

drama literature art life
 a j w reading
 culture read
 publication hear art poetry
 love see art remember write
 historical passion

(Editor's note: We invite local Jewish poets to submit their poems for publication. Please send your poems, along with a brief bio, to: poetry@ajwnews.com. Poems are limited to 30 lines, and bios are limited to 60 words.)

Shalom, AJW Readers,

Thank you, poets, for sharing your thoughts, feelings and images and for honoring people you love and things that matter to you with your beautiful poems. I am deeply moved by the vivid details: I feel as though I am witnessing each moment, whether painful or joyous.

In this season of Passover, we are asked to remember those who are still enslaved — an important consideration for us all, as we approach the second anniversary of the Minneapolis police's murder of George Floyd, and we're in a time when women still don't have sovereignty over our own bodies and a war is raging against a country with, according to Wikipedia, the 13th largest Jewish community in the world and a Jewish president.

Write down your thoughts. Maybe a poem will come forth to help us all work toward *tikkun olam*, repairing our torn social fabric. Writers of all ages are welcome!

Trina Porte
Poetry Editor

Shoah

A daughter of Holocaust survivors, immersed in the survivor community, an academic studying the impact of trauma and its mystifying transmission into the next generation.

She was driven, smart, funny, sarcastic, an intensity that shrouded a vast sadness, a hidden tenderness.

Everyone who confronts the Holocaust is shaken; up close it's unbearable, the pain of victims, the ordinariness of the perpetrators, the evil.

We worked to bring the stories of the Holocaust and its survivors to a wider audience;

Survivors who found the courage to speak for the many who lived like ghosts in the shadows.

We flirted a little, argued a little, liked each other, got things done; though never enough, never enough. At one event, we listened to Elie Wiesel speak fervently, eloquently as the audience applauded over and over. She whispered, *There's no business like Shoah business.*

We live among ashes, the faint odor of smoke reminding us of who we are, what world we live in.

Howard J. Kogan is a retired psychotherapist and poet. His two books of poetry, *Indian Summer* (2011) and *A Chill in the Air* (2016), both published by Square Circle Press, are available at: SquareCirclePress.com.

One Way or Another

In Cardiff, a mix of the young and the lifers

sunken sirens, hollow drums, shy horns
 blowing on a trumpet the player exhorts
 a low bow last night at Metchy's,
 the counter melody in iron lungs
 an 80-something, who had seen Wayne Shorter, Miles, Chet Baker
 Everyone is waiting for the scrape and stumble, saturnian,
 a dangerous bedtime tune
 a blazing infinitude.

That cat cruising and the charmers charming

singing to themselves, the busted air of the breath
 calling to each other a white electric
 the croup and the carrion.

Back at the Nuyoricana Cafe

in Alphabet City
 they broke down, anxious archangels,
 defectors from
 the printed page, the arbitrary separators
 in search of the body,
 in rhythm and sound.

Nighttimes rise

they sequence themselves
 and throw signs
 connect eyes
 they are joined in something deeper than words can say
 improvisation
 syncopation
 rhythmic understructure
 sophisticated harmonic idiom.

The moment elongates

Lisa Pogoff is a freelance writer and editor, after spending a career in public health and social work. She is a founding member of Shir Tikvah Congregation and passionate about Judaism, grandparenting, poetry, bonsai, traveling and her friendships. She lives with her husband, writer Jeff Zuckerman, in the Bryn Mawr neighborhood of Minneapolis.

Passage

Here I lie
 Among dust scattered
 Disturbed by humankind
 Once again
 In the reeds a warning
 BEWARE HUMAN ASHES

ARBEIT MACHT FREI

Enter Birkenau
 Burned-out barracks
 Chimneys pointed
 Heavenward
 Black ravens picking
 Among high weeds

HALF A CENTURY

Tread lightly
 Those who come to mourn
 Or to repent
 These Ashes
 Ravens see
 Once were such

AS YOU

Pass through
 These gates of
 Remembrance
 Do not close them
 Behind you
 Remember

REMEMBER

Judith Baron and her husband Fred visited Auschwitz, where they had both been prisoners. Her memories of that place where both of their entire families had been murdered were overwhelming. She wrote this poem to capture and express her feelings as she again saw Auschwitz. It's called "Passage" because although time has passed, the memories still live in her heart.

patients and sand pies, memories and connections by a doctor

gently
 I picked up the leaves from the backyard
 I moved the earth into shapes

and on the beach I made sand pies
 now so many years later
 is it any different?

all the chaos is caressed
 into portraits with frames
 that are finally stitched into a manual
 for the insurance people to ingest

laid down in careful patterns
 like the collections
 the stamps and the fossils
 and the old magazines and comic books
 right along with the memories
 and the feathers and the rocks

parts and pieces
 the skull and the skin and muscles
 the nerves and processes

that wind in and out of focus
 like the sand pies
 between my toes

some old friends hold on
 some are washed away
 as the waves come and go
 strong and infinite

oh great story teller in the sky
 who organized my mind
 I bless you and thank you

Reuben Lubka has been working as an internal medicine doctor for 27 years, currently in Fridley. He was born in Maine, raised in Fargo and has lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Teaneck, N.J. He and his wife, Gail, will enjoy their 20th anniversary in April. They have four children: Dawn, Manny, Ben and Solomon.

Traditional Inheritance

Her mother didn't keep kosher
 So my mother didn't either

And her mother didn't hit her
 When her periods first began
 And she didn't hit me.

But she found one Rosh Hashanah eve
 In the Chinese restaurant
 She couldn't bring herself to order moo shu pork.

Oh, well, she said resignedly,
 Everyone has his level of kashrut.

Ruth Berman's poetry has appeared in many general, Jewish, fantasy/science fiction and literary magazines. Her novel *Bradamant's Quest* was published by FTL Publications (Minnesota).

Summer Boogie

Rhythm propelled the dancing man
 with thrust and shimmy and shake.

He twirled and bent and
 bowed and swiveled before
 the summer crowd at the lake.

Swallows crisscrossed the cloudless blue sky
 as a vocalist synced with the band's steady beat.
 The dancing man gyrated in a
 world of his own, never tired,
 nor returned to his seat.

The sun set over Lake Harriet's gleaming waves;
 the dancing man lingered in reverie.
 As the Pops concert wound down
 on a perfectly mellow night,
 he merged into the exiting throng, seamlessly.

Sharon Chernoff Zweigbaum is an art administrator and has managed regional art galleries. She conceived and curated *Creating and Connecting: Art by Jewish Women* for the Midwest Jewish Historical Society. She directs ArtVantage, an art tour service, and was a longtime tour guide at Walker Art Center. Sharon has B.A. and M.A. degrees in art history from the University of Minnesota.