

[Home](#)

[Summer 2007](#)

[Spring 2007](#)

[Winter 2007](#)

[Autumn 2006](#)

[Summer 2006](#)

[Spring 2006](#)

[Winter 2006](#)

[Fall 2005](#)

[Summer 2005](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[SNR's Writers](#)

[Contact](#)

POETRY OF TALIA LAVIN

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Yuri Gagarin and Me

Down by the empty shops
in nothing but socks
you laid your palm
on the bald front seat,
clicking the seatbelt like a telegraph machine
sending a desperate message into space--
but we were the cosmonauts there, lonely and proud,
cold ground behind us;
your hair red in the light,
your eyes hollow with stars...

Then you cast
me out to tumble with the bad milk and spent bottles.
You heard the singing of the black lakes in your ears.
They were calling you to distant spaces.

I only died a little bit.
The blood ran thick and unquiet through me.
But I was already mapping the terrain
of a new planet,
gargantuan and blue,
where even the wheedling noise
of the satellites couldn't reach.

The Girl Who Wasn't Goldman

I'm going to charge you with all the bright humanity in me and explain
how everyone here,
naked under steel
and serge and desk lights,
is sacred, bodies holy,
and their fervid fervid unions are going to raise us up forever,

But your lips, turned at sour corners, won't tremble.
The hot lights on your unlikely flesh, the thin
fur on the indent in your jaw, will burn,
And I will turn, reddening and quiet,
into a morning drowned
in the rot of its promise.

Bad Futile Resolution

I would like to be the sort of girl who doesn't talk,
Who is still and sharp,
Lips calcified by the perfection of an urge
that gives no quarter;
When she surrenders at last to love
Her passions gather in a dark cloud of atoms
Rising and rising in her limbs.

Instead I am a sputtering machine of passions,
At times I roar, at times I mutter,
Belching forth always a curled black plume
of ambling, garish thought;
Mornings I swear I won't say a word until lunch
I am a fountain of words before breakfast;
Broad and yielding, I snack, I bluster,
I crow, I cringe, I fever to expand.

I wince at the brevity of the peerless mind,
I clutch to myself all that is fierce and disordered;
Jowls trembling, sunk in weakness,
I dream of creating a new self from a handful of bones.

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Talia Lavin is a recent high school graduate who has had poetry and fiction published in *Hanging Loose* #89, *The SNReview*, and *Slow Trains*. She will also be featured in the fall issue of *Mima'amakim* magazine. She will be spending the next year in Israel before joining Harvard's Class of 2012.