

## Sound of Judgment

By Ashley Edwards

Make your voice louder  
Words a little clearer please  
Don't forget eye contact  
Honey, I still can't hear you.

Poetry. I feel almost like I'm screaming.  
Oh honey, join poetry, it's just reading.  
No. This is competing.

Competing. Because if you're not loud enough  
Then they won't pay attention.

Screaming. Because your volume and tone  
Are the only way you'll make them listen.

We pick a topic, only to be judged on our tone  
They say we are heard, yet I still feel alone.

Look up here, and here. Make eye contact there.  
I just want you to yearn my subject about loss and despair.

Anything to make you feel, isn't that what counts?  
Honey, I wish, but you're graded on your sound  
Oh no, but this whole time I've been trying to make an impact  
"So have we" say the others, "but just know we've got your back"

Begin. From their mouth the word escapes.  
Now I compete, let me take you to my place.  
Roses are red, the sky is a pretty blue.  
There was a little kind-hearted girl that I once knew.

She wished to sing and act, the way professionals do.  
But an adult had the audacity to tell her it wouldn't come true.

She locked herself away,  
She hid herself for many years.  
She bathed herself in sorrow,  
With a bath full of her tears.

As she was lying one night  
She caught a gleam in her eye.  
"Maybe they'll listen to my stories  
If I can turn them to rhymes!"

When she had finished,  
She had left that dark room.  
It's almost like that earth had  
Never seen a speck of gloom.

"Of course they'll listen." She said,  
"If I just read them aloud!"  
But of course, right now  
You're only judging me on my sound.