

**2nd Bar Sagi Young Poets Prize, 2020-2021**  
**Winners of Prizes and Honourable Mentions**

**First Prize**

**loving without being loved**

By Aubrey McFate (pen name), age 18

I'll remember you in a way you never saw me.  
the first boy I ever admired,  
a defiant attitude toward the world.  
I could sit and just watch you,  
captivated by your boyish excitements and mature certainty.

peering around your room as if it was insight into internal workings,  
immersed in your aged charm.  
I loved you because I saw myself in you, maybe you saw it too  
and that's why you couldn't love me.

I saw myself in you, but you saw her.  
You told me you couldn't see me as that someone,  
but it's hard to be someone who's not the one.

you were my friend,  
until you weren't.  
you were my friend,  
until I cried uncontrollably,  
so hideously at the inevitable loss of you.  
now i'm left to replay,  
how through blurred eyes I watched you walk away.

life felt like a film for that fleeting friendship,  
but it wasn't blithe it was a landmine.  
for me, all that remains are fragments of you, your sibling's names,  
what you'd order to eat,  
what you were like high and who you held high.

I wish we weren't so similar then you wouldn't  
have had the power to ruin so many authors,  
and artists, and actors and antagonists.  
you wouldn't have had the power to taint talking.  
now I don't talk,  
as I have nothing to say if you're not hearing it too.

the kind of boy who would love a poem written about him,  
about your quirky wit and your reading list.  
but it's not a cinematic cliché cracked case,  
the credits rolled and my role's been recast.  
no fantastical cessation,  
no final hour realisation.

I can't have you,  
but as long as you're content I'm okay  
yet it still pains, that to me you have nothing to say,  
after you promised you loved me in a different way.

## Second Prize

### **I Move Forward Without Thinking**

by Rafi Goldstein, age 12

Bang! The pistol sounds  
I dive in and my body hits the icy water  
I move forward without thinking

Arms flailing, legs kicking  
I am doing what I have been trained to do  
I move forward without thinking

The lane ropes guide and reassure me  
The water consumes me  
Creeping up beside me the others appear  
I quicken my pace  
I move forward without thinking

Like a rocket speeding through the sky  
I am a shark honing in on its prey  
As I approach the finish line  
I move forward without thinking

My body aches and my senses are dulled  
People are cheering, calling my name  
The prize is mine  
I get out of the pool without thinking.

### 3rd Prize

#### **Stillness**

by Sigal Nachson, age 12.

It bobbed,  
It dipped,  
It proceeded to flap  
And then it bobbed some more.  
This robin that I'd observed,  
Was there from dusk till dawn.

It placidly stood there,  
In rain, sun and snow,  
Staring at the dew-sodden ground,  
Its red chest a-glow.

This robin seemed to turn its back on  
The hazy, infinite sky.  
It completely ignored the bird seed table,  
Opting for the passing fly.

It soon began to dawn on me,  
This robin was patiently waiting,  
Perhaps for an old feathered friend,  
Or it could be for spring, or maybe

It was waiting for no particular reason.  
Such a thought is highly likely.  
This robin could just be living out its days  
In no hasty rush or hurry.

Yes, this seems rather sensible.  
Such a thought lights up inside me.  
If we could just slow down our years  
And have time to reflect on life's real pleasures;

Like golden moments with loved ones,  
Cherished bursts of true happiness,  
If we could just slow it down,  
If we could relive it all,  
Such a lesson learnt from a robin,  
Leaves me quite enthralled

## Honourable Mentions

### Two minds!

by Hannah Sugars, age 17

Sleepless nights spent battling with relentless critique,  
Conforming to her expectations – not permissible to speak.  
Persistence driven by my inability to shake her week after week,  
Failure to see beyond tomorrow – a future looking bleak.

Deception of the self, something so ironic I can't comprehend,  
Utterly convinced in the voices I could hear I had found a friend –  
But what kind of companion are you fearful to offend?  
Complying with her orders: mere means to an end.

Stripped of personality,  
Those who know me best would but agree.  
Present in the flesh, but my soul an absentee,  
Eyes revealing nothing and speaking volumes simultaneously.

Indifference, impassion, a loss of zest.  
That once renowned smile one wouldn't have guessed.  
Mistreatment of a body with which I have been blessed -  
Heart rate slowed beneath my chest.

Losing nine times out of ten to one too cowardly to make an appearance,  
Attempts to save me a perceived interference.  
Restrictive guidelines, pressure for adherence,  
Despite a journey non-linear, demonstrating perseverance.

Her voice and mine, often difficult to differentiate,  
My desire for return of my life, hers for further loss of weight.  
But fortunately I have been successful, a few times to date,  
And I anticipate not long before the remainder of her hold on me is to abate.

In the absence of this demon I visualise my highest self,  
Certainty in that I'll outsmart the disorder and be restored back to health.

## **Our Mountaintop**

Natacha Alexander, age 12

We are an ambitious race  
We invent, we build, we aspire,  
We make the world so beautiful  
But then we destroy it all like fire.  
We create good, useful extraordinary things,  
But when we run out of good to create,  
We make bad, dangerous and terrible things,  
And smother Earth with smog and hate.  
Do we not treasure what we build?  
Do we not strive to maintain it well?  
Do we not love the human and natural world?  
Yet it fades with each tree that fell.  
We began at the foot, clueless and new,  
Then we worked our way up to the peak.  
But now with us on the mountaintop  
The future of all below looks bleak.  
Is it so hard for us to preserve  
The mountain we came to, the mountain that's Earth,  
When we weed out nature for our buildings  
Like it's useless; like trees and plants have no worth.  
When our buildings scrape the blue off the sky  
And our vehicles pollute and obscure  
This is the illness that we allowed to infect  
So now we must find the cure.  
There's smog in the sky  
And concrete on the ground  
And great metal birds  
Travel all over and around  
We are all but hammering metal  
To cover our world  
And we use more carbon to replace  
The clean air that once swirled  
It is too hot, all the places will flood.  
We will all be thirsty and starved.  
We are the murderers of our kind and others  
It is the Earth's gravestone we've carved.  
But there is a hope; there's a way  
We can return and reveal the light  
And put a stop to the trouble,  
A stop to this endless dark night.

The Earth provides us with all that we need  
To save the planet we are breaking.  
New fuel, new transport, new energy,  
Our world needs remaking.  
Brick by brick  
Tree by tree  
Each bottle we pull  
Out of the sea  
Each piece of litter we clean  
Each recycled thing  
This is the start  
Of the change we can bring.  
Together we can rid Earth  
Of pollution and sorrow  
The children of today will clean  
The mess that's left tomorrow.  
Now stand atop your mountain  
And survey your domain  
Survey the planet  
We ensured would remain  
Survey the bold world  
Which has gone through rebirth  
Stand atop your mountain  
And survey Planet Earth.

## **A wish in your heart**

by Yaara Heller, age 12

It all starts with a wish in your heart,  
and from it you will never want to part...  
It gives you hope for something more,  
something you might've never felt before.  
It makes you go forward and never go back,  
and for this journey it knows what to pack.  
The essentials like friendship, love and joy,  
a boost of confidence and how to enjoy.  
But that wish itself is the essential,  
'cause it's here and it's yours and it's special.  
So listen to that wish in your heart,  
because it's really quite very smart...

### Three

by Mordechai Howie, age 12

If I were still the age of three,  
I'd skip down the street joyfully,  
Holding hands with an anxious mummy,  
Afraid I'd lose my grip and flee.

We'd play in the park,  
A game of tag on the freshly cut grass.  
Feeling as giddy as can be,  
If I were still the age of three.

Climbing up into the fort above,  
There'd be scary kids who'd push and shove.  
I'd wonder maybe I should flee,  
As my mummy tells them they're no longer three.

On the journey home I'd whine for a treat,  
At the giant corner shop at the end of our street.  
Taking a seat enjoying the sweet,  
Looking back now have I ever felt so complete.

From the top of this playground I look around and I see,  
Toddling children full of so much glee,  
As angry mothers glare up at me,  
Telling me that I'm no longer three.

No longer pushed upon the swing.  
No longer to my mother I cling.  
No longer begging for a treat,  
Walking alone back down my street.

Ahead at the tiny corner shop I see,  
A group of teens still not quite me,  
Not quite grown not used to being alone,

Not quite thirteen but no longer three.



## **A teardrop cascaded**

by Roxana Isaacs, age 15

A tear drop cascaded  
Acid on her skin  
As one turned to many  
Valuable turned vulnerable  
Crevice turned crater  
Her skin was of a pale pink  
Eyes drenched and wrinkled  
Lips encrusted with frost  
Teeth clenched  
Hair worn thin by fear  
Like the tunes of New Orleans  
Like the eyes of Aphrodite  
The tears appeared a solemn blue  
They fell fast, vigorous  
Tumbling and moaning  
Rasping and groaning  
In the cold evening winds of September  
And came to a crashing crescendo  
On the tarmac streets below  
Waiting to fall again...

## **The universe – and us**

by Hannah Sugars, age 17

The something that outwits proof  
Invites us to acknowledge the art that is the stars,  
Or else the prospect of remaining aloof  
Is but a reality of ours.

Bereft of structure, robbed of normality -  
A world turned on its head.  
Mere existence, no purpose but to simply be...  
If we had only looked to the sky instead.

Devoid of our control -  
Sheer unpredictability in its place.  
Loss of touch with the soul,  
But the moon - a constant and reliable face.