

A person is running on a gravel path in a park. The person's legs and feet are visible, wearing dark leggings and running shoes. The path is made of small, light-colored stones. The background is a lush green park with trees and bushes, slightly out of focus. The overall lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a sunny day.

Running Into Poetry

An invitation to be
present on your path

Julie B. Hughes

JULIE B. HUGHES

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*To my running and writing buddies all over the world.
Thank you.*

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A Note to the Reader:

These poems were created during and after runs. They were influenced during a season of tremendous challenge for my family. When my husband Jeff was diagnosed with cancer at the beginning of 2022.

Running and writing helped me cope with these moments of sadness, loss, joy, and love. Many of the poems you'll read are from this moment. A moment when I was working hard to stay optimistic and not let my negative thinking consume me.

Whichever path you may be on, I hope these poems will remind you of the beauty, hope, love, and joy all around you when you seek for it— when you deliberately look for it.

“May Running Into Poetry become your soundtrack to show up, encourage, and cheer you on your path.” -julie b. hughes

SUPERPOWER

We mother runners
Cherish our time on the road
Power in our legs

The miles are fuel
A charge, freedom in our minds
Fire in our hearts

Energy we need
Motherhood we can handle
Purple toenails too

Let go of the guilt
Run, a moms superpower
Keep pushing courage

We are enough moms
Remind yourself this each day

Be yourself, believe

We will do hard things
Running is one we embrace
Bring it on, *Let's go!*

YOU AND THE ROAD

Lace-up your sneakers
No responsibility
You and the road, free

DO YOU RUN?

Do you run?

Is it to prove something
to someone
Is it to beat someone
or something
Is it to escape

Do you run?

Is it for a certain time?
To maintain a pace
To log the miles

Do you run?

Alone on the trail
Be with your thoughts
Nature to awaken you
Solitude

Do you run?

Yes, I do
Run to forget
Run to be free
Run to let go

DO YOU RUN?

Run to be me
Mind and body
Heart and breath
I run to connect it all
I do run
It's when I like myself the best

WHAT IT TAKES

The weather changes

Keep showing up on the road

Lean forward, lean in

You will make it mom

The climb is sometimes long-yet

You have what it takes

ONWARD

Whatever lies ahead
You're running the race
You build endurance
Resilience and strength

In the miles you run
In the challenges you face
Through the peaks and valleys
Keep your pace

Onward and upward!
You shout
The attitude to have
No doubt

ENCHANTED RUNNER

Outdoor runs refresh her soul

Connected to nature makes her whole

Wonder and miracles all around

Her feet barely touching the ground

Magical pavement

A carpet ride

Her senses come alive

Trees draped with snow

Branches outstretched wide

Welcome enchanted runner

we are your guide.

Chimney smoke clings to the air

Pine needles peek out of the snow—Stare

Winter birds singing above

Her heart permeates with love

Appreciation for her body and mind

God's wonderful design

COLORFUL STRIDE

Running in the fall

The leaves covering the road

Red, orange, yellow stride

RUN LOVE

Running with the breeze

This is the time I seize

The sunshine on my face

Grateful for the pace

The leaves on the ground

Crunch under my feet-

This weather can't be beat

The fall colors I spot

Love is what I got

AUTUMN TUNNEL

A tunnel of color
on her right and left
She hears the rustling of leaves
the sound of her breath

The autumn season she loves
A great time to run
Enjoying the miles
before the season is done

She knows winter will come
Embracing the change
The squeaky of the white ground
Leaves for snow exchange

RUNNING ON FAITH

Faith to keep going

Pray, run, be still with Jesus
God's courage to thank

My gift to embrace

I didn't stop believing
Friend and Good Shepard

MUD of LIFE

Bound up the trail of life
Peer around the bend
Leap over rocks and roots
Your legs in pursuit
Zig zag the turns
Mud puddles appear

How deep is the bottom?
Will I get sucked in?
My sneakers will get wet
I'm not sure I'm ready yet.

Questions spin
yet you must keep your pace
No time to stop—
Keep on moving
Even if you face-plant
don't say you can't

You're still in the race

One big adventure
Time to embrace
the mud and mess of life
It's what brings us to
the other side.

HINT FROM THE WIND

The wind pushes against her
She leans forward
and pushes right back
Swinging her arms with
a little more power
Shortening her stride
and fighting back.

The wind stays steady
She keeps her pace
Hang on just a bit longer
Relief is around the corner
The wind now at her back
Propelling her forward
She feels light on her feet
Like nothing can stop her
The wind to thank for this reminder—

She is capable
She is strong
The wind will come and go
Yet she will carry on.

GAINING

Get out the door, run!

Gaining ground in the morning

The best time of day

BE THE STREAM

Rolling over rocks

Finds a way around the bend

Pushing through the leaves

Gentle yet mighty

Keeps flowing, continues on

Be the stream, bounce on.

—*Be the stream, Bounce on*

ORANGE MOON

Upward towards the sky
What a sight! *Moon, is that you?*
I pick up the pace
Morning run adventure, chase
Exhilarating orange moon

ROLLICK RUN

Rain hits rat-a-tat

Sneakers are wet and heavy

Splash in the puddles

Trail dark pitapat

Frolic, kick around drip-drop

Morning rollick run

CATCH AND CHASE

Trail runs in the fall

Leaves running ahead to catch

Amusing to chase

SQUASH STRESS

Squash the stress

Wrestle down the worry

Anxious thoughts race

Action plan in place

Walk or run

Pray or dance

No right or wrong

You get the chance

Opportunity to take charge

Pen in hand

Watch out thoughts

I know where I stand

I can handle any emotion that comes up

A thought to repeat

A tool I use that can't be beat.

PONYTAIL SWAY

Her ponytail sways

Side to side, her eyes ablaze

Enthusiasm for the road

A time, place to let it all go

Both feet are off the ground

Look!

She is flying now

Drop the should, would, could

It's all good!

Let the ponytail sway

It's her time to play

FESTIVE RUN

Sweet refreshing smell
Conifers in the forest
Festive winter run

I WILL RUN

The weather will change, will do what it does

I will run.

The weather will howl and scream

I will run.

The weather will throw down rain and snow

I will run.

The weather will try to deter me yet

I will run.

The weather will make my mind work hard

I will run.

The weather will make me second guess

I will run.

The weather will build my resilience

I will run.

The weather is part of the adventure

I will run.

The weather I will embrace—*I will run.*

HEALING TRAIL

Living trees gather

Minty scent is her shelter

Unshakeable roots

Run the trail was her breakthrough

Nature to soften her pain

MAGIC RUN

Snow globe magic run

Snowflakes swirl together hug

Runner's secret joy

RUNNING IS...

Running is solitude

Running is space

Running is breathe, relax

Keep my pace

Running is to fly

Running is free

Running is uphill and down

A time to be me

Running is conversation

Running is play

Running is joy and love

Fresh air, yay!

—*Running is...*

LEAN IN

I confront the hill

Lean in, legs and arms obey

I am a runner

Dynamic body and mind

I flow on the road and grin

SNOW WHISPERS

Outside for a run

The snow whispers to the ground

My breath forms a cloud

RUN TO WRITE

Thoughts on paper
Thoughts on the road
Both a time to create
Or let it all go

Out on the road
Then over the paper
Space to be free
And time to savor

A moment of clarity
The “aha” we all want
Now a sentence to share
To spread love and care

WIDE OPEN TRAIL

The wide open trail
Tall trees -refreshing blue sky
Is my happy place

DON'T GIVE UP

Cross the finish is the goal
Your legs are burning
Your body wants to quit
Your mind starts to grumble
Is the finish line here yet?

You hear the cheers
You can do it!
Don't give up now
You have what it takes
You got the know-how

Bring a good attitude
Mental toughness you will need
Leave your self-doubt at the door
You will finish—*glow evermore!*

RECESS RUN

Run is my playtime
Trees, sun, road my companions
Nature diversion

HILLS TO TACKLE

I tackle the hill

Lean- leap into the crisp air

I am flying now

Light on my feet floating high

I glide on the road and grin

RUN FOR COFFEE

Run for coffee

That's how we roll
To keep the legs moving
Cold wind blows
When the air is frozen
Our eyelashes too
Run for coffee
Is our view
Bound along snowy roads
Faces covered, eyes peek out
FIVE MORE MILES we shout!

Run for coffee

A cuppa Joe each
Fuels us to keep pushing
We are almost in reach
Strong aroma
Bold taste on our tongues
Warms our body and soul
Run to Skytop coffee is our goal
We embrace all weather
Rain, wind, or snow

Coffee is the motivation—
A long run treat, celebration.

WORDS CAPTURE

Words keep coming

On the page

In hopes, they do engage

To spread love and encouragement is the goal

She pushes through the hesitation

Dreams the words inspire, bring resonation

On the road is when the words blow in

Bouncing around with every stride

The miles alive, her guide

Open-eyed sentences fill her head

Do they matter

There is so much chatter

Sharp, aware she makes the run home

Write them down, empty her mind

For tomorrow a new day, a new run

And more words to come

SOLITARY RUNNER

It's dark and quiet

Snow falls on my eyelashes

Solitary now

Fog forming with each exhale

I delight the loneliness

60-MINUTE RUN

60-minute run

What will I see today
When I look up instead
Keep my eyes ahead- a hawk
Glides, wings outstretched soars
I fly alongside the trees

A woodpecker to my right

What a sight
Bright red hanging out on a tree
Look up Julie so much to see
Keep looking up
Snow packed trails beneath
The firm ground reassures me
Look around as you pump your arms
Look around as you pick up the pace
My sneakers firmly laced

Breathing the cold crisp air

Awakens my soul
Self-connection is the goal
I know where I'm going

I know who I am

—*I am...*

EYES ON THE GOAL

I have what it takes

Bring it on mother nature

I can handle it

The weather I can't control

I keep my eyes on the goal

STEP INTO NATURE

Redwing blackbirds sing
Water shimmers by the trail
Mud grabs my sneakers

FOX

I lookup

Just in time

A red bushy tail

Darts in front of my eyes

A fox!

Sprints onto the road

I follow her footprints in the snow

Chase or being chased- I don't know

I pick up the pace

To catch up with her

My competitive spirit ignites

I'm chasing with no fright

My eyes fixed

On the fox ahead

Look at her run

Oh! What fun

Where is she going

It's still snowing

She disappears into the woods

I lose her tail, the red is gone

The chase has ended
My run adventure splendid
This is what the outdoors can do
You never know
Who you will run into

BOUND UPHILL

We bound up the hill
Into the bold morning sky
Mighty in our minds
A pink hue lit up the path
Let us rejoice and be glad

WINS

Look for the small wins
I tell myself each day
To keep going and bring
Happiness-is my way
The laundry folded and put away
The dishes aren't done
That's okay
Look for the wins is all I say

A healthy homemade meal
is what I'm proud of
I moved my body a run outside
I kept my mind on the upside
I will be deliberate with the wins
My brain needs the practice
It can act like a cactus
Prickly and sharp
I don't want the negative to take heart

I will focus on the triumphs
Though small they maybe
It matters to the brain, you see

WINS

Stay optimistic
Keep cheering yourself on
Look for the wins
You got this! Press on.

RUN BUDDY

Conversation, run

It's not about pace just, run

Movement nature, run

Fresh air to fill us up, run

Awaken our senses, run

I WILL NOT BACK DOWN

The wind is fierce

As she begins her climb
Lean forward, head down
Arms pump to get her knees up
She shortens her stride

The hill is the obstacle

She needs to confront
No way around it but up
You could turn around
Begins the conversation
Resign to the elevation
You don't need to climb this hill
Turn around, aren't you feeling ill?

The thoughts zoom in

But she is ready-
I will climb this hill
Strong and steady
I will not back down
I will keep pushing

My legs are strong
My mind is too
I will repeat these thoughts
I know what is true
I will get up this hill
My mind is in control
I will make it to the top
—I will not stop

COAST

I coast down the road
Into the wide open air
I am free floating
Without the pressure to please
I run relaxed and carefree

FIRST BRIGHT SPOT

Light vest flashing bright
Hat with a light
Reflective vest with phone
Flashlight on, I'm in the zone
I got all the lights so I glow
A 50-minute run in the dark, Go!
Roads clear though snow is coming
No matter, my mind-body humming
I'm alert to cars as they pass
In and out of driveways fast
Gas stations, stop signs
Do they even see me shine?

A truck speeds out of the lot
doesn't bother to spot
Me running on the side
He zooms out in his ride
I'm flashing light as I run
Can't they see me I'm like the sun
Oh well must have somewhere to be
I keep my eyes alert on the road- see
A snowplow rumbles past

Gives a beep beep blast

I give a wave fast

I'm noticed at last!

RESILIENT TREE

Wind aggressive, fierce

Rock the trees, branches wave swing-

Laced my sneakers though

My mind says *go back to bed*

I'm like a tree- resilient

Wind will make me strong

This sentence gets me outdoors

Build mental toughness

I want to do hard things, run

I'm like a tree- resilient

SHOW UP

The road and a pair of sneakers is it run
Step out into the cold crisp air commit run

Ground beneath, the sky above wide-open, run
Space to swing arms, pump legs no time to sit run

Longer the distance the more connected, run
The mind, body, and heart show up don't quit, run

Runner enjoys the solitude, calm, peace run
Miles of road stretched out ahead builds grit run

The road I love no matter the weather, run
I thank God for this gift, it keeps me fit run

NEW YEAR'S RUN

90-minutes of road

On the first day of 2022

It's exactly what I want to do

Lace-up the sneakers

Throw on my vest

My body and mind will take care of the rest

Meet up with a run buddy

Reflect on how far we've come

Running to the beat of our own drum

Go us! Press on

Persistence, courage, grit

We won't quit

Our run goals are ready

Our attitude is set

Watch out 2022—

You haven't seen nothing yet!

BELIEVE IN YOU

Believe in yourself

It's really that simple
It doesn't need to be complicated
Though the whispers linger
Those mumbles are musty
Stale and uninspired
An old story on the shelf
Time to let go—I say

Leave it there let it collect dust

You get to write a new story, *you must*
Take the leap
Deep inside your ready
You know what you're meant to do
Go for it!
I'm cheering for you.
—You can do it!

TRUST THE ROAD

There are several roads to travel
Which one do you take?
Stay small, stay quiet, hide your light
Straight forward, fewer turns, and climbs—
Don't go looking for change
Yet a feeling was rising
This road didn't seem right
Curiosity grew and courage too
To stop the cycle, a choice to make
Face the fears, let failure be—
There is nothing wrong you see
Shine your light as you make the climb
Some sharp turns, jagged ledges you will find
Push against the status quo
Seems to be the way to grow
Trust the road shining your light
It will lead to great things—
The adventure in life

MOTHER RUNNER

Rise early to get out the door mother runner
Alone under the dark sky no other runner

Silence in the morning clears the mind-breath runner
Time to feel free energized not smother runner

Snow whispers to the ground wake up feet crunch runner
Eyes wide snowplow up ahead oh brother runner

Dash across the road avoid the plow, safe runner
Adventure awaits here comes another runner

A wave, good morning smile stride along runner
Julie, it will be a great day mother runner

BLUEBIRD

I hear *tu-a-wee, tu-a-wee*
Ears alert to the soft sound
Eyes dart to the trees and all around
Tu-a-wee as I run past
Eyes smile to see
A bluebird on a branch

TRY AGAIN

Try again

First, second, third time

Try again

And you will find

Lessons learned, growth, and progress

Failures will happen

It's all part of the process

Try again

It will happen this time

Press on, pivot

You got this climb

Try again

Trust and believe

You have what it takes

You will succeed!

—Go on, *try again*...

4:30 A.M.

4:30 a.m. training run

She's up before the sun
Rise and shine out of bed
Pulls a hat over her head

Fresh, brisk air hits her face

Down the road at her pace
Snow flattened on the ground
Her sneakers crump with every bound

Music to her ears

Imagining the sounds are cheers
Enthusiasm and energy bubble through her veins
Her imagination used to soften her pains

MORNING RITUAL

Alarm beeps in the dark morning
I can hear the outside, pouring
I'm up for a run
My day has begun
Out the door for some exploring

WEARY RUNNER

Weary runner

Some days are hard
Climbs are long
Legs feel heavy
You look up to mountains
Whisper
Where is the valley?

A downhill would be nice

Or at least an easier path
The rocks, elevation, and turns difficult
You're not sure how long you will last

Yet you've faced challenges before

And made it through
Believe in yourself
You will make it to the summit soon

Keep fighting back

Don't back down
One step at a time
Is your new mantra now

A NEW PATH

Hilly climbs surround you
Challenges you need to face
The only way is up
Gulp
Do I have what it takes

Can I handle this detour?
It came out of the blue
Do I embrace this new path
Or dig my heels in and stew

You can do this
I hear a voice
Yes you have what it takes
Accept the road you're on
One small step
I know you can take

Keep pushing courage
Grab my hand
Keep your eyes and heart open
In your weakness — He has a plan

ANOTHER MOTHER RUNNER

There was a mother of two kids
She wanted ten arms like those squids
To finish the chores
Then be out the doors
Oh! what a sight for the eyelids

I RAN TODAY

I ran today

Three simple words

I ran today

My way to shine light

Today's all right

Bird song in the air

Ponytail sways without a care

I ran today

My energy is up

Coffee in my cup

Breakfast varies

Oatmeal, banana, and berries

I ran today

Thankful for my food

Blessed with my mood

Gratitude for the miles

Appreciation and smiles

I ran today

High five to you

If you ran too

It's all good
We ran today!

SUPERHERO

You cross the finish
A superhero feeling
You are strong, brave, bold
Nothing is impossible
Two thumbs up mother runner

SHADOW

Four-degree winter run

Thank you, Lord for the bright sun
Her shadow comes out to play
She's been hiding
You hope she stays

A dark silhouette impossible to lose

She's running in your shoes—
Out in front pumping her arms
Muscular and brave
Her ponytail sways

The light shines just right

A charge—
Power to run—
Ignite
You try to catch up
Run alongside
Your stride always just one step behind

You keep on running

She does too

Of course

The shadow is you

—*Embrace your shadow too*

RUNNER WRITER

There once was a runner writer
Who thought her poems made running brighter
To rhyme was such fun
Silly laughs each run
Her pen, sneakers made life lighter

FREE

I feel secure, free
Wide open spaces
Nothing can stop me
Gain ground on the roads
I feel at home

Ready to fly
A bird soaring high
Forward motion
Beats the commotion
Fresh air even if it's cold
I am bold

BREATHE IN LOVE

Long run Saturday

Morning runaway

Legs charge down the road

Self-care to unload

Empty the thoughts with every stride

God will take them captive- your guide

Trust Him in all you do

The spirit lives inside of you

Breathe in love

Exhale fear

Your faith is the anchor

You will make it my dear



About the Author

Julie B. Hughes shares her love of running through poetry in her third book. She lives with her husband Jeff, and two children Brindsley and Delaney in Manlius, NY. She is the author of *My Road: A Runner's Journey Through Persistent Pain to Healing* and *Staring Down a Dream: A Mom, a Marathoner, a Mission*.

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