

The Weight of Tradition  
By Sara Greenhalgh

The longest relationship I've ever been in is with my Judaism

We talk  
We laugh  
We cry  
We celebrate  
We fight

And at 12, I was ready for full blown commitment

I stood on that bimah as my parents wrapped my tallis around me and felt enfolded in Adonai  
Enfolded in l'dor v'dor as the arms of those before welcomed me and my heart went  
out to those to come after

I held the Torah like my mother held me 12 years earlier at my naming and carried the sacred  
weight of tradition

I have never felt such love

At 14, I was at my first NFTY event when a boy called me yellow and pulled his eyelids back

At 17, I was told I couldn't be Jewish because I was Asian

At 18, a Jewish professor asked me to bring back a signed leaflet so he knew I was at synagogue  
for Rosh Hashanah services

At 19, a woman refused to shake my hand at shul and called me a chink

At 20, I was asked who I was there to pick up because they thought I was the nanny

At 21, a man told me I was exotic to date, but because I was Jewish, he could bring me home to  
his mother

At 22, my Hillel director told a group of students "you should come to our event, our  
President's Asian too!"

At 23, I was asked if I was sure I needed a siddur

At 24, when I mentioned NFTY, a man asked, "so how did *this* happen?"

But these are the people who taught me Dan Nichols' *Hashkiveinu*

Whose hands I held during havdallah

Whose voices I joined in prayer

Whose minds molded mine

Whose thoughts became words became actions became justice became truth became  
traditions became Torah

These are the people I found God in

Truth can feel heavy but Your love is what makes it light//Tradition can feel heavy but we turn  
to You

Ahavat olam is a declaration

A reclamation

An all-encompassing

Divine reminder of Your love

And what a holy thing it is to be loved by You