
Second Place, Poetry, Grades 7-9

“Softly,” Emma Hausman

The light crunch under my feet,
The sparkling snow,
The crisp, cold air gently brushing my cheeks
Then suddenly, enveloped in the warm air
Of the house.

Arms wrap around
The neon purple jacket,
Keeping me warm.
Our voices come down to a hush.

The joyful light of the dining room
Is lonely without the laughter of people.
The menorahs sit anxiously,
Waiting for us to give them their time
To shine brightly into the darkness
Of the neighborhood.

The strike of the match
Is a rip through the patient silence of the room.
The small fire is passed from the match
To the tall shamash who stands tall,
Awaiting his orders.

The glowing flame ignites the first candle
As the flame grows between the two soldiers.
Our voices encourage the small spark.

The small, growing flame
Of the second candle emerges and then
Disappears into a small, swirling pillar
Of smoke.

The stubborn candle refuses the spark
Of the diligent shamash,
Who presses its light into
The blackened wick, until it lights.

The glow of all eight candles
Is magnificent in the window,
Spreading softly their light into
The dark night of the neighborhood.

Emma Hausman is in 8th grade at The Blake School. Some of Emma's interests are playing the cello, writing, traveling and learning about Jewish culture.