

JOANNA FRIEDMAN

The Train to My House

It was twelve minutes on the train to my house
in a season of twelve and together
and of lemon cakes and twelve hundred dollars.
We squeezed and scrutinized each delicatessen.
Rented private rooms with twelve thousand sounds.
It was twelve years—
on the train to the tip of my house,
and the huge egg that was waiting.

ABOUT THE POEM

“The Train to My House” was created from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925). About the poem and the process of composing it, Joanna Friedman writes:

The Great Gatsby is one of my favorite novels, probably because it is full of passion. To honor *Heron Tree*’s volume 12, I found all the sentences with “twelve” in the novel. Within these sentences, I searched for the power words, interesting phrases, and phrases with “twelve” in them. As I arranged the phrases and words to make a coherent poem, I wanted to capture the passion of *The Great Gatsby* and make sure that it came across on this 12-year train ride that is the focus of my poem.

“On” and “each” were added to the original text for smoothness of reading. “Waiting” was also added, and “Sound” was changed to “sound.”



HERON TREE

28 January 2026

herontree.com/friedman1