

**Anna Brittain**

Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Mountain Brook High School, Mountain Brk, AL

Educator: Shannon Marks

Category: Poetry

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## **Shivering, Quivering Miriam "Mitzi" Thompson**

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By: Anna Brittain

Inspired by T.S Eliot's "The Love Story of J. Alfred Prufrock"

*We all live in a house on fire,  
No fire department to call;  
No way out,  
Just the upstairs window to look out of  
While the fire burns the house down  
With us trapped,  
Locked in it.*

Come on then,  
Come on and grip the cold silver handle  
On the dreadful glass rectangle.  
Come on and push your timid foot  
Through the dreadful invisible wall.  
Feel the cool air from beyond the barrier  
Brush against your red hot cheek.  
Do not tell yourself to turn around.  
Do not run from the nonexistent sound.

As I walk,  
My peers pass by and I hear them talk.

The strings that pull my shoulders to my ears.  
The strings that pull my brows back to my ears.  
They do not seem to have a hold on my fallen head.  
They barely have a grip on my legs,  
Trembling like Pangea.  
And in my stomach they are tangled and mangled and knotted.

There are times  
For the strings that pull my shoulders and drop my head.  
There are times, yes, there are times.  
There are times  
For the strings that pull the sea in my eyes to high tide.  
There are times, yes, there are times.  
There are times  
For the strings to be cut and release me  
And for a stand to prop me up,  
To lift my head and let my shoulders drop.  
There are times, yes, there are times.

As I walk,  
My peers pass by and I hear them talk.

“Look at her shiver.  
I suppose she’s caught a chill,”  
I hear them say.  
I am sure they do not say it  
But the words still stay.  
I hear them say,  
“She is like a female Crane.”  
I know they do not say it  
And, yet, the words still stay.

“Is this what I am?  
“A quiet little creature  
“That retreats into the fluffy gray powder  
“Behind the bookshelf?  
“Is that truly how I seem?  
“A cowardly little man  
“Running from what is really his own shadow.”

It is not.  
It is not!  
This snake inside my mind  
Tells me nothing but lies.  
The heavenly box calls to me  
But I will no longer listen.  
This siren sings to me  
And I shall plug my ears!

I watch my peers pass me by,  
Thinking not of what they say.  
Pangea has ceased her shaking.  
The strings that hold me have been cut.  
The creature has retreated.  
The drenched little man has stopped  
To catch his breath, cheeks red as tomatoes.  
The snake has been silenced.  
The box has been shut.  
The sirens have closed their mouths.

I find myself upon my little spot,  
My things thud on the cold, grainy floor,  
My legs fold as my body lowers,  
The voice of my peers reaches me once more.