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*Shalom, dear readers,  
 Now, as we acknowledge the passing of one year since the events of October 7, the act of G-d writing each of our names in a sacred book as the Jewish metaphor for life going on has so much meaning. Books are being banned, and many of the stories shared in the media seem to be stuck in a negative feedback loop fueled by accusations and an almost total lack of compassion. As an antidote, the stories in these poems offer some sweet moments of human connection and wonder.*

— Trina Porte, Poetry Editor

### Joy Bounces In Sharon Zweigbaum

Minnesota's seasonal expressions inspire me.  
 Spring surprises beg me to tell of them.  
 One morning at the edge of my slushy patio,  
 a jostle of jumping juncos  
 jubilantly found seeds I tossed out.  
 Hopping here and there,  
 they darted amidst snowflakes softly  
 falling in inevitable late March weather.  
 This tableau was briefly interrupted by  
 a cardinal pair who did not stay long.  
 Exiting from a nearby bush,  
 the juncos returned again to feast.  
 These petite slate-gray avians were a welcome  
 diversion as I bounced back from influenza.  
 And, my favorite: the albino squirrel  
 on his daily visit was a startling sight  
 as he posed brightly against the leafy  
 backyard brush where he rummaged.  
 Later, driving in drizzle to a concert,  
 I viewed a beaming full rainbow  
 that arched over Lake Bde Maka Ska,  
 each color brighter than I've ever seen.  
 I treasure the spiritual aura that inhabits me  
 during these seasonal observations.  
 Such natural sights compile with others into  
 my mental gratitude journal.

Sharon Zweigbaum has managed several art galleries, served on the State Arts Board public art commission and written art reviews. She curated the 1997-1999 exhibit "Creating and Connecting: Art by Jewish Women" for the Upper Midwest Jewish Historical Society. Since 1981, she has directed ArtVantage, an arts appreciation tour service. For 50 years, Sharon was a guide at Walker Art Center.

### A visit from St. Nick

Ross Plovnik

to our home would end at the doorpost,  
 where he'd note the mezuzah and move on.  
 Still, why not ask him in to warm up  
 with a steaming glass of tea,  
 generous slice of lemon and sugar  
 cube to tuck away in his mouth  
 like Grandpa would in our small kitchen  
 while the young me wondered if the old  
 country lacked granulated sugar and  
 how to ask this of a granddad who  
 could pass for a department-store Santa  
 but to a child's earnest request for gifts  
 would respond only in Yiddish.

Ross Plovnick, born in Charlotte, N.C., raised in Boston, now lives in Minnetonka. His poems have appeared in a variety of print and online journals and in several anthologies. He is delighted that his grandparents all opted to emigrate and that they came to America.

### Lake Superior Spectacle

Diane Pecoraro

At 5:00 p.m. each day, the waves whip up,  
 we observers on the shore note with science in our eyes.  
 The thrust and force, the regularity, excite inquiry.  
 We watch the convergence of two flows from separate poles  
 cover smoothed rocks long abraded by water force.  
 What? How?  
 The earth?  
 The axis?  
 Something in us wants to understand the physics,  
 yet we hesitate to apply principle or pattern.  
 Words of science, indeed language, would label this motion,  
 stirred by elusive gravity.  
 Rather, let us relish the messy order of magnetic poles  
 and the swirl of tide pools.  
 We can pose questions later.

Diane Pecoraro writes about the quirky iridescent fragments of human interaction, political events, immigrant issues and art. She has been the Community Poet of St. Louis Park for over 10 years. Diane is a board member of the St. Louis Park Friends of the Arts (FOTA) and is part of the Minneapolis JCC Artist Lab project, a longtime group of artists.

### Big Cat Games

Ruth Berman

In October at the Big Cats Refuge  
 They throw pumpkins in the water.  
 Halloween-striped tigers love to play  
 Bobbing for pumpkins.

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

### Morning rituals, morning meditations

Miriam Weinstein

Each morning after my walk, I make my bed. Pulling  
 at sheets, tucking corners, tugging my comforter over  
 the mattress, arranging pillows. I pause, look out —  
 wisps of clouds scatter across the sky.

Each morning while still in bed, Grandpa, his soul  
 returned to body, gave thanks to a sovereign being.  
 Out of bed and hands washed, prayers continued.  
 Praise to *Hashem* for the body, wonder of design:

blood, water, bile all in measured motion.  
 I make another semi-circle of my bed. Pull,  
 tuck, tug. I remember hearing him pray  
 in Hebrew, almost a whisper.

*Adonai*. How little I know about God. *Shechinah*.  
 Days before Rosh Hashanah, I watch leaves spiral —  
 shades of amber, citrine, garnet settle on the ground.  
 A flash of black and bright yellow by the birdbath  
 as a migrating warbler lands, swallows several  
 staccato sips of water. Fallen leaves crackle underfoot.  
 Listen. My attention is better in autumn. Attention  
 to autumnal accounting: Where

have I been, where do I hope to go. How, if given  
 another year in this patch of wilderness, how  
 will I choose to scythe my path.

Miriam Weinstein has published her poems in two chapbooks, *Twenty Ways of Looking* and *How to Thread a Needle*. Her poetry also has appeared in several anthologies and journals, most recently, *A 21st Century Plague: Poetry from a Pandemic*, *Rocked by the Waters: Poems of Motherhood*, *Poems of Hope and Resistance*, *Survivor Lit*, *New Verse News*, *Plum Tree Tavern* and *Vita Brevis Press*. She lives in Minneapolis.



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