

Prisoner Express Poetry Anthology Vol. 25

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Cloud by Jason Blad

A strong updraft and a little moisture,
I am born.
Young and full of vigor, I drift over a
small, verdant valley.
The colors of the earth amaze me in a
way that I know

I can never achieve,
or even touch.

The lush green, yellow ochre, and
bluish grey of nature below me
dazzle and mock my stark
and uniform whites and greys.
Jealous, I float by in stunned
amazement.

A small rise, a sudden drop, a hot blast
of air,

and I am now floating above
an arid plain.

Its once green trees stand decimated
and gnarled,
turned brown from sand scouring
winds and lack of nourishment.

I realize that I am able to
help.

I absolutely long to be jealous of its
beauty and life.

I begin to weep for its life lost,
and the ground drinks up my
tears with thirsty vengeance.
Life begins to bloom as I pour out my
heart,

no longer in sadness,
but in joy.

Nearly spent in emotion, the bloom
reaches a euphoric climax...

and then I am no more

Morning Glories by Taj Alexander Mahon-Haft

Why do morning glories hate suns for
they can only sing their
splash of color arriettas
in the certain glow
of endless possibilities

by the end of the afternoon
the conspiracies of freedom
have drained the ultraviolet
from our minds
dwindled and tired

they are secret poets
daring each day
to dream
climbing prison fences
anointed on barbs
to see us in need and regret

Artwork by: Steve Fegan



I Dream of Houses by Bradley Porter

I dream, of houses
On water's edge
At the moment of balance
Between this day and the next

Of roadtrips rolling
Through unseen worlds of New
The miracle
Scrolling past my passive God's eye

I dream of free breath
Labored
In some treasured exercise all of my
own
Making

I dream of a sense of leaving
An endless origami unfolding in my
open hand
A packing and unpacking of myself

Leftovers by Sean J. White

my soul is a pizza eaten
to the point of diminished
returns in the open
box a few slices
remain cold and hard
domestic creatures gone feral

strewn over the exposed dark
streaks if grease staining
the corrugated cardboard lay
discarded crusts with delicate
bite marks and bits
of burned cheese--
a sun-bleached skeleton in the desert
###

The Blizzards Edge by Lucky**General Borg**

Snowblind on a mountain top
Midnight on the pass
An angel sleeps besides me, and
I'm running low on gas
My vision; a little blurry
Thoughts- on another place
Steadily going nowhere, man
My head is in outer space
The past still keeps running
From myself, I'm almost sure
The future is a death watch
From which there is no cure
A road sign tells me nothing
I simply cannot read
Four hundred miles to freedom and
I feel the need for speed
Pushing in the throttle,
Then pulling on the brake
Never looking back again
I'm blind to my mistakes
Truck stop up ahead
Policeman far behind
The Devil sits beside now
She so loves a thrilling ride...

The Rose That I am by JaQuan**Weathers**

Soft like cotton, yet, with a firm texture.
Curves blended with twisted and
bended edges,
in an array of different angles and
shapes.

Extremities that whole heartedly
appreciates the,
loving energy of the sun. Humbly
soaking up an
abundance of its rays.

Thorns, protruding from its base, do
not erase
its beauty but, only accentuates its
strength, to
embrace its true narrative.

No words can depict its simple but
eloquent sway
in the wind. An ardent display of love
and hope.

Captivating my heart in the presence
of my soul.

For I know that this is,

The Rose

That I am.

Haiku by Tim Casarez

When I see the sky
I'm reminded that the world
Ends not at the Gate

"The Comfort of Graveyards" by**Jonathan C. Holman**

There's all these cultured vultures.
Who surround the bright sepulchers.
Under catacombs of bone homes.
With writings written on tombstone.
And deep where there are dedications.
Read to those, lost on medication.
You might just find a mausoleum.
Full of those who fought for freedom

These headstones keep on breeding.
Where the angels are all screaming.
And I'm comfortable in graveyards.
The silent cities of the dead.
Alive and only breathing.
When they scream inside my head.

No one sees the sorrow
In the lands of no tomorrow
Where the fleets of the elites
Seek relief beneath concrete
Their lives so full of toil
Were rewarded with the soil
And the diets of the quiet
Can be shared amongst the royal

These headstones keep on breeding
Where the angels are all screaming
And I'm comfortable in graveyards
The silent cities of the dead
Alive and only breathing

When they scream inside my head

There is no need for weeping
In the vaults of all the sleeping
The hard working and lazy crazies
All will end up pushing daisies
Reaped in heaps, or mowed in rows
All their souls will pay the tolls.
All together, all as one
It doesn't matter what they've done.

These headstones keep on breeding
Where the angels are all screaming
And I'm comfortable in graveyards
The silent cities of the dead
Alive and only breathing
When they scream inside my head

Warm Neon by Ted Cole

When the sun goes down on the city,
and all the neon starts to glow,
that's my most favorite time of all
'cause that's when the dirt doesn't
show.
When you can't see into the shadows
you can pretend there's nothing wrong
there;
darkness covers up all the ugly,
and it hides what the heart can't bear.
It's been said that misery loves
company,
and I'm sure the poor and mistreated
feel pain,
but I've pain of my own and I can't
save the world,
so forgive me if my illusions I retain.

Wait For by Marino K. Leyba

The road I'm on...

-My soul seems gone,
Like the wicked wind when it whispers
sweet nothings into the air.
It appears and then it seems to
disappear.

Poof and then it's gone!

A love, a romance, the sweetest song!

It's exactly like when the final
golden/brownish leaf falls from the last
autumn tree.

It's like the longing for nostalgia, to be
home, to be free!

Something wicked comes and I cannot
see.

Something wicked comes and I know
it's for me.

I've eaten from the forbidden fruit.

I've been to the garden of Adam and
Eve.

I've watched the rain fall and flood the
earth.

I've traveled a great distance just to
prove my worth!

When the storms came, I remained, I
stayed looking in from the outside.
Like the dark grey clouds above I cried
when nobody else cried.

The road I'm on...

It feels like I've just begun.

It's foggy out and I miss the sun.

Has my path split, is it finally done?

—My jog?

—My walk?

—My run?

I hymn, because it was foretold I would
be the one.

But is that true or am I just another
one?

I don't want to sink in the sand.

I want to be great like the way the
Egyptian pyramids still stand!

Can I make myself something greater
than

—Myself?

A Path by Jason Morris

A street of cobblestone precedes the
dawn,

Mountains of anguished glory loom in
the dark.

Majestic hues and a purple to be

sought,

Eyes perceive the daybreak of calm.

Solitude defined, stride enhances,

A path emerges within the autumn of
morning.

Breath embraces the shadows of cool,

An invitation delivered to the wonder of
the day.

These steps are taken one by one,

Beckoning to the horizon with purpose
and intent.

Earth dampened by a dew of soothing
tears,

Compelling such sureness in echoes
of foot falls.

Sunshine encourages and entices the
senses,

Sounds and smells of Nature define
the gait.

Hidden within is this ever-thirsting soul,

Blooming with wildflowers, discovery
and grace.

Meadows, streams, plateaus

forwarded invite,

Pausing to inhale with admiration and
awe.

This journey embarked upon widens

the Divine,

A Universe of serenity follows the
dusk.

Dead Leaves on Broken Pavements by Casey Rhynes

They crisply crackle under my

feet, as I walk through

My shattered dreams

Wind rustles in small spirals

The fallen foliage as

winter consumes the fall

brick by brick, I've built

my heart into fearless wall

The sound is welcoming as

They stir

Throughout this Ghost town

where lives once were

I sit amongst them as if

they can understand, relate

to the emptiness I feel

as my soul Battles this world

and all its hate.

I Light a cigarette and touch

a Dead Leaf to the flame

rapidly as it chars up in smoke

as the hope I once felt

that now is Broke

I enjoy the smell of the

Burnt Remains

I crumble a handful in my

fist, so they too can

feel my pain.

Once green and beautiful now
passed away

I rise so once again the

Dead Leaves on broken pave-

ment can guide my way.



Artwork by: Gary Farlow

Monsters Within by Mark Pace

A Monster sits within me,
 In the Darkness, shattered by silence
 Was it created?
 Or was it always there?
 Waiting...
 In the Darkness
 Shattered by silence
 Should the Monster be fed?
 Or should we let it Starve?
 Will its Death be a quiet one?
 Or will it Rage and Rampage?
 Straining against the Chains that bind
 it.
 Only Silence answers,
 The Monster Within.

Waiting by Jack Morgan

Silence distills from stillness
 As fog in the valley
 Creeping forth its tendrils
 Swallowing the roots of the trees

We sit and wait, urgently
 For the breaking of the day
 When dawn will light upon
 And gently caress the vapor.

Impatience slithers upwards
 Misty claws seeping through bark and
 moss
 Until the quiet thunders
 Oppressive as the storm.

But we will cry and lie,
 Wrapped in the agony of our souls,
 As the dew disappears
 And rays disarm the heart that mourns.

**Inception's Search by Todd
Leatherland**

Pages Blowing in Anticipation, Divine
 Inception
 Searching for Secrets, Compelling
 Bees to Nectar

Spring Blooms with Intent, Secrets
 More So

Bringing Deep Wanderings, Yearnings,
 Surprises, Oh!
 Wine Flows from Sagehood, Dwelling
 in the Cluster
 Opening Dawn's Rays, Locked by
 Eternal Key

Fading Brush Lies Before Beautiful Ink
 Dries
 Hidden Fragrance Flows Upon the
 Stairwell
 Ascending, Mingled with Waning
 Moonlight

Heaven's River Drips Dew
 Unreachable in the Expanse
 Turning Like a Long Lost Love

Bed of Grass by Jeremy Brown

If you were a bed of grass
 what would you do?
 How could you spread
 if people just walked over you?

Could you grow up green
 and never turn brown?
 What would your death mean
 when they trampled you down?

If you were burnt
 or fed with trash,
 Could you live
 As a bed of grass?

Mower blades
 Cutting you down,
 to Society's accepted stipulation.
 If you were a bed of Grass,
 How could you expand your
 grass nation?

Weed Killer and Ant Poisons
 destroying your grass inhabitants,
 Grass Blade Street

shriveling up your
 Green Economical Blade assets.
 What would you do,
 if you were a Bed of Grass?

Junk and Glass remnants
 from the evil people Giants above.
 Push, scuffle, and show,
 no one thinks about the grass,
 when they exist above.
 What would you do if you
 were a Bed of Grass?

If I were a bed of Grass,
 I would have to be full
 of Forgiveness,
 Self Sacrifice,
 and Love!

Authors Notation:
 As I was looking out my cell window
 I stared and contemplated the grass.
 My mind then merged
 and the grass
 spoke to
 Me.

**Earths' Rejuvenation by Octavius
Scott**

Desolation just to procreate
 The effect unites beauty in an
 admirable fashion.
 Simulating rebirth.
 Life's replenishing itself in a manner,
 one becomes baffled when trying to
 imagine.
 Atmospheres seasoned with its' moot
 exquisite attire...
 Which inspires the surrounding to
 influence happiness.
 Harmoniously birds sing.
 But here is something that's puzzling.
 These wonders being only just
 spring!!!

**rearview sunset
(an ode to sunset)
by raul aguayo**

i captured you as
 you were leaving
 remorseless
my rearview mirror an
 enchanted
 looking glass

you were elegant
 orange-purple
 incarnadine
a blood orange slice
 being squeeze
 into time

rushing trees escort
 distant ocean
 roars
woeful seagulls
 sad to see
 you go

the air was filled
 with brine
 and pine
secreted lavender
 over-ripe
 lime

but you were slow
 ancient
 inexorable
affording me a
memory with
pine cone undertones

Artwork by: Tony Covey



Artwork by: Charles Kusiak



II.

KALEIDOSCOPIC

The Meaningless Poem by Al Newberry

This
is a poem.
It's not a great poem.
It doesn't even rhyme.
But really,
Is that such a crime?

See?
Not a great poem.
The rhyme didn't even help.
Who needs a rhyme
if the poem
Will speak to your soul?

A poem
is the soul
Spilled out onto a page,
Emotions in dried ink,
Tears turned to words,
Joy in pencil lead.

This
is a poem.
You may not get it.
Or maybe you do
But really
You can't bear its truth.

Oxymoronic Hypocrite by B.C. Brand

I am who I say I am
but I'll never be that person
I laugh only
when I'm crying
and scream all my secrets
in a deathly whisper
I'm the greatest ever
at achieving
absolutely nothing

I am who I say I am
I'm the ugliest beauty
all attention ignores
and I hurt
so painlessly
breaking foundations
my sanity builds

I am who I say I am
I'm complete
only when I'm broken
and I dream
only during nightmares

BIG HEAD-REX by David West

Seated on his concrete throne
Solitary - not alone
Surrounded by adoring fans
Who feed him from their outstretched
hands

Master of this steely realm
Upon his head there is no helm
Except a crown of battle scars
Won during the feline wars

About him lay his faithless kin
All conceived in feline sin
Jealous of his hard won power
They patiently await the hour

Quietly accepting gifts
His noble chin he always lifts
When under there he needs a
scratching

His scruffy coat now needs some
patching

The twilight hour now is here
But in his eyes there is no fear
Looking forward to his rest
Knowing that he did his best

Artwork by: Robert Gray



**“The Eulogy of a Cat Named Jake”
by Jacob Keiter**

Why, oh why, have they taken our
beloved Jake,
The felines shrieked in despair at the
midday wake.
He was one of the good guys for
Heaven’s sake,
This is the eulogy of a cat named
Jake.

Product of a litter, the second born
son,
Chasing mice is what he did just for
fun.
Until a wall interrupted his run,
This stunt is how he lost life number
one.

Abeyance from mice he watched as
the birds flew,
Clawing at a tree he climbed to the sky
blue.
Pouncing on a branch that snapped
right through,

Free falling a ways from life number
two.

Learning his lesson to stay away from
trees,
Encountering a fresh aroma sweet
honey.
Plotted on how to rob the hive and the
bees,
Instead their stings stole life number
three.

An adolescent now he took his life on
tour,
Kitty hormones directed and urged him
to score.
An alley cat lured him with a tail wag
and purr,
Catching an STD stripped life number
four.

Awake from recovery Jake’s still alive,
He survived the tree climb, and bee
hive,
The strive and thrive to live a purrfect
life,
Anxiety snatches away life number
five.

High anxiety moved him to a catnip fix,
So much so, he started consuming
bricks.
No time for love or other cat tricks,
Catnip overdose swiped life number
six.

Batting his eyes he swore he was in
Heaven,
On second thought he was passed out
behind 7-11.
He was approached by what looked
like his brethren,
Kitty Junior Mafia Mugged life number
seven.

Jake was losing his lives at a rapid
rate,
“Is life even worth it” he began to
debate,

Depression hit him he chose to sedate,
The late wait consumed life number
eight.
He told himself “Everything will be
fine,”
His mind was lying to stop the crying,
A fine line, he crossed one last time,
Jumping into traffic devoured number
nine.

That is the eulogy of a cat named
Jake,
What a wonderful life God has chosen
to take,

He will be missed and loved
regardless of his mistakes,
May I interest anyone in some Meow
Mix cake?

Midnite Manifesto by David Hehn

Kafka-esque
The Night clicks...
The Somber Nightmare Begins
UnHoly Thoughts
Sheets turn into nightmares
The Pillow talks and then Screams
Blanket Heavy, whispers
circle my head
The Shadows begin to creep and stir
A Bag filled of mixed
Emotions bursts...
Sorrowful Anger defies
circle and fall from grace
Lightning Storms echo off concrete
Walls
And Shatter False illusions
He has me metamorphosized
Into a cockroach
Cockroaches don’t care
Cockroaches survive Anything

Artwork by: Paul Bero



III. MELANCHOLY

BROKEN SOULS by Adrien J Espinoza

They are cast aside, rejected
Longing for that day, dejected
Harboring torment, desperate
Illusions of normality
Twisted sick, corrupt captors
Like a black hole, it sucks you in
The environment, the elements,
rhetoric
Nontransparent and hidden from
society
To our families once begotten
But now only forgotten
They are broken around him
Fallen, one by one, again and again
The sickness is in the air
But he fights it
His gas mask the only person who's
always cared
Fighting to persevere, detractors
become irrelevant
His chin high, his chest out, he is
benevolent
He remains headstrong, steadfast, and
whole
And Will never fall as a broken soul ...

"Some People..." by Blair Blanchette

Some people are just born bad
He towers o'er me, taunting my tears
Weakness makes him mad
Some people are just born bad
With every punch I wish I had
the Power to overcome my fears
Some people are just born bad
He towers o'er me, taunting my tears.

Lets Hide A Body by Josh Foley

Lets hide A Body
It'll be fun she said
We'll find an unknowing soul
Torture them for Days
We'll do it discreetly
Just you and I
We'll take it to our graves
Hide the Truth within lies
Her Heart finally Broke
She truly realized
I'd lost my Soul
It's her body I'd hide

Inviting Despair by John Adams

Her placating tone fogs the dirty
prison plexiglass
And I spurn the inhuman -- lifeless
thumbprint coated
phone,
Watching bittersweet clinches smoking
from
her sweet
lying lips,
The message clear as pastel marbled
black, in
her shit-brown eyes.
She loves me, honestly she does, but
she met
a really nice guy.
She'll stay in touch, honestly she will
but he's
waiting in the car.

My shackles clink too loudly shuffling
slowly --
to my ugly
dark cage.
Her crumpled picture digs red craters
in my palm,
I cannot
blink.
A lifer knows dreams are pretty
nightmares, savoring
his dumbass hope
Yet he embraces the ruthless siren,
rather than
his bedsheet rope.

A Refused Breaking by Brandon Rushing

I have heard.
But my heart,
in its pale cave
does not listen.

It is a poor
dumb creature that
can never know
more than what it
feels.

"Perpetual Loss"

Part One by Tito McGill

I lost the one that I love today, it
happened in the blink of an eye.
One minute I'm hugging my mother,
and the next I am saying goodbye.

I lost the one that I love today,
thoughts of him bring me to tears.
My brother and I were attached at the
hip; now I haven't seen my brother in
years

Another loss has come my way. The
mother of my mother has passed.
And though the pain has eased
through the years, my memories of
grandma will last.

I've lost someone I've grown to love.
My cell mate will live on in my mind.
He signed all his papers, packed all his things, and didn't leave nothing behind.

Broken hearted from losing a love. The woman was a pleasure to date.
She stayed by my side for a couple of years, but for me she could no longer wait.

I lost something of unspeakable value.
I didn't love or appreciate then.
But now when I fight for my genuine freedom, I know my life truly depends.

When trading my life for a life behind bars, I couldn't have imagined the cost.
Although I've developed the methods to cope, I suffer from all that I've lost.

I must learn to move on from the grieving. For loss I will continue to face.
I will continue to lose these things that I love, despite if I leave from this place.

For loss is a part of life's journey, for which I cannot run away.
Despite the saddening feelings from loss, I'm grateful to gain each new day.

~These Four Walls and Me~ by Jonathan Register

I am a locked-up soul,
Alone and confused.
At an all-time low,
Broken and abused.
I'm left with only my thoughts and dreams.
My heart's been ripped at the seams.
Left to fight my demons alone,
Woken from sleep by fear.
Terror chills me to the bone.
I think to myself, 'How did I get here?'

I wish I was home,
I miss my friends and family.
I'm tired of being alone,
Just these four walls and Me.

Ghosts in My Cell by Shawn Younller

There are ghosts in my cell,
dropping rhymes and spinning verse.
Many a night I've suffered,
while the ghouls beside me hovered,
and visit upon me,
their long-winded and hateful curse.

There are ghosts in my cell,
Talking trash and muttering jibe.
And when I wake tomorrow,
there'll be more sorrow,
for it is on this,
which they seem to thrive.

There are ghosts in my cell,
freaking out and telling lies.
I fear to even consider,
what spawns this ghastly shiver,
as they gaze upon me
with such starving, hunger-filled eyes.

"Shards of Memories" by Tim Lathrop

When slivers of the past
Slip through to pierce my eyes
With visions of your smile

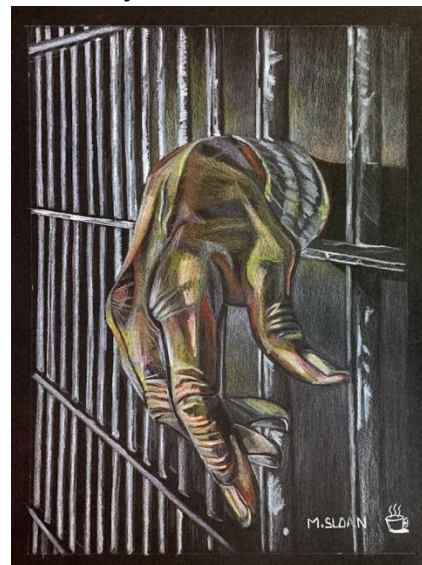
My eyes let flow with tears
Then blood, then my very soul

The very love we hold
Wrung inside out

Dripping down into
The blackened puddle
Of the past.

- Tears

Artwork by: Michael Sloan



Self-Center of Gravity by Joseph H. Navarro

While my subconsciousness is being pushed by obsession,

My consciousness is steadily being pulled by compulsion,
forever being compelled to find whatever tips
the balance towards Joy from misery,

Despair is my gravity if I'm walking in Hope,
the more my thoughts become meaningful,
the more my actions become meaningless.

My reality is a lie, I guess I'll get the truth when I die.

Eyes Wide Shut by Michael Marotta

Suddenly everything has started to blur,
There's a smile on my face...
Another dose quickly becomes sobriety's cure,
Getting fucked up's depression's rat race...
The needle bends but won't break,

the darkest moments with you
are brighter than
all my past dreams come true
even when black clouds block the sun
the moon guides with my eyes closed
had to leave my daily atmosphere
to know Chandra's eternal brightness
where lay stacks of green fifty years
untouched
and the flag's bleached full peace
white
erasing nationalism in the name of
humanity
and here I find I can't always breathe
easy
but I have the eternal company of my
goddess
so I smile because
the darkest moments with you
are brighter than
all my past dreams come true

Anywhere by Anthony Vick

If I could meet you Anywhere In the
world
where would it be?
Brazil? Portugal? or perhaps Italy?
On a beautiful ship?
Cross country bicycle trip?
Maybe some small town strawberry
festival
by the nacho stand
to the left of the carousel?
Too bad I'm in prison
so options are limited.
Don't let that stop us
imagination unprohibited.
Just meet where we're at
It shall be most worthwhile
Not asking for a cake
concealing a file
It's much easier to escape
in your letters and smile.

Untitled by Andre Ellis

When I think of being in love I picture
you.
When I think of Freedom I want to Run
with you.
If we are caught I'd rather be the one
to be whipped than you.
If they only drew up one set of
Freedom papers I'll hand mine over to
you.
Let them say Nigger each one of you
niggros stick out a foot I'ma say here
boss I's-has-two for you.
I wish I could feel your pain so I can
cry for you.
I'll give you my heart if your heart
stops beating for you.
If you were in labor I would lay down
and give birth for you.
I will never have a joyful day, I want it
all for you.
I will settle for a frown for life in order
to give my smile to you.
They can keep happiness, I'll spend
the Rest of my life lonely for you.
I'll do all the sweating in order for you
to stay cool in the month of June.
You will never spend a day in jail I will
do life for you, do away with my out
date and disintegrate the key I choose
love over freedom for you.
Bring the Rain I'll weather the storm I'll
sleep my Nights on the streets while
furniture's being delivered to you.
I've walked so much I've come out my
shoes in search of you.
When they ask what happened to my
car I'll say I save my ride for you.
I'll pay all your bills so your whole
check you can splurge on you.
I started watching Atlanta House
Wives to have a better understanding
of strong women like you.
Massage your body you don't have to
pay I just want you to feel my hands on
you.

Groom and feed your dogs daily so
you don't get any hair on you.

I'll even pray for you baby I want all
blessings to come from heaven
straight to you.
If you become ill I will be there for you,
After watching my parents I learned
that's what real friends are supposed
to do.
I will take all your calls I can't wait to
talk to you.
Even close my eyes while I'm on the
phone so I can imagine I'm sitting next
to you, After we've said good Night I'll
fall asleep so I can dream I'm sleeping
next to you.
The greatest gift of all I'ma give you,
breathe life back into both your parents
so you'll have another chance to say
Mom-Dad I love you.
I'll settle the sibling rivalry between you
and your sister so you don't have to.
I'll take every drug and die a thousand
deaths so you no longer have to.
Hide all the Narcan so the next call is
me instead of you.
Thinking about the Lord I didn't pray
left that conversation for you.
I only cry now I took all your tears from
you.
Loving you is suffocating I give my last
breath to you.
Standing at the footsteps of heaven
God smiles and said "I made women
for man in order for you to understand
to love it takes two, for every breath
you take she exhales for love sake,
Put the lord first and I will solidify your
love in faith for you."
Now if you would excuse me my son
you said.
Lord no matter how much I cry please
put me in back of the line so she can
be closer to you.

Love by Av3nue

I can't fight this agonizing feeling of wanting to be loved. But I'm not talking about your typical love. I'm speaking on love that's unconditional. Love that's irreplaceable. The type of love that give you butterflies whenever you look at your mate. The type of love you never wanna escape. Real Love,

That emotional attachment that makes you lost without that special someone by your side. The emotional ties that you couldn't hide, even if you tried.

The love that provides you mental stimulation and psychological security. The type of love where you never have to question its purity.

Fidelity. Loyalty. Trust. Honor. Respect.

All of the elements that make love worth pursuing.

I'm speaking on the type of love that's unexplainable. The type of love that's unobtainable. Love that arouses your sexual appetite to new heights. Love that make you wanna make that special woman your new wife.

I'm talking intoxicating love, the feeling that's addictive like a new drug. Love that makes you wanna taste every part of your lover's body. The love that makes a nobody feel like somebody. You know, unmistakable love. That tell a person "I'm taken" love. That, I'll never be forsaken love.

If you don't know the type of love that I'm speaking on, it's probably because this is something you've never seen. If you can't relate to it, then it's obvious you are not the typical human being.

Artwork by: Miguel Arcos



Untitled by JaQuan Weathers

Stories have been written about love extendin' beyond the limits of hardships and conflicts.

Stories of 2 hearts so pure within their intentions, they became the kind of stories told to children.

To inspire them to keep going, to striving. Even if the clouds above look down upon their hopes.

So with each brief moment in passin' I wonder what would a story where you and I are those protagonists entail?

Where would it begin?

And after mountains are surmounted, walls torn down, and bridges crossed, where would it end.

And would the destination be so elegantly written and filled with so much sentiment that it'll be the story we tell to our children?

I Wonder by Lee Ortega, Mentee

I wonder as I rest my head on the pillow.
Is she near-- a foot away?
How I wonder, if she knows how much she is missed.
How sorry I truly am to her.
I wonder if she understands.
Has she been there with me through it all?-- in the struggles and Victories?
How I wonder if she reads and sees my own natural heart,
Where it's been and where it is now.

If she knows how much I envy that I cannot be in her spiritual Presence to hug and talk to her for just an hour.
I wonder if she is proud of me-- how her only son could have used Her advice, wisdom, and guidance in his life, talking me through the Rest.

I wonder if the job of parenting--which is lifelong--continues in The afterlife in a different shape or form.
I hope so, or do I just feel like that? Does she see my changes? What would she say? I wonder.

Aztec Jewels by DREAMER

Like boomerangs in Dreams
Memories return,
Causing my shattered heart
To Burn,
with a passionate desire
To go Home.
Waking up alone,
In the middle of a crowd
Of "dead men walking",
Celebrating Groundhog Day,
From sentencing
To the grave.
Covering myself,

with the cold blanket of Darkness and
 Despair,
 Hopelessness fills the air.
 I hear silence
 From the ceiling
 To the floor,
 Thru metal doors
 shadows fall,
 over my hands,
 Face, and hair,
 Consuming the uniform
 I am forced to wear.
 Like an Aztec Drum,
 My heart beats against
 Iron bars,
 Caressing the scars
 of a Fallen star.
 On the wings of my pen
 I fly, over
 The Razor wire fence.
 Awaiting in suspense
 A poetic exchange,
 "Jordy", "Jane Doe",
 "K" and "Shanzay",
 UM students whom like me,
 Have a lot to say.
 Where do memories go to die?
 Thanks to my pen,
 Mine multiply!
 Like the words in my heart
 That have taken flight,
 Priceless Aztec Jewels
 shining so bright.
 Illuminating by teenage son's
 Heart and soul, four years ago,
 On That Cold, Dark,
 Homeless, Christmas Night,
 when he contemplated suicide.
 "If you die I'll die!"
 I cried out on the phone.
 "Son you're all I have!
 Don't leave me all alone!"
 Rogelio still lives,
 And here is the reason,
 A Father's Love,
 Can Never be Imprisoned.

Something Told Me by Richard

Beebe

Something told me you've been
 missing me.
 It wasn't words.
 And something keeps telling me I've
 been
 missing you too- just humming birds.
 It's these little innuendos nobody even
 sees,
 Those quiet pangs of blue nobody
 knows but me.

Like mutely whining for the thunder,
 hiding out to stop the storm;
 couples at a check-out, or a sweater
 you might have worn.
 It's like highway marker 69, or a pile
 of leaves in someone's yard.
 It's like Coke in a bottle or a Kid
 gazing up at the stars.
 Well I don't know why they make me
 think of you, but something told me
 You've been missing me too.

Some people call it the pondering of
 fools,
 a heart that won't let go;
 but it's more like the calling of a love
 that was true, but how could they know
 about these little innuendos
 nobody even sees, these quiet pangs
 of blue
 nobody knows but me?

Like lonesome patters of the rain,
 or traffic lights at dawn;
 sun on a breakfast table,
 or vacant campgrounds in the fall.
 It's the smell of eggs over-easy
 or a neighbor mowing his lawn;
 It's some old lady smiling
 or cartoon shadows on the wall.
 Yeah I don't know why they make
 me think of you, but something told me
 You've been missing me too.

Artwork by: Travis Magash



Unforgiving Din by David Kelley

Accosting
 Clinic Din
 Disturbing
 Community

Her appearance startled
 No body in the Park
 On the bench as I
 arrived
 Mary & I
 talked quite some time.

Same bench, same hour,
 same chance to devour
 Her Voice
 Noon, Mary waiting, for me
 Leaning to hear, Mesmerized.

The
 plainness of the sameness
 Caught me by surprise
 Neat bun, carnal
 skin, shaded lips

Breath-taking
 Insisting on dinner
 Heart-breaking decline
 Persuasion failed

Illusion rend

Mary

explained

Lost for

shame

Taught me not to blame

Showed her love remained.

The din

over the door

Operating cost the

Daughter ordained

To keep me sane.

Mary & I talk

Quite often

On the bench

In the Park.

Carry You by Taj Alexander Mahon-Haft

On this dusky, shattered trail
solo steps did echo in my head
until I saw your shadow
sewn to my own shade
with me ever do I carry you
tied to me via heartstrings
your voice my cricket and my muse
from the mountain, I will sing you
through my veins your river flows
your moon rises, my tide rips
your earth spins, my year leaps
whatever forces drive my path
have woven with your physics
in your presence
my present

presents

presciently

previews of the gravity

of our future collisions

love quarks and bosons

simplest elements do bind us

when love is all there is between us

then I will be satisfied

until that sacred moment

with me ever do I carry you

armor myself with your verbs

battle apathy on Harmes' bow

reminiscing of our kissing

adorned in smiles with which

we dress and address each other

in the mirrors of our souls

Breanna's Poem by Lawrence Smith

A kiss for your nose

As sweet as a rose

A tickle for your toes

And a smile, I suppose.

I pray your day, as it goes

Will be led by Him, cause He knows

The light from shadows,

And He holds the sparrows

And you too since He chose

You from birth and He shows

Love each day when He flows

Through your life, till you close

Your brown eyes, as He sows

a new day; highs and lows

Always there; yeses and no's

He's still there; friends and foes

Oh God is there; Joys and woes

He never stops, never slows

No goodbyes, just hellos

~I love you daughter~

(Hope that it shows).

Nights Become Cold by James Gondek

Voices become distant

as I travel this road

Demons take ahold

they influence and control

they manipulate many

and people do as they're told

I was lost, my soul was sold

then you came along

lifted me and shared your soul

showed me hope

and tossed me a rope

thank you so much

you helped me along

out this pit in it I was stuck

before you all was wrong

Now I see the light

it just seems too right

I'm on guard ready to fight

good things don't last in my life

the one thing. I hope you do

so I'll fight until my body's cold and

blue

even if I'm sick deadly with the flu

I'll maintain my strength just for you

Porcelain by Lance Ellis Porter

So Softly

her Kiss

As a Snowflake upon

my face

Calming the Fever of

worry,

And Bringing the desire

of a Flurrie,

a dusting of zen

so far within

reaching, penetrating the

Cold dark Blues, and Blacks

in which I reside in,

disturbing what haunts and

plagues me

The empty slate of gray

faces, and Abysmal blackened

Sockets of past fears and Failings,

Conjured from thy own Core,

I the Architect, the Author,

and designer of this prison

without Boundaries, yet still Kept,

She the Key

To Release me.

The Bond by James Cloutman

It's late fall probably October
The world of trees color the world
In scarlet reds, amber yellows, and the
hues of orange in between
Leaves litter the world of those already
fallen
But my world is minimized by one little
being
The smiling redheaded girl who calls
me Daddy
She is the treasure of my heart, My
Purpose for existing
She amuses herself by trying to catch
these falling leaves
As they float, flip, and spin their way to
the ground
Her sweet giggles whirl through the
Universe
Her ridiculously wild laughter floats on
the cool breeze
As she throws leaves into the air like
confetti
Watching her warms my heart, melts it
actually
Her pleas to have me join in her fun,
are quickly answered
Nothing else in the world exists to
them
Now the Father and Daughter's
obvious silliness
May seem absurd to others
Who can not comprehend the love and
bond a Father and daughter share
The day ends with the two indulging in
some cool ice cream
The pleasure, love, and joy of the day
Is forever embedded in their minds
and in their hearts
Because there is no stronger bond
than the love that exists between a
daughter and her Father

Drunk Harmony by Ed Rose

#1

Here I am on this highway again.
Left a little woman and a few old
friends.

Finally found out how it's got to be.
For me to survive — I gotta be free.

#2

As I pull into L.A. Town,
The people out here never bring me
down.
I love to sit and watch the sea roll in.
Think about all the places that I've
been.

[Refrain]

Once, an old man told me it's the place
to be.
But, you'll only get what you can and
then you'll see.
There's a fools' treasure up in the sky.
And most men die dreaming to get
them by.
Singin' drunk harmony sounds real
nice
To the few of us that's paid the price.
Losing myself in the wine and song.
Never gonna worry again 'bout gettin'
along.

#3

Playing my music on the streets for my
meals.
Getting the chance to express what I
feel.
Met a girl and she makes me smile.
Think maybe she'll be hangin' around
for a while.

#4

Letting go — I'm finally feeling free.
Being exactly who I need to be.
Met a girl — she really makes me
smile.
Think maybe I'll be hangin' around for
awhile.

[Refrain]

#5

Sittin' on the beach — looking up at
the stars.
Drinking beer and playing guitar.

Met a girl — we make each other smile
And I think maybe we might both be
hanging around for awhile.

Poetry Project... by Meagan Rena Work

All I need is for you to let me hold your
hands and my fingers to tightly hug
yours. Allow yourself to be naked with
me while fully clothed and let those
guards rest. Be at ease and entertain
the idea of being loved in a way your
defensive waves won't let you. Help
the doors of your heart to open up a
little bit and some fresh air in. Let me
love and hold the real you. The
vulnerable and broken beautiful you.

People are often unreasonable,
irrational, and self-centered but forgive
them anyway. If your kind people may
accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives
but be kind anyway. What you spend
years creating others could destroy
overnight but create anyway. If you're
successful, you'll win some unfaithful
friends and some genuine enemies,
but succeed anyway. If you find
serenity and happiness some may be
jealous, be happy anyway. The good
you do today will often be forgotten but
do good anyway. Give the best you
have and it'll still never be enough for
some but give your best anyway. In
the end, it's between you and God. It
was never between you and them
anyway.

Capturing the words from my heart like
restless butterflies set free into the
wind, like releasing my soul into a
great unknown but with no way to
defend the pieces of who I am out
there for all to read. My story is right
there within these lines. My grief, my
passion, my love and my needs.
Should I try to recapture the words I
speak as they ebb and flow within me?

No. that'd be futile, like harnessing the wind, like holding back the sea. These words need to be seen, if only by me. Each one gives my soul a moment of respite and my heart a measure of relief. By stitching the fractures back together with my grieving ink.

Mind a chaotic whirl, emotions spin and twirl. Scenes pass by in a frantic turn, increasing steady burn, searing every nerve. Wishing I had wings to fly, not crawling along but barely getting by, dodging left and then right.

Maneuvered like a puppet on strings towards a destiny unimagined, an emotional devastation unfathomed. Wanting to turn off the answers running through my brain in blissful ignorance I'd rather have lain. Where hope could be nourished in my ignorance it'd flourish. But false hope is no hope at all, only a delusion to the blind. So in truth I'll stand, even as life pours through my fingers like an hourglass sifting grains of sand.

How am I to grow and learn when my eyes can't see past the tears that burn? And my ears can't hear over the catch in my every breath? How do I step, God, when I'm collapsing where I stand? How do I discover the core of who and what I am when my world will never spin again? But oblivious to me, time moves forward at a rapid speed. Humbled at every turn by many strangers I called friends, I found a way for my fractured heart to mend. Despite the heavy shadows and the rain, through your strength I found a way. Nestled deep within my soul, I carry your boundless courage and love like a luminescent glow. And while I may never again be whole, I no longer feel so broken and alone.

My dreams are filled with you, I relive every moment and memory the whole night through. Like precious gems I hold and savor until dawn paints a pale pink sky, I awaken to tears streaming and questioning – why? Why am I here living without you? Everywhere I go I turn to see you there, I hear your musical laughter and smell the sweet scent of your hair. Why must I rouse to each new day when within those memories I wish to stay. Every sleeping waking cycle it begins again. God how I wanna stay there and breathe you in.

Three Words by John James

Memory of you serves as a reminder. A memory that haunts me still. Appearing in my dreams, tormenting me when I awake. Struggling to make sense, finding the right words, to fully express how I feel. To make known how much you mean to me. How often I relive the past in my imagination. To feel once again how I felt then. Oh, how much I want to understand; so powerful, painful. A need to feel how you felt, love how you loved me; suffer your suffering. To see through your eyes, see who I am, who I was for you. I want to experience the Joy you felt that first time you whispered to me these three magical words. Three words so meaningful, so redeeming, transcending. Like a prayer I contemplate you invoking the words, as if like an incantation, filling my being with you, all of you. Your small serene voice reaching out to me across space and time. Speak to me once again, these words; my salvation: I love you.

Father and Son by Barry Monroe

I never meant to leave
but I didn't have the balls to stay
I should have come back to you
But I kept moving far away
I was the one who left
but now I want to make it right
I know it's going to be a battle
But I'm up to the fight
You say why now? Where was you before?
I say why not. I was behind closed doors.
I closed off myself
to what is real to me.
You are my son
but I abandoned my responsibility
never got to hear your first word
never seen your first step
won't accept my advice
cause to you I'm like death
Another man raised you
you call another man dad
that makes me feel ashamed
embarrassed and sad
can't bring the past back
and our future seems lost
because I'm lock down
I never imagine the cost
Given the chance to connect
to the one I helped live
If I could bring life back
that's the price I would give
I had the chance to be your father
but I threw that away
I hope that you can forgive me
and we can reconcile one of these days
If not I understand
yet you are truly my son
but me being your father
to you that is over and done
Yes I do love you!
Yes you have my eyes!
Yes you have a lot of questions
and the main one is why?
I continue to pray
that I may have an answer
before God calls me away

I wanted a son
 before you was ever conceived
 so for me to walk out
 that was hard for me to believe
 It hurts not to know you
 It hurts for me to care
 It hurts for me to have a son
 and me being absent it is not fair
 I want what is missing
 you as my son
 can we start over
 me as your father
 day number one

“To Love” by Tim Lathrop

Tides roll through us
 Swaying consciousness
 Tugging awareness towards
 Beats resonating as one.

Potentials are glimpsed
 Through reflected light
 Peering in the soul's window
 Compelling attraction.

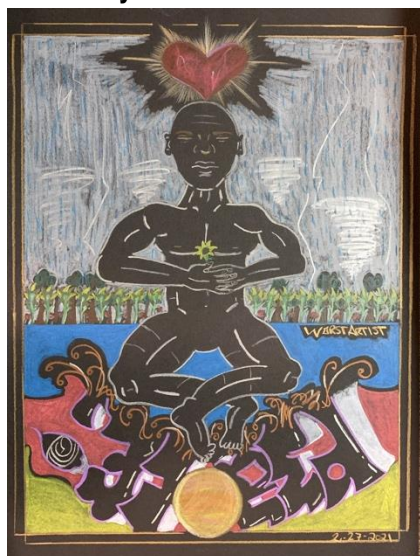
Touching the deepest core
 Reality shifts
 New paths become open
 One's choices are weighed.

Many futures are lost
 With a single step
 Ignorant outcries
 Echoing within.

Ones uncertainties gnaws
 Clouding clear vision
 Redemption arrives
 With a single touch.

- Tears

Artwork by: Kenneth Zamarron



**V.
 RACE**

**Caucasian Abrasion by Cory
 Lambing**

Hello.
 You have reached Black America.
 We can't come to the phone right now.
 Because we've been shot by the
 police.
 The same police that we called,
 to protect us.
 I guess you could say,
 we broke the law.
 For Living while Black.
 A crime only punishable
 By organized Governmental Lynching.
 An ETHNIC cleansing
 Hidden in uniform.
 I understand this may not be poetic
 laying on the cold Asphalt
 slightly warmed by our blood
 Choking on our own Bodily Fluids.
 Bullet Fragments, Racism and
 Ignorance
 If art is inspired by reality,
 This is certainly our Reality.
 So please Leave a message
 And we will Get Back to you
 Next Generation.

Black Mamas Club by Kenneth West

Black Mamas got a club
 You don't want to join
 Unpayable Admission fee
 Forced to enter... where no one wants
 to be
 Sabrina, Tamika, Regina,
 Fran, Gina
 Hearts knitted in pain
 A club of Sacred lost
 Children
 To Violence
 Violence from their Brothers
 Violence from Others
 Outside the Community
 With legal immunity
 Scorched Flesh / Raw Pain
 Systematic ton on Mamas Breast
 America... feel her pain
 She can't... We can't... breathe
 The Black Mamas club
 CLOSED
 No New Members
 Please...

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT by Lawrence
 Smith**

You have the right to remain silent, if
 you give
 up this right anything you say can and
 will be
 used against you in the court of law.

You have the right to an attorney. If
 you can't
 afford one, one will be appointed to
 you.

Like shards of glass, another body of a
 black man lies in
 the streets, killed at the hands of the
 shield. Lethal force
 used as an excuse to steal the soul of
 another while bullets
 numbers those who died senseless for
 the sake of justice. I CAN'T
 BREATHE... becomes a symbol of
 systematic racism while

injustice gives birth to failed liberties.

As I lift my hands in protest, I shout
"Don't Shoot!!"

In the face of Racism:

I shout Don't Shoot to Economic
Oppression.

I shout Don't Shoot to Sexism.

I Shout Don't Shoot to Educational
Deprival,
along with so many other things that
deprive the
rights of so many who look like me.

Death has always been the history of
malice and rage in
the hands against those of color
whether they are black, brown,
red and yellow. Lawlessness becomes
branched of bureaucraties
who wear the Brook Brother's suits
and black and blue uniforms
and use guns as metal ropes to lynch
the black man's internal
soul.

You have the right to speak out. My life
matters.

You have the right to shout that I am
human.

You have the right to lift your voice and
say:

"I am a proud black man for I know
that Black
Life Matters!"

Complacency and Complaisance by *Unknown*

You think you know me, but you don't.
You could find out, but you just won't,

You think you know me through and
through,
You think they never could get you,
You know I'm guilty. You just do.
'Cause what they say is always true.
You tell yourself your world is safe.
Your trash is picked up; shorts don't
chafe.
You watch the teevee every night.
The government is always right.
They get the bad guys on the 9am.
They do it all for Uncle Sam.
The main news outlets all agree:
The cops protect you; don't you flee!
What NPR says, and Fox news
Is only colored folk can lose.
So don't you worry, if you're white,
You have no greyhound in this fight.
That Eric Garner? He was Black!
And George Floyd had a heart attack,
And neither of them was like you,
So don't you worry. Have a brew!
Now put Kent State out of your mind.
Lieutenant Pike was being kind.
They're isolated incidents,
Becoming active makes no sense.
So don't you march, and don't you
vote.
Learn Law and Order, Cops by rote.
You wouldn't want the government
To come arrest you, for dissent.
Of course that could not happen here,
So just relax and have a beer!
It's time for lattes: almond milk
And num num nummies, of that ilk.
What smells of almonds? Cyanide!
Six million Jews just couldn't hide.
You think it never could be you
But you will find out it's not new.
It's been the same for all the days
For witches, gypsies, Jews and gays.
But that was then and this is now,
It all is better anyhow.
No need to worry or to fret.
They clearly haven't nabbed you yet.
And when they do, it's just too late
To do a thing to change your fate.
No one will listen. No one cares,
No one will protest. No one dares.

Americans will have no fear
So just relax, and
KNOCK KNOCK

"Injztic" by AJ Castro

I am a victim...
A victim of a broken down
And racist system
Designed to hold me back
And discourage me
From the fulfillment of my vision
I've been subjected
To some of the most harshest
And oppressive conditions
All under the supervision
Of those assigned to help me
because of the color of my skin
And/or my pigment
I was harassed
Endured brutal whippings
Imprisoned
Treated completely different
Than that of my counterpart
In a court, whose scale was tipped in
Favor of the privileged
I've been miseducated
History has been rewritten
They say, the founder of math is Greek
When it was really an Egyptian
They say, Columbus discovered a
place
In which the natives already lived in
Robbed me of my people
Took my language and religion
Forced upon me and my people
Their savage customs and traditions

We were once kings and queens
You know, knowledge and wisdoms
And the understanding we had
Is what the modern world calls children
We have been denigrated
Desecrated
Despite our once heldt positions
Relegated
To that of barley existent

This new world...

This new world

In which we live in
is filled with so much
Separation and/or division
That we look at
Our very own people
As if, they were different
Lightskins thinking
They're bigger, better, and innocent
While darkness is vilified
Portrayed as villainous
We went from, united in tents, huts,
and villages
To being divided
In a city of skyscrapers and high rises
Where the unexpected surprises
Are bullets fired from a gun
At someone of my very own likeness

They say
no justic, no peace
How could that be
If unarmed men and women of color
Continue to be assassinated by the police
If blacks are killing blacks
In these cold and unforgiving streets
Where is the justic
Show me, where is the peace

**Respect Existence or Expect
Resistance by Reginald J. Holland-
Houston III**

No Justice! No Peace!
New Black Panthers Party — we're off
our leash!
Korrupted Killer Kops! Weeping family
members!
Became a normal on these rural &
urban streets!
The nation is tired! Not just my sisters
& brothers!
The whole U-S of A Is FED UP!
No! Body asked to be a stickler!
We been screaming, crying, & yelling -
--
BLACK LIVES MATTER! For years!

I can thank Donald Trump for 1 thing,
He helped open our nation's eyes &
ears!

The might label me a terrorist or,
A radical! After reading this -- but,
I fully understand the vandalism!
We helped build this country,
We can do to it as we please!
I fully understand the looting!
How is it we helped build this country,
Then have a hard damn time living in
it!

FUCK!

Struggling & broke mothers!
Scattered & chained fathers!
Scared & damned sisters!
Shook & empty brothers!
Last, lonely, & unloved, we are ALL of
those in ONE!
We're FINALLY coming together!
Brothers & Sisters of EVERY color!
I'm sick and tired of Gang-on-Gang
Homicides!
I'm disgusted with our tribes
committing --
Self-genocide!
Gang banging done changed! In many
fucking ways!
Gangs started off protecting OUR
communities!
100% Klan & Kop killers!
Then sometime down the way, it all
changed!

Whatever happened to --
Constitution Revolution IN Progress?
Whatever happened to --
Brotherly Love over out Destruction?
Strong African brothers! Lecturers of
our tribes!
Back home - our REAL Home - there's
a limited divide!
I earned my name - GNote - for many
reasons,
Music, Money, & Mischief - to name a
few
But the true acronym to my name is,
Genius Negro Obtaining True
Enlightenment,

Twenty-Two rotations I thankfully
survived,
From corrupted killer cops to my last
brothers tribes,
The Old Negro Spiritual States -
"A change-a gonna come."
Stay tuned...stay glued..and always...
Respect Existence or Expect
Resistance

**Out of Africa by Desmen Best
(18A3578)**

We emerged from the "Gold Coast"
to the shores of "Jamestown, Virginia"
and smuggled into "Cuba and Brazil"
let the young, and old boast
"W.E.B Du Bois" was being layed to
rest in "Ghana" king
afterwards, "Martin Luther" was
describing his dream
"Mother Africa" is the birth place of all,
represent-her-and-we'll
forget what european history teaches,
this the Real
I'll show you the hypocrisy
of this U.S. democracy
they say Roosevelt freed us from
economic slavery
the way Lincoln freed us physically,
both false statements - we
still fighting for freedom, and against
injustice, it's bravery
African Warlords, sold us to the white-
man
who eventually tore the treasures out
of the bowels of the land
somehow we faced our fears
Willie Lynch promised whites a full
proof system, to keep us in bondage
for 300 years
if they stopped hanging strange fruit
from southern tree's, by-ropes
reminiscing, when segregation held
the south by the throat
before it was "Rosa Parks", it was
"Sarah Keys"
shes a soldier that was on furlough,
headed to washington, N.C

abroad that Carolina Trailways Bus, in uniform, "W.A.C" despite her military experience, Race, and Gender what happened to "Morgan vs Virginia" let us remember, the "fourteen amendment" equal protection, despite our pigment Imagine "sarah" fighting for her life hauled off to jail, and incarcerated over-night All because she stood up for her rights women came a long way, to finally become empowered thanks to "Dovey Roundtre" and Jim Crow being demolished imagine the "King" never entering the Tarraine hotel "Martin" marching to the podium at Lincoln Memorial, and his dream not being derailed imagine if "Malcolm" and "Huey P." didn't get caught-up in the politics whites just explicit and brainwash, the powerless racism is still prevalent it's evident, look at "George Floyd", "Sean Bell", "Breonna Taylor" and "Eric Garner" on top of that man-made coronavirus, made life harder global protests, reminding them of the "Silent Parade", and a "Red-Summer" heads under, racial tension, forced to the North now gentrification forcing us back South it's looking like the "Great Migration" of the 1920's when times hard, we stick together like Siamese twins, we far from soft listened to racism spilling from trump mouth we people, not commodities dummies the devil devised this system, keep us down, and make us the victim making history, reminding America of the "Comstock Lode"

constantly finding the "Silver"-lining, while sitting in a cell in comstock, refusing to fold conform or comply to this mode of oppression, social-distancing, and prison segregation the economic inflation, and financial isolation all we want is simple justice, and they wanna Assassinate us, like "Medgar Evers" We come from kings and queens, that's the truth of our ancestors FAMEUS uplift, and enlighten, every boy and girl This the most imperialistic country in the world Beware of these caucasian, white, europeans It can't be no peace, without freedom It went from "Negro", "Afro-American", to "Black" the fact remains, prisons still packed Modern-day slavery, still intact C.O's couldn't walk a day in convict shoes I'm a "poet", and "novelist", like "Langston Hughes" The road we traveled, wasn't paved Once incarcerated, your debt to society, is never paid Becoming conscious, is a curse and a blessing The more you learn, the more you realize you been jerked, since adolescence The history taught from pre-k to 12th grade, is not significant They don't tell you how we came "OUT OF AFRICA", to keep us ignorant

Poem by Colin J. Broughton

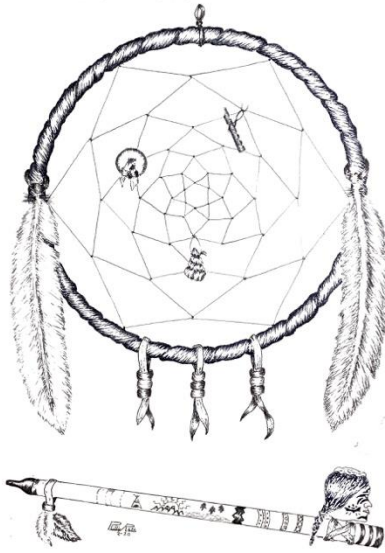
I am forced to imagine how I would spend my summer days, as new sprouts of life spindle from the earth in unison with our world, as it nurses her child named "Hate",

spewed with gas from the president's tweets, His ignorance spikes the fire's flare, while solid bliss washes over me for a moment, realizing that grass can be moved and uprooted but racism and police brutality will never cease Still no justice, while a noose grips the throat of peace, and the real pandemic is death by an officer's knee Mama! I can't breathe! On a cell block where I can only walk in circles like a gerbil My cell is no longer an escape, or a place to retreat They say wear a mask to protect yourself, wash your hands and stay 6ft apart, but as monuments topple and protests continue, the masks with pointed hats come out of the dark But who am I to judge? From this barred window I lay, watching the taller grasses sashay in the breeze The moon has appeared, shining over this gated community, while I envy the stray cats, who come and go as they please



Artwork by: Herman Moore III

Artwork by: Phillip Rath



VI. HOPE & LESSONS

Word Count by Elliot Gornall

Upon birth, every man is allotted a
finite number of words
he may speak in his lifetime.
No credit is given for those unused,
nothing additional can be granted.
Words spoken, but ignored, cannot be
repossessed.
A warning;
Count your words.
Make your words count.

Poor Puny Paul by C. Ripley Rappé

There was a creature that lived by a
creek
And all the other bugs thought him
weak
But try as he might, no matter the need
He couldn't move even a mustard
seed
Poor Puny Paul was small for his kind
But his biggest problem was in his
mind
See, Poor Puny Paul was just an ant

But Poor Puny Paul's motto was
"Can't"
Everyone knows that ants are strong
Surely you've seen them dragging
along
Things that are dozens of times their
weight
But Poor Puny Paul wouldn't
coordinate
All the other ants would laugh and jeer
At poor puny Paul as they drank their
beer
After a hard day's work was all done
And the time had arrived to have some
fun
But Poor Puny Paul would suffer in
quiet
While the other ants would jostle and
riot
For a chance to be the king of the hill
They did it for fun; it was quite a thrill
Poor Puny Paul just sat deep in his
hole
More like a groundhog, or even a mole
Than the social bugs that ants should
be
But Poor Puny Paul's only friend was
he
One day there came thunderous roars
And the rains crashed in all of the
doors
The anthill was under a violent attack
And the only way out was through the
back
But that path was closed, it had been
forever
It was crushed in before by similar
weather
Everywhere you looked ants were
drowning
The rivulets of water were quickly
browning,
Turning to mud and smothering the
clan
Somebody had to come up with a plan!
These are the times that try ant's souls
Toughen their tendons, strengthen
their goals
So Poor Puny Paul gathered his mettle

Took a deep breath so his nerves
would settle
Then he dove in the water and swam
like a fish
With saving his people his only wish
The ants were screaming and in such
a way
That all of them thought they'd die that
day
But all of a sudden they heard the call
Of the newfound voice of Poor Puny
Paul
He pushed and prodded with all of his
might
Yet the way stayed blocked, sealed up
tight
However Poor Puny Paul heard a new
chant:
"Come on now Paul! Don't say you
can't!"
All of the others that used to tease
Were cheering him on as loud as you
please
So that old motto that ruled his life
And caused such hurtful and wounding
strife
Was gone in a flash, as fast as the
winds
As Poor Puny Paul was cheered by his
friends
So with a rush forward from deep in
his core
Poor Puny Paul pushed again at the
door
All were amazed when out they flew
Left gasping for breath and covered in
dew
The waters receded as it drained from
their hill
And not a member was lost when they
saw with a thrill!
But after a meticulous searching for all
Everyone was accounted for except
Paul
Then came forward the worst of Paul's
foes,
Big Bad Brian, to tell what he knows
"I saw it myself, and I'll tell you straight

Poor Puny Paul flew right up to the gate!
 Holding it till the rest of us made our escape
 Paul was like Superman without the cape!
 He held the door with uncommon strength
 Stretching out to an un-antlike length
 Then when he was sure we'd all made it out
 Poor Puny Paul gave a colossal shout
 And down came the roof of our former abode
 Crushing Poor Puny Paul with quite a load
 I'd hardly believe it, but you make the call
 I say the savior today was Poor Puny Paul!"
 So before you go and judge yourself weak
 Remember the ant down by the creek
 He once lived life with "Can't" in his calls
 So beware the strength of the Poor Puny Pauls

Knowledge by J. Mika

Knowledge knows no boundaries
 limited only to those that choose to be
 if knowledge is power
 Then make me King
 The hunger of my mind is endless
 like that of nuclear energy
 My mind seeks immortality
 not from life itself
 But to understand the concept of reality
 fear of the darkness, seek comfort in the light
 lessons of the past hold the key to the future
 History, immortal in its own right
 a book written today
 Will forever be read by one tomorrow

I seek knowledge today, of past lifetimes
 Knowledge to retain, share, keep forever
 Never borrowed...

"STILL" by Lance Fleming

IN A SEA OF DARKNESS
 LOST AND FORGOTTEN
 THROUGH THE BREATH I BREATHE
 I AM STILL
 STILL ALIVE IN
 THE NIGHT
 STILL
 THRIVING AND STRIVING
 STILL HURTING AND
 DREAMING
 SOME HEAR MY VOICE, I PRAY
 THEY HEAR
 FOR WHATEVER REASON
 HOWEVER LONG
 THE SEASON
 ALTHOUGH MY CANDLE IS SMALL
 I WILL LIGHT OTHERS

A Prisoner's Dream by Richard Dixon

Lonely nights I lay, wide awake
 Thinking about my fate,
 unbearable anger turn into
 unspeakable hate,
 This is more than one man
 can take,
 I need to escape,
 wait!
 I look into the Dusty mirror
 to see what has become a Disgrace,
 I don't see me, I see my Father's
 face.

A prisoner's Dream is to escape
 From what has become his reality
 so it seems.
 A place far away from Steel Doors

and chains,
 That feeds off of Fear and pain.
 It seems a little Far Fetched
 Doesn't it?
 And they say we are to blame.

But now can we be held
 accountable for a mistake?
 A prisoner's Dream is to survive
 for his Family's sake,
 Destruction is on the horizon
 in the form of a man without
 a release date,
 so, how can you expect me to
 rehabilitate?

I've been beaten, Battered, and
 Bruised,
 a pessimistic attitude, with nothing
 to lose,
 so, why am I being judged, when
 I paid my dues? I had to choose.

But still, I couldn't believe I done it
 when I never did it,
 A mysterious crime that was never
 committed,
 Please, let me Finish,

I've been back and forth
 Battling my emotions like I'm
 playing tennis,
 it's hard trying to understand the mind
 of a critic.

A prisoner's dream is to never be
 Forgotten,
 not to be taken hostage,
 how Can I Further explain my logic?
 I can't.

So it's best to try to address
 the issues at hand,
 A prisoner's dream is to understand
 So tell me can you understand?
 What it means,
 When a prisoner says
 "I have a Dream."

"Transform My Thoughts" by Scott

A. Solovic

My thoughts are as grains of sand at a beach
scattered together with the water in reach
My thoughts are as years without any rain
still planted in soil, grown to be slain...

My thoughts stand loud, my voice falls into silence
fast asleep is my peace, slowly awaken to violence
my thoughts are as cars colliding with bricks
fragile to walls of doubt, broken like sticks...

My thoughts in distress, turned my heart to the Lord
from depths of despair, His word, my sword
My thoughts, my actions fell short of His glory
My end is His start, beginning the story...

I AM

Sometimes I feel like a toad,
like mounds of warts cover my face,
And crossing a public road,
Is showing me of my disgrace;

And sometimes I feel like a King,
A vessel crowned in rubies and gold,
And all the world looks on to see
As I bask in the shine and the glow;

But then I remember,
Most importantly - just in case
I forgot - it's all temporary
Whether I am or I am not.

Resolve by Kraig Powell

Even though nobody else cares
Even though they don't understand
Even if Earth turns inside out
I can master my own hands

It doesn't matter what they think
It doesn't affect the way I live
It won't matter when it's over
My life will still be mine to give

I can't expect to change the world
I can't be the end in our strife
I still plan to be my own change
So we can have a better life

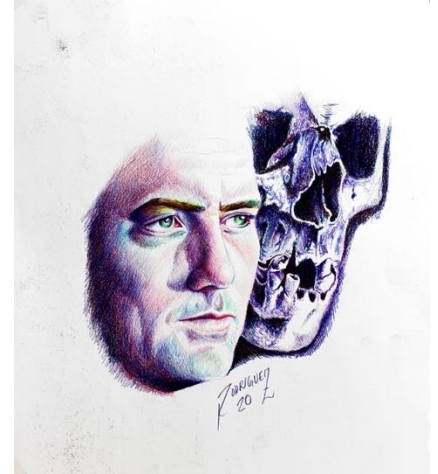
I'm not ready to move forward
I'm not quitting or giving up
I'm advancing in my success
Without letting myself get stuck

Every day when I become stronger
Every day that I become smarter
Every time I set better standards
My resolve will fail to falter

AD- SEG by Santiago Leija III

23 hours a day in a cell to yourself
AD-SEG will make you or Break you
How do you use your time?
Do you complain, worry and cry all the damn time
or Do you believe, stay positive and Very optimistic
Cause to gain wisdom and knowledge is really simplistic
So once again Just stay Optimistic
Don't fall victim to dilapidation find your motivation
Aggrandize your mind cause trust me we got plenty of time
AD-SEG will Make you or Break you
Breakfast in Bed with nothing to be said
Now here comes lunch with the watered down punch

I do miss the interaction it gave me
some satisfaction
now I'm learning of the laws of attraction
for that is true satisfaction
AD-SEG has Aggransized my mind
Don't let it debilitate yours
23 hours a day in a cell to yourself
How do you spend your time



Artwork by: Edward Rodriguez

Role Reversal by William Ziegler

How many days, months, years
'Til life's meaning disappears?
Institutionalized
Hidden through tunneled eyes
Monstrous reputations
Emitted by News stations
Friendly smiles and haircuts
For publicity's circus
'Til one embezzles too much
Or harasses via touch
Getting thrown into the lion pen
From prior lyin' dens
Trading vibrance for dull hues
Uniforms black, gray, or blue
Neckties replaced by nooses
More heads on walls than mooses
Your commented-on selfies
New mugshots for laughing bellies
Squeaking shoes signify brawls
Rolled playing cards are snorting straws
Cheeto and ramen goulashes

Pre-K food for the obnoxious
Corporal punishment see
Is the only consistency
Prison is out of one's hands
Beyond the tightened wristbands
No matter how high your esteem
Just ask the late Mr. Epstein

Invisible by Taj Alexander Mahon-Haft

It is not
the man with the gun
but the badge
without a face
to fear
his humanity erased

what is the fate
of the sun born
to a father without a name
prison visitation room conceived
his life begins
without a trace

"American Classism" by Matt Barnes

Born into poverty was the crime
committed...
Condemned because of meager
means...
Can't we use our blood to satisfy your
debts of greed...
You fight against us...
Because you refuse to recognize our
humanity...
While you feed on hatred and
violence...
You spread false lies and untruths...
Weaponized words spoken with the
intent to harm the innocent...
A generation lost, relocation of our
communities behind prison walls...
Mass incarceration...
Results of corrupt officials with warped
mentalities...
Engaged in racist ideologies...

Oppressed because we choose to
uplift the people...
Where is this American Dream...
Life, liberty, and prosperity...
For who American Classism...
All I see is a society that persecutes
those less fortunate than he...
Is this democracy or is this the one
percent that profits off of me...

Poetic Therapy by Martell Harper

A safe space when faced with
discomfort of any kind
I'd turn disagreements into lines of
many rhymes
Pain related haikus
Or joyful stanzas too

The free flow of letting that pen go,
birthing words
Introducing life of a writer's plight with
verbs
Nouns and adjectives trace the print of
most mistakes

A blank verse will let the brain work
without restraints
Just carefree moments of therapy,
giving thanks
Oh how sweet are the thoughts of
words journeying walks

The wicked twists of fate, or elegance
of grace
Descriptive with depiction of
conviction's face,
Ends with punctuation... emphatic
frustration

But detours are allowed, insisted on in
fact-
To profess love of one through a
blazon's act...
Beauty is desire
Confession's rapid fire

Speak, scream, write, or draw, express
yourself through any art

Swapping souls of light for dark, live in
freeing stark!

Words are wings, ears are air
And Freedom's why I'm sat here

Struggles & Smiles by Aaryana Malcolm

Even though we struggle
look around you to
the person in front of you.
To the person beside you
or even behind you
The world has been brought
to our knees with COVID
But COVID has not broken us.
A smile can be so uplifting
So give a smile to someone around
you.
If you don't have a smile
I'll give you one of mine.

Headstone by Colin J. Broughton

The crown of my head
Is missing valuable real estate,
While my face grows hair in places
I'd never expect to see,
Changing tones all at the same time,
Giving me the urge to shave
Can you believe that I was almost a
tenant on Death Row?
Maybe rightly deserved
I drove through life inebriated,
Spilling cheap liquor upon Mercy's
curve
The doors remain secured in this
concrete grave
Where they believe I'll rot and watch
my dreams decay
Im assigned here until I show no signs
of life
No more air to swallow. No more fuel
to fire a heart beat.
No pulse to race from a moment's
excitement,
No sweat to cool you down. No more
smile

To plaster like a mask, no muscle
memory to
Turn up a scowl. As time persists to
travel,
The precious minutes slip away, and
the things
That happened yesterday, shouldn't
give meaning
To the things of today.
Although my actions showed no soul
And my movements were swift to
destroy
I will remain your unwanted son,
Struggling to be the prodigal boy
While my joints betray me, and slower
Reactions are donned for rust,
I expect for you to swallow the key
Because I've terrorized you enough.

Another "Groundhog Day" by David Hehn

The Heaviness of the Night
Olde episodes of The Twilight Zone
play in the background.
The black & white shadows criss-cross
& paint the walls.
The sad music of a time-gone-bye
plays through cheap tinty headphones.
This could be Now, ten years ago or
50, the Feeling is the same.
It's a noir world & im just living in IT; or
trying to anyway.
And my emotions Have Gone Blank
IT's the same olde story: me alone in
the dark, the TV on, & me left with the
consequences of A Shattered Life.
And Eternity Has Another Name and
IT's called: "Prison."
Have you ever heard the term
"Limbo?"
Well when I was a kid I Didn't get IT.
Now, after 15 years in prison; I get IT.
Tragically, I really get IT.

Untitled by Gernard D. Chestnut

I'm still looking for God 2 find His way
but I was thrown into the pin
betrayed by my friends
because they didn't think that I'd
escape

They locked me down in confinement
but I still traveled the country from
state to state
many things I did and places I went
but nobody knew that I'd escaped

Prison guards denied my breakfast
I told them I'd already eaten eggs and
steaks
because I'd broken out the pin that
night
but they didn't believe that I'd escaped

They came back lunchtime and denied
me of another tray
I told them its cool I was having
seafood
a shrimp and lobster plate
because I'd learned how to escape

They mocked me laughing and
screaming
"Who do you think you are, Houdini?
Get the hell out of my face!"
They placed me on a strip taking all
my property away

They left my ink pen inside my storage
locker
never realizing this light mistake
I picked up my ink pen and broke out
again
laughing...
It was my escape!

As Free As My View by Michael Walker

Puffy white clouds float above the
horizon,
A sky filled with shades of blue.
A mother goose escorts her children,
And shows them what to do.
Blossoming trees with leaves of green,
Their branches bend and sway.
The sun shines down with rays of
warmth,
The animals come out to play.
An eagle swoops in for the kill,
The rabbit caught by surprise.
The circle of life must run its course,
Mother nature we must oblige.
A group of sparrows perched on the
fence,
Singing radiant songs of glee.
Though all this is witnessed through
iron bars,
I know in my heart I am free

Societies Forgotten by Daniel Olar

Desolate streets, desolate thoughts
Place nobody should be brought
Cages and brick walls
Facades and Broken promises
Societies Forgotten
Thousands of lives without meaning
The system set from the beginning

Artwork by: Gary Farlow



God Says Forgive by Jeffrey Miles

Forgive the sun who didn't shine,
 The sky has asked her in to dine.
 Forgive the stars that heard your wish,
 The moon prepared their favorite dish.
 Forgive the rain for its attack,
 The clouds have tears they can't hold back.
 Life intends to not cause pain.
 The flowers bloom from all the rain.
 The storm will come and it will pass.
 The sun that shines, it grows the grass.
 The wind cannot help but cry.
 The stars at night light up the sky
 Don't hate the birds 'cause they are free.
 Don't envy all the things they see.
 Don't block the wind, but hear its cry,
 Or else that wind may pass you by.
 Forgive the world in which we live.
 We'll all find peace if we forgive.

Justified by Clifford Clark

When you followed him
 was you justified
 When you approached him
 was you filled with pride
 When you harassed him
 was hate in you multiplied
 When your son fought him
 was your hate intensified
 When you shot him
 was you dignified
 When you shot him twice
 you wasn't horrified
 When you shot him the last time
 you wasn't terrified
 When you killed the innocent
 was y'all satisfied
 A prison cell y'all shall occupy
 The real question is why
 y'all sins has made a family cry
 Was y'all suicide

Comfort Barometer by Thomas Dale Andrews

Helping pay for Hell's heat bill,
 Tarnished halo for hawk,
 Groveling before a grumpy God,
 Finding forgiveness has its limits,
 Extending eternities patience,
 Suffering solidified the soul,
 Concrete comforts my fall,
 Fences filter freedoms view,
 Razor wire catches snowflakes,
 Yellowish light yawns lazy hues in hallways,
 Blood highlights the daily news,
 Corruptions infused between criminals and cops,
 Buried beneath these bricks and locks,
 Justice is a blind bitch swinging a sword,
 hate is just another rusty shank niched in a neck,
 Human beings treated like commerce,
 Modern day slave exchange called corrections,
 Humanity restrictions imposed to teach lessons,
 How's not seeing the sun expected to let light in,
 Man can't manacle miracles,
 I watch ants maneuver within my maximum security cell,
 I prostrate before providence,
 The hymn in my heart hums everything will be ok...

Artwork by C. Ripley R ppe

You can paint a picture with simple words
 By brushing strokes of verbs or nouns
 And the robust rhythm of stringing sounds
 Together to make others understand
 Your own point of view or even more
 Can often impress upon reader's hearts
 A new idea and then call up thoughts

So when you write your fiction and facts
 Don't you dare dally, but post some haste
 For the more you put your pen to paper
 The more likely you'll be to live forever
 And really isn't that what we're all after?

True selfishness never got us anywhere
 However the tempters of fate will believe
 That in order to win we must be ourselves
 But never has tomorrow seemed so far
 From where we stand together right now
 Though before i name the wily ways
 Upon which you rest the chance to beat
 Me at my own zero-sum game of chance
 I must digress toward a place of slumber
 And peaceful gazes leading down a slope
 Of slippery sliding hidden messages

- H - by Robert Roginsky

A poppy's like a rose with thorns not yet seen.
 It won't prick your fingers, it won't make you bleed.
 It's damage is greater, its damage is greed.
 You'll know nothing else but the song that it sings.
 And those all around you will know the pain that it brings
 Nothing will save you except one form of Death,
 And if you survive it'll haunt you until your last breath.

The Faith Group by Jevon Jackson

When the room goes silent
and despair ripens in the air
like the old dead fruit
of carrion flowers,
We are there to pluck the bud away;

When the shadows
gather like gangs in the scour
of the night,
coming to rob you of willpower, safe
and hours,
We arrive in the moment
on a sliver of light
to remind you of grace, allotted;

When the weight of what you own
becomes monolith,
titan, overgrown,
We surprise you with this here—

you won't carry it alone.

Pen vs Gun by David Meade

The gun takes lives but the pen has
the capability to end careers,
You can rob a bank with a gun but with
a pen you can write millions of checks
legally without any fears.
The gun has the ability to shake a
person out of their boots, but the pen
freezes bank accounts and brings
about arbitrations and extravagant
lawsuits.

A person may take a gun and use
every bullet in the gun to execute and
kill,

But the pen has unlimited ammunition
and writes obituaries,
death sentences and the Power of
Attorneys and also private wills.
Carrying a gun on your waist may
protect you from danger or it could
have you in a courtroom being called a
refill felon and a low down menace, but
the pen has the capacity to protect you
from foreclosure and even got

countless men their freedom after
serving life sentences.

A gun can get you ten years in prison
but the pen can make you a
multimillionaire within a span of under
5 years with reaching the status of
Billboards,

So no matter what your perception of
the biggest gun with an extended clip,
(The pen will always be more lucrative
and mightier than the biggest sword)

Rhythm of the Grind by Eric Taylor

Be still 'o' heart of mine, I know you
still beat to the rhythm of the grind
hustle at sundown till sun up. Money
the only thing on my mind, bustin in
the back door, tears in my mamas
eyes; dead presidents in my pockets,
gain on the waist line, walking to the
prison fence, family crying, still fighting
the man upstairs, running from prayer,
dying on the inside, showing no fear,
stupid choices have brung me there,
Devil speaking in my ear.

Finally, I hit my knees, Jesus please
give me the strength to leave these
streets to drop the drugs and find love,
peace, to repeat these sins, so I can
be born again turning prison cells into
church pews. Thank you Jesus for
helping me spread the news.

Hammers & Looms by Zachery Kelsey

With hammers and looms to record
days gone and dreams that never
were
Heavy-handed smiths beat cast-off
scraps into functional shapes
While skillful weavers interlace past
blues with brighter hues
Artisans that employ alien surgical
instruments to lay bare their soul
In an effort to close old wounds and
make themselves whole

Tough Times by Cliff Smith

There are those times in all of our lives
when things don't go as we would like.
Tough times will come to one and all,
causing us troubles and worries...
wanting us to cry,
No rose garden is always bright. No
sunrise lasts... to please our sight.
That which does stay with us forever,
that which does bring hope to bring
back... can be found, it's all around.
Just look at each day for peace and
rest.

It's here, it's there, it's everywhere. For
you and me for all to share.
None other than eternal love
Coming on down from God above.

Paratrooper "Airborne One Final Time"

**By J.T. Likes 3/504th PIR 82nd ABN
4/30/2019**

My helmet is now a halo,
Wings replace my chute.
To fly amongst the Angels
No combat soldier would dispute!

No aircraft is needed
To take me to the sky,
Your prayers from below
Have lifted me so high

My Spirit is the engine
No need to refuel,
No runway is required
A rainbow arch will do.

No need for a map and compass
My Angels are the guide;
Their strength and love upon me
To soar the sky with pride.

The guns finally have gone silent
My soul now free to roam
I salute with tears of Joy
This Paratrooper's found his home —
The Final DZ!

Emerald Veil by James Cepak

Crossing an emerald veil
under a Celtic sail
Find five points in elemental fires
five points to grace of life higher

Bright waves lift sails
When sorrow seems to prevail
Rise on the waves
lean into all pains
Move to those greater spires
of ancient sacred fires
Forest Cathedrals
Inspire great wonders with no Ire

Crossing an emerald veil!
Rising to a Celtic Rail
The ship has faith that never tires
Even stepping beyond the pyre
to joy & new life given voice
Crossing an Emerald veil.

Happy Meal by Kevin Murphy

There's something
that keeps popping up in my head
It's wrapped in paper
But it starts with bread
It has two things
That come from a cow
And several others
that started with a plow
On the side
are things that have been dug up
And of course
cold liquid in a cup
These things can be found
all over town
Just look for
a Girl, a King, or a Clown
Them and more
would serve them to me
For a few dollars
if I was free
But I am not
so I guess I'll have to wait
For the meal in my mind
that I just ate.

**Because We Are Reasonable by
Bradley Portar**

They say the fish here
Were once so thick
You could step right out of the boat
And Jesus back to shore

That seemed unreasonable
We made the fish extinct

There were places in the world
Beyond the world
Unknown to human eyes

A signed piece of paper
And everywhere
People live or die

Smart man
Smug on two feet
Using hands
To emphasize a point

Artwork by: Jeff Fiaman**Beware The Demons by Trizzy-G**

I can take you on a journey, if you
really wanna know what makes me
me,
Come look into my eyes and tell me,
what do you see?
Not just the mask that's on the surface,
look further, look deep,

But I warn you before we take this ride,
beware of the demons you might meet,
People ask what makes me tick,
what's going on inside my head,
If it's a chemical imbalance, or if I'm
something just shy of brain dead,
Did the drugs finally take a toll, or am I
doing all this for street cred??
I listen to the psychiatric theories,
laugh when I hear the words that are
said,
They call me psychotic, and they call
me deranged,
They say there's possibly a chance,
that traumatic stress is to blame,
Or I could be anti-social, and get joy
from another's pain,
Between you and me, I find their
diagnoses a little lame
I can't blame neurological short-
circuiting, on the things that I've done,
We are who we are for a purpose,
from our twisted thinking to our
breathing lungs,
Some things I did with justification,
some were just for fun,
And some you'd never know, I did
because there were monsters I was
running from,
They say if you look deep enough in a
man's eyes, you can see his soul,
That's why I rock shades, so that the
world won't know,
That's why I keep my head down, so
these haunting memories won't show,
I can't blame it on anyone else, it's on
my own shoulders I carry the load,
But I can take you on a journey, if you
really wanna know what makes me
me,
Come look into my eyes and tell me,
what do you see??
Not just the mask that's on the surface,
look further, look deep,
But I warn you before we take this ride,
beware of the demons you might meet.

Wish Me Well by Ethan Macks

I sit and wait in a place where time
stands still
What is this game we play, subject to
another's will
The darkness from within overtakes
the feeble light
What is the benefit of doing what is
right
Evil jesters dancing, they titillate my
mind
What is the answers I cannot find
I find myself sitting in a prison cell
What is the consolation of those that
wish us well
Here I am lost in a world all alone
What is the point of succeeding to this
kingdoms throne
Because pursuing these goals do not
equal a win
What is the purpose of wasting away
until they saw when
My own actions may have put me in
here
What is real and false are becoming
clear
I play with woods on a tablet, my only
tool is a pen
What is a thought that has only one
friend
Befriending the vernacular that we use
What is banishment? Do we not all pay
dues
One day I will finally become free
What is the point if I lose a part of me
So I ponder these things while deep in
thought
What is the reason? I've practically
forgot
Let me out of this man made hell
What is next? I may not know but wish
me well

Inner Peace by Lorenzo Flores

Peace! Peace? When can I be in
Peace?
When will this eternal condemnation
cease?

Why are you trying to destroy my
reputation forever?
All I have in this world is sitting here
with me, at once, blamelessly, yet it's
daunting...
Who would've thought that one act
could come back and continue it's
haunting.
A faint whisper from the past, echoing
consequences and regrets,
it pardons but never completely
forgets;
It's a conscience all of its own.
Internal conversations mixed with
abysmal contemplations,
Quite enough to have anybody feeling
anxious.
Thinking, feeling, like you can't see the
end.
Imaginings, the kind which others fail
to comprehend.
When this peace finally comes, I pray
it takes hold,
Consuming inside & out, a cathartic
experience
Bringing a glimmer of hope, as the rest
of the story
Unfolds...

Write On by James Newman

I write like dinosaur
Using Mr. Webster's Dictionary
And ol' Roget's Thesaurus, a
Sharp Ticonderoga, #2
The only yellow pencil
This poet will use
Pink Pearl eraser just in case
Yes, I'm prone to a few mistakes
Lastly a ream of Mead College Rule
Round out my prehistoric tools
Write on man, write on

Dear Poets,

Gary here. I just want to thank all of
you who have sent in a poem to be
considered for the anthology. We are
already collecting poems for volume
26. I am sending this volume out to
everyone who sent in poems for vol
25, and also to those who I have
received poems for vol 26. You will get
vol 26 as well if you have a poem
under consideration for that edition,
but it will be at least 4 months before it
is finished and I figured you'd enjoy
this edition while you wait.
Perhaps the Winter 22 Newsletter has
already arrived and you know about
our latest poetry collaboration with
Rattle Magazine. If not, you will be
hearing more about it when you get
the newsletter. The main piece of
information I want to pass on is how
impressed the editor of the magazine
is with much of the poetry you submit.
It is clear that practice makes perfect. I
believe writing is once such art that
continues to get better the more you
do it. I have been reading some of
your writing for more than a decade,
journals, poetry, and theme writing. I
can testify to the power of practice as I
see many of you become well versed
in communicating your thoughts and
ideas.
This issue of the anthology was
created by Kimberly. She has read a
thousand poems or more to come up
with this selection. Don't despair if you
have not been chosen. Sharpen your
pencil and keep at it. As far as I can
tell it is the process of writing that sets
us free more than what others think of
our writing . [Though of course we all
love appreciation]. Let me tell you now,
you are appreciated by us at PE.
Write on, Gary