. The room has become a parlour for transition.

morning tea
the rattle of cups
passing by

The darkness morphs into a restless journey. A storm is brewing as I set out alone to reach the unknowable source. The path is difficult, and I stumble, aware you are there ahead of me. If only I could move faster.

It's three am in the morning when the phone rings.

Mona Bedi
~

The One

*"Peace is found when the mind stops chasing and starts embracing the present moment."
—Bhagavad Gita (6.10)*

On a hospital bed in the oncology unit she calls out to the doctor on duty. He comes after half an hour. By then, she has vomited twice.

firefly garden
a dream or two lingers
over the jasmine

*"The peace you seek is within; calm your mind, and the world will follow."
—Bhagavad Gita (6.7)*

I am doing my yogic breathing when the phone rings.

My sister's attendant is calling from the hospital, "Madam, your sister has a high fever. She is asking for you."

Tears well up in my eyes as I hear her incoherent voice.

paper boats
I slowly let go
of what's mine

*"True happiness is found within, where the soul is free from desires and attachments."
—Bhagavad Gita (5.24)*

haibun

I close my eyes and remember the times when both of us would paint the town red.

Her laughter resonates in my mind.

The attendant's name flashes again on my phone screen.

falling star

the wishes I hold

close to my heart

Rashmi VeSa
~

The Shape of Change

At this junction, where the traffic signal changes every 480 seconds, there are hordes of persons seeking alms. Moving in groups, they have hived out grids for themselves. Over time, there is a working relationship with the wayfarers like me, who take the same road daily to work. An easy banter relaxes the workspace. I ask about their health and reasons for a missing face. They talk of troubles with the law enforcers and their greed to shave off their earnings. Almost every other day, I ask why they cannot join the skills centre run by the city council. They laugh off my inquiries, shrug them, and get back to their vocation with more vigour.

Yesterday, they ambushed the auto I was in, refusing to make way till they were given more. "It is Deepawali; we need to burst crackers too," they chorused. Every day, I have a tacit understanding with the auto driver, who gives them some loose change, which is then auto-deducted from my account. "I carry no cash," I tell them firmly. One young man fishes out a swanky smartphone from the grimy folds of his tattered shirt and opens a QR code. "Transfer the money digitally," he says.

anti-corruption rally
everyone feasts on
the free lunch

Rashmi VeSa
~

On the Margins

Soul-searching rain pierces the Sahyadris. Nights stretch into days and blur back into nights. A mountain collapses, sweeping away a village of eight tiny homes and smaller people: women and children of indeterminate age. The men are away, working in a city, a two-night train journey from home, visiting once a year or perhaps once in many years—no one can say for sure. This village is perched on the mountainside and has no forests to forage, trees to cut, or land to till.

murmurations
the shape-shifting earth spills
bare truths

Two days later, the men come. They have journeyed two nights and days and are unkempt. They tell each other in hushed whispers to cry and wail. The authorities are calling the disaster 'an act of God'. The men leave clutching the compensation cheques for deaths.

Sandip Chauhan

In the Gaps

The train car feels emptier without him. For weeks, maybe months, he was always there, riding the Silver Line. He sat by the door with his tattered coat pulled tight, muttering to himself. How did he end up here?

wet pavement
steam billowing
from a grate

Farragut West

He blended into the routine, like graffiti on the walls or the screech of the brakes echoing through the tunnels. Did the city swallow his identity?

crowded subway
strangers share a smile
over a dog's antics

McPherson Square

I catch glimpses of him, lost in his own world, as the train jerks forward. How thin is the line between my world and his?

flickering lights
a cigarette stubbed out
in the rain

Metro Center

The platform buzzes with people switching lines. Passengers sidestep him, some casting curious glances, others moving on without a second thought. Does anyone see him the way I do?

transfer point
an unclaimed newspaper
rustles in the draft

Federal Triangle

His usual seat is vacant. A stillness fills the air, heavy with unasked questions. Where could he have gone?

empty bench
pigeons fight over
the last crumb

Smithsonian

I search the faces on the platform, but he's not there. Tourists and commuters rush past, absorbed in their own journeys. Are they all just as lost?

museum queue
a kite tangled
in bare branches

L'Enfant Plaza

As the train pulls into my last stop, I pause to look around. Will I see him again?

morning frost
a bird lifts off
into the silence

Sandip Chauhan

Under New Skies

The corridor hums with a quiet I can't quite shake. I come out of anaesthesia's grip relearning the rhythms of this body.

end of winter
a crow's footprints
erase themselves

I gather the loose edges of my gown feeling the tug of stitches. The nurse arrives silently helping me dress and wheel me to the hospital exit. Light spills through the sliding glass warming the edge of my skin.

discharge papers
a sparrow builds its nest
in the parking lot

In the garden, the statue of Meera Bai stands in quiet devotion. Her hands clasped in prayer holding an ektara. I hear the faint echo of her bhajans in the wind.

first warm day
the scent of earth
in a dog's fur

A young girl nearby hums to herself on a swing, her legs barely touching the ground. The rhythm of her song carries me forward into the waiting air.

new leaves
a mantis unfolds
paper-thin wings

Sandip Chauhan

In the Balance

withered crop
a scarecrow's arms
heavy with debt

Dear Neta Ji,

Your promises drift like stray grain sacks across barren barns.
Our children's eyes grow wide as meals grow scarce.
In the city, fountains spill freely while our wells cough dry.
They sell us seeds spun from gold; all we harvest is dust.
When did you last bend down to smell the earth?

green revolution
pesticide bottles line
the dry pump

With bare hands,
The Keepers of Fields

haibun

Sangita Kalarickal

Message in a Bottle

The bed that Ammamma lies on seems to hug her. She smiles, reaches out, and strokes my face. I bend down to bury my head deep into a corner of her blanket. The wind swishing through tamarind leaves outside the window pauses. Only Ammamma's faint sandalwood fragrance swirls past.

My eyes suddenly flutter open to the incessant ringing of my phone. I'm shivering slightly. A draft whistles in. Through the open window a late Colorado night sky reveals the Big Dipper. I swear and jab at the answer button. "Hrrr..lo," I mutter sleepily.

"Hello, molay?" a voice floats through the ether, "Ammamma ... she is no ..." and the words give way to sobs.

My cheeks still feel slightly warm from her frail finger. The muskiness of sandalwood lingers in my nostrils.

a butterfly flutters
out of its cocoon
green pales into gold

Note: Molay is an endearment in Malayalam literally meaning daughter, but often used to indicate closeness

gembun

Kala Ramesh
~

village granaries bursting with gunny sacks of rice

her baby's first cry
 unlocks
the milk flow

Vidya Shankar
~

recipe for fighting cancer

brewing chants
with a d r i z z l e
of rain

Alfred Booth



In the Background

I am sandy-blond fair, not looking-glass fair. The decades have been kind although I'm not as spritely as I had hoped to be. Retirement proves itself beyond my comfort zone; I imagine the still-smoldering forest fires that have topped deforestation, both ravaging the Amazon. I'm no superhero-type guy. This morning's news about Gaza and Lebanon has cast a deeper sadness to the post-rainy weather. I have known so many fine people from Beyrouth; time has left its fade-away stamp on our friendships. I have never learned to pray . . .

wisteria leans
into autumn's yellowing
yesterday
I laughed at the mirror
as fine crow's feet winked back

Arvinder Kaur
~

Festive Fervour

She is wearing her favourite white Kanchipuram with the slim gold borders, pallu draping gracefully down fragile shoulders.

When I go in, she is sitting near the filigree window reading *Tomb of Sand*, a translation of Geetanjali Shree's Booker winner *Ret Samadhi*. On the side wall hangs an imprint of *Damyanti talking to a Swan*.

After her husband's passing she has taken to reading voraciously.

forehead wrinkles
glow in autumnal light
in the distant skies
a vermillion dot
sinks into the ocean

C.X. Turner
~

The Softest Imprint

Every Sunday morning, the quiet crackle of batter fills the house, a ritual of steam and sweetness. With practiced grace, I dust each waffle in icing sugar, turning them into clouds that melt on our tongues. For a few tender moments after we finish, the world outside feels gentler, as if wrapped in morning's first light.

moonlit kitchen —
night gathers around
each small flame
its glow recalls a warmth
no longer here

C.X. Turner
~

Liminal Air

For the first time in weeks, the tension in my chest loosens, a quiet understanding blooming beneath the oak's canopy. I pause, allowing the fog to settle around me, softening the edges of the worries I've carried for months. Like morning light filtering through mist on the daily commute, clarity begins to take shape.

quiet stars
flicker in the haze –
I sit
with the weight
of what remains

C.X. Turner
~

Steps in the Dusk

The world slows; an acorn drops from an ancient oak, echoing through the stillness. The damp forest air releases its earthy scent as we let the season draw us closer. After months apart, our hands find each other again in the cooling air, like remembering a forgotten rhythm. Even in the twilight, harmony becomes its own kind of light.

frost lingers
on the empty path —
between breaths
we speak of things
that never needed words

Cynthia Bale
~

Invitation

I can't tell you how, but I know they come. On the last night of October, I open the doors and they slip back into my kitchen from the next world, flickering greetings into the silence we hold for them. I raise the cup of remembrance and drink deep. Tonight, food is not the main nourishment.

family dinner
before the candy rush
candles glow
at the place setting
saved for our ancestors

Lorraine Haig

The Memory of Small Things

Every Christmas holiday we drive to Sydney and stay with family. It's a long drive. To keep us amused we play *eye spy*. But we kids are waiting for something else and when the high stone walls appear in an old town, we're silent. "That's where they lock up the murderers" says dad. Next, it's a small bridge over the *Three-legs-o-man creek*. It's no less exciting to be told again of a three-legged troll who lives under the bridge. "Can you see him?" Four small children all pop-eyed with anticipation scan the gully.

how moonlight
shapes the shadows
stories retold
embellished
in the telling

Nalini Shetty
~

Wandering Path

There's a stretch of trail by the Phalguni I used to know by heart. It twists and turns with the flow of water, cutting through woods and rock. I return now, years later, but it feels different, as if the trees have moved, or the earth shifted beneath my feet. I take a wrong turn. The sun filters through the leaves in a way I don't recognize. I pause, realising I've lost my way — not only here, but in life. Somewhere along the road, I forgot who I was supposed to be. The river continues, indifferent to my confusion.

how do we lose
ourselves so easily?
the shadows
of passing clouds blur
the line between then and now

gembun with tanka

Kala Ramesh
~

in no man's land lantanas growing wild

stillborn
 once again
my egg cell
attaches itself
to hope

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

the lead in her heart ...

imagine
floating and fluttering
like a butterfly ...
the gold-reds of falling leaves
merely dead

haiga



ku and pic: Daipayan Nair

haiga



rippled waters
the changed landscape
of my belly

©ranu jain

ku and pic: ranu jain

Dear Readers
thank you for being with us.

See you once again on 22 December 2024!
with many more fine poems
from our contributors.

Team: *haikuKATHA*