

## Identity Project Poetry Examples

*The poems were written by students in my 10 Honors class for their identity projects. Notice what is revealed about the author's identity in each. If you are writing short poems, a minimum of three is suggested. If you write a longer poem, one is enough.*

### Childhood

Believing bubbles  
were never broken,  
We didn't shrink from the shadows or  
Move away from the meandering moonlight,  
Our dreams were our destinies,  
The whole world held arms open to embrace  
us.

--AH, 2000

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### Forget-me-not

A scattered patch of  
forget-me-nots,  
clumped by a busy street  
Disregarded by many  
who don't see the  
harmony and bliss I can bring.

My colors,  
sky blue petals  
and small sunny yellow centers  
Remind some  
that little things  
can bring  
bliss.

I will wait,  
in my welcomed solitude  
for one to pluck me  
Another I gladly  
enlighten.  
Wait for anyone  
to notice  
how I shake off  
cascading splashes and careless feet  
and  
go on.

Wait for another  
to see my  
sky blue  
me.

--LB, 1998

### Accentuation

I am the rhythm behind the music  
I move my hips to the beat  
Men wonder where my secret lies  
For I am the music that the band plays  
I am the drum that moves people's feet  
My body sways and men are mesmerized  
My lips curl as the fire inside me sparks  
My eyes flaunt my haughtiness  
my sassiness

I rise above everyone else as my body  
twists and turns on the dance floor

I speak through my moves

I am a mystery to men

They cannot reach my inner self

I move too fast, too gracefully

I close my eyes as the music stops

My clothes blend into my flesh

and

I am unique

I want to be noticed

and

I am

For I am the rhythm behind the music.

--FN, 1998

### I am bitter

I am a bitter fool  
Jealous and afraid  
A Siberian tiger,  
The first chapter in a book  
The color grey.  
I am a talker,  
A listener,  
Spontaneous yet regretful.  
Somewhere else I'd be a rock star  
Hope, faith, destiny...  
But here, I am only indecisive,  
Confused, and bitter.

--EG, 1998

[Untitled]

I am the dust that  
Swirls around my daddy's old red pickup.  
I am the tall grass whisked  
By a passing vehicle.

I am the wildflowers  
in a jug on the table.

I am the willow tree  
by my grandmother's pond.

I am the smell of warm apple pie  
and melted  
chocolate.

I am a soft spring breeze,  
making its way to a big white house.

I am a gray tabby cat perching  
on a barn door.

I am the shy rain  
that can't decide whether or not  
it wants to  
pour.

I am the light gusty clouds  
looking down  
on the plains.

I am a leaf floating in an  
aged bird bath.

I am a great oak tree,  
whose branches reach out  
everywhere.

--CBC, 1998

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**i am NOT**

i am not your expectations

i am not a plastic doll –  
a smile plastered on its unemotional form  
powerless to change the rouge of its lips

i am not the red of fire –  
the colour of an angry scream  
erupting from your raw throat

i am not the approaching storm –  
pouring its wrath  
upon the vulnerable breeze

i am not the sinister wind –  
chafing the exposed bark  
in that forest of plastic lies

i am not an idle thought –  
seizing your consciousness  
only to leave

i am not your expectations  
i am breaking free

--MN, 1998

**The Child**

Awake only to see  
clear blue skies,  
rolling down  
immense hills  
of Kelly green grass,  
as the  
memories stain  
her oversized overalls.

Beneath the  
heavenly illuminated sun,  
as bright as her  
never-fading  
smile,  
she is mesmerized by the  
cleansing white rays that  
drain  
problems and worries  
from her body.

As the sun rises with her  
hopes and wishes,  
she grows dreary,  
ready for her nap.  
She dreams of a perfect world,  
subject only to endless days of  
playing,  
drawing pictures of colorful rainbows,  
struggling to remember the color scheme.  
She paints a family portrait,  
one of a perfect family,  
standing tall with  
perfect grins.  
Too good to be true...

Too good to be true.

-LC, 2000

## **Black Coffee and Grape Soda**

By Kate Steinberg

My friend drinks her coffee black  
In its natural state  
No additions, no frills  
She drinks it as is-  
Bitter  
While still managing to achieve  
A rich, profound, slow-roasted taste  
Simple on the surface  
Complex once you dive in

On the other side of the table  
I pour cream colored milk in mine  
Stopping only when  
I fear it will  
Spill over the edge  
Then empty the container of sugar packets with  
A few practiced motions  
Diluting the harsh taste  
Which assaults my taste buds  
While they beg for mercy

She throws a glance at me  
Lets me know she thinks I'm  
Strange  
And tells me  
That mine isn't coffee anymore  
At the same time familiarity is in her face  
This routine a choreographed dance  
She flinches at the taste of so much sugar  
I grimace at the idea of something so bitter

And this habit forces me to reflect  
On a long ago, forgotten, abandoned custom  
An almost daily trip to a vending machine  
Just a stride away from the playground  
The clicking of coins  
The clatter of a can  
Falling with so much force  
That my young mind couldn't understand  
Why it didn't break  
Explode  
Leaving sharp pieces of aluminum  
And the sticky residue of soda  
In its wake  
My fingers struggled to open the tab  
Fumbling with anticipation  
Until I gave it up  
To the strong hands of my father  
Who opened it with no problem

Or to my mother  
Who used deft movements  
Graceful fingers  
Exerting minimum effort as the can  
Popped open at her very touch  
(I always thought her hands should star  
In their own ballet)

Or my sister  
Who seemed ancient to me  
Already in school  
She threw me a smug glance  
Flaunting her maturity  
In opening the soda  
Yet in that glance I detected  
A strange blend  
Kindness and over-protectiveness  
Mixed together in a way I've  
Never witnessed in another pair of eyes

Then I gripped the bright purple can  
Between my small hands  
Starting slightly at the coldness  
*Welch's Grape Soda*  
In that familiar font  
A constant  
Printed across the side

I'd close my eyes as I took a sip  
Revel in the sweetness  
Let my tongue bathe in the sugar  
As if it were ambrosia  
Stolen from the peak of Mount Olympus  
Then wait in anticipation  
For the extra instant it took  
To break through the syrupy bond  
That formed on my lips  
Before I parted them  
For a new sip

I don't remember exactly when that routine ended,  
When I no longer stood in the shadow  
Of the towering vending machine  
When I no longer  
Waited anxiously for the inevitable  
Crashing can to arrive in my hands

But the last time I tried grape soda  
I was taller and older  
In the suburbs, not the city  
From a fridge in a convenience store  
No vending machine in sight  
I opened the tab with my own fingers  
And took the coldness in stride

Unsurprised at the chilly condensation  
And metal beneath my lips

And as I took that sip  
(With a side of nostalgia  
Arranged like a lemon slice)  
I winced at the saccharine taste  
As it flowed down my throat  
So sweet it almost stung.

My face contorted  
In disgust at the syrup of my childhood  
As it clung on the borders of my mouth  
Reluctant to loosen its sticky grip  
I no longer wanted such an  
Intimate relationship with  
The vestiges of the soda  
Which settled on my lips

Looking at the can in my hand  
A familiar label,  
*Welch's Grape Soda-*  
It was the same:  
I was the one who had changed

And in that instant  
I hated my taste buds  
For maturing and changing

I threw the can away  
97% full  
No 5 cent deposit  
But the sweetness of my youth  
Stayed behind, refusing to follow the soda  
Into the garbage can

Those early days  
A distant memory  
Which happened yesterday  
And in the larger picture  
Barely a fraction of my life

But now  
Those childhood walks  
Innocent sips from a purple can  
Are reflected in the gleaming  
Tan surface of  
My "faux coffee"

Lingering as a remembrance  
Staring back at me from a Styrofoam container  
Refusing to let me forget

And if it's only to cling  
To that last semblance of childhood  
If only to hang on to  
That last drop of liquid sugar  
Catch it on my tongue before it rolls  
Down my chin to the ground  
If only to clutch and cradle  
That feeling I may never really fully know again  
Which always came  
With the first sip of  
Grape soda

I sip my coffee  
Let the sweetness of the sugar  
Which overpowers the coffee taste  
And settle comfortably on my tongue  
Like a familiar friend who never left  
My side  
I will never drink that bitter solution  
That screams of adulthood  
I will never drink my coffee black.