**8th Form National Poetry Recitation Contest:**

**Title of Poem**: Amor Fati

**Poet**: Jane Hirshfield

Link: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/92039/amor-fati>



About the Poet: Jane Hirshfield is a contemporary American poet. Her poems contain a mixture of the Western and Eastern world, of both Western and Eastern traditions and ways of thinking. Often her poetry is short, precise, and easily readable. Her themes include man’s relationship with nature and how the self relates to the outside world in general. She once said, “My primary interest has always been the attempt to understand and deepen experience by bringing it into words. Poetry, for me, is an instrument of investigation and a mode of perception, a way of knowing and feeling both self and world…”

**Amor Fati**

By Jane Hirshfield

Little soul,

you have wandered

lost a long time.

The woods all dark now,

birded and eyed.

Then a light, a cabin, a fire, a door standing open.

The fairy tales warn you:

Do not go in,

you who would eat will be eaten.

You go in. You quicken.

You want to have feet.

You want to have eyes.

You want to have fears.

**About the Poem**: This poem begins with a person’s soul; it has been traveling for awhile, in the dark, but it sees a light. Jane mentions fairy tales, for all children growing up hear the stories of the witches in the forest, of the scary things in the dark. The little soul, however, is excited by the possibility of change, of growing a body-- of having fears, because fears make you real.

**Discussion Guide:**

If you were a soul, why would you want feet, eyes and fears?

Why does the soul “quicken” when he/she enters the cabin?

Why do people do things that make them afraid? When was the last time you feared doing something, but did it anyway? Why did you do it?

What contrast is the poet creating with “you who would eat will be eaten”? What is the purpose of this line?

What do you think your soul looks like? How is it different from your body?