

haikuKATHA

unfolding the story within



Milind Mulick

Issue 12, October 2022

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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 12
October 2022

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

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

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for gathering the poems
written for these prompts,

our contributors
for sharing their poems.

Editors' Choice Commentary: Priti Aisola

Dimitte Mei

To my list of recurring dreams add this new one: My parents are not dead after all, and it's been weeks — months, even years — since I called them. How did I let it go so long? My father will be disappointed; Mother will be ...

I fumble with the phone, misdial, misdial, realize I no longer have the number.

night light
in the children's room
the weight
of knowing all we have
to give is not enough

— Linda Papanicolaou

I read and re-read Linda's tanka-prose several times. Something about it tugged at my heartstrings, left me feeling a little burdened and slightly guilty for no concrete reason.

At the surface level, Linda's tanka-prose deals with a familiar theme of recurring dreams that many of us have – dreams that perplex or unsettle us, or reflect our innermost fears and apprehensions, or bring to the surface our unfulfilled commitments. But at a deeper level there is more to this piece of writing than meets the eye.

The title was a mystery to me till I read Linda's explanation of it: 'Dimitte mei is a Latin phrase from a prayer in the Christian liturgy where one is asking for forgiveness of sins.' And the thought occurred to me, 'What are these sins that the poet is referring to? 'Sins' is a heavily loaded word. Are they grave ones? Will the prose give some insight into what is being referred to?

The prose mystifies, more than it clarifies. To the several recurring dreams that the poet has, a new disturbing one has been added: her failure to reach out to her parents (who *'are not dead after all'*), not just for weeks, or months, but years. Imagine her anguish, her sorrowful frustration, in the dream. What has prevented her from doing so? Neither she knows, nor does the reader. She goes on to say, *'Father will be disappointed; Mother will be ...'* She leaves the reader to fill in the unsaid. What will her mother be? Saddened? Upset? Dejected?

It is the very brief second paragraph that jolted me: the futility of a bungled, repetitive act and a sudden realization of irrevocable failure to connect with her parents. The reader knows that her parents are no longer around, then why so much pain, frustration and lingering guilt in the dream?

Then there is a deft, fluid shift to a mood of reassurance in the upper verse of the tanka: *'night light/in the children's room'*. The reader pauses, takes a deep breath. Feels calmed. We don't know how young the children are, but going by the image of the 'night light', one guesses they are young. One also gets the impression that they are comfortable or cosy in bed, after a storytelling session and hugs. Then comes L3 with its heavy tone: *'the weight'*... The *'weight'* of what, one asks. L4 continues: *'the weight/of knowing all we have'* ... Is it the burden of knowing that one has too many material possessions? L5 belies this. Together, Lines 4 and 5 reveal this burdensome realization: *'the weight/ of knowing all we have/ to give is not enough'*.

How much of emotional sustenance and psychological support is enough for our loved ones, be it parents, or siblings, or children? There can be nothing fixed or decisive here. To love is to love unconditionally; to give is to give unconditionally.

In Linda's tanka-prose, the title, the prose and the tanka interweave smoothly to create a resonant and deeply touching piece of writing.

Cover Art: Milind Mulick

Thoughts from an art lover: Alaka Yeravadekar



Song of Life

Reams can be written on the two key elements — water and women — depicted in this powerful digital painting by Milind Mulick.

The two elements are similar in fundamental ways. Water is a giver of life; so is a woman. Water does not have its own colour but reflects its surroundings and adjusts to the available space, much like a woman does as she performs different roles at home and at work. Some say that water has a memory. And for all its softness and fluidity, water has strength too. It is powerful enough to cut diamonds, wear down mountains, and create fertile valleys that are cradles of civilisations. A woman has the capacity to make a home from a house, nurture her children to become good human beings, pilot an aircraft, or conduct path-breaking research like Marie Curie.

To go back to the artwork, one can imagine these women gathering every day, by the river or stream, to wash clothes and utensils. Along with their work, they chat about various things — the latest happenings in the neighbourhood, beauty treatments, births, deaths, weddings in the family, pet peeves, and so on — much like how their sisters might, from different walks of life.

The clear water by the bank absorbs their vibrant colours, their conversation, and their moods, and flows on, carrying their songs to other women in other parts of the world.

— Alaka Yeravadekar

haiku

unspoken words ...
three freshly picked roses
on already cold hands

Angiola Inglese

training session
my neighbour barks louder
than the dog

Arvinder Kaur

end of drama class ...
my four-legged animals
become two again

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

palm reading ...
any excuse
to hold her hand

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

haiku

wandering minstrel ...
selling poems
for a song

Baisali Chatterjee Dutt

warm afternoon ...
joining autumn for a walk in the woods

Barrie Levine

old street sweeper
the early morning shift
of a ghost

Barrie Levine

ping of hailstones
on the old shed roof ...
this solitude

Billie Dee

haiku

the dog and I
speaking in wolf ...
hunters' moon

Billie Dee

what's left to say –
I drink coffee
she drinks tea

Bryan Rickert

the patient
listens open-mouthed
dentist's monologue

Dipankar Dasgupta

sunshine after rain ...
the old books vendor
opens the tarpaulin again

K. Ramesh

haiku

blanket of snow
lingering in the warmth
of her knitted throw

Kashiana Singh

autumn equinox
black-eyed susans
hibernate

Kashiana Singh

roadside chat
the Thakurs boast
of their heirloom

Lakshmi Iyer

neighbourhood gossip ...
stories of the abandoned
scooter

Lakshmi Iyer

haiku

wrestling match
his tiny finger
crushes my thumb

Marcie Wessels

removing a splinter
the tenderness
of his calloused hand

Marcie Wessels

the frayed wings
of a lingering war
Icarus, 2022 AD

Marilyn Ashbaugh

our tangled clothes
on a field of wildflowers ...
September twilight

Milan Rajkumar

haiku

temple bylanes
a saffron-clad pundit
foretells my future

Mona Bedi

fading light ...
he says a prayer
and throws the dice

Reid Hepworth

catching the cane
in my master's first lesson
purple sunset

Robert Kingston

warming up over chai
their chatter takes on
a different tune

Ruchita Madhok

haiku

pillow fort —
she speaks
royal gibberish

Sankara Jayanth

the sun's last rays
leaving some orange behind —
top of the maple

Shelley Krause

street music
the valley's echo
in his voice

Vibha Malhotra

overhead cables ...
our static lives
in a crackling street

Vibha Malhotra

one-line haiku

night ride rush of summer rain

Marcie Wessels

homesick the quiet of unquiet woods

Marilyn Ashbaugh

sun all over apathy

Sankara Jayanth

concrete haiku

skipping | over | the | sidewalk | cracks | in | my | memory

Barrie Levine

concrete haiku

narrow stone
canyon every
silence from
echoes

Lev Hart

concrete haiku

the full moon
short of
a few blocks

l
l
i
h
p
u

k
l
a
w

e
w

Lev Hart

concrete haiku

a roof peak

in the fog

bare fields

Lev Hart

concrete haiku

h a r d
r a i n
w a t c h i n g
t h e
p o u n d
fall

Robert Kingston

concrete haiku

entwined lifelines the p a l
u n l of an eastbound train
s d u
h p

Robert Kingston

concrete haiku

dinner
with the in-laws ...

i
keep
getting
calls

Sankara Jayanth

tanka

calligraphy brushes
moving upward
pampas grass
blending with the light
gold-dipped

Barbara Olmtak

gently holding
mother's wrinkled hands
growing older
I cherish what is
here and now

Barbara Olmtak

just when I decide
to lay my grief to rest
this deep red sunset
 the way you left me
 the *way* you left me

Billie Dee

tanka

the silence
between us in the garden
your first day home
after the biopsy
deadheading roses

Billie Dee

Mom's garden bench
laced with dancing sun stars
in afternoon heat
the scent of her lilac soap
and Chanel #5

Billie Dee

seven years
of a relationship...
the lyrics
to her favourite song
I still can't sing

Daipayan Nair

tanka

the kitchen
too small to hold
much anger —
I keep mine
on a bottom shelf

Ken Slaughter

smirking
the bully throws a curve ball
to me ...
I drive it deep
to center field

Ken Slaughter

darkening sky
ahead of my birthday
December days
measured out
with coffee spoons

Ken Slaughter

tanka

the child named
“beauty of a tinkling bell”
flunks math again--
at the IEP
her father jokes she’s stupid

Linda Papanicolaou

pup tent
amid oak and chestnut
— we listen
to the poetry of tree frogs
singing the moon awake

Marilyn Ashbaugh

dense fog warning
these well-traveled roads
suddenly unknown
in my seventh decade
orphaned by mother’s death

Marilyn Ashbaugh

tanka

scent of thyme
in the garden I planted
long ago
a seed of forgiveness
I must water daily

Marilyn Ashbaugh

our discussion
escalates to a quarrel —
I bite my tongue
when he quips
send in the clowns

Marilyn Humbert

quiet sunset —
aching for you
I talk
my heart out
to a scarecrow

Mona Bedi

the road
where we first kissed
now lost...
the mushrooming city
swallowing our memories

Mona Bedi

the dog and I
snuggle on your side
of the bed
longing for all that is lost
we hold on to what we have

Reid Hepworth

again we walk
alongside the river
taking with us
the sound of boat masts
rattling on the mud flats

Robert Kingston

tanka

deep churning
the boat's propeller
takes us back
to our time in the shadows
of the Rialto bridge

Robert Kingston

blown away
by a glitter ball
refracting its magic
in the dance floor mirrors
my first vision of you

Robert Kingston

an older couple
letting off steam
face to face
he pours her
another cup of tea

Ron Russell

forgetting
the Punjabi word
for moss
I mourn the loss
of dadi's memory

Ruchita Madhok

this longing
through the ages
for male progeny:
she holds her mother's hand
during chemotherapy

Rupa Anand

more and more
i implore the Earth
for forgiveness:
an Olive Ridley throws up
plastic before choking

Rupa Anand

tanka

tallying the total
in grocery bills ...
once again
I score an F
in math

Vibha Malhotra

moving out
of our childhood home
how snugly
this one bedroom house
held us for years

Vibha Malhotra

Anju Kishore



Where the Heart is

I stand at my favourite window overlooking the generous boughs of the Rain Tree. Below, a little to the left, the Golden Shower blazes at me as if in reproach. I look away, in no mood for questions. Or answers. My eyes follow the croton-hemmed path right up to the gazebo, a-tumble with the joyous blossoms of Chinese Honeysuckle.

april afternoons

Before stepping away, I steal a glance at the horizon to see if the familiar drizzle would drift in, to draw me outdoors one last time.

spectacles clouding over

One last time by the smooth, wet roads, on the manicured walkways, and under the verdant canopies of the Little Red Dot. But that seems destined to be an exact, impersonal taxi ride to the Singapore airport to catch my flight back home.

Home?

ma's masala chai

Anju Kishore



The Law of Motion

unlocking the latch...

Grief cascades like a river birthing itself, and then seeks ground to flow unhindered, beginning to divide into streams of which some, sooner or later, slip into the earth.

a veil of dust

And then finally, somewhere, it lets them all go, to find their ocean.

on the still pendulum

Waves of memories are all that remain, to rise and fall, rise and fall.

Billie Dee



Foundation

The new Sleek-Y-Form™ bra both lifts and shapes the modern bustline while providing a full sixteen hours of comfort and grace. For the woman past prime, a long-line elasticized model slenderizes the torso, while controlling those tell-tale rolls, so unattractive beneath this season's form-fitting fashion wear. A bright silk neckerchief completes the look for today's stylish woman striding confidently up the boulevard, projecting her charms in the brisk spring wind.

chilly afternoon —
her fingers tracing the scar
where a breast was

Diana Webb



The Candle Ignited

I walk the threshold on notes of songs where the stone is dappled and a broom
made of shadow sweeps the path ...

September high street
a bouquet of sunflowers
maintains the light

You come to meet me down rivers of stars and we walk hand in hand in
alchemical waves of leaf-strung horizons ...

a sheen of yellow
beneath the town centre ginkgo
market lemons

It is always ahead, the vision, the metamorphosis, spring's distillation, the way of
the wing ...

between two rivers
traditionally churned
a brimstone butterfly

Kanjini Devi
〜

The Roundabout

I tell her to stop telling me about everybody else's business, I really don't need to know. How are you, I ask.

lost in thought

She resents all the people who have caused her hurt. You must forgive, I say, it does not mean you forget.

a forager stumbles

Her solution is to sell her property and leave town, she continues to seethe . . .

on poison ivy

Lakshmi Iyer
~

One More Time

Dark clouds hover above our aircraft scheduled to reach Prayagraj by noon. A big downpour.

the river terns gather

My eyes follow the lashing drops on the windowpane. Just a minute away to land and the pilot takes off for a second time. The runway is water-logged. A hush descends in the cabin.

Ganga aarthi

The pilots make a difficult landing in Calcutta. We wait in the plane for an hour. Later, on a third attempt, we land safely in Bhubaneswar. Not on our itinerary. They arrange for our stay at a hotel, free of cost. Nothing much is lost as we get to visit the Lingaraj and then fly to Prayagraj the next day.

settles over dusk

Marilyn Ashbaugh
~

Morsels

noon visit

“You never know what will happen later,” grandma tells me in her thick accent as she gently tucks a tiny cucumber sandwich inside her pocketbook.

one yellow rose

“You will be hungry later,” she assures me, “and this will taste so good.”

on her gravestone

Marilyn Ashbaugh



Tightly Wrapped

double dutch rope

Around my Bazooka bubblegum, below the comics, is an advertisement for sea monkeys. They are lolling on a beach with a large sand castle in the background, royalty “so eager to please, they can even be trained.”

the heart palpitates

I chew my gum double time as I imagine the many tricks they will perform. Ten comics and a dollar. The wrappers and pennies slowly collect in my underwear drawer, safe from siblings who fear cooties. With success so close, I may need to quit school.

a failed dream

Martin Duguay
~

Three Years in the Making

After a four-hour bus ride to Incheon Airport, I'm eager to stretch my legs. At the check-in counter, there is an absence of a queue.

muggy morning

The hallways are deserted save for a few delivery robots and their handlers. In the departure lounge, the usual crowd.

a snail glued

More downtime than expected. Too much time. Will Dad even recognize me when he sees me? Is Mom still too frail to walk since her hip fracture last winter? I pull out the bestseller from my backpack.

to the garden chair

Reid Hepworth



Fresh Start

Grade 3. Skinned knees and a pixie cut. Mum's last attempt to keep me in pigtails and dresses has failed. I've set my limits and have started picking out my own clothes. No more waking up and seeing skirt-sets laid out at the bottom of my bed.

the thinnest sliver

Mum quietly cringes at my fashion choices; dad calls me his "little bra burner" when I refuse to wear my bikini top at the beach. I am secretly pleased when a total stranger mistakes me for a boy.

of light through the trees

I want to fit in as much as everyone does, but my friends have long hair, wear mood rings and listen to pop rock. I listen to Gloria Steinem on TV with the growing realization that times are changing. Just not quickly enough.

new moon

I make my stand at dinner. I refuse to clean the dishes while the men sit at the dining table talking politics. My dad grins as he picks up his plate.

Reid Hepworth
~

Nature Proofing

I've left my cabin in the woods.

I no longer wake to the sound of birdsong or the wind in the trees. Now I listen to the recycling being rifled through in the middle of the night.

The city doesn't sleep like the country does. The stars, mere shadows of themselves. I am untethered by the noise. I almost look forward to the change of season, so that I can close my window and shut it all out. Oh, to be a bear, to hibernate the winter away.

car alarm
a tree frog bellows
above the din

Reid Hepworth



Tuned In, Tuned Out

For my birthday, my parents buy me a Realistic portable radio from Radio Shack. It's not very good. Mostly I just hear static, tinny rock or the crackle of our neighbour's ham radio.

My dad, being a sound technician and a lover of loud music, decides to build me an external speaker. This is one of those times where I have to remind myself to be careful about what I wish for. Dad has a tendency towards creativity. Like the time he built a wooden couch for our cabin and painted it bright orange. And then built a sailboat in our basement and painted it orange too.

It takes my dad a couple of weeks, but the wait is worth it. My new speaker is amazing! It's bigger than me! My mum calls it, "the baby coffin". However, I'm not daunted by this as none of my friends have anything remotely like it. This is epic.

I decide to show off my new sound system and to prepare, I spend the day emptying my closet of clothes and replacing them with my doll table, a chair, the radio and a speaker. I'm going to create my very own radio station, with me as the disc jockey. Even better, I have a full-length window in my closet...which opens onto the front porch and street below. Imagine everyone's surprise when I start broadcasting.

Just like dad, I like my music loud.

yowling
through the night...
cat on fence

Ron Russell



The Way

Plodding ever upward. Steep, narrow and winding, a footpath worn in stone. A single scraggly bloom ekes out life in a barren crevice. Beyond the edge, a flotilla of clouds stretches across an endless blue sky. I ponder my place in it all. In the footsteps of those gone before, I seek what they sought.

mountain shrine
after many steps
heaven's gate

Linda Papanicolaou



Bitter Cold New Year's Eve

My parents are on their way out to a party. I'm already in pajamas, the babysitter
a few steps behind me holding a bedtime story she thinks I'd like to read.

Mother's perfume
and the swish of taffeta
at the front door
she kisses me goodnight
while Father warms the car

Linda Papanicolaou



Dimitte Mei

To my list of recurring dreams add this new one: My parents are not dead after all, and it's been weeks — months, even years — since I called them. How did I let it go so long? My father will be disappointed; Mother will be ...

I fumble with the phone, misdial, misdial, realize I no longer have the number.

night light
in the children's room
the weight
of knowing all we have
to give is not enough

Marilyn Ashbaugh

Confession

I want to leave. I seek the counsel of a Tibetan Buddhist monk but he tells me it is my karma to stay. The Catholic tradition is to confess one's sins to a priest, and so I do. The anger is consuming me, I tell him. How could the Church abuse innocent children? How could the bishops turn a blind eye?

a small piece
of stained glass
stuck in my throat
a bishop moves the priest
to play with other pawns

Ron Russell



Correct Change

A string of dead-end jobs. Many buddies but no friends. Endless lovers but not one to love. Overweight, cigarette lungs, alcohol breath. In the groove, the pattern remains the same. The merry-go-round does not stop till you get yourself off.

over and over
dancing to the same tune
a broken record
another quarter
for the jukebox

Vibha Malhotra



Cracks

He will be back in the morning. The two days for which he was on tour were her time to heal ... at least a little. For how long, she asks herself. Lighting her third cigarette, she ignores

her kitchen
with yesterday's utensils
unwashed
and years of having her faults
highlighted

Vibha Malhotra



Communion

Curled into a ball, a black stray lies shivering on the concrete floor. I run upstairs to get a blanket and, my husband and I, spread it out on the floor. The dog walks up to the blanket, sniffs it, and lies down on it.

Next evening, I see her again. The blanket is still there, except now it is tattered and scrunched up into a pile. She seems to have gotten into a fight over it. Now she is afraid to leave it unguarded.

Maintaining eye contact, I sit down next to her and start talking. As I start to pry the blanket from her, she holds on to it tighter. But after a while, she lets go. She watches as I spread the blanket out. Then she gets up and lies down on it again.

to the butterflies
that land for a rest
on me —
all the world is made of faith
and trust, and pixie dust



Marilyn Ashbaugh

haiga



*cold night ...
the doctor's pause
fills the room*

Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta



Rupa Anand

EDITORS' POEMS

A Note of Appreciation

It's our twelfth issue and it would be befitting that the editors' poems are published in *haikuKATHA* – a journal we have come to love.

The distinguishing feature that makes *haikuKATHA* stand apart from other journals is the month-long dialogue that happens in each of our forums in an enthusiastic and congenial manner. Editors give their time, effort and knowledge to offer critical assessment and many of our contributors have expressed how much they appreciate this gesture.

I can't help but quote our very active member, Billie Dee:

"Once again, I'm both pleased and proud to be selected for publication in such a fine journal. This line-up of brilliant poems will be quite a treat for the international haikai community.

Many thanks to our editors for all the hard work this entails, and for their wisdom in choosing so many gems. It looks like *haikuKATHA* is setting a new benchmark for online poetry publishing."

I was so touched by reading this comment from Billie. It was a dream to nurture and hone the talents of all those wishing to enter the haikai stream and it's happening each day, each hour. Each issue is making a mark and this is our 12 issue – a whole year has passed by.

Here's wishing this momentum doesn't slacken.
Long live our editors and *haikuKATHA*!

With pressed palms,
Kala Ramesh

Editors' Poems

Akila G.

Buoy

We snorkel in the reef island of Seraya for corals, Tigerfish and Manta ray. But the most intriguing are the starfish for which there are no synonyms in my daughter's crayon box. An unusual pale yellow, cream with black spots, dark orange glows majestically on their skin; especially the ones in royal blue that glisten in the waterbed.

painting class
her skirt
no longer white

The beach slumbers after sunset; an idyllic solitude after a day of ebbing and floating with divers, boats, prey and predators. The water bedspreads in the sand and mirrors the sun slipping into a dream.

night shift tracing the ursa major

We spend the morning picking sea shells. While I search for pale pink, light grey, conch-shaped and cowry shells, my daughter hoards the white tiny triangular ones softened at the corners. She puts them in the box along with the shells gathered from the banks of the river Godavari. I wonder what stories they would share with each other.

back home
an extra pinch of salt
in my cooking

Editors' Poems

Akila G.

falling asleep
in the car's back seat
 i drift
to the gurgling brook
i wish i had touched

Editors' Poems

Firdaus Parvez

again, a reminder
of his passing —
subscription renewal
of another journal
he will never read

lovelorn coos
of a mourning dove —
is it just me
that holds on to little things
like your old coffee cup

Editors' Poems

K. Ramesh

Lost

Deep blue summer sky.
A soft breeze rustles the trees on the campus.
They seem to enjoy it.

I look around, sitting on the cement bench near the playground. Some boys are playing football. They all seem to be happy. Even the trees look so. Not me. I feel sick inside. Not physically though. A nagging emotion in my chest. I feel that I don't belong to this place.

In this new school, I am homesick. Not able to connect to the smiles of boys and girls who could be my friends in the future. The bell rings, and it makes it worse. I lift my heavy bag and walk towards the class.

dusk ...
one heron far behind
the skein

leaving the forest ...
the fading calls
of cicadas

Editors' Poems

Kala Ramesh

Ancient Chimes

on her veena

Out of the muck petal by petal the lotus unfurls as water holds its reflection in the moonlight.

she plucks those liquid notes

I release the cluttered and the unwanted out through the doors and windows of my mind, but feeling guilty, I hasten to gather them and bin them, though thoughts don't dirty gardens and walkways.

a homage to the rising sun

Editors' Poems

Kala Ramesh

Sports Day

the sun

d

r

o

p

s

into the basketballrim

Editors' Poems

Priti Aisola

A Seagull's Long Call

Walking along the seawall in Vancouver one summer evening. Children are having fun in the small playground. There are some joggers, some brisk walkers, and a few dog lovers enjoying the sight of their pets running along a parallel walkway. A large family, who have brought in their own foldable tables and chairs, are enjoying an early supper.

Seated on a bench, an elderly woman gazes at the sea. And totally out of the blue, Friedrich's painting, The Monk by the Sea, flashes before my mind's eye. I know that, at the surface level, the two scenes have nothing in common. I am at a temporary exhibition of German Romantic painters in Paris.

A bare-headed monk stands on an undulating sandy beach looking at the sea. He is a very small, inconspicuous figure, and yet, we notice him. The sea that he contemplates is a dense band of midnight blue. The high waves with their foamy white crests forebode danger.

The sea moves into the sky, a lighter but sombre version of its opaque dark blue. Then a vast greyish-white expanse of the sky sweeps across a major part of the canvas.

What drew me to this painting was its mood of grave silence in spite of the crash of the large waves that one can imagine and hear within.

message-poem
on a bench plaque ...
passersby pause

Editors' Poems

Priti Aisola

this train journey
to see a river ...
all those years
I did not walk by the Mekong,
a stone's throw from home

Editors' Poems

Ravi Kiran

milky way
flows into the river
into the sea

folding light
into their petals
stray poppies

Editors' Poems
Shalini Pattabiraman

A Season of Being

When loss made an appearance in our lives, we went different ways. What we needed was a space to pause. Put our grief in storage.

barni
the kohlrabi pickling
in ancient oil

My Ma doesn't like the intimacy of words. Ma who has felt the heat of seventy-three summers, each distinctly reminiscent of the season's gifts, withers in winters. Her phalanges freeze when kneading the dough. Bones lose the fluid key where the articulation locks movement. She drags her leg, one foot trailing the other and rests the stiff inflamed parts swelling in the cold.

To articulate the pain one feels, one needs to separate the parts distinctly. It's a kind of commitment — this separation that makes one stand out. Ma prefers the waxy sheen of molasses, its darkness and stickiness hiding the ingredients as they settle into a thick inarticulate mass rising in the heat and cooling in the shade.

parcels of dough
the centre warm
with sweetness

Editors' Poems
Shalini Pattabiraman

On Exhibit

Some distance from me are the large glass doors through which I enter the mediaeval and renaissance galleries.

Solid sculptures stand tall over feelings dwarfed in retrospect. My fingers try to read the invisible grain of sand compressed in their marbled origins. Sand that doesn't move like how sand slips through my fingers — loose breath of the earth sighing.

I shift to the less crowded and the rustic. Look at pottery. My hands that have never shaped a bowl, never birthed anything this perfect or even attempted the imperfect beauty of making, feel the pulse of a clay's wet shape spooling over the wheel.

centering
the years it took
to learn breathing

Tanaka's wood screen
between chasms only air

A noisy group leaves. In the emptiness of the hall devoted to Japan, stillness weaves like waves washing over me. I am the grass bending with the wind.

kimono
a ghost of wings
flapping

Editors' Poems
Shalini Pattabiraman

An unplanned choreography, bodies weave in and out. Life converges and disperses over a mosaic floor patterned like conversations halting between the clinking of crockery at the in-house café.

A geometry of broken glass — the kaleidoscope colours my heart. Above me, arched ceilings rise to create the illusion of space: air and lightness.

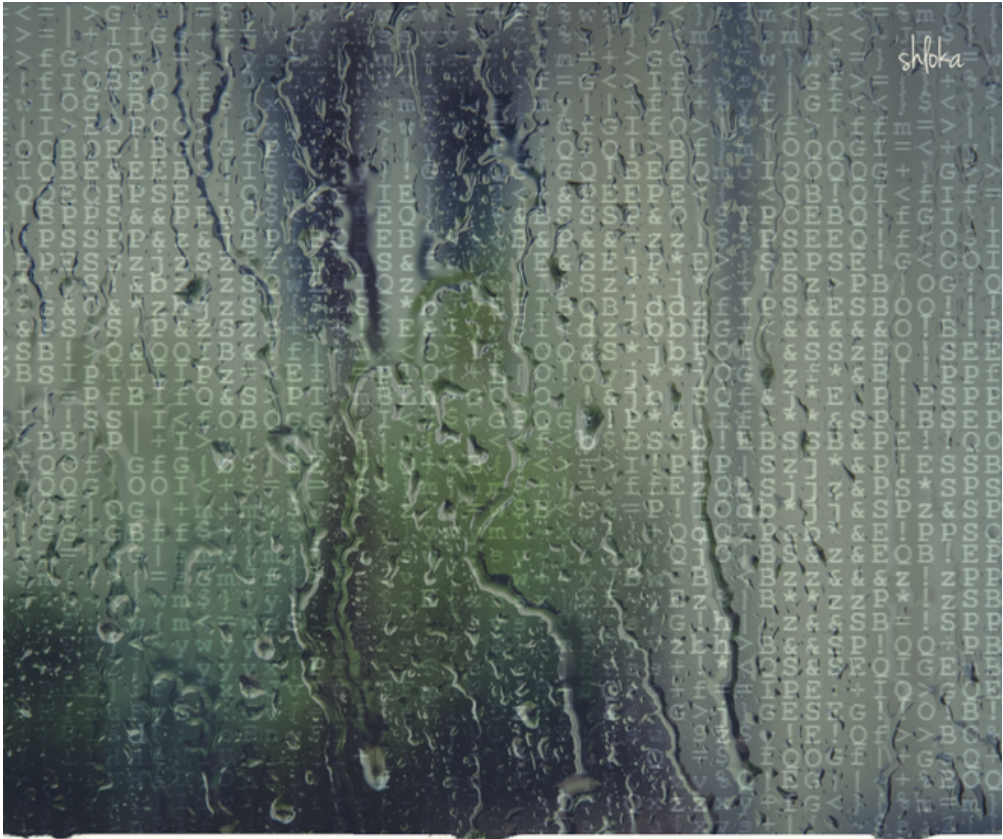
Time halts. I look at the reflections on the glass window and think, how all that I witness is the image of a light that has travelled to me from somewhere distant.

long corridor
the endlessness
of seeking

Editors' Poems
Shloka Shankar



Editors' Poems
Shloka Shankar



finishing my sentence summer rain



pic sourced from canva

Editors' Poems

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

Mind's Eye

'Can you see colors?' Asked the little boy to the blind woman.

She smiled. 'Can you help me see a color?' She asked.

The little boy thought for a while. He pulled out a red apple and put it under her nose. 'Breathe deeply, lady. This is red.'

'Oh ...' she said. 'I never knew.'

'This is red too', he said, bringing a red rose for her to smell. 'And so is this', slicing a tomato. And in the process cut his finger, and the blood flowed freely. A drop fell warm on her hand.

'Oh, what is that?' she exclaimed.

'Pain,' cried the little boy and ran away.

She raised her hand and smelled the blood. 'So this is the color of pain,' she sighed deeply. 'I have 'seen' this at the butcher's shop. But I must say, I had no idea that red was so many different colors!'

screeching brakes
at the traffic light
sounds of red

Editors' Poems

Suraja Menon Roychowdhury

the promises we made,
kept, broke, laughed and cried over
such drama
the sky bruised at sunset
with oranges and purples and reds

Editors' Poems
Vandana Parashar

rain on terracotta toys summer dissolves



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thank you for being with us.

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with many more fine poems
from our contributors.

Team: *haikuKATHA*