



# **Broward Art Guild**

## **Art & Poetry Exhibit**

### **TECHNICAL NOTICE:**

The following pages are original poems submitted to us for this exhibit.

Each poem is a copyrighted work by the individual poets.

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### **THE FUN PART:**

Check out the selection of over 50 poems below from local poets and choose the ones that inspire you, make note of the number and title, then select them on your entry form from the drop-down menu.

If you choose to use your own poem or another as inspiration, you can note that on the entry form as well. Those can be submitted on the entry form as well.

The poems will be displayed with the works, so the public can enjoy the experience of these relationships between the written word and the visual interpretation.

Now have fun and bring words to life through your creativity.

**LET'S MAKE MAGIC!**

**Poem Selection Entry Deadline:** Wednesday, April 26, 2023

**Completed Artwork Delivery:**

Friday, May 26 & Saturday, May 27, 2023

(1)

**Artzz**

***I Was Always Here***

I was always here  
even before the end was near.

How could it be

I did not see

Wrapped in such drama

Dealing with the Karma

It became a race

To reverse the pace

Was everything real?

What is the deal?

My heart is beating

My lungs are breathing

Am I Godfearing

The light was dim

Are my chances slim.

Did I miss my shot

I think not

Don't miss me

I will always be.

No need to blame

Just call my name

Because.... I was always here

(2)

**Artzz**

***Show Me A Sign***

There is a space within  
That causes me to spin  
Need to fill the space  
Please Lord give me grace  
Looking for a sign  
Anything to remind  
Me of the presence  
That was so divine  
My grief runs deep  
I feel so incomplete  
The sadness is dark and  
Wants to make its mark  
Looking for a sign  
No matter how benign  
Need something to relieve the pain  
Of a death that was so inane  
Need to ground myself and land  
It would be nice to hold his hand  
Looking for a sign to fill my mind  
Struggling in emptiness as I rewind  
If I did this or that would he still be here  
That thought is causing fear  
Fear is at the root of the grief  
Some courage would be a relief  
Looking for a sign  
To help me realign  
Perhaps rest and relaxation

Could help the numbing inclination  
I am trying to beat the haze  
And get released from this maze  
Looking for a sign that will give me hope  
Wanting so desperately to cope  
When will things get better  
My feelings change like the weather  
Show me a feather a butterfly or a dime  
Please, Nothing too sublime  
Looking for a sign from the other side  
Why does it have to be such a bumpy ride

Show me a sign  
Show me a sign

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**(3)**  
**Claymuse**  
***Elixir***

Gesture & sip!  
Oh how intimate!  
A cup to thy lip!

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(4)

**Daniel Bale**

***Another Year Passed – A Poem by Daniel Bale***

Here's to another year that has come and gone  
The older you get, the quicker they seem to move along

Youthful wishes for Friday to get here fast  
We now wish next year won't go by as fast as the last

Try living more in the moment  
Letting go of memories needing atonement

Recognize there's much to be grateful for each day  
Even if hair is falling out or turning grey

The love of family and thoughtful friends  
Is more important than any Mercedes-Benz

What is the most important thing we collect each year?  
Friendships that give the future hope, isn't it clear?

So don't be sad that another year has passed by  
Savor those dear relationships that let your heart fly

(5)

**Daniel Bale**

***Assumptions – A Poem by Daniel Bale***

Looking in from the outside, we often make assumptions

The brain's primitive part creating presumptions

Early humans assessed danger reacting with fight or flight

Trying to stay a step ahead of threats, day and night

Our brain still analyzes situations through that basic prism

Leaving us overreacting, trying to rectify the schism

No longer facing danger to hunt or gather food

There's often no need to anticipate or preclude

Desires to understand and control set the mind into action

Past experiences filling in unknowns as a natural reaction

Rather than just letting things be simply as they are

The mind can make something normal seem bizarre

Often believing we know the facts and what's what

Stories are created and told producing a scuttlebutt

Rather than trying to control or fill in the gaps

Stop cerebral churning creating emotional traps

Take the leap, replace fear, anxiety, conflict, and angst

By letting life be exactly as it is, your soul will give thanks

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(6)

**Daniel Bale**

***BE KIND - A Poem by Daniel Bale***

As challenges find their way into our life  
We often push back proclaiming this can't be happening to me  
No amount of whining and complaining can make you trouble free

By realizing that everyone faces their ups and their downs  
The knowledge that each situation is an opportunity to learn  
Sometimes helps people deal with anxiety, concern, and often heartburn

Try to find the positive in each situation  
Otherwise, you'll always be fighting with life  
Exposing yourself and those around you to great strife

We each have a choice of how to react  
Stay in the moment and ignore a chattering mind  
But above all... Be Positive, Be True, and always Be Kind!

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(7)

**Daniel Bale**

***Forever Your Man – A Poem by Daniel Bale***

A feeling of helpless seeing a loved one in pain  
Desire to try and fix things brings a mental strain

Each morning praying today will go well  
Hoping no problems strike like a bombshell

When the person you love is stricken with cancer  
Going doctor to doctor trying to find an answer

The ups and downs of a disease takes its toll on both  
Love perseveres, 'In sickness and in health', says the marriage oath

When being by their side is the best medicine to provide  
The benefits of a loving touch or kiss can't be denied

Be strong when possible and cry when it's needed  
But make sure the doctor's advice is heeded

Enjoy life, finding happiness wherever you can  
Always remember the love we share...forever your man

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(8)

**Daniel Bale**

***Honest Man – A Poem by Daniel Bale***

Others judgement of me...I try not to give a damn  
But sometimes thoughtless words keep me questioning who I am

"You're too sensitive" is a simple little phrase  
Hearing those words, the intent is clear, it's not praise

It's NOT okay to tell me, I'm too much of 'anything'

Hurtful words are like daggers, they wound, burn, and continue to sting

Keep in mind God created me according to plan  
I'm doing the best I can to be a good and honest man

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(9)

**Dennis Dezmain**

***CRAYONS***

Sometimes I can be free as the wind  
and can be like others

Sometimes a tree, a flower, a cloud or even a person  
in the domain of the colouring book

Sometimes I am used to create beauty and expressions  
of love – red, green, and blue hearts and faces

- its all one to me

I am used as intended, to give someone else an existence, a reality, fun  
I ask for nothing and speak only one word in the silent language of colour  
I only cry when I am abused, pressed too hard,  
revealed, tossed and want to go home  
and can't

It's a gentle hand that guides me best with  
a child's mind to place me right  
between innocence and wishes

Perhaps it's all a dream to be like the heroes I render,  
after all, in my world I am just another colour,  
another crayon in the box

5/29/93 inspired by my children Trystan and Celyn  
and Multicultural book by Banks

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(10)

**Karen R. Phillips**

***Clouds***

I am watching big fat white clouds  
inch northwest across the sky.  
Their coolness a welcome contrast  
to the midday heat of the September sun.  
Slow and steady they move  
with no real intent or goal.  
How unlike humanity they are.  
Serenity in motion...  
where people long to speed everything up.  
Ever changing shape,  
the cumulus sculptures  
try on new identities  
while men and women  
bemoan their destiny.  
If humans stopped once a day  
to check out a cloud  
and marvel at its  
random progress,  
the world might just remember  
the joy of being a child.

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(11)

**Karen R. Phillips**

**Imagine Life Without Breast Cancer?**

Imagine life without breast cancer?

I don't know if I can.

No more "tata" bumper stickers  
or breast clenching mammograms,  
and the month of October  
could be just for Halloween again.

Imagine life without breast cancer?

What would the pharmaceutical  
companies do?

Half the sky would no longer live in fear  
so how would they control us?

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(12)

**Karen R. Phillips**

***The Web of Grandmother Spider***

Debby sits absorbed in her sewing,  
lost in the world of fabric.

Above her, in the corner, a dance begins.

A small black spider  
works along with the quilter  
quietly spinning its gossamer web.

Each is intent on the job  
suspended between the physical

and the infinite  
where time has no place  
and does not exist.  
Creativity rises out of necessity.  
Beauty and geometry intertwined  
in ways neither comprehends nor understands.  
This balance is the Grandmother spider's gift.  
She came to teach us  
how to straddle past, present and future  
integrating each to be called upon as needed.  
The Divine feminine shines  
through each servant  
as she calls these working angels  
to listen to their hearts,  
give birth to their dreams  
and leave a legacy of light.  
So open your mind, my friend.  
Allow the arachnid queen  
to walk with you now.  
You are her chosen one.

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(13)

**L Anne Greenspan**

***Can Peace Be So Distant***

Can peace be so distant  
that its shout  
cannot be heard?

That its wings  
cannot be seen?

Peace should be a whisper  
understood amidst the thunder of empires,  
as it stands guard  
over our wretched souls.

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(14)

**L Anne Greenspan**

***The Close of the Day***

The close of the day  
is a haphazard wrap of blankets,  
a comfortable nose,  
a hand wrapped around another's,  
a murmur of let's finish in peace.

Unless there is grievance.

Then the close of the day becomes  
a wrangle of silent screams in the air between two bodies  
a clench of jaws underneath benign smiles  
the width between legs as wide as a canyon -  
all unspoken at the close of the day.

A noisy breach of air around you  
complains about all those things that matter  
but never arrive out of the mouth  
remaining on a tongue

but never descending from pouted lips.

And then a hand reaches for comfort,  
a head turns and eyes latch on for the sake  
of all that could be everlasting.

There is no good night said  
but a good night implied  
until the next morning  
when a haphazard wrap of blankets  
unites in a single purpose  
to be one with the new day.

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(15)

**L Anne Greenspan**

***The Wind as Choreographer***

The wind as choreographer  
is not a wrecking ball, sometimes  
more like  
a whipped lashing,  
an uncontrolled blow of a silent hand  
that  
stirs up  
leaves  
and dust  
coming from a mouth  
that curves up not from a smile  
but  
from

the  
force  
of  
what  
it  
exhales.

You see, the wind can  
offer a friendly dose of advice  
it can carry on a lazy conversation  
or it can howl like it's been chopped in two  
but the curve of the lips demanding deliverance of rain  
or twilight blinking  
or sun entranced in a daze of diamonds

will  
never  
cease  
to  
speak  
their  
mind.

It's what the wind dares create,  
all that choreography,  
calming the storm in my head  
on a day  
of dancing  
limbs.

(16)

**L Anne Greenspan**

***Written on a Warm Day***

My summer feels like the scratchy floral fabric of a couch rich with the smells of all the sweat and crumbs of the days and weeks of childhood, and the musty lingering of humid walls and cozy rugs.

Summer feels like an overgrown lawn of weeds, Queen's Lace and dandelions, or the plastic strips of an old outdoor lounge chair, strips that hug but never mold to your body because that would mean it was your chair and no one else's. And that couldn't be, because everyone sat here.

Summer feels like the open window of the bedroom after a thunderstorm when the droplets cling to the screen and the western angled sun, low on the horizon, shines its beams through them and the metal of the screen and the dewy scent of the grass become the things you measure across time . . .

it is now this summer, and now this summer, and these things become the rusty skeletons of seasons long gone.

It's funny, as you go about adult stuff in a new place, where there are no more plastic strips on lawn chairs and the couch has long been sent to the dump that you can still feel all of it, as if time stands still in the mind,

as if the mind stands immobile against time

as if time and the mind are in a race to see which gets priority – the lawn chair, the screen, the pebbles of stone in the driveway which we didn't mention, but are still there –

all of them do, of course.

That is the thing about growing old.

Your mind is time

and it won't suffer abandonment.

(17)

**L Anne Greenspan**

*... this child I will hold*

like broken glass so there is no blood...  
like marigolds at dawn, to keep despair  
from drowning out the beams of the sun  
I will hold the child like a lost feather,  
scattered from a bird, or fallen from a cloud ...

this child I will hold  
like all the new exuberance that brightens faces  
at the discovery of a frosted bud through winter's snow,  
poking through, willful and strong  
a bud that becomes the spring flower  
it grows through storms and lightning  
and summer's daunting heat,  
pounded by leaves in the fall  
it does not shake its purpose  
to endure and fight and love  
no broken glass will scratch this surface  
nor despair upon the eyelids dance  
for my hands take care  
upon this child  
I will hold.

(18)

**Lynne Winterfield-Fielder**

***Saturday Morning***

I am sitting in my sunroom with Charlie at my feet,  
Its a beautiful Saturday morning and friends I am going to meet.

Peter and Tim together I am seeing on the Drive,  
New friends I like to meet, that keeps me alive.

The restaurant has good food but is noted for its wings,  
When dressing to leave I definitely will not wear rings.

The meeting should be fun,  
I will write more when I am done.

It is now 2 hours later on this beautiful day,  
And lunch was so much fun I am happy to say.

I am now home and Charlie is waiting for his snack,  
He hates to see me go and is so happy when I am back.

Charlie is my love my 5 year old Maltipoo,  
He is my companion, without him I would not know what to do.

So in closing, I would like to say,  
If you have a painting for this poem, it would make my day!

(19)

**Milton Carp**

***Hunger is the Norm***

The child a mere skeleton  
looked up with glazed over eyes,  
and a blank stare.

I look back, wish to help,  
too feed him,  
but, it is too late.

His frail body  
cannot absorb nourishment,  
We are looking  
into the eyes of death.

He accepts it without question.  
For, you see,  
to him starvation and death  
are the norm.

(20)

**Milton Carp**

***I Come to You***

I come to you with open hands,  
palms turned up not clenched,  
arms spread apart.

Let us embrace one another.

I come to you with open heart.

I come to you as sister and brother,  
not black or white.

We have been apart far too long.

It is time our hearts  
knew right from wrong.

Let us not live in the past  
but, treasure the here and now.  
Time to embrace our likeness  
not our difference.

Blood runs red in our veins.  
Hearts beat quick for all to see.  
Heart pumps same for you and me.  
Let the heart speak for both of us.  
Let our skin touch one another.  
Me the father you the mother.

Let us bridge the gap  
here and now.  
so, all who follow can allow

their hearts to speak of love.

Let manna fall from above.

Each receive their equal share.

Let us stand as men and women

tall and proud and proclaim

us clear and loud.

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(21)

**Milton Carp**

***I Dream of You When I Sleep***

I dream of you when I sleep,

my downy cover drawn,

in the wee hours between

dusk and dawn.

I dream of you in my morning

shower, awash in the warm

spray of the day.

In the promise of you.

I dream of you as I am busied

With the midday hustle and bustle.

You're always on my mind.

I dream of you at day's end,

weary and worn.

My bed awaits me with the promise,

to share with you once more,  
a new dream, a new dawn.

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(22)

**Milton Carp**

***Oneness***

The world at large

I see everyone

I feel our need

We are one

You and I

Take your burden

Give it to me

For to share

Eases the load

On both

You and I

Are one now

Our burden

Shared

Our steps tread lighter

Our pace quickened

We are one

With ourselves

With the universe

Search not  
For worldly goods  
They are but fleeting  
Seek the wealth  
Of mind and body  
Your inner peace  
Your oneness

Share it with  
The world at large  
One world one people  
The duality of oneness

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(23)

**Milton Carp**

***To the Nines***

Nine is a cool number.  
Round top with straight line.  
Strong like a ponderosa pine.

Needles crisp and dark green.  
Strong in branch and bough.  
Eagles nesting in the pine  
at the very highest tree line.

Then there are the numbers one and two  
to start the count anew.

Bunny rabbits at the door,  
three and four and even more.

Five and six are added to the mix.  
Seven always follows six.  
Just one more chomping at the gate.  
I would assume that would be eight.

Now my numbers game must end,  
then start again with number ten.

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(24)

**Randie Denker**

***Becoming a Modern Grandmother***

Grandma smelled like love and mold,  
Like borscht and onions,  
She smelled like the Old World.

She stocked worries  
The way a grocer stocks canned goods.  
“Did you eat? Are you warm enough?”  
Her legs were two parentheses.  
Her stories animated golems and  
Witches’ houses on chicken legs.

How I loved her!

I never imagined that,

Some day, I would be her.

That I would queue up

On the line, pushing,  
pushing ever closer to the  
check-out counter.

Maybe there is still

Time to indulge

The desire for chocolate and the  
Concupiscence of late summer peaches.

I hold my new grandson and look into his eyes.

I see my own rebirth.

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**(25)**

**Randie Denker**

***Making My Mind Up About Change***

Changing a life is no small enterprise.  
It is not like changing socks or wallpaper  
It is not like changing your mind at the I-Hop and  
Ordering the waffles instead of the pancakes.

It is elective, but still major surgery, and  
Once you decide to change your life, you cannot  
Return it like a coat that did not fit or had a  
Defective zipper,

Really, all you wanted was

To fix something that was broken  
When you were too busy to notice.  
You were trying to pay the bills and keep your life moving along  
But then you realized that life was like that conveyor belt  
In “I Love Lucy” where the candies come faster and faster and  
You can’t keep up and pretty soon, it’s impossible.

One time, you lay in bed, brittle as a beached sand dollar,  
Next to a person who was so familiar but unknown,  
And you thought you heard a voice say that it was time for change.  
It was only the recording inside your heart, repeating that you had  
Reached a number that was no longer in service.

It took a while to understand the message because the voice  
was strangely metallic, like a robo-call.

Eventually, you became brave and made that change.  
The conveyor belt slowed and you found that you could  
Nimble place all the candies inside the box.

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**(26)**

**Randie Denker**

***Nesting***

I see the shutters, the door ajar,  
Oak-postered bed, Amish rug of hex and rose.  
I love this earth, this brown and green scintillation.

Your chair, my books arranged like forts, like dreams.  
On nights when the fire burns and singsongs,

I see histories in the flames.  
What might my life have been if you had not come into it?  
Instead, we run breathless together at horizons  
Untamed by rubble.  
Those old townships left behind.

The moon is a bright penny for my thoughts.  
I never sleuthed these truths,  
But merely stumbled upon them.

I need neither shrine nor shield,  
Only the consistent tangle of loving.

On nesting, I have found my truth.

I need no more than these:  
Wilderness, your constancy,  
Four shoes next to my bed.

Do I miss the quest of spectrum, spectacle?  
There is no other.

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(27)

**Randie Denker**

***On Selling the House that I Lived in for 25 Years***

I walk around inside these rooms,  
Containers of memory.  
Over there is where the child boiled pasta

For 45 minutes, unaware that it turns to book paste.  
See that table, how many meals did we eat together?  
Those are the books we read out loud to each other.  
There's the dogwood, so generous with its flowers.  
That closet held our clothes, co-mingling our scents,  
Stand-ins for our real bodies.

Our numbers whittled down.  
The animals died, the child  
Sprouted wings  
Then,  
It was just we two.

Then, one.

I learned that dreams are not the same thing  
As plans. That forever is not the same thing as,  
Today. And that love does not always come with  
Adhesive.

Life intervenes with  
Its unpredictable outbursts and tantrums.

That is why I am selling the house.

It no longer fits.  
It has grown too big and I have grown too small.

(28)

**ReGina Skane**

***Mustard Seed***

Who gifted the tiny seed  
floating in resin, encased in a glass orb?

Mother had one just like it.

Sad to have lost mine at the beach  
More is the regret that I cannot remember.

A grain of sand is small too.  
It would not look good in  
a necklace;  
Never to grow, flower or become a plant or tree.

The ocean washes it away.

(29)

**Rick McKenzie**

***Buzzards***

The buzzards gliding in the clearest air,  
not even waiting, just feeling the sky.  
Circling over everything happening,  
separate, completely, from all that's below,  
until there occur the various endings.  
They know more about death than we ever will.

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(30)

**Rick McKenzie**

***Cumulonimbus***

Huge, grey, and low over the ocean,  
coming this way, unstoppable, potent,  
scattering leaves, litter, and children,  
delaying the game, stopping construction.  
Now pounding and thundering, lashing with whips,  
till even the cars have stopped driving,  
leaving the world to the kingdom of plants.  
Look at them, dancing in ecstasy,  
scattering flowers, ceaselessly drinking,  
filled with the frenzy, worshipping God.

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(31)

**Rick McKenzie**

***In the Pines***

In the pines, and in the empty spaces in between,  
bright air, just there, and owing nothing.

There is no sound that money makes,  
no cars, no tools, no big machines, celebrities.

Birds, bugs, breeze announce the times.

What is memory to the trees? It's always now.

What is regret? What is tomorrow?

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(32)

**SB**

***In Shadows***

We circle each other in shadows  
adrift in our smoky swirls. My  
fire in the hollow earth. I am  
lost in the cold current of arms, legs.

Adrift in our smoky swirls, my  
eyes close to forget your hand  
lost in the cold current of arms, legs.  
Memories swallow me in pieces.

Eyes close to forget your hand  
lashes that split the night. We are  
memories swallowed in pieces.  
I gather a sharp tongue and throw

lashes that split the night. We are  
faceless in the silver mirror. Empty  
I gather a sharp tongue and throw  
stones into your palm of ice. I am

faceless in the silver mirror. Empty  
you drop into darkness and spew  
stones into your palm of ice. I am  
dancing on the edge of our chasm.

You drop into darkness and spew  
fire in the hollow earth. I am  
dancing on the edge of our chasm.  
We circle each other in shadows.

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(33)

**SB**

***The Last of It***

his dark hands break  
the dewy globe  
orange peel speckles  
drop to the sidewalk,

nails pierce the  
pulpy landscape  
with tongue, teeth  
he rips the veins

sweet, sour drips  
down his chin  
with soft mouth  
he sucks the core

untangles the nectar  
he swallows hard,  
down, down, down  
to the last of it

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**(34)**

**SB**

***Unbound***

window man  
measures his  
bitter gray  
December  
counting  
swing, sway  
legs, arms  
passing by

the day's  
cadence slips  
timidly  
into a  
shadowless

vista of  
leafless trees  
he lingers

and I see  
a coil of  
smoke from his  
cigarette  
drift like a  
memory  
into the  
moonless night.

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**(35)**

**Shawn J The Poet**

***Her Natural Solution***

As the door opened and closed the bell rang  
She enters with a less than confident stand  
Removes her hat, head bare cept for a few strands  
She whispers to the hairdresser, and so the hairdresser began

What skill, what dexterity  
I sit in amazement as she bobs and weaves  
Her fingers quick as thieves  
They intertwine and design a look that's divine

Imitating Robin Hood, she dare  
Steal from her wealth of knowledge

To give the girl with no hair, a style with such flair, that the whole room stopped and stared

When it was done she stood up and paid

She had an extra oomph in her step as she walked away

As the door opened and closed you heard the bell

and though it would be swell to stay and dwell

on how magnificent you hairdressers are

I gotta go get baldheaded chicks number

before she gets to her car

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(36)

**Shawn J The Poet**

***Broken Hearted***

I remember being lighter than air / With a smile on my face / I was floating from here to there

Wearing a green maxi dress and matching bow in my hair / The breeze was just right and the sky was so clear

My world was just fine / with a great idea in mind / I grabbed lunch for us to dine / so I could surprise you with flair

Then I broke the corner and saw you there / she held your hand and you smiled from ear to ear

This was not even a fear of mine / now frozen in time / I just / stood there

As storm clouds rolled in / The sun became dim / my perfect day is ruined

I slowly turned around / tears pouring down / pieces of my broken heart left on the ground

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(37)

**Shawn J The Poet**

***CUPCAKE***

She's coming their way so he gets to his feet  
and this is the scene that played out on 4th street

He addresses her as she glides by  
"Hi Cupcake"

She stops, turns,  
Hits him with the side eye and reply  
"Cupcake?"

Yes he smiled.  
"Classy Unique Princess Calmly Awaiting Kadeem's Embrace"

He holds his face as she walks pass  
Nursing the slap to the left half  
His friends laugh  
She mutters "Cupcake My Ass!"

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(38)

**Shawn J The Poet**

***Fragile Little Bird***

Fragile little bird.  
Her innocent chirping caught the attention of those who would hurt  
Rough hands inappropriately touch, devaluating self-worth.

Endangered since birth.

Much too young to be expected to handle that girth.

Now silent little bird, No more chirping to be heard.

Not knowing of her wound, you coax her to sing you a tune

So she tells you of a room... and who took her there

how at first they gently stroked her hair

Then, kissed her face with their unwanted passion, before touching her there.

You sit with a wide eyed stare

as she told you how she gasped for air

Are you hearing her clear?

Nah, you're impaled by fear.

You lack the capacity to comprehend the atrocity that she had to bear.

Now your mind swimming in disbelief, seeking relief, decided to question every word of her speech

Ignoring as she beseech you not to let her ship crash against the reef spilling the boatload of courage  
it took for her to speak

You could have been her hero

Wiped her tears and told her to stay calm

Slipped your cape on

and incinerated her fears like napalm

But I guess that responsibility was too big for you to take on

So you decided to stay away from

Actually stepping up!

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(39)

**Shawn J The Poet**

***NOT ON THE SAME PAGE***

Their concoction of passion caused intoxication  
They drank from each other's lips  
Then wrestled For control of the situation  
But too late  
That train had already left the station  
No stops between here and elation  
Just a celebration of lust  
Problem is  
She was drunk in love  
He was drunk with lust  
And even that left the moment he bust.

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**(40)**

**Trish Kahn**

***Endangered Mother Earth***

Her temperature is rising.  
Carelessly we feed her with toxins and filth,  
Nowhere to go, no place to hide,  
Tomorrow is no more at this accelerated rate.

Where is the kindness, the love?  
Our habits destroy her limbs, her oceans, her atmosphere,  
She can not breathe, engulfed with smog,  
Her tattered essence cries for your mercy, your compassion.  
She is wretched with darkness abound.

Her tears are the floods,

Her anger, the raging fires,  
Her gasps, the destructive winds.

She chokes from the deniers,  
Pleading to change our mindset,  
Yes, her temperature is rising,  
As we stay shivering and frozen in despair.

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**(41)**

**Trish Kahn**

***Tree of Life***

You are a magnet, you draw me close in your beauty and awe,  
As you shield me from heat, storms and harm.  
You reach out to me with your open arms,  
Branches upon branches surrounding me.  
Through and through, speckles of turquoise skies peek between your extended limbs,  
Your snake-like roots hold fast to the earth, your foundation, strong and permanent.  
I breathe you in, your fresh, perfumed aromas.  
I taste your fruits that engulf with sweetness.  
We are connected; the air we breathe,  
I give you appreciation and you show me that which is appreciated.  
I embrace you with love and you emit that love.  
Your endurance and life brings me a knowing of what is important.  
Our lives are entwined for all todays and tomorrows.

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(42)

**Trish Kahn**

***My Safe Haven***

Auras of light, fresh scented grass, sparkled ponds,  
Arms of trees reaching to enfold, embrace,  
Shield my tormented existence from danger,  
Your comfort, so strong and majestic.

My safe haven, where nature is solace, wordless, but expressive in its beauty,  
Where shadows and sunlight blend in harmony.

The yin and yang of seedlings and ficus, day and night, sun and rain, frigid  
and warmth,

Forever that pulse of life,  
My safe haven, temple of life, emits joy, love and freedom.  
Thank you for your grace, presence and protection

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(43)

**Trish Kahn**

***Swimming in Gratitude***

I'm grateful to you, oh fifty meter pool,  
For each developed stroke in your water so cool.  
Saved me from broken bones and much strain,  
Toning my body and relaxing my brain.

With each breath I take, brings a feeling of peace,

Inhale, exhale, all the troubles release.  
Afloat on the surface, above the black line,  
A sense of refreshment, a feeling so fine.

Oh mighty pool, please stay full each day,  
Shimmer and shine from the sun's golden ray.  
As I take the plunge, go into the dive,  
Thankful for making me feel so alive.

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(44)

**Elaine Midcoh**

***They Thought He Was a Hero***

They thought he was a hero

Because he helped a wheezing old man fix a flat,  
Worked a double shift to help a sick friend,  
And dove into a lake to save a drowning dog.

But when he was alone

He'd shriek, "Screw you!" while cutting off cars,  
Make obscene calls to women who'd forgotten him,  
And whack his neighbor's mailbox to hell with a bat.

The next morning he'd help

His neighbor pick up the mess  
And, shaking his head, ask over and over,  
"Who would do this? Who would do this? Who would do this?"

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(45)

**Elaine Midcoh**

***Stupid Dog***

Stupid dog, Papa is dead.

Your time laying out

on the front porch

by his wasted legs

is over.

No more click-click of his walker

up and down the sidewalk

with you creeping slowly

by his side.

No more gnarled fingers

skin rough with age,

reaching out

rubbing your backside.

Stupid dog, Papa is dead.

Why does your tongue

hang out and tail wave

when you raise your head

and gaze at his empty chair?

(46)

**Elaine Midcoh**

***For Mama Upon Becoming a Grandma***

I hold my newborn daughter's hand and remember you holding mine.  
You held me tight to keep me safe, loosened your grip so I could grow.  
You stroked my hair, announced I was beautiful and so I was.  
You sang your songs to me, and cheered and clapped when I sang my own.  
And when I left (so scared) you promised I could always come home.

I hold my newborn daughter's hand and know your secrets now.  
I know you were afraid as I am afraid. Your granddaughter is so little!  
I know you were brave as I am too. She is so much to fight for.  
I know your love is eternal. My love for her rockets the heights of sky and stars.  
And when I touch her face, I feel your fingers touch upon mine.

Mama, generations from now you and I may be forgotten,  
Our names lost, our faces – perhaps – preserved in faded photographs  
Piled in a dark drawer, pulled out for a moment's diversion.  
“Who is this?” your granddaughter's grandchildren will ask. “Who is that?”  
We know. We are the ones who loved. We are the ones who love you.

(47)

**Elaine Midcoh**

***Eleanor Roosevelt is Watching***

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home...Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.”

Eleanor Roosevelt, 1958

Dear Eleanor,

I want to be good.

In my thoughts I am the woman who hides slaves in the cellar by day and smuggles them to freedom at night. I stand in defiance of tanks rolling down Tiananmen Square. I march with Dr. King and sing “We Are the World” with Stevie and Bruce. I rescue young girls from human traffickers.

But you understand, I think, that I must work and buy groceries and take my grandmother to the eye doctor and drive the children to school and to the soccer games and weekly birthday parties and make them dinner and breakfast too, and lunch on weekends.

I would like to march with George Floyd’s family, but my daughter’s tooth hurts and we have a dentist appointment.

Still, I try for small things. I do not laugh at the hateful joke and practice giving an expressionless stare. My neighbor lives alone and has a curled back. I bring her almond milk and oranges. My son’s friend’s mother screams, so Abe eats with us. I am careful with my vote.

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(48)

**Soul-O-Traveler**

***BLUE***

Your undulating blue  
we glide comfortably above

Your cavernous deep  
we hide emphatically from

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(49)

**Soul-O-Traveler**

***MY MACHINE***

I'm a curious machine  
a lazy machine  
a dreamy machine  
a rebel machine  
trying to outsmart my programmers.

I'm a sensual machine  
a perverted machine  
a sensitive machine  
a tormented machine  
addicted to beautiful machines.

I'm a pretending machine  
a shy machine  
a needy machine  
a broken machine  
depending on your validation.

I'm a rotten machine  
a moody machine  
a cynical machine  
a sad machine  
celebrating your downfall.

Now, tell me about  
your machine.

(50)

**Soul-O-Traveler**

***ECHO***

out of the blue  
you flew  
like an echo  
in the desert

a familiar voice  
carried by the wind  
calling my name

I wanted to call back  
to answer you in kind  
but your voice  
no heavier than a feather  
lay like a boulder  
on my chest

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**ww**

(51)

**Soul-O-Traveler**

***PIECES***

You're in pieces. Broken. A multiple of yourself.  
Your body: a lesson in mathematics.

I was always good with numbers;  
faster than the others.  
What was the symbol the moment my metal met your bone?  
What was our order of operation?

You were a glimpse on my windshield, a scream  
and then a thud. (Or was the thud before the scream?)

Now, how to get you back to 1 again.

Didn't you know just like rock always beats scissors  
that metal always crushes bone?

I wish you would have known.

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(52)

**Soul-O-Traveler**

***BEYOND THE CLOCK***

just before the sun  
gets too zealous  
and just after the birds  
have finished foraging for breakfast

exists a magical time  
a portal if you will  
beyond this realm where  
clocks rule

a quiet spot to sit  
and a mischievous smile  
are enough to get you there

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(53)

**Natasha C. Samagond**

***Transition***

She stood quietly on the sidelines  
No one paid any attention to her  
She made herself small and invisible  
Shrank, disappeared into the shadows  
Timid as a church mouse  
Ceded space to one and sundry  
She wanted to be on the other side  
How badly she wanted it  
She didn't know the power she had  
Blissfully unaware of the flame within

She was oblivious to her own radiance  
Or the capabilities she possessed  
She wanted to break free, chart her own course  
She tried to unlock the doors, but couldn't find the keys  
Or even the doors  
Gave up after many failed attempts  
Resigned to what was, feeling like the perennial weed

Until she didn't

She took baby steps, pulled herself up by her bootstraps  
She stepped into the light, slowly, but surely  
With each tiny flicker of success, she grew in stature  
In confidence, in strength  
She stood tall, ramrod straight, and on tiptoe  
No more drooping shoulders nor long sighs  
She occupied space, the full space  
Her tiny frame allowed

She found her voice, and what a treat that was  
She shared her thoughts, her views, unsolicited  
They stopped in their tracks to listen, really listen  
She kept flowing like the river, tentatively, at first  
But when the river merged with the ocean  
Boy, did she become the ocean herself  
Releasing waves of pent-up sadness and tears

She paused to look back  
Surprised at how far she had come  
Without applause or encouragement  
She didn't need any

She lit her own candle  
Dispelled darkness and cleared the cobwebs

No longer afraid to leave the shores  
In search of new horizons  
Fear still lingered sometimes  
Trying to get a foothold inside her  
Unflinchingly she soldiered on  
Until one day, her fear turned into resolve  
Then unbridled confidence

She erased doubts and fears from her vocabulary  
She smiled, actually smiled  
That's how good she felt after a long time  
Stood her ground, paved her own way  
Followed her dreams, healed the broken parts  
And began to iron over creases in her life  
And appreciate all the nooks and crevices  
Where once she hid and sought refuge  
Now the light entered through those very cracks

Like the caterpillar in the cocoon  
She knew she had to let her old self die  
To become the butterfly she was meant to be

(54)

**Natasha C. Samagond**

***Don't Judge Me***

If I step off the hamster wheel  
I am drained, not made of steel  
Not just physically weary  
Tired deep down unto my soul

If I retreat full tilt into my shell  
I need time to think and dwell  
To heal all my broken parts  
To piece the puzzle, make it whole

If my canvas is blank  
No blue skies or rainbows nor pots of gold  
If silence is my only currency  
I need time, let me heal

If the pages are void and creased  
Words frozen midair  
I'll start off with a clean slate  
And share my story another day

If you see signs of disarray  
Emotional debris strewn everywhere  
Fog so thick I am invisible  
Know I am in there gasping for air

If the wait seems endless  
The abyss unfathomable

The emotions intractable

Hope still springs eternal

If I am ensconced in my cocoon

Don't rush me

It's the only place where I can be me

In time I will be free

When I surface, and I will

Know the churn and the pain

Have not been in vain

I will fly again, until then refrain

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