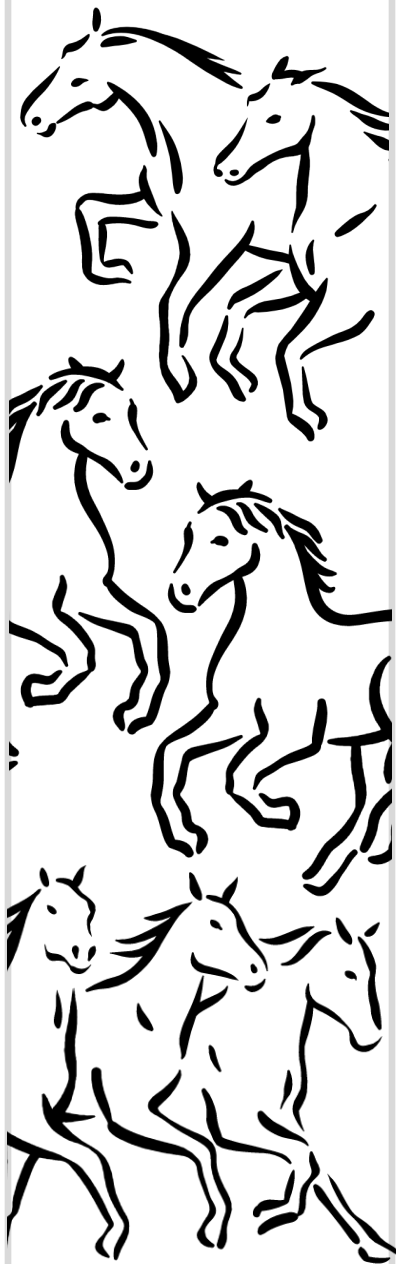


Printing note—

Print pages 2-3 two-sided on the short edge and the front and back should line up.

Cardstock is recommended.



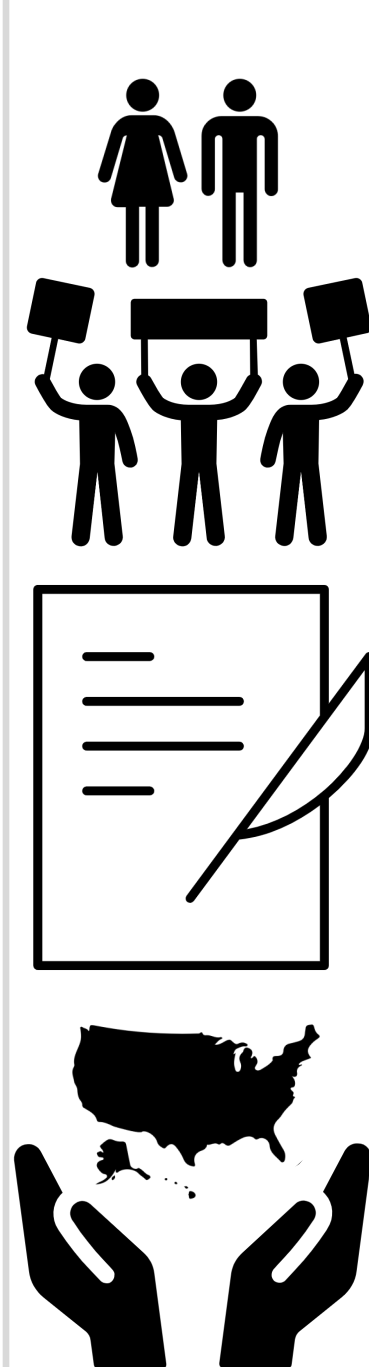
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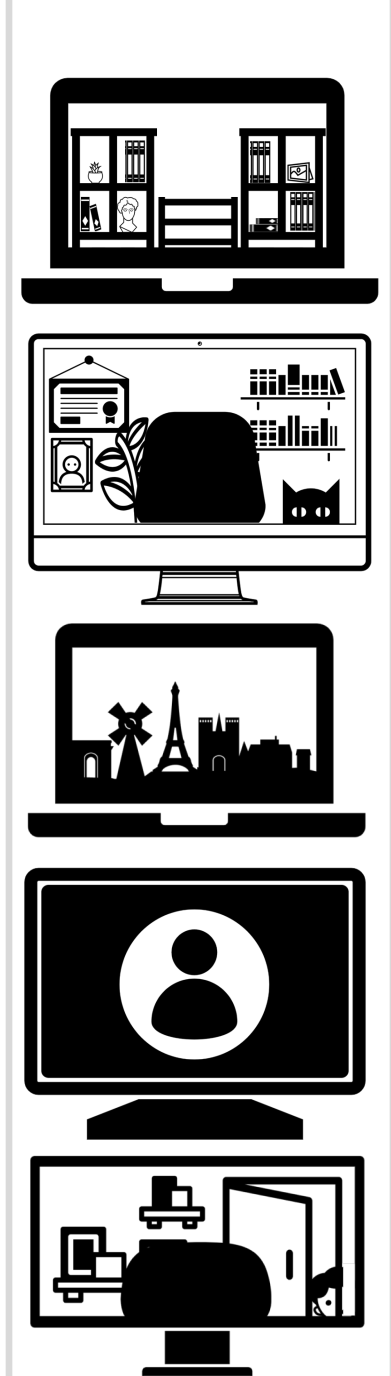
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The living rooms of my neighbors are like beauty parlors, like night-club powder rooms, like international airport first-class lounges. The bathrooms of my neighbors are like love nests — Dufy prints, black Kleenex, furry towels, toilets so highly bred they fill and fall without a sigh (why is there no bidet in so-clean America?). The kitchens of my neighbors are like cars: what gleaming dials, what toothy enamels, engines that click and purr, idling the hours away. The basements of my neighbors are like kitchens; you could eat off the floor. Look at the furnace, spotless as a breakfront, standing alone, prize piece, the god of the household.

But I'm no different. I arrange my books with a view to their appearance. Some highbrow titles are prominently displayed. The desk in my study is carefully littered; after some thought I hang a diploma on the wall only to take it down again. I sit at the window where I can be seen. What do my neighbors think of me — I hope they think of me. I fix the light to hit the books. I lean some rows one way, some rows another.

A man's house is his stage. Others walk on to play their bit parts. Now and again a soliloquy, a birth, an adultery.

The bars of my neighbors are various, ranging from none at all to the nearly professional, leather stools, automatic coolers, a naked painting, a spittoon for show. The businessman, the air-force captain, the professor with tenure — it's a neighborhood with a sky.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Karl Shapiro  
“The Living Rooms of My Neighbors”  
*The Wild Card: Selected Poems, Early and Late* (1998)

There's a poem in this place—  
in the footfalls in the halls  
in the quiet beat of the seats.  
It is here, at the curtain of day,  
where America writes a lyric  
you must whisper to say.  
There's a poem in this place—  
in the heavy grace,  
the lined face of this noble building,  
collections burned and reborn twice. [...]

There's a lyric in California  
where thousands of students march for blocks,  
undocumented and unafraid;  
where my friend Rosa finds the power to blossom  
in deadlock, her spirit the bedrock of her community.  
She knows hope is like a stubborn ship gripping a dock,  
a truth: that you can't stop a dreamer or knock down a dream.

How could this not be her city  
su nació  
our country  
our America,  
our American lyric to write—  
a poem by the people, the poor,  
the Protestant, the Muslim, the Jew,  
the native, the immigrant,  
the black, the brown, the blind, the brave,  
the undocumented and undeterred,  
the woman, the man, the nonbinary,  
the white, the trans,  
the ally to all of the above  
and more? [...]

There's a poem in this place—  
a poem in America  
a poet in every American  
who rewrites this nation, who tells  
a story worthy of being told on this minnow of an earth  
to breathe hope into a palimpsest of time—  
a poet in every American  
who sees that our poem penned  
doesn't mean our poem's end.  
There's a place where this poem dwells—  
it is here, it is now, in the yellow song of dawn's bell  
where we write an American lyric  
we are just beginning to tell.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Amanda Gorman  
Excerpted from “In This Place (An American Lyric)”  
*Split This Rock's The Quarry: A Social Justice Database*

to love life, to love it even  
  
when you have no stomach for it  
  
and everything you've held dear  
crumbles like burnt paper in your hands,  
  
your throat filled with the silt of it.  
  
When grief sits with you, its tropical heat  
thickening the air, heavy as water  
  
more fit for gills than lungs;  
  
when grief weights you down  
  
like your own flesh  
  
only more of it, an obesity of grief,  
  
you think, *How can a body  
withstand this?*  
  
Then you hold life like a face  
  
between your palms, a plain face,  
  
no charming smile, no violet eyes,  
  
and you say, yes, I will take you  
  
I will love you, again.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Ellen Bass  
“The Thing Is”  
*Poetry of Presence: An Anthology of Mindfulness Poems* (2017)

Seven of the ten things I  
love in the face  
Of James Baldwin  
concern the spiritual  
Elasticity of his  
expressions. The sashay  
Between left & right  
eyebrow, for example.  
The crease between his eyes  
like a tuning  
Fork or furrow, like a  
riverbed branching  
Into tributaries like lines  
of rapturous sentences  
Searching for a period.  
The dimple in his chin  
Narrows & expands like a  
pupil. Most of all,  
I love all of his eyes. And  
those wrinkles  
The feel & color of wet  
driftwood in the mud  
Around those eyes. Mud is  
made of  
Simple rain & earth, the  
same baptismal  
Spills & hills of dirt James  
Baldwin is made of.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Terrance Hayes  
“[Seven of the ten things I  
love in the face]”  
*American Sonnets for my  
Past and Future Assassin*

In winter  
through the damp grass  
around the house  
there are horses  
moving  
on the snow

in the half-light  
they move quickly

following the fence  
until the mist takes  
them  
completely

and evening  
is the hollow sound of  
hooves  
in the south field.

\*\*\*\*\*  
David Whyte  
“Horses Moving on the  
Snow”  
*Songs for Coming  
Home* (1989)