

Meanders of Haiku: Voices from Six Continents

Edited and Introduced by Goran Gatalica

Welcome to *Meanders of Haiku*, a journey through the rich and varied work of haiku poets from around the world. This column celebrates the enduring vitality of haiku by bringing together six distinctive voices from six continents: Dan C. Iulian from Europe, Indra Neil Mekala from Asia, Taofeek Ayeyemi from Africa, Vanessa Proctor from Australia, Rosa Clement from South America, and Julie Schwerin from North America.

Through fleeting scenes of nature, intimate emotions, cultural memory, and quiet revelation, the poets featured here demonstrate how an ancient poetic form continues to evolve across languages, landscapes, and traditions. Each poet brings a particular cultural background and personal sensibility to the form, while sharing haiku's attentiveness to the present moment.

From rural Romania and the changing seasons of India to the weather and social realities of Nigeria; from the landscapes of Australia and the Brazilian Amazon to the rivers, fields, and winter light of the United States, these poems reveal both the diversity and the universality of human experience.

Together, they remind us that haiku remains a living and border-crossing art: concise in form, expansive in resonance.

Dan C. Iulian

Dan C. Iulian is the pen name of Iulian Ciupitu, who was born in 1955 in Obîrșia Olt, Romania. He lives in Bucharest and is a retired researcher in science and engineering. Between

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1989 and 2025, he received several poetry awards in national competitions, and his work has appeared in literary magazines and anthologies.

Dan C. Iulian's haiku capture the quiet nostalgia of rural life and the persistence of memory. Empty country lanes, returning swallows, drifting snow, and a forgotten shawl become images of continuity, estrangement, and the gradual fading of the past. His poems often move from close observation of the natural world toward moments of inward reflection:

empty country lanes—

only the swallows

still return home

*
*

reading the sutra—

a dandelion fluff

in levitation

*
*

poppy field aflame—

no one calls

the firefighters

*
*

hummingbird in flight—

waiting for reality

to begin at last

*
**

foggy day—

losing the way

to oneself

*
**

childhood village—

only the vagabond wind

still steals the walnuts

*
**

the snowfall

erases all shades—

dementia

*
**

attic with moon—

the warmth of memories

in a forgotten shawl

Indra Neil Mekala

Dr. Indra Neil Mekala is a radiologist from Andhra Pradesh, India. His favourite pastime is reading and writing poetry, particularly haiku. His haiku have appeared in respected journals and on literary websites, and he has received multiple awards in national and international haiku competitions.

Indra Neil Mekala's poems reveal the delicate beauty of everyday experience: the bursting of a soap bubble, a drop of dew at dawn, clouds joining mountains, and the soft movements of wind and rain. His haiku are attentive to transient natural phenomena and to the subtle connections between human perception and the surrounding world:

with each burst

of a soap bubble

the child's chuckle

*
**

spring dawn—

before it drops, the stretch

of a dew drop

*
**

sea of clouds

joining two mountains

our echoes

*
**

summer wind—

the fast twirl

of cotton candy

*
**

monsoon—

the gentle shake

of an umbrella

*
**

passing rain

the squeaky sound

of windshield wipers

*
**

winter clouds—
watching things
go their own way

*
**

winter seclusion
the coldness
of a door knob

Taofeek Ayeyemi

Taofeek Ayeyemi, fondly known as Aswagaawy, is a Nigerian lawyer and writer. His publications include the haiku chapbook *Across the Full Moon* (Mamba Africa Press, Ghana, 2021) and the haiku chapbook *Dust and Rust* (Buttonhook Press, California, 2022). A Best of the Net and Pushcart Prize nominee, he has published haiku and haibun in *The Mamba*, *The QuillS*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Haibun Today*, *Frogpond*, and elsewhere.

Taofeek Ayeyemi's haiku explore love, migration, weather, hardship, and cultural resilience. A migrant's shoe caught in barbed wire, a butterfly retreating from a near gale, and a neighbour collecting rainwater all become sharply observed moments in which beauty and vulnerability coexist. His work combines lyric delicacy with an awareness of social and environmental realities:

summer date . . .

the vanilla flavour

of her lips

*
**

meteor shower—

an immigrant's shoe stuck

in the barbed wire

*
**

near gale

a butterfly

retreats

*
**

night hunt

a frog scatters the moon

on the pond

*
**

rainy night . . .
a neighbour fills her buckets
with cloths

*
**

harmattan . . .
a car's headlight breaks
the fog

*
**

sultry noon . . .
a masquerade stops
by the well

Vanessa Proctor

Vanessa Proctor, BA (Hons), MA, is an award-winning British Australian poet who lives in Sydney, Australia. Her work has been widely published internationally. She discovered haiku while living in Japan in the early 1990s. A founding member of the Australian Haiku Society, she served as its president from 2016 to 2020. In addition to appearing in print, her work has been set to music, printed on tea-bag labels, and etched into stone. Her latest book is the poetry collection *On Wonder*, published by Walleah Press in 2024.

Vanessa Proctor's haiku are rooted in close observation of the natural world and the subtle shifts of season, light, and mood. Plum branches, lotus seeds, moths, ocean tides, and

the warm fur of a kangaroo evoke a vivid sense of place. Her poems also allow the natural environment to enter moments of human vulnerability, tenderness, and reflection:

fallen plum tree

snapping lichened branches

ikebana students

*
**

planting season

lotus seeds sink

to the bottom of the pond

*
**

dusty paddock

the mare leans in

to my touch

*
**

hitching a ride

on sun-dried sheets

hawk moth

*
**

infusion centre

outside the window

leaves turning red

*
**

late afternoon glow

the warm brown fur

of a backlit kangaroo

*
**

cold touch of the ocean

a child's goggles wash

up with the tide

*
**

a kite tangled high

in a sycamore tree

drizzle turns to rain

Rosa Clement

Rosa Clement lives in Manaus, Amazonas, in northern Brazil. She also lived in Hawaii from 1990 to 1995, where she first encountered haiku through the guidelines for a haiku competition published in a local newspaper. Her books include *The Full Canoe*, a collection of haiku published by The Helionaut Press in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2002, and *Terra de Cunhantã e Curumim é Assim / Girls and Boys from My Land Are Like This*, a collection of children's poems published by Editora Valer in Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil, in 2002.

Rosa Clement's haiku move between the landscapes of Brazil and memories shaped by her experiences abroad. Her poems combine childhood wonder, humour, sensuality, and close attention to nature. Shadows, tree houses, wind, stars, footprints, water, and moonlight become images through which memory and identity quietly emerge:

shadows on the wall

a stork is born

in his hands

*
**

spring dream

a tree house blooms

in my backyard

*
**

summer wind

the stripper's bra swings

on the clothes line

*
**

a starry night

only the scarecrow

doesn't look

*
**

wet feet

my footprints follow me

on the bridge

*
**

shallow creek

there is a rock in

the moon's path

Julie Schwerin

Julie Schwerin, who lives in Wisconsin, USA, is an associate editor of *The Heron's Nest* and a member of the editorial team for the *Red Moon Anthology*. Her first full-length collection of haiku, *Fencing with the Moon*, is available from Finishing Line Press.

Julie Schwerin's haiku evoke contemplation, resilience, choice, and the wandering spirit. Images of sprouting leaves, fungal networks, sunflowers, river light, migrating leaves, snow, and candle wax reveal the cycles of growth, dispersal, disappearance, and renewal. Her poems frequently allow the natural world to illuminate difficult personal and collective questions:

free of attachment
this green twig
sprouts a leaf

*
**

fungal network—
rain calls
to the resistance

*
**

thinning sunflowers—
how to explain
the choices I've made

*
**

river light . . .

the wanderlust

of cottonwoods

*
**

already in tassel molting moon

*
**

autumn leaves . . .

the myriad responses

to mass migration

*
**

painting over

the sparrow's poem

morning snow

*
**

molten wax

dowsing its own light

longest night

Concluding Reflections

Across these diverse voices, several shared concerns emerge: the fleeting nature of experience, humanity's intimate relationship with the natural world, and the persistence of personal and collective memory. Although each poet writes from a distinctive cultural and geographical setting, their work demonstrates how haiku can function as a universal poetic language.

The poems gathered here meander through landscapes both outer and inner, crossing borders while remaining rooted in precise moments of perception. Together, they reveal haiku as a living art form that connects us through a shared rhythm of observation, feeling, and insight.