



POETRY POWER

An Anthology of Students' Original Work
Produced by the ELA Department of
Manhattan High School for Girls

March 2014

POETRY POWER

An anthology of students' original work
produced by the ELA department

Manhattan High School for Girls
March 2014

"The artist is a receptacle for emotions that come from all over the place: from the sky, from the earth, from a scrap of paper, from a passing shape, from a spider's web."

-Pablo Picasso

The Manhattan High School for Girls
Poetry Power Award

First Place: Moriah Berg

Second Place: Tova Schwartz

Table of Contents

Front Cover Design

Fraedyl Goldberg

Back Cover Design

Shira Hein

Foreword

Ms. Estee Friedman 13

13 Ways of Looking at a Snowflake

Class 11A 14

13 Ways of Looking at a Pearl

Class 11B 16

Life Through the Eyes of Its Beholder

Randy Balasiano 18

Soothing Streams

Rachelle Benedict 19

Three Different Ways of Looking at Words

Sara Ben-Zvi 20

Israel

Moriah Berg 21

Children's Menu

Dina Rochel Blumenthal 23

The Jewish Nation

Shaindy Blumenthal 24

Stimulate-Response

Esther Butler 25

The Different Views of the Poster of Prada Models Outside Its NYC Store

Yocheved Butler 26

The Journey

Rachelle Chechik 27

Parallel Stripes, Parallel Worlds

Elisheva Cohen 28

To Change

Frumi Cohn 30

Seven Ways to View a Black Garbage Bag

Nechama Dembitzer 31

Table of Contents

Ten Minutes of Harmony <i>Suri Deutsch</i>	32
Coffee: Cure or Cause of Pain? <i>Tamar Eisenberg</i>	33
A Gilded Python's Effect <i>Gabriella Englander</i>	34
The Cookie Snatcher <i>Chayala Friedman</i>	35
I Only Have One Question <i>Mindi Gelbtuch</i>	36
The Park <i>Estee Gerber</i>	37
Harlem <i>Bryna Greenberg</i>	38
Four Ways of Looking at an Apple <i>Miriam Halberstam</i>	39
Homework Planner <i>Gabrielle Hawk</i>	40
Silent Connections <i>Ariella Huberfeld</i>	42
The Survivor Lives On <i>Gila Klein</i>	43
Closets Full of Clothing <i>Ruti Koenig</i>	44
A Minyan <i>Devorah Laub</i>	45
My Homecoming <i>Esther Malka Laub</i>	46
Perspectives <i>Miriam Liebling</i>	47
Writer's Block <i>Ariella Mause</i>	48
To Make Life Count <i>Tamar Rosenfeld</i>	49

Table of Contents

Champion <i>Elisheva Rosensweig</i>	50
Defeating the Storm <i>Shoshana Rosenthal</i>	52
The Gift of Kindness <i>Esther Rothman</i>	53
The Road to Paradise <i>Malkie Rubin</i>	54
Mathish <i>Tova Schwartz</i>	55
Smile and the World Smiles with You <i>Baila Schuster</i>	56
Sunrise like you do? <i>Rivka Schuster</i>	57
Purple Reign <i>Zahavah Sokolow</i>	59
Into the Wild Blue Yonder <i>Chana Steinberg</i>	60
My Five Senses <i>Shenya Stern</i>	61
7 Ways of Looking at a Poem <i>Shayna Strum</i>	62
The Destination <i>Miriam Wilamowsky</i>	63



Foreword

My dear readers,

Poetry is the language of the heart and the skill of the mind. Fueled by passion, the poet selects her words carefully and assembles them brilliantly, and voila!, she succeeds in creating a picturesque space. It appears to have been effortless, seashells spread across a silk mat.

But that is the magic of the craft.

Who knows how many hundreds of shells were discarded and traded for that crisp shade of coral?

Who knows how many hours under the sun were spent digging through the dunes for that mysterious shape, not quite heart-shaped, not quite oval, not quite round?

Who knows how long the shells were soaked till all the grains of sand were gone and their sparkling opalescence restored?

A few words, a couple of lines—and the reader is transformed by that sensory image, by that riveting thought, by that gripping emotion. Poetry is a study in elegance. So much is withheld and yet so much is there.

MHS enjoyed these weeks of poetry writing—the catharsis and creativity and craft. We also enjoyed reading our poems aloud at the Poetry Power event, giving to and growing from one another, reinforcing the beauty of this artistry—the gains we achieve when we sift carefully through the sand and painstakingly weigh one word against the other.

Poetry Power is a collection of our poetic inspirations. We hope you will enjoy the poetry and be inspired to write your own, recite your own, and read your own aloud.

Sincerely yours,



Ms. Estee Friedman
Principal, General Studies

13 Ways of Looking at a Snowflake

Class 11A

(inspired by "13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" by Wallace Stevens)

I.

The perfect snowflake falls to the ground and vanishes in a puddle.
The perfect snowflake is perfect no longer.
The perfect snowflake is a snowflake no longer.

II.

They say each snowflake is unique
But no one ever sees the detail work
Just a cold white dot
Surrounded by identical brothers

III.

A little girl peers over the tips of her skis
A steep hill lurks ahead
"I can't do it"
"Yes, you can"
She takes a deep breath and forces herself forward
Overpowering any snow or ice that comes her way

IV.

I stick out my tongue and imagine the taste of a milkshake
To my dismay, the cold frosty feeling in my mouth was merely a snowflake

V.

It snowed yesterday and on yesterday's yesterday
until the heavens could cry no more
and now, with the first protruding ray of the sun
the snowflake trembles
because tomorrow and tomorrow's tomorrow
all the snowflakes will fade away

VI.

The snowflake falls
And rests upon a heap of snow
Brown from the exhaust of passing cars
Drivers oblivious to its beauty

VII.

Half asleep
neither rising nor falling
stagnant in the cold
shrinking from the light

VIII.

Its singular uniqueness
A hexagonal maze
Of icy symmetry
So cold yet full of light

IX.

The girl steps into the ballroom
The light reflects off of her sequined dress
That shimmers like the snow

X.

Her fingers float gracefully over the white keys,
Like the snowflakes falling slowly over white rooftops.
With not a care in the world,
Nothing to stop them,
To stop the beauty.

XI.

Look how it catches the light!
The silver-white glitter
Off the edge of her wrist.

XII.

Each falls on their own
In their distinct shape and size
But when they fall together
They can cancel school forever!

XIII.

The snowflake watches as the sun rises.
Please don't come out,
or I will melt and not be back until next year.

13 Ways of Looking at a Pearl

Class 11B

(inspired by "13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" by Wallace Stevens)

I.

A suncoated shell
unleashes a pearl
A wild, untainted pearl
never touched, unattainable

II.

What is that, Grandfather?
It's a pearl in a bed of shells on a
beach.

III.

Blue
White
Waves shuffling back and forth
A pearl lying on the beach
Blue
White
The serenity of the scene

IV.

"It's a pearl!" he said
"No, it can't be.
Pearls belong in fancy shops
They're worn by beautiful ladies
No, a pearl doesn't, no, it shouldn't,
Belong to someone like me.

V.

I spotted it from a distance
small, white and round
it just lie there

VI.

A shiny ball that could easily be mis-
taken for a gumball.
A pearl.

One of many, resting on my grand-

mother's collar bone.
A pearl.

Alone in the bottom of the ocean, in the
shell's belly, waiting to be found.
A pearl.

VII.

And when the shell cracked
And the rock was cleaned
The beautiful bead was clear to see.
And then it blew away.
Forgotten and lost.
Forever.

VIII.

I sit and glisten,
no longer on the hand,
rather in the dark,
with only air as my friend.

IX.

He told his daughter to shut her eyes
as he strung the necklace around her
neck

X.

Hidden inside is white beauty
(small rough irritation)
only imitated never copied

XI.

I blend in with the sand
I'm one in a million
But we're all basically the same
Yet sometimes in an oyster shell
I'll see my reflection
I'm one in a million
And very unique

XII.

She sits, clothed in white, surrounded by loved ones
Yet her shelter has been softly pried open
She is a shy combination, holding onto the past, while blushing into the new
Much like a pearl
Whose shell has been cracked open
Now

XIII.

Hidden by a shell,
he sits in silent hell.
he heard about a special bond,
but cannot reach the world beyond.
and so he sits all day and thinks
about his lifelong wish

Life Through the Eyes of Its Beholder

Randy Balasiano

Some people search,
But they cannot find.
Because their own glasses,
Make them blind.

They're jealous of the others,
The different frame collections.
But really it's their pair,
That's custom made for perfection.

Other frames from a distance,
May seem crystal clear.
But when you put them on,
All the bright pictures begin to smear.

Some are tinted with,
The rosier side of life.
Rainbows, sunshine and butterflies,
Just sugar and no spice.

While others are shaded,
Looking out brings horror and doom.
They think the glass is half empty-
At least that's what they assume.

Then there are the ones that are perfect,
Those are 20/20 vision,
And without them,
You couldn't make life's decisions.

Sometimes we have to realize,
That the glasses that we acquire
Are unique and special for us,
And others we should not desire.

Soothing Streams

Rachelle Benedict

After a long day
Scars and thoughts behind me
Coffee stains on my shirt
Heart weary from pumping

Effortlessly I turn the knob to the right
The warm rush of water cascades through my hair
Rushing as though to catch a train
Erasing the scars of the day

The white tile marching on the wall
Echoing music, laughter, and crying
I feel the tension ease
The water dissolving the angst

With a toga and a turban on my head
I stand tall
Ready to rule the world
Or just get through the morrow

Three Different Ways of Looking at Words

Sara Ben-Zvi

A key
to life, to death
the right ones
twist and turn
click in the lock
the wrong
so badly scrape and mangle the lock it is almost unrecognizable
both gain entry
they are the same, yet different
words

A story, told
by generations, gnarled hand resting on smooth curls
blankets pulled up to chins
rooms turned into wonderlands
vividly, artistically painted
into fantastical settings and beings
the croaking voice continuing
to spin out an assortment of characters and their predicaments
until the soft, slow breaths signal
the end of a chapter
until tomorrow
words

Hard black borders
defining ideas
confining such brilliance, emotion, what-have-you
to these shapes we give meaning
trying to capture
in essence, the essence
of the virtually unconfined
words

Israel

Moriah Berg

Let me tell you my story,

At first he didn't want me. He cried that
I would reject him.

He didn't realize that all I wanted was
for him to embrace me.

I was beautiful.

I was rich and generous.

But he was scared. Why would I want
him?

But I did, I don't know why.

Perhaps it's because I was destined for
him. I was promised to him.

I was his.

I knew that for either one of us to reach
completeness we had to be together.

He realized he was mistaken. He
should have trusted that I would accept
him. And so he came to join me.

But he was late. We lost 40 precious
years together.

He was my prince. He bought me gifts
and dressed me in warm silk gowns.

I was more beautiful than I ever was
before. And happier.

I was always dancing and singing.
Overcome with joy.

I was calm. I was complete. I was at
peace.

But then he got confused.

War raged.

He forgot he loved me. He forgot the
day he had yearned for me and cried
because I was too good.

He forgot that he had cried in vain
because I loved him.

He left.

He was only gone for a short time. He
came right back.

And we enjoyed more beautiful years
together.

But it was not as beautiful as before. It
could never be.

He left again. He was going through an
internal battle. He didn't know who he
was.

I thought it wouldn't be long until he
found himself. But he's still a wander-
ing soul.

I watched him tortured by life's trou-
bles. He was beaten.

He was alone.

But he never forgot me. He cried over
me.

Again.

And again.

And again.

But he never thought to return.

And I watched him as he became sicker
and sicker.

I was sure he was dead. It would take a
miracle to survive.

But he was immortal. He was broken
and bereft but somehow alive.

And then he returned.

Yes.

He returned.

I watched with anticipation as he
walked up to the garden of my palace.

I did not believe he was here.

He strolled around the garden. Slowly.

I was surprised.
I thought he would run.
He came to my door and he knocked.
I swear I could have heard a trumpet roar. The trumpet of the imminent redemption.
My heart stopped beating. I began remembering the days of undisturbed joys.
I didn't think that I could still recall those days.

I don't know what happened next. I can't explain it.
But I began to scream and weep. My heart stopped beating.
I fainted and lay there unconscious for days.
He turned around and left.
He knocked but didn't wait for an answer.

Now he sits at the entrance to the garden gates.
His back is against the brass iron door and his clothes ripped from the dirty cobble floor.
His limbs still struggle against one another.

Sometimes I stretch outside the window to take a peek.
The sight of him makes me weep. He hits himself then punishes his hand.
I fall asleep crying into my pillow.
I hardly ever check any more. It's always the same.
He is so close, yet it cannot be more different than the days of old.

I am Israel. Return to me.

Children's Menu

Dina Rochel Blumenthal

Sunday afternoons, at about five o'clock
we all file in to the kitchen whose table we
don't fit around. The aroma of frying chicken
envelops us in a warm embrace,
as sizzling oil dances around the tender pieces in the pan
perfectly blanketed in corn flake crumbs.
Within minutes of our coming,
the cutlets are crisped to perfection,
and served on a napkin-lined porcelain platter
beside a bottle of ruby-red Heinz and "Always Fresh" Tropicana.
The menu never varies, but not
for limitation on the part of the chef.
We enjoyed this best when we were little,
and to Grandma we still are.

The Jewish Nation

Shaindy Blumenthal

We were born
When one man chose a different path.
We were recognized
When he jumped into a fiery furnace
Ingraining within us the power to withstand,
To live on.

We became a nation
Amongst the tortures of Egypt.
We were led out in a blaze of glory,
Showing the world who we are.
That we would live on.

We were taken down to Babylon
Where Daniel entered a lion's den,
To sanctify G-d's Name.
A hand on the wall
Foretold their destruction
And we lived on.

At a party of a drunken king
One queen was decreed to die.
And when soon thereafter our fate was the same,
Her successor intervened
To ensure we would live on.

Amid the destruction of the second Temple
Came the rallying cry.
Who will be on G-d's side?
We were the minority,
And yet, we lived on.

They expelled us, tortured us,
And burned us at the stake.
They tried to take our identity
Forcefully converted us.
Despite it all,
We lived on.

We were massacred and gassed,
Six million souls lost in the flames of Europe.
We picked up the pieces
And combined our past with our future,
Against all odds,
We will live on.

Stimulate-Response

Esther Butler

The mouse hovers
Refreshes the page;
A computerized black hole
Sucks me in.

Time kills me
Work calls my name;
While I await
And stare, accomplishing nothing.

A glance toward my papers
Technology dominates;
The chair swivels
Two minutes pass.

An hour and a half a day,
10 and a half hours per week,
45 in a month,
22 and a half days a year.

A squandered life,
Lost potential,
Emptiness;
Three more emails pop up.

The Different Views of the Poster of Prada Models Outside Its NYC Store

Yocheved Butler

I. Passing “them” on the bus every morning,
I see a flash of angry birds or maybe birds instructed to look angry.
They look like supercilious peacocks with the variegated plumage of Prada fashion.

II. The handyman changes the poster bi-weekly at 9 a.m.
Today, the price of the suede handbag dangling from a bejeweled wrist
Is twice his monthly wage;
A symbol of the elusive American Dream.
He sighs and descends from the ladder leaning against the Prada window.

III. His wife sees a dress made of gold and silver threads
She wonders if her sewing machine can ever produce such a masterpiece.
But her heart reaches out to the lonely figure
And subconsciously, she is grateful for her portion that does not include Prada dresses.

IV. I can have her pumps but can I ever have her figure?
I will! I will!
This image-conscious girl walks up E. 70th to hail a cab
Thinks better of it and runs all the way to prep school
In Prada flats

V. She watches New York City from up high
Half-sneering at the jealous school children, workers and passers-by with a cold smile
Half-wishing some of them would pay her a compliment instead of their sneer
Knowing she is selling a Photoshopped façade of perfect beauty dressed in Prada.

The Journey

Rachelle Chechik

Cold blows,
Long roads,
She waits for the world to know
But she can never let it go.

She huddles inside,
Waits for the sun.
The world she knows is dark
But deep inside she has a spark.

On the day she tried to get away,
The darkness tried to make her stay.
And when she felt the dark come in,
The spark inside began to spin.

It spun until it began to grow,
It spun until it was aglow.
And then the spark became a flame,
Consuming everything in its way.

Her darkness flew away,
Consumed by flames that were once its prey.
And in that moment all she knew,
Was the world that was now in view.

It sprung up in colors and light,
The blacks of her past were out of sight.
She smiled up at the sun,
At last able to have fun.

Warm glows,
Short roads.
The world outside lets her grow,
And now she is never low.

Parallel Stripes, Parallel Worlds

Elisheva Cohen

My father has an armband but I never got one.

My father had an armband and so did I.

It is a swastika.

It was a yellow star.

We moved to a new house.

We moved to a new house.

I sleep in a bed of my own.

I sleep in a bed shared with eleven others.

My father wears a uniform.

My father wears pajamas.

I am not allowed to go to my backyard.

I am not allowed to go past the fence.

I went past my backyard.

I would never go past the fence.

I found a boy beyond my backyard.

A boy came to the other side of the fence.

His name was Shmuel.

His name was Bruno.

He was eight, like me.

He was eight, like me.

Why can't I come to his side of the fence?

Why does he want to come to this side of the fence?

I didn't tell my family about Shmuel.

I didn't tell anyone about Bruno.

I didn't think they would approve.

I didn't want him to get in trouble.

One day,
One day,

I was able to come to the other side.
I needed Bruno to come to my side of the fence.

Shmuel needed help to find his father.
Bruno could help me find my father.

All of a sudden,
All of a sudden,

Mean people were shouting!
The soldiers started yelling at us!

We were pushed into a room.
We were pushed into a room.

It's just to get out of the rain.
It's just a shower.

I turn to my right.
I turn to my left.

And hold on to Shmuel as the doors close.
And hold on to Bruno as the doors close.

(Based on The Boy in the Striped Pajamas)

To Change

Frumi Cohn

You gallop through the midnight skies,
Unannounced, you slither through the trees.
Sometimes you bring lavish gifts,
Other times, poison covered apples.

You bring on the colors of the day.
Black, Gray.
If lucky, you slowly turn into
White.
Then Blue, Pink, and Yellow.
But then you attack again and the colors wash away
Into
Black, Gray.

Seven Ways to View a Black Garbage Bag

Nechama Dembitzer

A little boy bounces on a black trampoline into the clouds
An elegant woman in a flowing black dress hails a cab in the night
A black hole swirls endlessly among galaxies, planets and stars
A small ship fights bravely against the massive black waves of the stormy sea
A little girl runs as fast as she can with her black kite flying in the wind
A baby bird unfurls its crumpled black wings and learns to fly for the first time
A simple black bag lies silently in a can waiting to be filled and replaced

Ten Minutes of Harmony

Suri Deutsch

Slugging up the steps, sweat hugs me.
Creeeeek! The door to dark awaits,
I shake slightly from my inner tornado,
Math, English, Global.

Voices screech like chalk on a chalkboard,
A witch's long pointer runs up my back.
The heat closes in, ready for the kill,
As I slump on the rock-hard bench.

My fingers glide along the black and white
Clearing the storm cloud to bliss,
My mirage forms into an oasis of keys,
The bones in my back relax.

Blush dissolves on my face as I feel
The light blue harmony.
My yellow highlights come out,
Shielding from the dense pit.

I feel pulls, shouts,
My fingertips drop off.
Hope, bring me back soon.
The pit is open, I hold on.

Coffee: Cure or Cause of Pain?

Tamar Eisenberg

A thrice a day habit is a worthwhile investment
Double shot of espresso is my usual dose.
It electrifies the brain, like no other.
Generating waves of energy
Causing my body to shudder.
Bags under my eyes and yawns emanating from my mouth
Soon dissipate as the addictive drug kicks in.
Shoulders unslouched, head upright
A sigh of relaxation
As I encounter a day's work prepared
My brain is wired and programmed to take on any challenge that may come my way.
A sharp pain beginning in my temples
Burning like a blazing camp fire.
Fetch me some drugs
Add a triple shot of espresso
The pain is stronger than yesterday.



A Gilded Python's Effect

Gabriella Englander

Imagine

disrobing from the reed loaf of a basket, a gilded python
forked tongue flicking against his charmer
a tanned, lanky lad splayed across
wine colored cushions
the identical color of his turban.

Imagine

pluming from the depths of the charmer's pipe
sound waves twist and turn in tune with
each flit of the python's tongue,
each coil of the python's body,
each glint of the python's gold-flecked eyes.

Imagine

snake and charmer, sequestered on seamless sand
aside from a caravan, dune-trekking
silhouettes dark against the black of cloudless night and the white
block of moon.

Imagine

atmosphere dark.
No; light?
Veils of stardust
hazy, humming orbs
mold and mesh; unfathomable shapes!
A gilded python? No.
The Thinker? No.
Ah - a banana
split.

The Cookie Snatcher

Chayala Friedman

But he did it! He really did! I saw him do it!

Ma! Mom! Ma!

He really really did it. He climbed up on the counter and leaned over. I saw him
ma.

He took three cookies and he climbed on the counter ma!

Like, on top of the counter.

Ma! Really.

It wasn't me.

I would never climb on top of the counter.

And I would never take two whole cookies. Or even three.

And-

He took 'em right before dinner.

And ma, I would never take, like, two whole cookies right before dinner. Or even
three.

And even without permission!?

But he did ma.

He did too. I saw him.

Right on the counter there. Right on top.

And really, I'm tellin' you.

It wasn't me. It really wasn't. Honest.

Would I ever do that?

Your favorite-

-Loving,

-Mature,

-Appreciative,

-Admirable,

-Marvelous daughter?

This is my best honest voice.

Really.

And ma, it was three whole cookies. Whole!

And besides,

Right before dinner.

I Only Have One Question

Mindi Gelbtuch

One: Where is he?
Only moments from my bosom
Now in G-d's

One: Where did those ten months go?
Into a cramped
Cold
Carven casket
Corroding by the second

One: Where did my feeling go?
Away with my sanity

One: Where did my hearing go?
The ringing resounding in my brain is only getting louder

One: Where did ten go?
The counting never ends
I never reach—

One: Where is my shopping list?
Maybe on the counter
Around the corner
In a crevice
Crumbling

One: What
One: When
One: Where

I only have one question:
Why?

The Park

Estee Gerber

Sun sparkling behind closed trees,
 blinding
 Long hair whipping the car,
 freezing
 Trees' streaming by,
 blurring
 Snow glinting, dazzling, soft as,
 angel's wings
 Puffs of smoke released,
 heavenward
Happiness, surrounds, brightens,
 enlightens
 Warmth radiates from within,
 igniting
Cars honking, people screaming, sirens blaring,
 my city's alive
 But here, in my safe haven,
 peace
Only trees' rustling against each other,
 murmuring
Whispering secrets, softly, lightly,
 Here is the start to my day

Harlem

Bryna Greenberg

It may have been the colorful town
Of people dressed in a uniform
Of threadbare sneakers
And legarthy in their eyes

Or the squeaking noise
Of the trembling roof hatch
As the tires pulled and pulled
Our bodies

I didn't hit my head
Of that I was sure
They enticed me on their own

Might it have been
The colors
Of yellow and red
On faded rain stained walls

Or the timeless way they walked
No jacket briefcase promptitude

But it doesn't matter what it was
That made me turn my head
Through the tinted windows
I saw it all
Their hearts sewn to their sleeves

I harken for those art covered walls
Each time I take a ride
Their stories still untold to me
As I only traverse through

Each bit of grit
Tells me its past
The thrift shops tell me it's present
The future of this town
I'll see each day
As I watch it
Through the rattling metal frame

Four Ways of Looking at an Apple

Miriam Halberstam

Rows and rows of trees all with tiny red balls
Upon closer look they seem to be apples
Apples ready for anything, waiting for their task
Each one different yet unique

The shinning sun creates a glare on the trees resembling a burning fire
Soon the harvesters arrive
From row to row they collect all the apples
The apples are then placed in crates to await their task
Each one different yet unique

Each crate in the warehouse is filled to the top with apples
Apples of all shapes and sizes
Apples with many purposes
Each crate will be shipped and each apple will complete her task
Each one different yet unique

The crates arrive in the South, North, East and West
Apples become something new
Each part is used
Apple pie, apple juice, and applesauce
Each one is different yet unique

Homework Planner

Gabrielle Hawk

I scribbled.
Gripped the pencil
As if it was my lifeline
Blocked out all
Chatter. I tried
To focus. I finished
Scrawling my homework,
Hand cramping
After running
A marathon.

Temporary but Necessary

Tziporah Hirsch

Friendships
Will be lost
Fun
Will conclude
Education
Will be forgotten
Hearts
Will be broken
Memories
Will fade

But

New friendships
Form
Fun moments
Bring happiness
New lessons
Are acquired
Heartaches
Wither away
New experiences
Transpire daily

So

Friendship
Is essential
Fun
Is momentous
Education
Is crucial
A heart
Is vital
Memory
Is meaningful

Silent Connections

Ariella Huberfeld

Night falls, and while others are...
Stocking up at the supermarket,
Carpooling kids to basketball,
Starbucks run for a booster,
Kickboxing at the gym...
We're home, together.

As disconnected as life seems
In our daily routine
After dinner, we somehow all come
United in a unique silence...
Breathing through pages of other
Lives, but somehow reuniting with our own

Planted in the usual "spot"
Wrapped in the cozy cashmere blanket
Bordered fur edges delicately lying
Below the book placed upon my body
The grey suede couch below
Like a comforting cloud

A warm lemon brew is medicine
To my quenching throat
A blended smell of freshly lit
Lavender candles overpower the whiff of
Left over lemon chicken and roasted garlic cauliflower
However, all I see is them and page 54

It's these moments
Each night, connected
Parents, siblings...each engaged in words
And me, deeply serene with a quiet bonding
Kept hushed by avid reading surrounding
This evening habitual collection of books and loved ones

The Survivor Lives On

Gila Klein

I would not be here now if you weren't so brave
This bravery is evident here on your grave.
It says that you passed in 1995
Not in the 40's when they tried to burn you alive.
We share the same blood
We share the same name
But I never got to know you
Which is such a great shame.
I read your stories over page by page
And every single time I cry tears of rage.
There are so many questions
Which I don't have answers to
Like why do terrible things happen
To great people like you?
They tortured and humiliated you
Everywhere you went
But they say you never showed it,
You still remained content.
I've tried to emulate you
And to overcome my fears,
But I have not been successful,
As the months turn to years.
You believed your purpose in life
Was to make people remember
So I promise you, Grandma,
Your stories I will cherish forever.

Closets Full of Clothing

Ruti Koenig

Have you ever had that feeling
It's kind of like despair
When you're going to a party
And you have nothing to wear

I've got closets full of clothing
But nothing seems just right
That skirt is screaming "so last year"
That sweater's getting tight

Have you ever had that feeling
It's kind of an emotional mess
When you're meeting friends for a fun night out
But you don't have that perfect dress

I've got closets full of clothing
But nothing calls my name
This has happened countless times before
And by now I know the game

Every article in that closet
I will try on then discard
And you can bet there will be imminent damage
On the MasterCard

For I've got closets full of clothing
But they don't compare at all
To the closets full of clothing I love to visit
At my mall!

A Minyan

Devorah Laub

He needs a Minyan.
It's the middle of the night in the middle of nowhere,
And he hasn't davened Maariv.
And in Israel, of all places.
He's stuck.
What to do...
Inspiration hits.
He pulls out his phone,
Dials a number.
And then another.
And then another.
And then another.
Asks for a cab,
To this-and-this address,
Thank you.
The night is dark,
Very dark.
Nine sets of headlights.
Nine drivers.
Nine Jews.
They are here.
They are confused.
Why are they all here?
He asks them to please start their meters,
And come daven with him.
They daven,
And no one takes a cent.

My Homecoming

Esther Malka Laub

I am a king.
Adorned in greens and greys,
Awaiting, my queen and subjects to
greet me.
I had been in exile in Vietnam for too
long.
I have nothing but my black stallion
and my pride.
I have been waiting for this moment,
To come home,
And feel the joy,
That my own father felt when he came
home from battle.

I am a trooper.
Although I left the fields of blood and
corps,
I still stand proud.
I wait for the cheering to begin
But my ears hear nothing.
Not a sound.
I touch my stallion that rests proudly
on my arm,
And remind myself,
That risking my life was worth the joy I
would soon feel.

I am a leaf.
Falling with my dreams.
This is not what my father experienced
after serving;
Or his father
Or his.
I had hoped for more.
Where are the fireworks that replaced
the grenades?
And the screams of joy that replace the
screams of war?
Where are the people who will admire

my stallion?

I am a speck of dust.
Ignored and stepped on by the world
around me.
I thought that I would be the hero,
the one who others would honor and
praise.
They would wave their flags-red and
blue and white,
And I would salute,
And show off my stallion
But now I hide my "pride"
Beneath my coarse sleeve,
In shame.

I am ashamed.
The blood of war was replaced with the
blood of tomatoes.
They stain my clothes with their ven-
omous spit.
Is this what I risked my life for?
To be shamed?
And humiliated?
I can't bear to look at my stallion,
And my pride is lost.
Forever.

Perspectives

Miriam Liebling

A chessed.
Waiting to happen.
With just a touch of a button,
You can send out your notes.
It's called Photos.

An inspiration.
Waiting to penetrate.
With just a touch of a button,
You can listen to a shiur.
It's called Downloads.

A connection.
Waiting to be made.
With just a touch of a button,
You can daven from a siddur.
It's called an App.

A mitzvah.
Waiting to be fulfilled.
With just a touch of a button,
You can brighten someone's day.
It's called FaceTime.

A dollar.
Waiting to be spent.
With just a touch of a button,
You can give it to tzedakah.
It's called Safari.

An Opportunity.
Waiting to be grabbed.
With just a touch of a button,
You can make a difference.
It's called an iPhone.

Writer's Block

Ariella Mause

Writer's Block stole my binder,
With all my inspiration inside
Or maybe I misplaced her
For how long can she hide?

Now I can't write my poem,
Or study chemistry,
I can't even do a math problem,
Oh where, oh where is she?

I looked under my desk and in my locker,
In my room and on my bus
I was really hoping to find her,
But Writer's Block won't give up.

So I type on my computer as I wait for her return
I need to get my revenge, she has many lessons to learn
So I bang the keys and I think of a plan
If Writer's Block won't return, then maybe this can

Now I am very busy with this
And don't really have much time
How will I think of a poem,
Especially one that can rhyme?

To Make Life Count

Tamar Rosenfeld

Count.

Count seconds.

Count uplifting quotes.

Count goals and aspirations.

Count ways to help others.

Count failures that have become achievements.

Count favors that others have done for you.

Count moments that mean the world to you.

Count points that score and help win the game.

Count all words of advice you have received from others.

Count all of your blessings, even those that seem in disguise.

Count everything that you find inspiring, even if others do not agree.

Count the events that you don't care to count, but others live for.

Count your tasks in this world so that others may follow in your tracks.

Count the steps written above to ensure that your life will count and impact others.

Champion

Elisheva Rosensweig

Over. The day is finally over.
And at this small interlude of time I can forget
The menacing storm cloud of "to do's" hanging above,
Threatening to pour down its saturated contents upon me.

But it holds. It always holds back its thunder for the time being.
Allowing my mind to run free. Run.
The only thing that requires thought at the moment, and strategy.
Avoiding the obstacles.

Chance. It was no game of chance.
For the time and time again that I would lose was no mere heads or tails.
But after every defeat I race again the next day, and await it with enthusiasm.
For I am one race closer to winning.

Today. Today will be different though.
Determination determines the outcome.
Not speed. Nor strength.
But the mere wanting for it to come true.

Despite my familiarity towards the routine, excitement builds.
We both take our marks, and begin the agonizing wait
For the fellow subway pedestrians to evacuate the stairs.
A clear track is created and we eye one another for approval to start,
The gun shot is sounded and

Begin. The first four steps fly by and confidence builds,
But the next three I see her five steps ahead.
Just there the first obstacle arises. A pungent smell overwhelms me.
Aromas eternally combined; almost beyond the point of differentiation.

They come to form one foul entity of damp fur hoods,
Soggy, disintegrated cardboard, lunch left in the sun for too long.
A melting pot of odors eternally combined.
But it is overcome.

But only a new barrier erupts.
Noise begins to knock down my defenses. Ricocheting
Off the walls, ambushing the protective bubble surrounding me.

The creaking trains, shifting escalators threatening
To come to a halt.

People muttering; placing bets
On the opponent.
They blend into a conjunction of murmuring,
That mocks the past defeats.
My past defeats.

Today. Today will be different. Only two steps behind now.
I weave in and out of the oncoming stampede of people.
Driven by hunger exhaustion, one unified goal to get home.
Avoiding crushing-luggage, jagged-brief cases, and clawed-pocket books.

The muggy, yet still frigid air yearns to escape the underground prison.
Just to glance upon the open world above and escape
From its compacted neighbors. To float around free once more.
Distraction. I narrow my eyes. Focus.

Only one step behind now. And gaining.
The top of the never ending mountain arises, and I know that I can win.
Just one more step and.....

Defeat.
Or is it?

I crossed the line, didn't I.
I kept up, most of the time.
I finished the race, I did.
I had won.

Just in second place.

Defeating the Storm

Shoshana Rosenthal

Amidst the raging gusts of winds,
Swirling, churning monsters come to life.
Innocents are grasped in its merciless arms,
Yet there is an eye of calm within the storm.
The fortunate few remain untouched
Within the circle of security.
While beyond the wall, fury reigns,
Unchecked catastrophe runs free.
A pure, blameless child, cast out due to the storm
Draws the heart of one of the fortunate few.
Her heart now torn and battling itself,
Struggling to find the strength to choose.
Can I? Should I? Will I?
The torture to her soul is relentless.
It's impossible. He's out of reach.
Icy cynicism attempts to deliver the final verdict.
The storm raging around her no longer compares to the storm within her.
She deliberates, debates, decides.
It may be impossible, but she's going to try.
Against the will of all around her,
She breaks through the eye of the storm,
Reaching out, out, out, far beyond her reach,
And pulls into the calm the boy who will one day calm the storm.

The Gift of Kindness

Esther Rothman

Kindness is a quarter,
Entering a blind man's tin can in Times Square.

Kindness is a door,
Held open for the elderly man in the wheel chair.

Kindness is hot cocoa,
Given to the crossing guard in the cold snow.

Kindness is a smile,
Shared with the neighbor next door.

Kindness is a wallet,
Returned to the business woman rushing through the subway station.

Kindness is a sneaker,
Donated to a child in the orphanage.

Kindness is a "thank you,"
Said to the cashier in the coffee shop.

Kindness is a daily action,
Grasped by all those wanting to make a difference.

The Road to Paradise

Malkie Rubin

The road stretches into the distance
While the seat cushions what is behind me.
Glitter sparkles in the twinkling sunset over the river
While the portal to leave and arrive is occupied like a whirling dervish.

The sun sets across the horizon.
Colors of the rainbow splash along the window,
As giggles playfully bounce out the door and down the road.
I peer outside,
As massive buildings tower over the moving ant with wheels.

Hands are waved.
The time has come to say goodbye
To the road marred with speed bumps, potholes, and ruts.

It is a time to laugh and enjoy,
To grab the hand and snatch the opportunity of this moment.
I see fresh laid asphalt, no grooves in the way.
The past trails behind as home arrives.

Mathish

Tova Schwartz

The summation
The geometric sum
The derivative
Are all words
Words found in dictionaries
Dictionaries of a language
A language different from English
And Spanish
And Yiddish
The language of Mathish

For many centuries men were fluent in
Mathish
It was simple then
As simple as...Pi
It was not the lexicon of the professors
But the common talk of societies mem-
bers

However, 4 scores and 7 years ago
Things were different

Recently
Some crooked men
With twisted minds
Shook up our foundation
They blended Mathish with English
And created mathematical equations

We must spread the truth
We must clear the fog
We must remind ourselves
That numbers do not equal letters
And letters do not equal numbers

We must undo the havoc
Caused by men like Pythagoras
We must purify Mathish
From the contaminations of English

And then
Maybe then
Things will be simpler

Smile and the World Smiles with You

Baila Schuster

Squished
Into a hard blue bench,
Amidst strangers.

Smells
Of sweat and perfume clash in the air.

Elbows,
Like needles,
Poke me as the surrounding people tap on their gadgets.

Anticipation
And dread fill me,
As my thoughts turn towards home
And of the work that needs to be accomplished.

Out of the corner of my eye,
A smile,
A gleam of white.
I feel
Special and acknowledged—
Relief.

My lips rise,
I smile back
And I dream that
Maybe
The stranger
Feels
Special
Too.

Sunrise like you do?

Rivka Schuster

I wake up
And
Like you do
I check my phone
I check the app that detects smog levels
To see
If today I have to wear a mask
Again

Like you do
I'd love to play outside
But my teacher
Says
It is not
Safe

Like you do
I do my homework
And study for exams
In the foggy
Dark

Like you do
I like to eat veggies
But the gray
Has stunted their
Growth

Like you do
I want to watch the sun come up
Its rays
Penetrating
The black cloud of
Smog

And I did
I watched sunrise
Like you do
In Tiananmen Square

On a flat LED
Like you do?

Discrimination

Rikki Siebzener

The ways of the past have come to an end
Yet they still hold something against me
I haven't stopped trying to blend in
But they don't perceive it as flattery

I feel their condescending looks
Piercing holes through my self esteem
And all their bloody whispers
Haunt me in my dreams

As nightmares bleed into days
Realizations slowly sink in
The world won't change its way
And neither will my skin

Purple Reign

Zahavah Sokolow

I've got another piece of plastic, scratching up my heart
A giant purple sequin that's been tearing me apart
Imagine that one speck of glitter, shining in the sand
Imagine that one seagull with no waves on which to land

I've got another plastic rhinestone, scratching up my soul
Bittersweet Swarovskis made me prematurely cold
Imagine that one speck of glitter, shining in the sky
Imagine that one dragon with no courage left to fly

I've got another shining diamond, hurting me inside
A broken, lattice crystal that's defracting all the light
Imagine that one shard of sea glass, beached upon the shore
Imagine that one sparrow, with a tree, yet nothing more

I've got another silver timepiece, turning back my life
Restarting all the torture, the pain, the fear, the strife
Imagine that one shining diamond, born from common stone
Imagine that one single deer, lost, lonely, and alone

I've got another piece of gold that's tearing me apart
Manmade mass destruction that's done all but break my heart
Imagine that one speck of glitter, shining in the sand
Imagine that long tunnel, with no start, no light, no end.

Into the Wild Blue Yonder

Chana Steinberg

My feet drag on the loose dirt
Head heavy, surrounded by twitters
I plant my feet firmly on the ground, then push off
Gravity drags, pulling me down
My legs pump hard, struggling to stay aloft.
But I am always fighting just to stay up.

I rest for a minute, look down-
The dull brown of the mud so close
I sag, wanting to rest
To relent, to just be
But then I glance up, into the brilliant blue sky
And push once more
And finally I am flying, flying into the wild blue yonder.

My Five Senses

Shenya Stern

I am wrapped in a curtain of darkness
And the silence is calling my name...
I can taste the words forming in my throat,
But only sounds stumble off my lips
 Calling my name...
I smell the anticipation of my mother hearing me
 Calling my name...
I feel a hand envelop mine
As I speak with twisted fingers...
"My name is Helen Keller."

7 Ways of Looking at a Poem

Shayna Strum

- I. Trying to write, yet only pulling out hair in frustration.
- II. Struggling to understand the convoluted metaphors, esoteric similes, like the moon growing in the purple grass.
- III. Poems are repetitive. Repetitive. Repetitive.
- IV. A sweet device to show your love. Use words like passion, swoon and heart.
- V. Shakespeare doth writeth with words that thou doth not understand.
- VI. Made up words, forcibly put in rhyme. Drashing the chords, with their plucky fine.
- VII. Poems that cut off in the

The Destination

Miriam Wilamowsky

Many athletes attempt to bike to you
They put their toughest efforts into
running to you
They pant
They gasp
And yet even the best swimmers cannot
wave their arms long enough to reach
you.

You are a unicorn;
too fake to believe in
yet too magnificent to doubt.
Every step we take is in order to reach
you
but are you reachable?
Every movement we gesture is in order
to touch you
but are you touchable?
Every obstacle we climb over is in order
to sneak a glimpse of you
but are you visible?

Once the cyclists bike you, the wheels
continue to spin further and further.
Once the runners run to you, they have
miles to go.
Once the swimmers swim to you, they
have more water waiting for them to
tread through.

Once we find the so called you
you are reborn into an new you.
You are constantly being killed and
resurrected.
We can't know you
yet we trust you
following every hazy trail that may lead
us to you
only to find out that

you are a lie
but possibly the greatest lie
because without you where would I go?

It's all about how far the bikers bike
and how fast the runners run
and how quick the swimmers swim.
They say the journey will lead us to you
But perhaps the journey is you.

The pestering voice blaring out of the
car speaker
thinks she knows when I have arrived
at you
but what she doesn't apprehend is that
I'll be back in the car
with a new you
and a new you
and a new you.

