

## POETRY CORNER

**Lawrence Lesser** (The University of Texas at El Paso) is often inspired to write songs or poems related to mathematics education topics. Such creative work can communicate important points with more efficiency and emotion for broader audiences, and *TEEM* readers are invited to explore this as well. In this mathematical poem, he explores expected value and the mean in the context of social media.

### **E(X)**

Let's call X the platform  
where the expected value of a post  
is mean lifespan,  
spread rate, or number of

hearts. Or just what's expected  
when algorithms center  
negative,  
people being mean.

The mean is a levelling value  
as if X lets all voices  
signal virtue  
in the noise.

And it's a shaky point  
of balance how posts lie,  
swayed by extremes  
(always both sides?)

like theft  
of an election  
or indigenous  
land.