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Shalom, dear readers,

A geopolitical version of Emmy Noether's fix for the theory of relativity is the best thing I can think of for what is needed now: "If energy may not be conserved 'locally' — that is, in an arbitrarily small patch of space — everything can work out when the space is sufficiently large." (Quoted from Steve Nadis in *Discover* magazine, May 16, 2017, updated April 26, 2020.)

So, I truly hope that Israel is sufficiently large enough to include the Palestinians who want and need

their own homeland there, just as Israel now includes the 21 percent of its population who are Palestinians choosing to be Israeli citizens.

And may the gravity of Israel's situation help the world accelerate its motion towards supporting Israel as a home for all Jews, for all time. Because peaceful coexistence seems to be the only viable formula for solving this heart-wrenching problem.

Please send us your own verses on peace and hope, and read on.

Trina Porte, Poetry Editor

Song in a Brooklyn Courtyard

Not a beggar, really
 a restorer of memories. Dressed
 in layered rags, sleeping where he
 can—a park bench, a coal cellar—he
 sings Yiddish songs in crying breaths,
 his pain falling hard on listeners' ears.

Old women leaning on their
 windowsills pull their shawls
 tighter against the chill, recalling for a
 moment childhood winters in
 Russian shtetls, chickens and goats
 foraging among the headstones
 for anything to eat.

His song ends, and the singer calls out
 for a few cents; "help me please, I
 have no home, no family, take pity,
gotenu helfn mir."

Paper-wrapped pennies rain softly
 down; among the coins a balled pair of
 socks lands at the singer's feet. He
 slips off his shoes, replaces his torn
 socks, then rising
 continues his song.

Al Porte's abiding creative work, poetry, began seriously in the 1960s. During the 1990s he took classes with Michael Dennis Browne, Ray Gonzalez and other poets at the University of Minnesota, and was grateful for their encouragement and critiques. His strongest love was for his dearest wife, Bonnie. This poem is from *Let Me Off at Bergen Street*, Chickaree Press, 2010.

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 intentionally
 no scratchy poem
 no spicy paragraph
 no paraphrase for posterity
 a great white rehearsal it is
 to have nothing more to say
 no high cone of light
 to illuminate the afterlife
 but the sum of all colors
 this white wilderness
 this immensity
 I stare into it
 lost
 like a boy in a mirror
 searching his face
 he's beautiful

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.

Mark Mann (z"l) worked at a used book store, wrote poetry and taught poetry in Chicago. He died in 2022 after battling cancer.

The Fargo Girls

The girls always turned away with a pinchpaper grip
 doing their white skirt quickstep into echoing hallways
 with endless rows of lockers
 or they waltzed into classrooms
 full of square shouldered boys
 pumped with beefy ideas of football and Jesus
 while I, against the currents of a subterranean river
 lay tranced and enchanted
 as liminal and transparent
 as a pillar of salt

I was a salmon swimming upstream
 in the dark of night, cold but strong
 I was in a canoe paddling across a chasm
 of the perilous void
 in the white Dakota January
 looking onwards for my origin,
 led only by a moonlight glow
 and the flashlight of my scientist's hat
 even the whispered hush
 of wide-eyed lovers
 rich in the mystery of night
 could not replace the hunger
 for the ancestral homeland
 on the shores of Lake Kinneret
 under the hot sun of Galilee

Reuben Lubka has been working as an internal medicine doctor for 28 years, currently in Fridley. He was born in Maine, raised in Fargo, and has lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Teaneck, New Jersey. He and wife Gail will enjoy their 21st anniversary this April. They have four children: Dawn, Manny, Ben and Solomon.

Hetchy (with love for Howard)

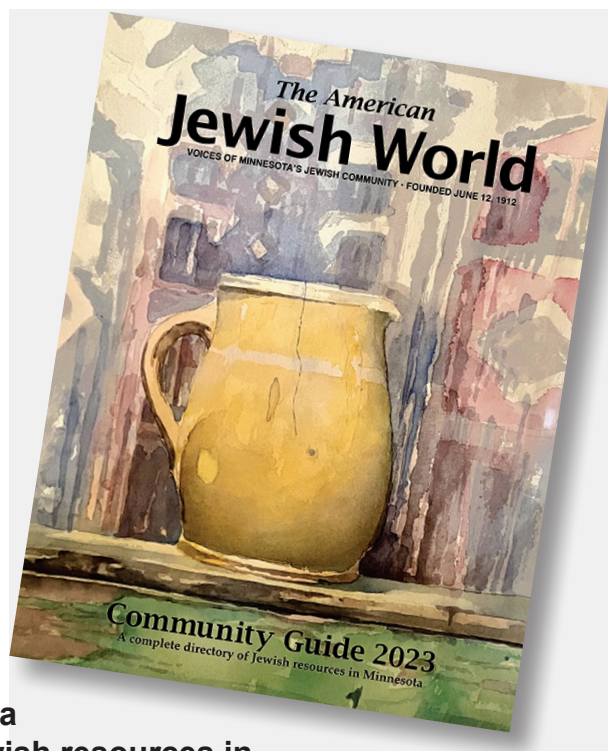
I have given myself 18 minutes to write this poem
 Because it is after work and I am hungry for dinner
 But every poet thinks that time is malleable
 And we ignore it like we ignore mortality
 In our metaphorical dance with that capricious timer bell
 Musical chairs played wearing a blindfold
 He writes biweekly in a circle of friends
 A blessing with which few writers are bestowed
 Yet he kvetches like a small-town Moses
 Lost wandering apartment hallways
 Bereft of his beloved pigeons
 And therapeutic woodpile
 Given the name Howard
 Knowingly after someone who died
 In that agonizing catalogue of our history
 Where survivors weep for being left alive
 And warn their children with screaming silences
 We process by giving ourselves peaceful deaths in poems
 Not knowing his Hebrew name or his Yiddish name
 Or his Bubbe name spoken with simultaneous ear pulling
 Or cheek pinching that reminds us never to forget
 That love hurts and family is always the boss of you
 I only know his American name Howard
 Whose kvetching I love so I call him Hetchy
 As in "Hetchy, vos macht ir?" or
 "Oy vey, Hetchy—again with the snakes in the poem?"
 Now I give thanks for the fourth book of his poems
 One written for each twenty-five years of life I hope
 So that's L'chaim: 18 more years
 To mark a century of writing

Trina Porte: "I was given my first diary at age 7. My most exciting entry that year was a full moon seen when I was taking out the garbage. I was afraid of the darkness, and that bright moon made my shadow into a big strong me. I'm still trying to put that feeling into words. I write poems because I don't know what to say without them."

Be listed in our directory!

If you represent a local Jewish organization and have not yet been contacted to be included in the 2024 AJW Community Guide, please contact Mordecai Spektor at 612-824-0030 or at: community@ajwnews.com.

Our Community Guide features a comprehensive directory of Jewish resources in Minnesota. Jewish organizations (shuls, schools, agencies, etc.) can receive a free listing, which includes contact information and a 50-word description.



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