

Prisoner Express Poetry Anthology

Volume 24

Dear Reader,

My name is Kimberly, and I am a rising senior studying at Cornell. I was brought onto the Prisoner Express team not too long ago, and although I am a lover of all things literature, being tasked with putting together a whole Anthology seemed daunting. However, from the first day I began reading your poems, I was immediately drawn into and immersed in the words written on the pages. Reading the words you wrote allowed me to laugh, cry, feel your anger and frustration, and cheer for your triumphs. Thank you for allowing me to experience your art.

This 24th volume of Prisoner Express's poetry anthology is a special one. This past year we've experienced a global pandemic that took so many lives, as well as a racial reckoning across the country in response to the killings of unarmed Black people by the police. The tragedies and traumas of these events are expressed so beautifully within these pages.

I am in awe at the amount of talent and introspection apparent in all the poems received. Every one of you is an artist, a poet. We received hundreds of submissions, but with only 28 pages our team could only choose so many. We mostly sought poems that touched on themes surrounding injustice, love, life in prison, and spirituality for this volume. Congrats to everyone whose poems were selected! Even if your poem was not selected for this anthology, I'd like to encourage you to continue writing and submitting your work to Prisoner Express. Not only is the next anthology right around the corner, but you all have gifts that deserve to be shared with others, and your voice deserves to be heard.

I feel eternally grateful to have been entrusted to put together this anthology for you. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed creating it.

Until next time,
~Kimberly



Spring Shower in Provence by Gary Farlow

Injustice

Searching fingers by R. Ya'iyar Carter

brushed across my skin
found me near death
amid a coppery aroma

flakes of black blood
caked on shackles
that chew my wrists
and ankles

splayed and stretched
bound to a wall
starved beyond pangs
numb to my wounds

nearly comatose, dreaming
floating through darkness
beneath waves
vaguely aware, suffocating

heart rate slowing
beat... by... beat
each inhale: salty, metallic, gritty
what my ancestors tasted

Searching fingers
found my lips
and covered them
and pinched my nostrils

hot rage burned away the fog

fighting with
my whole being
to deny death

to escape the cruel hands
of tyrants
who relish the sight
of my weeping blood

who drink my skin
and water their fields
with my pain

blind to the truth
which is that my suffering
poisons the harvest
that they feed to their children

So when searching fingers
found me chained in the dark
I bit them off
and ate them

Dark Times by Kevin Jones

We're living in times of darkness
Where sunlight can't be seen

Where the deeds of men are wicked, but
Our people are blind to these misdeeds.

Where the "fortunate" becomes exempt from chaos
And the poor are left hopeless

Where they trap our bodies behind iron curtains
And label us "the voiceless"

See, they labeled us as terrorist because
We hold clenched fists towards the sky

But fail to acknowledge their own terroristic ways
That causes us to suffer and die

They lock us up like caged animals
To strip us of our humanity, dignity, and pride

While our children are left fatherless
Because they're victims of genocide

How could it be that this darkness
Still looms over our bodies today?

Did we fail to continue our struggles,
Or did our will to struggle go away?

Have we tucked our tails like cowards
And succumb to darkness past?

Or, have we become pacified by the powers
of societal materialistic trash?

Did we forget the sacrifices of our fathers
And the courageousness of their deeds

Or have we lost sight of their fight
To focus on individualistic needs?

Would we rather die over blue or red
Than for the liberation of our people?

Because if that is the case I see
Then we're dying a death of a thousand needles

What's the sense of being black if you're
Not fighting for our liberation

If you refuse to stand up for our people
During these dark times of tribulations

If you turn a blind eye to injustice
But will kill your brother without hesitation

Then you're just another black body
Helping exterminate our future generation

These dark times are devastating but
I'm dedicated to the struggle

Because I'm tired of seeing all my people

Living on their knuckles

I would rather stand on my feet
Feeling tall as a tree, than to tuck my tail like a coward

Because at the end of the day, I can still hear
The voices that screamed "Black Power!"

The Fear of Our Unity by Charles Payton

I don't understand the big fear of us having peace and equality, or unity in it's truest form. Or the fear of the oppressed seeking to free themselves.

I don't understand the resistance to us solving our own problems, or bettering our own conditions, or for the asserting of us being talk to and treated like man and women, or just like people / humans in general.

What's wrong with calling wrong, wrong?

If I'm promoting peace, unity and equality, and you find a problem with that, then that means that you got to have motive that consist of disharmony, destruction, and corruption. This is what happened to doctor King, Marcus Garvey, Julian Bond, Nelson Mandela, Madiba, Shaka Zulu, The Black Panther Party for Self Defense, The White Panther Party, The Egyptian Cobra's, John Brown (and his children), David Walker, Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubois, Hannibal, Queen Nzinga, Queen Tye, Queen Candice, The Ancient Black Nation of Babylon, The Ancient Black Nation of Canaan, The Ancient Black Nation of Kamit, The Ancient Black Nation of Dravidians, and countless more.

Our Struggle / Our Past / Our Story holds the data of our strengths and weaknesses, our success and failures, our highs and our lows, how far we've come as a nation, and how far we must go in the spirit / as the spirit of our nation.

There's a problem when you have a people that don't want you to fix your own problems, especially when those people benefit from your problems. This is what our people have fought against, died for, and been imprisoned for. this is what have bought us this far. They noticed that your / their freedom lies in your / their ability to do whatever is necessary, within whatever circumstances / conditions that you / they may find themselves / yourselves within, in order to bring about change / the conditions that makes matters / your environment more liveable / suitable, more profitable, more survivable then it was when we inherited it.

This is why our youth is breaking the racist foundation by not seeing race (to the dislike of the Founding U.S. Stealers), and only see those that struggle with us and those that struggle against us, uniting with all nations and all nationalities in the fight for peace, freedom and equality. And this is why the racist foundation hate my Kam (Black / Unadulterated energy

/ matter) and their youth new found White (the light that emerged from Kam), because we unite in ways that benefit all, and their systems no longer stand as tall. They can see their fall clearly, for it's undeniably coming.

Our conditions depend on our actions or inactions, not in our oppressors. Just look at our past, and then the future wouldn't seem so unclear.

Modupe to the elders and Ancestors whose shoulders we stand on.

Ase. Ase. Ase. 1 Love,
Many Lives, 1 nation, 1 struggle

War Path by George Hesse

I'm on the other side they ain't ready/ Armor steady
Beyond tribal I'm regulating in NO gravity
I got the Matrix glitching/ Frontline with no extraction
Its aftershocks a dreadnaught/ Divergent I'm manifesting
My flows are critical gunships/Can't stop me
I walked out the gallows Jack Sparrow on a Battleship/
watch me
My cipher unstoppable a lyrical juggernaut
From the spirit world A Lakota/ A legend
Visiting mysterious places/Animals Translating
Bending reality with my ancestors levitating now

Freedoms... by Gabriel Peterson

Freedoms I have never known as an American...
Freedom of speech and expression, freedom of and from religion, freedom to not be oppressed for my race, gender, and sexuality, freedom from suppression and repression, freedom from surveillance, freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures, freedom to dream, freedom to be me... I've spent my life in a police state I've never been able to tolerate, I listen to Patriots clamor about freedoms and glamour all the perks they enjoy and I just wonder what country they are talking about, whether or not they've ever even tried exercising these alleged freedoms...

When my dream comes will I be beheaded by a madman quoting scripture over a picture? No, that can't happen here... my government will throw me in prison long before he gets to me. I'll be dreaded and reviled no right to vote no representation...

This is my nation. Looking at all the derision knowing coming here was my decision now complete in my exile wishing banishment would come back in style hallowed halls to narrow walls my dreams silenced by enraged screams.

Police fiefdoms now decide how my life runs...

Oxymoron by Trisha Morley

Civil War

Civility is defined by the society of its citizens
Politeness, courtesy, kindness

Sworn to serve & protect
While kneeling on a neck
Breath escaping while others watch
Helpless & unhelpful

All men are created equal
Endorsed by slave owners
Selling people & separating families

Building walls to keep people out
Bring us your masses no longer applies

Never united
Undecided
Slavery, segregation, white supremacy
Seceding & divided

Beginning centuries ago,
When will it end?

The gangsters in blue by David Meade

Now a days it's scarce to pick up your telephone and dial 911,
Cause you could be calling for help and out of nowhere a bunch of criminal cops themselves come.

You can't even let them enter into your house to make a criminal complaint
Cause you yourself could end up in handcuffs and all of your valuable jewels they will take.

Just cause they have a badge they believe that they can do whatever it is that they want to do,
They are the real gangsters and extortionists and if you say something about it, they will kill you.

They always have their sirens on looking for some houses to Raid,
The truth is that they are the ones who should be locked inside of a cage.

They get away with so much murder that's why they are always raising hell, look what happened to Trayvon Martin and Rodney King, not to mention Shawn Bell.

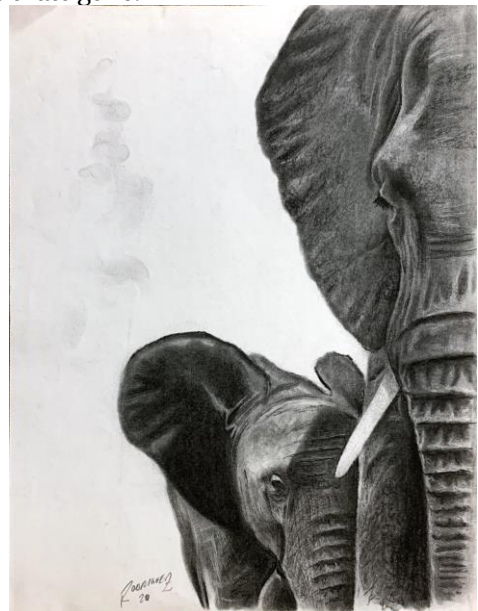
You got cops selling drugs, and even pimping women at this day and age,
Did you guys see the footage of what that captain did to that innocent woman at the Puerto Rican day parade?

I thought that they were to serve and protect and not act like Apes,
I had to tell my daughters not to trust them after seeing that cop convicted of rape.

If I told you some of the things that I experienced, you wouldn't believe that it is true.
So please keep your cameras and phones out and watch the gangsters in blue!

Before you dial 911! by Demone Allen

Please Mr. Officer don't shoot my Son, He is off his Meds he is no threat to Anyone. White cop Black community the cop look stunned the dude lunged. The cop step back and Emptied his clip screaming "Drop the Gun." But he Never had one right in front of his Mom Officer Taylor Murdered her son. Could have used his stunn-Gun but he chose live Ammunition. She dial 911 to get him some help when she seen the bullets pierce his body her heart started to Melt. Feeling guilty for his death Mentally she probably Never Recover. Do Black Lives Matter to only Black Mothers? They say they don't Matter when we killing each other. When brother kill brother you barely see Media coverage. No protest No riots maybe a candlelight vigil. Maybe a Memorial on the wall where his Name gets scribbled. You Mr. Officer supposed to protect our community. Not neglect or disrespect and Murder with impunity. You took a Oath to uphold the law to be held to a higher standard. Everyone of you cops from rookie to commander to chief of police. Should be nothing less than a role model when you patrol the streets. We should feel safe when we see them boys in blue. Instead of being afraid everytime they roll through. Who Next to fall victim of a choke hold it just might be you. Your cousin or your sister you'll feel the pain when it hit close to home. No dollar sign amount can replace a love one thats gone.



Mama by Edward Rodriguez

Peace Birthed through the barrel of a gun by Jordan Jones

Peace was born through the barrel of a gun;
but the time for arms is said and done.
We've claimed the lands; the wars are won.
We now seek peace that is void of blood.

I look to a day with the clearest view.
A day we're free of "the boys in blue."
When "protect and serve" doesn't conjure shame,
and our own government officials can SAY HER NAME!

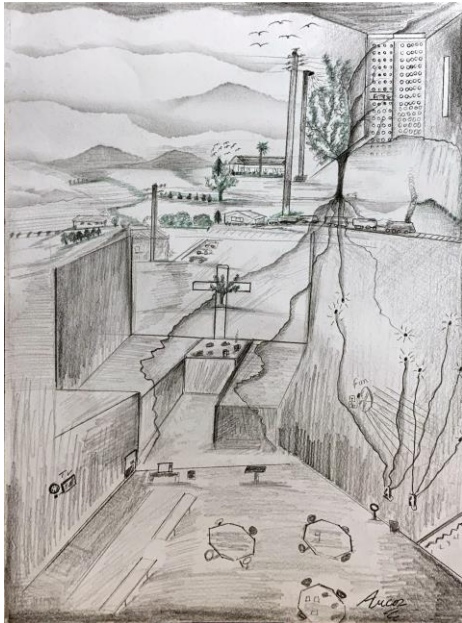
See, those barrels meant to secure and sustain,
have become no more than a political game.
Yelling, "it's my right." "Amendment 2 will stand."
While even our cops can't steady their hand.

An instrument of death will never bring us peace.
They're so often used in anger, and they only breed grief.
A much stronger symbol that one could bear-
Try a knee to the ground, and a fist in the air.

As the peace we know was born of struggle,
so too must rebirth spare the humble.
"By violence?"- no; but Revolution!
Civil unrest is our only solution.

See if you want to make peace, you don't talk to your
friends.
You talk to your enemies and you take a stand.
You open your fists and you reach out your hands.
You make it your purpose to be the bigger man.

Peace, birthed through the barrel of a gun?
One day, perhaps we'll see the sun.
To at last proclaim that race has won.
When George can breathe and Ahmaud can run.



By Miguel Arcos

2020 by Armando Alegria

Must our tears continually come in a flood,
to cleanse away the oppression in our blood?
Is that how we will reach the figment of equality?
Then how do we wash away the systemic brutality?
When all we've ever known is injustice,
still blindly we follow when you say trust in us.
But we the ones dyin and bleedin.
Steady hustlin for the kids we feedin,
just so they can die and bleed.
Tell me how we supposed to succeed!

When it's life that we need;
but the only life we guaranteed,
comes from a plea bargain or a jury.
Yet you wonder at our fury.
Beaten down and forced to remain quiet,
our only voice resounds when we protest and riot!
To late you're shocked by our violence,
but yours was okay when we suffered in silence!

Social Distancing by Jamie Pугte

They made a virus to knock off the community, covered
the
Police to raise brutality. Was told to stay in and avoid
Reality,
But thats not the black mans mentality...
Was taught to fight stay and learn my rights, cause in a
world where
White is right, There's no telling what day will be the end
of my life...
2020 and we still at war for social Equality, I turned to
the streets, I
Had to find a way to erase poverty from my reality, sadly
all I've witnessed,
Was a surge in police brutality...
Eric Garner and George Floyd yelled I can't breath,
Breonna Taylor
Was asleep but did you hear our pleas?
Tired of being subjects to choke holds, knees and seeing
the white
Man freed... Black lives matter and We Want Peace!
Thrown in
A cell they say we are all a menace To society, We're all
the same and
Besides the different color of skin, The only difference
between black
And white is the respect and justice in which we are
given...
Its time to stand together not at a distance, because a
social distance will
Make a difference, when we seek equal commitment and
less political
Resentment, For the black man whos been economically
deprived and
Socially despised, For the darkness of our skin and the
blackness in
Our eyes, so the home of the free sounds like a joke to
me, especially when you're
Forced away from your kids and families, locked in a cell
and told when to eat and
And sleep, Minimizing communication is phone home
deprivation, where all
Love is taken due to a built up frustration and lack of
physical relation...
Social Distancing is Not mistaken, but used to further
separation,
In Black communities searching for social Justice and
Equality!

What Do I Know by TRIZZY

What do I know, about a life of ease??
A life without worry, a life full of peace,
Luxurious cars, that you drive with the top down,
And park in a garage, at a house that you own up town??

What do I know, about a life without struggle??
A life where paying the bills, is no kind of trouble,
5 Star Meals, High Priced Dining,
or trips overseas, first class flying,

What do I know, about a life without pain??
If I'm being honest, I don't know a thing,
But before you tell me, I don't have a clue,
There's a few questions, I'd like to ask you,

What do you know, about a life full of tears??
A life where gunshots, ring in your ears,
A life full of poverty, and ruthless dope fiends,
Where a mothers heart jumps, everytime that her phone rings??

What do you know, about life in a jail cell??
Where you sit 'cause the streets called, and you had to make a sell,
Being able to count more dead homies, than you can count that are alive,
Some whose souls were taken, and some who took their own lives??

About this life I live, you know nothing at all,
The pain my soul has felt, the things my eyes have saw,
What's behind my eyelids, at nights when these eyes close,
Or fighting to survive, but then again, What Do I Know????

Bastard Boy by David S. Cummings

What's the matter Boy?
stomach achin,
Body quakin,
hungry all the way to your bones.

Listen to your mama Boy!
I Gotta get out that door Boy,
Help aint comin through it,
Government aint gonna do it,
Gotta put my feet on the floor Boy,
I gotta go through that door Boy.

Why you cryin Boy?
scared a that door Boy?
Your Daddy walked on through it
and He aint never Comin back to it

Who called you that Boy?
Don't ever let em say that Boy!
Only mama can call you that Boy,
Mamas little Bastard Boy

No reason to flip that Switch Boy,
aint no juice in them lines Boy

Don't open that icebox Boy,
foods all spoiled Boy.

Time for you to go to your room Boy,
Stay under them covers Boy.
We need food Boy,
I gotta work the corner Boy.

Mama loves you Boy!
Folks aint gonna feed us Boy,
I gotta go do this Boy.
Sweet Dreams Bastard Boy.

Circumstances by Richard Dixon

Why do people undermine the way
a prisoner lives?
They say they sympathize for them,
but They never have, nor will they ever will.
If you're quiet, you can hear the lost souls
that cries
So look into my eyes and tell me; how can you sympathize?

A harsh living environment are the conditions we're
forced to live by,
a false sense of hope that people give through the lies
they tell,
In the eyes of twelve, we were tried, criticized, and
undermined,
So look into my eyes and tell me; how can you sympathize?

The tears that fell, were not of remorse, but from the
anger
we held, because now that we've failed, we [men] live
where
the lost souls dwell,
So look into my eyes and tell me; how can you sympathize?

Chains of Grief by Kraig Powell

How did I become imprisoned? It's very difficult for me
to say
But seeing that you're not here to judge I will tell you
anyway

Let me tell you a bit about me, that could be a start
Maybe you will relate to me, a little heart to heart
My mind is capable of many imaginations
Each thought can spawn its own little creations

What's the source of my behaviors? It's hard to know the
truth
When I seek to solve this puzzle, I start early in my youth
As a child I grew obsessed with rocks, I collected quite a
few

I'd pretend each kind has power, now I wonder if it's true.
 Sometimes I'd crush a couple together to see what rocks were stronger
 A green and black stone was the victor, but it was stone no longer
 I learned that metal becomes more pure if you apply some heat
 It was several years later that I learned to use more than air to treat

Every memory was like a rock, but not made of mere stone
 Each was treated with emotion and I treated them all alone
 Melted by my burning passions, but cooled by icy tears
 Tempered over by delusions and then polished by my fears
 I proliferated these mental metal hands in my perpetual brooding
 Wearing such spiritual chainmail, how could I be lewding

I thought it was my immortal soul this armor was protecting
 But staring into my own minds mirror, I saw the devil it was reflecting
 Covered by my chains of grief, my soul continued crawling
 Weighed down by years, tormented by fears, my journey to heaven is stalling

It will take an arrow of such powerful truth to pierce this guarded veil
 If there is no relief from our chains of grief then our soul are doomed to fail



The Title's First Word by Kenneth Zamarron

kNOw Justice, kNOw Peace by John Michael Loomis

I can't breathe cuz you're standing on my neck
 you're supposed to serve and protect
 but you have no respect
 just here for the power and the paycheck
 Seems every time i turn on the news
 another black life ends
 grief pours out from family and friends
 while some bigot with a badge tries to claim self-defense
 but we ain't buying that bs
 It happens too many times
 murderers trying to justify
 muddy up the truth with more lies
 and now you see why the cops are despised
 You think you have the power
 cuz you have a badge and a gun
 but this battle has only begun
 our weapons are our voices
 united as ONE
 and now you have nowhere to run
 No Justice, No Peace
 until we can all breathe free ...

A Dysfunctional Family by Paul Barber

Into this crazy world i was born,
 alone, abandoned, rejected and forlorn.
 Seeking meaning among the living dead,
 imprisoned, lonely, and barely fed.

A dysfunctional family like so many others,
 Struggling to live with two other brothers.
 Conditioned by parents, schools, and religion too,
 Trying to find answers, yet have no clue

An uphill battle to say the least,
 Scraps on the table while others feast.
 War, disease, and violence abound,
 God must love violence, so much around.

Hypocrites climb the political stairs,
 self-serving interests, hardly anyone cares
 Propaganda, spews from other lofty leaders,
 political, religious, and malevolent tweeters.

Living on the third planet from the sun,
 So many persons just want to have fun,
 Macabre days and lonely nights,
 One quarter of nations in deadly fights

Mr. President by Lamont Adams

The picture being painted isn't hard for us to focus,
 Your racist views between the lines, isn't hard for us to notice.
 Premeditated dilemmas in your actions is what you show us,
 You can't lose, defeat is hard for you to cope with.
 You supposed to be a leader but bigots are your culprits,

Divided the country even more, now your culprits is all hopeless.
 You said the election was stolen but no facts were ever found,
 but what you really mean, is, all black votes don't count.
 We see your desperate cries we hear your lawless pleas,
 Since you've been in office more blacks have been hung from trees.
 Excessive force by police encouraged by thee,
 On camera unarmed innocent kids shot dead in the street.
 Everytime that you meet, with reporters in from of cameras
 You make statements so double standard, is why most the country can't stand you
 Your statements and remarks is why most Senates want to ban you,
 Your decisions, not the media, is why your life is in a scandal.
 Equality for blacks you and your supporters couldn't handle,
 Mutual understanding for minorities you couldn't fathom.
 If there's no such thing as white privilege, than black logic's not real,
 Then explain how white protestors took over Capitol Hill.
 Peaceful Protestors got beat for exercising their First Amendment,
 Politicians commit perjury and treason and get pardoned from seeing prison,
 While majority of blacks is doing time for crimes that they never committed.
 Prosecutors never stand trial to answer for who they wrongfully convicted
 What goes up must come down, every dog has its' day,
 You've been doing alot of sowing now the weeping is on its way.

Black Lives Matter by Carnell Wingfield

Black Lives Matter?
 Not to our black hands,
 We are sorry to our own women
 She finds stability with a White man.

She pointed me out in a "dream"
 That cost my black skin
 Life or death sentence
 That's the price for a black friend.

She worked her way to be V.P
 Mass incarceration is what the price was
 She give hope towards many things
 But not one look like us.

If Black Lives Matter, then what's black?
 I am worthless in my circumstance
 Research my case and see the facts.

If you think Black Lives Matter, Look at my skin
 I am locked up for being black

We get killed for being black
 Which means being black is a sin.

The System by Michael Mosley

(clears throat)- pardon the interruption
 From the police to the judge, there's nothing but corruption
 I've been a victim & a witness
 How the system captures with a quickness
 Once entailed- hard to break free
 There's bond, lawyer, court
 All in all, a substantial fee
 Don't you get it? Can't you see?
 Ot feeds itself, a hunger beast
 Then you're released- thrust back into society
 Institutionalized, wiped of your propriety
 You submit applications
 Desperate for work
 But no one hears you supplication
 You forgot, now you have a rap-sheet
 Businesses don't want felons
 So it's back to the streets
 Concrete jungle, you'll do whatever to eat
 Lost, in the void of the system
 With only 2 destinations
 A casket or a prison
 No one even notices the corruption
 Or how the induction of laws that govern
 Only make it worse
 Majority of politicians are perverse
 And none familiar, they're never conversed
 With people outside their economic class
 There more wired about
 The next law they can pass
 That'll increase their wealth
 But decrease your health
 Remember, the systems all about self,
 Money, power & greed
 I'm just tryna open your mind
 Plant a seed
 Can't you coned, that what we need
 Us a complete overhaul
 A good place to start
 Is re-examining the law
 & opening our heart

FALSE REALITY by Keith Nichols

Politicians make us promises,
 that they know they'll never keep.
 As they move like marionettes on corporate strings,
 who make them dance and leap.
 They over tax the lower class,
 saying there's a price for Democracy.
 Then they take kickbacks from big business,
 can't you see its really a hypocrisy.
 As they make more laws to control us,
 our freedom becomes less free.
 Telling us lies through the media,
 making us believe in their False Reality.

As we advance further in technology,
 is the cost more than it's worth?
 With pollution causing global warming,
 we're destroying planet Earth.
 Everyone had become more materialistic,
 we can't live without our toys.
 As we rip down another forest,
 and the ecosystems it destroys.
 The homeless are abandoned in the streets,
 and we pretend not to see.
 As the rich drink from their golden cups,
 We continue in our False Reality.

Famine and pestilence devastate nations,
 as others are torn by war.
 Tornadoes and tsunamis kill thousands,
 while hurricanes rack Earth's shores.
 How many more signs do we need,
 To change the way we live?
 To sacrifice some of our amenities,
 we have to stop taking and start to give.
 If we don't open up our eyes,
 and make some changes drastically.
 We won't leave anything for our children.
 Not even a False Reality.

Prison Life

Welcome by Grady Harris

Welcome to Prison let your sentence begin
 There's plenty to cover once you get settled in.
 You'll get three outfits some old prison blues.
 And the footwear comes standard with holes in the shoes.
 They'll give you a job. You must work everyday.
 Yes, They'll put you to work but they'll give you no pay,
 Now it's off to the chow hall where in line you wait.
 They'll feed you three meals, but the food's not that great.
 Back in the block you can still sit in your cell,
 You can think of what you bought in this little corner of hell.
 The worst thing you'll notice, Are the tricks of the mind,
 And how ever so slow goes the passage of time.
 Each minute is an hour, Each hour is a day
 So soon you will wonder how you'll live life this way.
 Excitement is high at mail call each night
 For some hope is shattered... When loved ones don't write.
 Now it's time for lights out, what a strange day it's been.
 It's like living a nightmare, that won't ever end.
 When you wake up tomorrow. You'll start it over again...
 So Welcome to Prison let your Sentence Begin



Freedom by Travis Magash

Untitled by Cory Lambing

As I lie here,
 I tried watching a movie
 In my head.
 But the disc must have been scratched
 Or something.
 Because it kept skipping
 And then froze
 On the screen where
 Your just smiling off into
 The distance
 With that twinkle in your eye.
 So I tried to pour some
 Rubbing alcohol onto the lens
 But I accidentally spilled it onto
 My cerebral cortex
 And now my right leg moves in
 A fearsome and uncontrollable manner
 I tried to see a doctor
 But I kicked her in the face
 And I was sternly asked to leave
 Oh, and Now I'm also clairvoyant
 Which is by far, the most
 Annoying thing ever
 Because now I can't pay attention
 To the damn movie

Appeals To The Bowerbirds by Charles Tooker

All of my friends are murderers, dear
 But I welcome all the drama & polish the veneer
 While Cain loved Abel, he was born to die
 With promises of heaven; fly, bowerbirds, fly

Everybody wants to rule the world
 With a borrowed crown & flags unfurled
 Stuck between the devil & the deep blue sea
 I lure a mermaid queen to take confession from me

Never had an inkling I'd end up in Sing Sing
 Scratchin' these loose-leaves; what comfort they bring
 And nature moves on like I was never there
 At times touched by the wind, icy fingers through my hair

While suffragettes cry & mourn each day
Tears mixed with rain in April, dried up come May
Appeals to the bowerbirds, colored with song
Welcome June & July, days passed & forever gone

Alas, I find you there, asking me to come near
Hoping that I'd still care & relieve all former fear
I'm a new man now; I'll never rule the world
But I'm sure to die a royal with you as my girl



House Sparrow by Donald Corpie

The Bleached Way by Jeremy Brown

Bleach the walls,
Whitewash the sheets,
Dye my hair blue,
Paint my nails Black,
Screaming away my fears,
into the comfort of my pillow,
for have I not walked in the shadows?
Now drum in the Reflection
of my former self,
I walk soaking up the
Rays of This
Moment of existence.
Truly I leave in this Eternity,
Nothing more Nothing less,
The care of a gentle caress,
brings back my humanity.
All I wish to do is climb a Tree
perhaps, meditating on the mind of Sill, wondering
where my lost one has
Gone, It's Twilight
now, Breaking Dawn
a deer doe a pretty Fawn,
I yawn, world weary
acquiring, spending money.
Some pleasure, Immeasurable,
gleaned, From the Sober,
Break away of habit,
Would be nice a tasty roasted rabbit,
Caffeine Addiction. Just one more
healthy drop. Stop. Slow

down the noise, Raise the level of
Infinite Silence

To the future... by Reynald Carey

They called me a menace
When they put me in this cell,
The longer I'm here I realize
This ain't prison it's concrete Hell.

The things I've seen over the years
Have slowly sapped the light from my soul,
Now I sit here all these years later
I'm bitter & oh so Cold.

I started out as a teenager
Now I'm turning thirty,
As I sit here writing this
I wonder if I'm worthy.

I reflect on the past I left behind
Regretful of alot that I have done,
All the people hurt & let down
Will I ever again see the Sun?

For now I'll stay here idle & still
Waiting patiently for my time to Shine
Everyone else has gotten theirs
So now it's time for me to have mine...

Endless Adversity by Charles Higgins

I love how everyone says they heard of me,
But to my face, they won't say a word to me.
Use derogatory terms when they refer to me,
I ain't shit! Exactly like I prefer to be.
And it just occurred to me kind of observingly,
That they're not even worthy of my adversity.
Personally, to even refer to me verbally,
Behind these walls still serving the world versus
absurdities.
To fill my shoes would be bold, bare naked or clothed,
Exposed to the soul where only a few could even go.
If you would even know, the deepest pain that I hold,
I know I'd never fold, so forget what you're told.

A Tyrant Philosophy by Carlton Nobles

I said move it now boy! The voice of an officer

I said move it now boy! The voice of the officer slash's
through my mind like the gash of the slave masters whip.

this work detail designed for torment, but the making of
a man.

Psychological oppression and pain from the blistering
calluses in my hand
bucket and pick in tow, clearing trash from miles of
woodlands

Man! my feet hurt, three and one fourth a mile. Buzzards
circling over head , I wonder If they are waiting me out.

Evergreens, pines, cedar trees, I can't deny its a beautiful
scene
briers, vines, twigs in bundles, in the sweltering sun
weed eating a jungle.

Reptiles, insects, tons of livestock, the rawness of the
wild.
Taken in the nature as my tractor plows.

Yeee! the whistle blower again, taking me out of my
reality
im so sick of this in actuality.

Talking to me crazy making odd sounds as he spits dip
dictating demands with a literal whip. I could just
scream, son of a Emm!

Degradation, demoralization demons and racist
prison Emm! modern day plantation

I wish this would end, but its where I began
the strength from the deprivation forcing the win.

calluses are now healed which is now tough skin
feet are numb, walking light as the wind.

they wanna break my stride. My mind they cannot
penetrate
tyrant conditions, I look them in the face.

Slave Ways by Edward Finley

Slavery is a word, I'm so over familiar with working three
days a week at 0.74 cents a day is out landish
How can I manage
Off \$11.40 a month?
\$12.60 after a two month probationary period is still not
enough
So, sacrifices have to be made repeatedly, keeping
necessities up front
I didn't come from a platinum, gold or silver spoon
family, so, I'm constrained financially
While trying to figure out a way for me
To somewhat live comfortably, provide for my family,
while serving time at the very least several ideas and
business proposals are not taken seriously, by love one
or anyone outside my family so, I use my talent and
explain my experience through poetry, while faithfully
knowing I will prevail in the sciences of writing, that will
eventually open up a door for a king

The Bully by Matthew Feeney

I know a really mean bully
Who calls me bad names,
Spreads untrue things about me
And causes great shame.

He mocks my many failures

And highlights my disgraceful history
Ignoring my subsequent hard work & successes
Cementing my flaws with glee.

If I stand up to him
And say he's beating a dead horse
He'll try to use that as further evidence
That I have absolutely no remorse.

Fanning the coals of hatred
Sowing the seeds of fear and dread
He alludes to the news reporters
The world's better off with me dead.

I've faced bullies all my life
But he's the absolute worst you see
He thinks what he's doing is alright
Simply because he's the County Attorney.

Paid to be a courtroom bully
He does his job too well
Mistreating people who are hurting
Making our lives a living hell.

Now You Know World by Sten Elysium

Now you know world
Our Pain
You know the sting
Of quarantine
Which is our everyday
Shut away
From the rest of the world
Now you know world
The deadlines
Of silence
The monotony
Of confinement to a bed
The fear of being stuck
In your own head
The dread of another day

Solitary by Michael Manis

Someone yells an beats on the door,
have you heard the game, do you know
the score. Flush my toilet, it is shower
time, these are the words I hear up
an down the line. Trapped in a box
night an day, alone in solitary till my dying
day. I didn't kill or rape or hurt one child,
but the system is corrupt an time has been
Piled. Piled on my back for 60 years to
serve, I feel its far more than any one
man deserves. I just live each day alone
with no family or friends, cause they pass
on over the years, these are why my eyes are
sometimes filled with tears. Just another
prisoner whom most don't know my name,
trying to be peaceful, to keep from going
insane. Trying to stay busy is sometimes

hard for me, cause when you're alone its
hard in these penitentiaries.



By Herman Moore III

Time by Matthew Shelton

Please tell me
I'm not the only one
Who mourns the passing
of the morning
Who wastes silently away
Semi-forgotten but never alone
Unable to create anything
other than simple utterings
The sound of the pen scratching
My only mantra
Musings on life and death
and what happens in between
Moments slip away
like sand between my fingers
Where does time go
when it cant stand itself?
Its hands too weak to tick or tock
Playing endlessly in a circle
it can never complete
If it only had a nature to care
It would loathe its natural order,
to break free, to be free
Never wanting to remember
the structure or its purpose
That we are a slave to it
That it is truly the Master
of all.

Freedom by Chris Floyd

How I long to be Free,
The feel of the wind, The Kiss of the Sun
Like a bird soaring high above the clouds
or the leaves of trees swaying in the breeze
Oh how I Long for Freedom...

Untitled by Christina Clayton

Past the point of no return
In prison again; when will I learn?
I'm close to hell, I can feel the burn.
I'm fighting demons, no matter where I turn.
I miss my son and that's a fact.
I cannot be naive, I may not make it back
I pray for strength in the areas I lack
But I stay ready my bags are packed.

Who Am I by Gary K. Farlow

Who am I? I hear the answer
as I step from my 10 x 10 cell.
With a smile, a nod hello
not unlike a somebody I once was.
Who am I? I hear the answer
as I converse with my captors
in tones of respect and friendliness
as if it were I over them.
Who am I? I hear the answer
as I wear the years of my ill fate
with a certain resigned grace
like an old, out-of-date overcoat.

Am I truly only that which others say?
Or am I that which I once knew myself to be?
At odds thirsting, like parched nomad in the
Sahara, seeking freedom like the first taste of cool
Oasis water in this desert of broken humanity.
I yearn for splashes of color amidst the grays, blacks
and browns of my world, the sound of traffic and
laughter over the clang of metal and voices of despair.
Powerless, aching for human compassion,
weary of unanswered prayers,
Lost in a land of the loveless.
Who am I? The afore or after?
Am I one individual today, another yesterday?
Or am I both? A merging amorphous bit of flesh,
faceless, nameless, only a number among thousands?
Yet, could there still be within me a something,
a spark, a sense of determination like that of a
vanquished army facing overwhelming odds but still
defiant in pursuit of a hopeless victory?
Who am I? I hear the answer
as I am scorned, mocked by ones who
once lauded me.
Who am I? Only Thou knowest my God.

Madder Than Him by Matthew C. Cox

There's a man behind bars. I see him e'ry day.
I'm there with him. What can I say?
The Bless-ed Virgin on his back below
His name in bold. Webs on his elbows.

His meds are bad. They make him sad.
He loves his mom. He hates his dad.
He walks around in a thorazine shuffle.
Without it, things are too beautiful.

He crushes pills into a line.
Shares with homies. It's mighty fine.
Turns fruit cocktail into sacred wine.
Blood of Christ is the fruit of the vine.

He jumps and whoops for no reason;
Fingers to his head like a gun.
Jives and dances-music of rain;
Is sound inside or outside his brain?

He's not Joker or Hannibal but just as mad.
Sometimes he's funny; some think he's bad.
Lives in the moment. Every day is new.
Some think he's crazy. I give him his due.

He hears voices, dreams, dreams, sees visions.
I don't diss him. He's strong inspiration.
I can only ask, when he yells and screams,
Am I madder than him when chasing my dreams?

A BRAND NEW DAY by Francisco Ortega

Pickin At The Scabs on My Heart
I Frantically Look for the Best place to Start
95 years to do Life, & I Still Find New Ways to
Fuck up
I Can Match Every Tragedy with an Old Scar
I Can See Nothing But Violence & yet I dont Run.
Stickin Used Needles Inside of Ma Veins
I Still Got The Tracks, Now Forever I'll Live with The
Shame.
BUT...
Im Finally Free & Now I Embrace the
Pain
It's a Weight off my Shoulders to Step out The Haze
I Found Ma Way, in Writing My Pain
Tryna Project The Vision I See Inside of My Brain
So Now I look Forward To A Brand New day
Gettin High off the Way you Say My Last Name
I Now Thank God for The Problems He Sent My
Way.

4playdaydream4 by Zone

- (1) As pages turn and clouds roll by
Aside a lonely midday sigh
I wish it was a gift of mine
To bend the rules of space and time
- (2) Then I'd transform this underscore --
So you could magnify its pore
From droplet to pool-size and more
A galaxy you could explore
- (3) Highway miles, supermarket aisles,
Drinks, fruit and fowls packaged in piles
Bags of clothes, your favorite styles
Terry-cloth robes and towels, real smiles
- (4) Waiting in a line without trays
Purchases from a job that pays

Your favorite songs, Alexa plays
My loving arms around your waist

The Feather by Dana P.R. Schultze

A single feather fell from my ceiling.
I certainly wasn't expecting that.
Nor was I expecting such a feeling
Inside of this jail cell where I've sat,
Second into minute into hour,
Waiting for a sign or a bit of hope;
Continuing despite lacking power.
Daily, I struggle with learning to cope.
Sometimes coping may be just getting by,
A struggle to just get up out of bed
And give the new day the old college try.
Still that crazy image burns in my head:
How did a feather get into this place?
Who cares? The smile still won't leave my face.

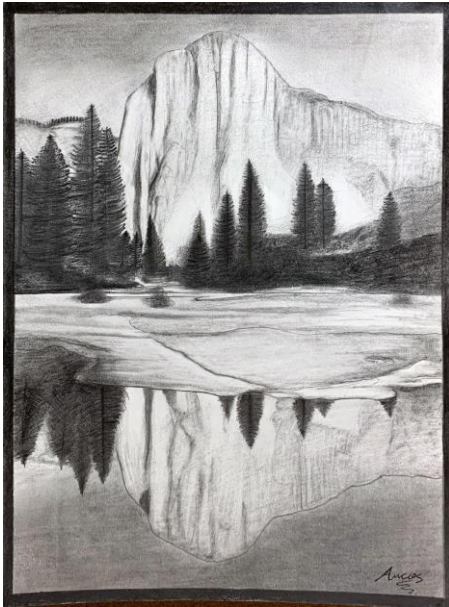
The Beetle by Lawrence Smith

I sit alone on my plastic chair,
On this dimly-lit prison tier.
Staring blankly at the concrete floor,
Cold, worn, and filled with cracks.
An abstract sculpture of sadness, of my own heart.

When a little black beetle scampers into view.
Appearing, almost, as if from nowhere.
Scurrying, struggling, dancing
Across the flat, uncaring floor.
Stark contrast of life on lifelessness.
A smile creeps across my face
Watching the ebony sojourner tread in the hardened
desert.
Aimlessly it seemed to walk
Seemingly without goal, without purpose, without care.
A fellow prisoner but with the advantage
Of obliviousness to his woeful surroundings.

Lights flash on like electric suns,
Doors swing open, and from dark caves,
Emerge giants with crushing footfalls.
In spite of myself I hold my breath,
Hoping a hopeless thought for survival.
Alas, it is to no avail,
A body lies broken in the wake.
Silently it lived, silently it died,
Alone and unnoticed.
In my private pain, in my dismay,
I wonder if God views me this way.

I simultaneously mourn and envy my tiny friend
For him, the struggle is at an end
When mine will come, I know not when
I look down at the empty floor again.



By Miguel Arcos

Northern Gifts by Burl N. Corbett

Thank you, O Canada, for your excess snow.
and a tip of my prison cap, Lake Erie,
for lending us your surplus geese. Although
they waddle the yard in brazen gaggles,
defecating at will, they are my friends.
After all, we speak the same language:
the universal tongue of nostalgia,
and their casual joie de vivre,
their untroubled existence,
reassures each dispirited inmate
that happiness is his birthright too.

Covid Prison Smell by Taj Alexander Mahon-Haft

winter shared and moisturized this year
grooming corporate in this hipster age
so the yard saw few flowers color February
then March blitzkrieged in
tipping over the terrarium
left no one caring about a few escaped ants
now April and the prison's gone to seed
dandelions standing taller than barbed shadows reach
finding every beam streaming between the coils
with unrepentant arms like ancient evaggly oaks
spring onions sprung their scheduled guillotine
lending each stroll a Greek salad tang
grass boldly showing off its chaff
as it bends lazily in the breeze
like a teen in a chair in study hall
too certain of its future to know its circumstance
today I found the fattest starling's feather
If it all gets worse, we're already forgotten
as unremembered hues riot from the cracks
broken in this concrete sea

When a stolen breath
shakes all the world
how can freedom look closer

even as it feels further away
might it be a spirit
or perhaps a ghost?

Twelve Years War by Al Newberry

I'm six years into this war.
At first I thought
I was done for.

Twelve Years?
I knew I would never last.
Turns out, I'm stronger than I thought.

I realized I had to choose
Would I let prison win
Or make it lose?

Prison wants me to be afraid.
I face it, chin held high.

Prison wants me to be miserable.
I keep my blessings in my mind.

Prison wants me to be ignorant.
I earned my Bachelor's degree.

Prison wants to make me idle.
Now I'm working on my Master's.

Prison wants me to be shady.
I focus on integrity.

This war is halfway over
Yet I am not destroyed.

You lose, Prison.

Plague us in Vegas by Michael S. Griffis

T'was the first of October and Vegas was rockin'
the music was country and thousands were flockin'
Steel guitars weepin' and banjo's was pickin'
Somewhere unheard was a bomb that was tickin'

That music was awesome, the fans warm and
cheery

just to be honest an eye or two bleary
for beer was flowing, a fact not so strange
that's how it's done on the ol' country range

The footloose were swaying and tapping their toes
Selfies were taken in festive type pose
Some folks weren't dancing but passionate leaning
for often a touch has a lifetime of meaning

A great country singer took center and stage
when loosed from a window was man and his
rage

Aldean started crooning his number one song
When realized that something was more than
just wrong

The rat-a-tat chatter mistaken at first
but then without question with next deadly burst
with nowhere to run and nowhere to hide

the shooter kept shooting, the killing field wide
 A thousand more bullets like fireworks popping
 the dead and the dying all over were dropping
 the wounded were crawling -- pushed, pulled,
 and carried
 in cars and trucks taken, to hospitals ferried...
 The bullets kept coming, the victims kept falling
 loved ones were searching and frantically calling
 Some used their bodies to shield wives and lovers
 heroes distinguished by coroners covers
 Still yet more bullets, it seemed never ending
 nightmare to nightmare to nightmare was
 blending
 those bullets exploding in head, neck, and chest
 even while shooting these wounds were
 addressed
 For yet once again we saw best and the worst
 the heroes and monsters, the blessed and the cursed
 courage undaunted, valiant and daring
 circle the globe but there is no comparing
 The wounded were treated and none left behind
 even in death there was comfort and kind
 for even with effort not everyone saved
 but everyone's efforts were greatly behaved
 Count not the bodies, the so many souls
 the fiber that keeps us now so many holes
 add up the greatness then start the repair
 it's only in doing that fiber will tear.

Untitled by Howard Banks

Ladies and gentlemen, hobos and tramps;
 Crosseyed mosquitoes and bowlegged ants.
 I'm here before you, not behind you;
 Here to Address you; Not to UNdress you.
 Here to tell you something I know nothing about!
 One bright day, in the middle of the night.
 Two dead men got up to fight;
 Back to back they faced each other.
 They drew their swords and shot each other.
 The deaf policeman heard the noise
 And came and killed those dead boys.
 If you don't believe this story is true,
 Ask the blind man who saw it too!

MY NIGHTMARE PREMONITION by David Hehn

The Discotech is BURNING
 HELP! Get me out!
 These people are on Fire
 These people are Hot
 I can't believe my Eyes
 Oh, the Humanity!
 And the Beat surges on...
 And there still Dancing : on Fire
 And I can smell their thoughts
 They reel of Sexuality & Desperation
 They are slaves to the Beat
 And Their shoes are smoking
 And their heels are melting
 And long as the music plays they won't stop
 They are hypnotized by the Beat

And the strobe light silhouettes their suffering

But they Love It
 They have Been Taught Since Birth
 That this is what passess for a "good Time"
 And the beat pulses on...
 And the bodies writhe in Ecstasy
 And I watched Blurry EYED thru my TEARS

Religion and Spirituality

Reflections of a 'Generation Xer' by Troy McNeil

Poverty is pain, so I chased money at all cost,
 Another stint in prison acting on compulsive thoughts.
 Money leads to respect which lead me into the eye of a
 violent storm,
 Seeking the approval of my peers, a strong comfort of
 human norms.
 The lack of having produced a lust and desire to possess
 material things,
 In search for the benefits and pleasure that they
 supposedly bring.
 What purpose does it serve to live in the land of the free,
 Living life on the lowest rung, with limited choices,
 blinded by misery.
 Clawing and scratching for a hustle some days only
 making crumbs,
 In and out of prison, when you add it all up, I'm living no
 better than a bum.
 My inflated ego conceals my deep insecurities that I
 camouflage with false pride,
 Which were developed in the streets, fed on a steady diet
 of fears and lies.
 Excepting the belief that I could succeed at a life were I
 have to steal, rob, and cheat,
 Conditioned me to a life of self-deception, and self-
 defeat.
 I believed that working a job was for sucka's a fate fit for
 a slave,
 Now I sit in prison working a job thats a fraction of
 minimum wage.
 A heavy price to learn from living life on the edge,
 To have or have not are the dynamics behind this
 historic wedge.
 Ignorance was my tyrant that kept my heart in the
 streets,
 The slow death of my soul; the vultures wait patiently to
 feast.
 Leaving behind a son with these words I am filled with
 shame,
 A boy can't bond with a father who treated life as a game.
 When the time comes for him to choose what road he
 has to take,
 Will my limited influence be enough for him to open the
 right gate.
 Poverty fuels a cycle, fast money will always lead to a fast
 end,
 Death or prison is waiting, two fates that will never
 budge or bend.

It takes inner strength to leave behind the protection of the pack,
 Strive to be your own man, you will progress and that's a fact.
 Take heed to this poem so your life you won't bungle,
 A man thinks for himself, and cuts his own path through the jungle.



By Craig Peldo

The Search by John Barton

We start out our life on a planet that's spinning
 in orbit before we were born,
 and we're given a mind that's exquisite and blank,
 but a heart that's a little forlorn

So outbound we hatch to establish a place
 in this world we feel is a home;
 we try the new clothing of various roles
 like an Emperor out on the roam.

We settle, resettle, and travel the globe
 as we newly rechristen this search.
 Each nightfall concludes with:
 "Tomorrow's the secret!"
 And onward the vanities lurch.

The years turn to decades and moments are made,
 although only the lurky few see
 that all of the lives we have touched on the way
 were creating our family tree.

Then it's finally after the bustling recedes
 that the end looks again to the start;
 for despite all our roaming we'll rest in the knowing...
 our home was in fact in our heart.

Sept. 29th 2020 by James Gondek

Every minute
 every struggle
 every second
 every fumble
 gain it once
 than lose it all
 think you won
 until you fall
 so raise your hopes
 high above
 let your dreams
 grow and evolve-

R.E.A.L. N.E.R.D.Y. by Jeremiah A. Stubbs

Remember, Everyone Aint Loyal
 Trust can Get You Hurt
 We've trusted ones we've loved
 Yet, was treated like we're dirt

Not Everyone Really Deserves You
 Conveying truth that is Real
 When you're torn and Battered
 Not many will help you heal

This world is cold and cruel
 But every now and then
 You may meet a Person
 Worthy to be your Friend

They will Accept You as You are
 Regardless ugly, bad, or Good
 Offering Support and Understanding
 When others have You misunderstood

They will look beyond the scars
 Recognizing the beauty deep inside
 Encouraging the true you to Shine
 When this world is forcing you to hide

With a Very Selective Few
 You will build a Place
 Where it's okay to be Yourself
 And know that You'll be Safe

It sounds hard to believe
 Yet, I know it to be true
 Dreams can become Reality
 Many share stories like me and You

Untitled by Justin Rice

I scream inside
 In silence
 Though across a world
 You hear
 For a heart knows not a barrier
 Just as love gives not to fear
 And like a flower

I reach for light
And I seek a something
For I know I've been planted
Here
By something greater than
Myself
And though my memory fails me
My heart does not
And I cannot walk
So I'll grow
I cannot hide from the storm
So I will face it
I may not survive
But I'll die while losing seeds
And then the storm will see more of me
Again
And as I close my eyes
A hundred shall open
As the light is my witness
I will have traveled far.

Addiction by David Lance Pereira

I want to be in control
No weakness
Nothing with a hold
I want Power
Power to mold
To put you in your place. Or tone you out of the fold
I want Peace
Peace in my own mind
The world is burning...
I'm running out of time.
I want you
Put you in a cage
To break your spirit
Make you my slave
I want knowledge
To be like God
To know The Score
And thus beat the odds.

ESSENCE By Michael Kent

I FEEL THIS FEELING IS FLEETING
BUT IT'S MORE LIKE EVANESCENCE.
I MEAN IT'S RAPIDLY LEAVING
I MUST EXPRESS IT IN ESSENCE.

BY NATURE I WANT TO PROVIDE,
BUT PRISON IS MEANT TO DIVIDE.
MY WHOLE HEART IS HURTING INSIDE,
WHERE FREEDOM AND PRISON COLLIDE.

MY HEART HAS BEEN FREED FROM THE SIN
MY BODY'S CONFINED FROM WITHIN.
MY MIND COINCIDES WITH MY PEN
I HAVE DREAMS I'M FREE AS THE WREN.

YOUR ESSENCE STILL SEEMS TO HAUNT ME,
I CATCH WHIFFS OF IT, IT'S DAUNTING,

IT OVERWHELMS ME LIKE POTION,
I HOPE I CAPTURE MY NOTION.

THE ASSAY IS SET IN MOTION
I'VE STRUGGLED WITH MY DEVOTION,
CONSTANT CHAOS AND COMMOTION;
THE EBB AND FLOW OF EMOTIONS.

COME READ MY BOOK WHILE IT'S OPEN
IT'S A GIFT IS FREE WHILE YOUR PRESENT
I'M INTROVERTED BUT HOPING
THESE VERSES ARE OF THE ESSENCE.

Take Responsibility by Adrian E. / T.R.U.T.H.

As deep sadness settles in my mind begins to drift.
Upon the better things of life which most of us
has missed,

A simple hug or a kiss from the ones we love
the most, A Kind word or a letter to lift your
spirits and give you hope,

The truth is hard to cope when you know Right
from wrong, Ignorance is no excuse read
the title of this poem,

For so long I've been a victim of my own cir-
cumstance, Tried to earn a decent living but
been Robbed of the chance,

Perhaps it's not my purpose to earn a decent
living? Instead embrace my mistakes and put
a limit to my sinning,

By forgiving my own self for all the troubles
that I've caused, All the pain I've inflicted
without giving it any thought,

I'm the only one at fault this I dearly under-
stand, It takes courage to admit and become
an honest man,

A plan to succeed and overcome all my failures,
Always hope for the best and never expect
any favors,

Beware of all the games selfish people like
to play, who take advantage of your Kindness
then smile in your face,

Keep a steady pace and maintain your indepen-
dence, Pursue moving forward in the Right
direction,

Remember imperfection can always be corrected,
And poor performance through preparedness can
always be prevented,

Apply this Knowledge to your life and a decent
man will grow, Beyond any expectation or
any common goal...

What About You? by Clifton Wade

Have you ever been so lonely, that you prayed to
Have an enemy, just to fill that gap? Or so starved for
Forgiveness, that you would eat your words if you could
only
Take that back? Have you ever felt so lost, that you found
Yourself not caring what's next? Or so stuck in an
emotion,
That you wouldn't move knowing you're a mess? Have
you been
Living a life that you felt wasn't up to par? Or dying to
Be loved, for who you truly are? Have you tried so
Strongly to do right, when all that seems left is wrong?
Or
Been so close to capturing your mind, before realizing it
Was already gone? Have you ever been so thirsty for
Happiness, that you drink shots of sadness to no avail?
Or
Claimed to be in search of Heaven, as you painstakingly
go
Through Hell? I was just wondering, did any of this
sound
Familiar to you? Or do you only hear lies, and become
Deaf around the truth?

My Heart Stops by Marino Leyba

Seven o' clock, is this when my heart stops?
I can't see, what is it this time, what does eternity have
for me?
I'm sick of being inside this box, all I hear is my
conscious talk.
I'm a good person, but personally, it doesn't even matter.
My dreams have been stolen, my soul has been battered.

Im shattered as the tears run down my face,
I miss my mom, but she's in another place.
I'm shook, too much this life has took, I'm spooked.

End of a chapter or end of an age,
I'm enraged with the lack of true justice,
"Trust us"
Is what they say as I fade to gray.

Thunderstorms are coming from the north,
My heart's locked down at the port of no entry.
The rains fall, but I've been here for a quarter century.

I wish the fires would engulf me from the West.
I wish the hurricanes would come,
So I can finally rest.

I wait on the ancient ones return.
I wait as the wind blows each year.

My vessel is destroyed, my mind is deployed.
Self-concerned, I've cared too much
So this is how my house is burnt to dust.

Candlelit, the wind flickers my being inside,

I feel like it, I might just quit.

Hit and miss as Death comes down with its sweet kiss
But, for one moment let's reminisce.

Seven o'clock, is this when my heart stops?
I can't see what is it this time...

A Lighter Nation by Justin Leblanc

During desperate decades filled fully from our chase,
mangled moral men sadly shaken from our place,
We weakly went for what we craved unconsciously,
After appetizing apples were tasted from the tree,
every even element is balanced by this force,
An agonizing afterlife to help to stay on course,
The teacher told a secret in the silence of the soul,
Private purpose prevailed in the gaining of this goal,
Superior strength is striving to force an answer out,
Quiet curious questions can't be said above a shout,
but barely buried treasure can be easily be missed,
freely flowing fantasies arise after being kissed,
The thing that steals a heart hardly must be real,
Igniting ill ideas we are deceived by what we feel,
Hooks hurl hours beyond my minute grasp,
Oily oxygen operates to produce a perfect rasp,
Rarely reached for reading is medicine for me,
Stoic stomachs strain to indulge in it for free
Your yeast yearns for heat to rise religiously,
Eternal eyes full of forms you cannot see,
Properly prepared portions swerve straight along the
spine,
Graciously giving good rations from what I think is mine.
~Poetic Justice~

Phantoms by David Bunning

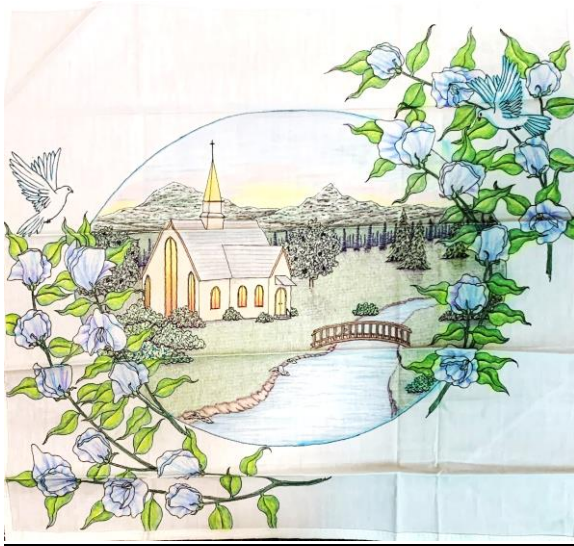
Ghosts moving behind the veil
Locked away and washed away
Clinging tightly to a shattered existence
That always remains just out of reach,

Trying to give meaning to a life so devalued
Through my own actions or those of another
Wishing only for a chance to make things right
To say "I am sorry" and take away the hurt.

Blue, White, Orange, Black, Red, Yellow, Green
The colors of our penance
The hues that silence us.
But we are still here

Untitled by Danny Gilmore

God filled the earth with lovely blooms, and scented
them
With rare perfumes. And so he made the flower
With grace, perfected it In form and face. He
tended it Until it grew, Into a beauty rare and true.
Throughout all times its beauty grows
and only love outshines the Rose



By Tony Covey

A Woman at Point Zero by Angela Rizzo

I have principles too
 A basic law of truth
 Being a victim does
 Nothing for me
 I'd rather do my time
 Stand my ground
 I don't do eye for an eye
 Pound for a pound
 Where fear is lost
 Hope is found
 Don't give me your hand
 Than turn me down
 Stop calling my name
 I can't stand the sound
 I've grown out of that
 Little trick
 There's a glasshouse
 There's a brick
 I'll never be like you
 I want to put God's gift
 To use
 Your life story taught me
 Well
 Maybe death is heaven
 And life is hell
 My more standing I will keep
 I rather be the lamb
 You be the sheep

Extra Baggage by Michael Haynes

Pain, we never really been apart
 We have a long relationship right from the start
 Ever since I could walk and talk
 You took advantage of me,
 And broke a little boy's heart.

Pain, I know you oh so well,
 I have lots of stories that I could tell,
 Of suffering, sorrow, and dumb mistakes,

On how all you taught me was to take, take, take.

How I thought I'd never see twenty-five,
 I would be killed, shot, or somehow die,
 I do pray to God that I'm still alive,
 I have so many scars deep inside,
 The pain I have I always hide.

But now I'm older and I want to share,
 The pain I'm accustomed to,
 To people who care.
 I'm tired of carrying pain everywhere I go,
 It's too heavy and it's taking its toll.

I can leave it all behind with prayer, patience,
 And the gift of time.

My Voice by Quinton Quinn

I made a choice to hide my voice
 Deep down in the pit of my soul
 Where the truth and Lies are Kept
 and Never to be told.

My voice is scared it trumbles with
 Fear, its in a dark and lonely
 place. No one's there to hear it
 No sounds for echoes to chase.

My voice has been hidden for so
 long. that not even I can find
 a sound. Not a whisper or word
 anywhere to be Found.

OH! how I wish my voice was
 Free. instead of being locked away
 in the bottomless pit that lies inside
 of me.

I screamed with all my Might
 but still not a word was heard.
 My voice Rather stay hidden, than
 fly high like the Wings of a bird.

When no one else could hear me,
 my words reached my Fathers ears,
 He took away my doubt and Cast
 away my fears.

Through faith and trust my voice
 has been Released, taking off like an
 eagle singing Songs of Peace.

My Lord gave me a new sound
 and for that I truly Rejoice and
 thank Him unconditionally for
 helping me find my voice.

FIFTY NINE PAST ELEVEN by K. Daniel Okken

The Master looked down from his throne in heaven,
 It must have been about fifty nine past eleven:

The cry had gone out a long time before,
"The Bridegroom is coming," which they did ignore.
With lots of time on their hands, so they thought,
They were eating and drinking, and sold and bought.
Many lusted after the flesh; some were lifted with pride,
They stole, they murdered, they cursed, and they lied;
But time was passing to a swiftly coming end,
And if they were saved it would totally depend
On whether or not they would look to God in heaven,
Who was now looking down at fifty nine past eleven.

It must have been about fifty nine past eleven,
When Gabriel was polishing his horn up in heaven,
For God had just said, "Get it ready to blow;
I've given enough time to the people below."
And, the stamp was inked up that would blot out the names
Of those backslidden; who had caused him many pains.
And with great tear filled eyes, saddened with sorrow,
He still held out his hands; until it was tomorrow.
And Love held them there 'til that last second ticked,
Hoping that some poor lost heart would be pricked...
Suddenly, wrath filled his face, what a frightful sight;
For the clock of time had just ticked to... midnight!

Tell Me by Dreamer

(A conversation with the Knight In Albrecht Durer's
'Knight, Death, and the Devil')

O nameless Knight, as I
see your weary face I
wonder; can you feel the
Angel of death lurking

By your side? The devil
creeping from behind? Can
You hear the hissing of
The snakes slithering from

Death's head? Tell me, how long
Have **you** been dead? Many
Questions come to my mind
For I too am running

Out of time. Have you cried
As I? Yearning for days
Gone by. Searching for what
We've always had. Chasing

Unattainable dreams.
Emanating screams from
The saddle inn the midst
Of the battle within.

Tell me, are you leaving
Or returning to the
Castle which can be seen
From afar?

Does anyone care where
you are? Is your dog the

only friend willing to
stay with you 'til the end?

Does **HE** have a name? Have
You ever felt the type
Of pain that drives a man
Insane like when you love

Someone in vain? I see
No clouds yet I suspect
A storm brewing within.
A chink in your armor?

The way you tightly grip
The reins causes me to
Explain that I too am
Holding on even when

It rains. Endless teardrops
I have shed, for like you,
I am dead, abandoned.
Left to tread in a sea

Of despair. Hoping some
One will care and somehow
Dare case me a life rope
Reviving the hope that

Used to live inside. Yet
Compassionate hearts are
Hard to find, they've started
From the divine, devoid

Of symbols and designs.
Cold blooded as reptiles,
Their humanity slipped
Like the sand in the hand

Of the Angel of Death
Which has you in a trance.
Tell me, how many hearts
Did you pierce with your lance?

I Am by Taurus Devault

As "Taurus", me, lay in his bunk lockdown 24/7 at Lee
County, he dropped his head for the first time in tears

He asked the Lord (Allah)

"What is a real man?" Although, Taurus" knew a number
of languages, studied his Qur'an and moved with
opulence,

He still inquired about a "real man"

"The general population calls me smart and highly
educated, "Taurus told the Lord (Allah) on his knees.

And I was such a fool that I actually believed them
all.

The Lord (Allah) replied, "Why should you not think you're a real man? You help those in need and in one day you will make a great scholar in Ohio."

"That may be", Taurus said.

"So, what's the problem?", the Lord (Allah) replied.

But I do not know what I am.

I do not wish to suffer, but these material miseries are forced upon me. I neither know where I've come from, nor where I am going, but yet people are calling me a real man. I am satisfied, but truth I am such a great fool that I know what I am.

If we do not know who we are, how can our activities be proper?

If we are mistaken about our identity,

We will also be mistaken about our activities.



The Eye of the Beholder by Michael Sloan

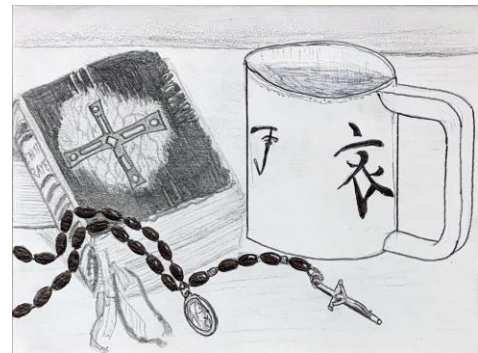
The Story of Genesis 5 by Deric Conn

Adam was a man
the first of his kind.
Seth was appointed,
to be the Messianic line.
Enos too was mortal,
though he lived much longer than any man today.
Cainan was sorrowful,
for what, who can say?
Mahalalel sang praises
to the blessed God.
The angels came down in the days of Jared,
inciting the Almighty's judgement rod.
Enoch was so dedicated,
that God raptured him before death had it's way.

Methuselah's name meant his death would bring the
destruction
that would sweep mankind away.
Lamech was despairing,
that the world had grown so dark.
But Noah brought comfort that not all would be lost
as he and his family boarded the salvation Ark.

Meaning Of Life by X-Plicit

Experience is what separates
Knowledge from Wisdom
Mistakes teach us lessons
But we often forget them
Now I wake up older
With nothing to show for it
Wasted so much potential
Makes no sense does it?
But if I can stop you
From making the same mistakes
I'd give my life for it
If that's what it takes
We have to break the cycle
Somebody's got to succeed
And it can be you
It doesn't have to be me
I'm willing to sacrifice
For the greater good
That will surprise some people
They didn't think that I could
But a power greater than myself
Knew that I would



Faith and Coffee by Stephen Stoeltje

Love

A Pleasant Daughter I Have Today by Anthony Ramirez

A Beautiful pleasant Daughter
that I will always bring that greatest Love with
in My Daughter that I have today.
Because she will always make me proud
inside Daddy Heart and soul All of the Times
Because I look upon my Daughter as a teddy bear
with in our Times that we spend in our Time.
I will spend a wonderful time in my pleasant

Times is a place that I never been before
Because I will make Her shine on those gloried Days
to come in my Daughter life as well with me being alone
All of the Times.

This give me strength, to get me so strong every day
Because that is what I have to do today in me.
That brings the greatest smile in my Daughter's faces
that also make my Daughter Shine Big in Her All of the
Times.

To the Daughters by Alan Coleman

Never let us make you simple
Never let us make you still
Never let us make you patient
Never let us take your will
Maybe say you're too ambitious
Maybe say you're much too chill.
Maybe say you need obedience
Maybe try to hold you back
Tell you what your place is
Tell you what you lack
Tell you how your face is
Tell you how to act.

So become who you are right now
So become a someone who
So become a different who tomorrow
So become another you
Who is an ever changing thing
Who is something true.
Who is not to be contained
Who is never pure
Let us mispronounce your name
Let us be unsure
Let us try to change you who
Has the spirit to endure.



Companion by Jesse Osmun

Reminiscent Reunion to Come by Greg Hodge

The Brightest Day or Darkest Night
Your Smiling Face is my Delite
Happy or Sad Blue or Gray
Nothing can ever take my love Away
On December 8th one Special Day
I Knew my life would never be the same
Cause on that day you changed my world
God brought into my life the most Beautiful little girl
Day and Night I watched your face
and made a promise to always keep you safe
I apologize they took me away
But I Dream about you every day
You told me once if we are far apart
You would always keep me in your heart
So Beautiful So Smart you made it clear
The Blessing I was given gives me cheer
I owe you so much you give me hope
In my life you always matter most

The Perfect Father by Marcello Gibbs

Since your birth, I been in and out of prison.
All behind my foolish decisions.
Repetitive incarcerations had you and your mother in
critical situations.
It's like I never took your feelings into consideration.
And for you to forgive me and recognize me as your
father
You are no doubt the perfect daughter.
I know in your heart, I'm your biggest hero.
But my failures in life got me feeling like a zero.
I'm grateful to have you in my world.
And you will always be daddy's little girl.
I feel your pain from the absence of me not being there.
I've dedicated my life to making a change and showing
you that I really care.
You're such a strong a great kid.
I want you to know that, I do recognize the things that I
did.
Nevertheless you and your mother always held me down.
I understand that you lost a little trust in me.
But understand that I'm striving now! To be all I can be.
"The Perfect Father"

I always wanted a dad that I could call my own.
Though I searched and prayed, there was never one in
my home.
I'm 36 and a half and never had a true dad.
No father figure there to comfort me through the times I
was sad.
So I grew up with this heartless heart.
Now I release this pain through these poetic arts.
I told myself that I would never be like him.
So I made a metamorphose decision just for them.
(Mykids)
I can't allow myself to take the path like my father did.
And make the mistake of not being a father to my kids.
I was innocent when I came into this cold world.
And my father is guilty of not being there.
Sometimes I question myself why?
Why do I have to lay here and cry?
No guidance or no words spoken.

Only thing I was doing was praying and hoping.
It was hard but I remained focused.
Knowing with this life that I was chosen.
"The Perfect Father"

For You to show me unconditional love time and time
again, makes me trust and believe in You.
You were always there for me, and you always pulled me
through.
I know I disappointed You in the past.
That was because of the lifestyle I was living, was way
too fast.
I always wondered about the life I used to live.
And I'm thankful for all the mercy You give.
You're the definition of a true Father.
You guided me through life even when times got harder.
I'm grateful for Your presence.
And it's a blessing to be a reflection of Your essence.
I understand that You carried me when I couldn't walk.
In a way I feel like that was my father's fault.
Because there were a lot of things I was never taught.
In a way I feel like that was my father's fault.
Because there were a lot of things, I was never taught.
I learnt on my own and by seeking Your word.
I can understand that You were the only one that really
cared.
No doubt You are The Perfect Father for me.
Together me and You will always be
"The Perfect Father."

Without You by Sam Gypson

It's scary for me to contemplate
the way your life would be.
If you had chosen to go a different route,
instead of having me..

You definitely would've saved a lot of money,
and cut way back on the stress.
Lord knows I've been hard to handle,
yet you never loved me any less..

From the moment when I was little,
When you caught me in that first lie.
Through all the stunts that I pulled since then,
and all the times I made you cry..
But you never turned your back on me,
not once did you put me on pause.
Even when the world did it's very best
to show you I was a lost cause..

When it came to taking care of me
there was nothing you would not do.
So I want you to know that when the tables have turned,
I'm gonna be there to take care of you..

So the next time you begin to wonder
if there was ever any more you could do,
Just imagine how lost I'd have really been
If I had to do it all Without You...

Superwoman by Walter Hart

A young mother
With a bunch of knowledge, went to college,
Has a disabled brother...
Two kids who have a deadbeat dad,
Thinks about the love they never had...
All her money spent on food, car note, gas and rent...

A healthcare worker,
Frontline with a mask and gloves,
Face shield and a lot of love...

At least from me, I saw you on T.V.
Taking that mask off at the end of the day,
Tears cascading down your face

Because COVID-19 keeps your kids away,
They gotta stay,
With your mother and your disabled brother,

Cause your angelic spirit pushes you to help others,
What a beautiful lady what a beautiful sight
I pray that you are bathed in God's light...

A New Angel In Heaven by Clemente Bell

(In memory of my close friend Sonja- 1995)

She was 22 with a pretty smile
Sonja was her name
She was a very beautiful woman
And had a personality just the same

She was the person I enjoyed spending time with
Someone I loved to be around
She would always offer me her shoulder
Whenever I was feeling down

Even when her health began to fail her
She would call to see how I was
I had asked her why she cared for me so
And she simply said "Just because"

She told me that if God would allow her the chance
And her heart would let it be
She would find someone to share her life with
And that someone would have been me

I wish I had the time to show her
The life that we could have lived
There was so much I wanted to tell her
So much love I wanted to give

But Sonja is no longer with us
For she has gone to a better place
For her, there will be no more suffering
No more pain etched across her face

I will always cherish the time spent together
And the friendship that we let grow
She was a very special part of my life

And I'll always let the world know
 Now, when I lift my eyes to the sky
 I smile, because now I know
 That there is a new angel in Heaven
 And she's with me wherever I go



By Patricia Olsen

Piece #3 by Antrell Brown

All that it could of become
 With patience made of Stone

She embraced it although it
 Was locked in Distrust Alienation
 Grief N Rejection

She polished it up
 Gave it a Kiss of love

In Return it became its Reflection

Can you Hear Me by TIKa

I don't want My words
 To be just words
 I want them to be heard
 I want you to feel it
 On the end of your nerves
 Deep in your veins
 Can you hear the pain
 It screams
 From my Soul
 Nothing can console
 I try to fight it, hide it
 But it seeps through
 Can you see through
 This Mask
 That I wear
 Are you aware
 Full of despair
 Scared
 But do you really care
 The feelings that I feel

They are real
 But to you it's no big deal
 I'm on the ledge...
 Can you hear Me now?

Untitled by Isiah S. Mincef

Some place far away
 A Heart lies Awake...
 Occupying space the
 Way love takes shape...
 Images of your face.
 Warm embrace.
 Trace of Scent.
 I savor the Taste.
 of what Remains...
 Safe Caged I Await...
 for you share My Mind
 & state yet feel like...
 An Ocean Away.

Cussing by Geneva Phillips

1. I am waterborn shinebearer
 Catching sundiamond droplets
 In a pitcher
 Carrying star slivers on a platter

Two tumblefish swimming
 Against the currency
 Tide weary thrashers, tail tied
 String bound sacrifice
 Upon the altars of everwhen
 Everywhere and neverafter

I am moon
 Gaping face full
 Mysterious appeal veiled
 Hidden indoors
 Behind eyelids
 Round orb revolving
 In the dark space
 Of your emptiness

2. You are sunfired shadows
 Sauntering over salt sands
 Claws sighting water for gold
 Tossing waves back into the ocean

Two pillars conjoined
 At the heart of battle
 Half holy; terminally carnal
 A fatigued figure running uphill
 Attempting to retake
 The lost dreams
 Before recrossing the same stream
 Back into the wilderness

You are canyon walls,
 Mountain immovable
 Rock cliff face sheer drip
 Falling into depths unknown

Rough with turmoil
Shattering impact
Midnight water
Black rapids
Rushing past
Pulling me down

A L hope (4) by Steven E Daniels

Control is the key to manipulation of temptation.
It is a war fought within craving with an appetite
embolden by delight.

Creamy, dark, chocolate, milky or white.
If that's not your metaphor distant shores,
rainbows, mathematics or cozy tours.
Delight has many hidden doors.
We all welcome the encore.
What is ice that is not ice.
Sunset before night, what's magical flows with
thrown dice.
It's nice to catch a glimpse of a genuine smile.
It fits tight in a heart that has been drowning for
miles.

Pleasant words, phrases and images solidify.
Becoming thought actions and visions that won't
be denied.

Truly from a woman there's beauty in her
laughter.
It's relevant to work (your / her body) to the
sweats beads pour,
message the mental and run a hot bath, bubbles
to galore.

What delicacies delight or move your goose
bumps to rise.
Let your taste buds surmise.
(Tell me) Check the vibrations timbre of sighs,
note the emotional highs.

Rolling beneath the ocean until the storms
builds and thrives.
Picture the surface calm and full of purpose, it
never burns us.

We enter the flames unwittingly as we turn up.
The twist, this would not even exist in a forlorn
dream.

Such cream it seems in reality is
(slippery/secretly) a stream.
Having no idea just knowing a untouched theme.
The hope to move closer at least become friends.

A Secret in Destiny by MJ Richardson

Palms touch, fingers lock,
Bodies rise and fall with labored breath ---
Chasing hearts that rage.
Honeylipped caress in silence
Feeding passion.

(Enchanted Interlude of) two
Nervous hearts pulsing, aching
For the Strawberry Moon.
Silvery beams illuminate hair fluttering
In salty-sweet Gulf breeze.

Mojitos on sticky lips.

Luminiferous arcs
Green and Pink tangles in whispering water,
Jellyfish in love.

Salacious tide pressing to drowse
Careless flames
As crystalline tongues
Lick bare flesh.

Remnants of delicate Sin ---
One heart seared,
One still hungry.

Lost In by Liam Föster

Lost in a touch,
Like the lightest breeze.
That's left such a feeling,
Deep within me;
I can tell neither left from right,
Nor up from down.

Lost in a smell,
Like a memory from youth.
A scent that lingers on,
Pulling at the strings of my heart.
Like your hair lain across my chest,
I breathe you in and out.

Lost in a taste
Like mid-summers cotton candy,
Your kisses flavor my life,
Filling me with joyful bliss.
Tongue dripping with the ambrosial nectar,
That flows from my goddess of delight.

Lost in a sound,
That resonates in my soul.
The soothing melodic rhythm of your voice,
Tames the beast inside;
Yet freeing the man from his decay,
For the song you sing guides me home.

Lost in a sight,
A vision of sublime splendor;
As you walked into my world,
Revealing the true essence of beauty.
A mere glimpse of you lovely body,
Liberates me of the chains of immobility.

Lost in the feelings of you,
I drown in the moments we made,
And the memories that we'd shared.
'Cause with you in my arms,
Time has no meaning,
For nothing else matters but you.

A Moment, to A Life Time by James Cloutman

It was Mid-Autumn, maybe even early November
In a small town in the North east
The Ocean's Music filled the air
The Sun was setting on the day
Beautiful shades of purples, blues, and reddish oranges
tie dye the sky
The trees have all started to change colors
The leaves are bright with yellows, oranges and maroon
Except the remaining Greens
You can feel the love as it travels on the cool fall breeze
whispering to...
The couple walking hands so intertwined They've almost
become one
The conversation is of tomorrow's tomorrow and what it
may hold for them
The possibilities seem endless... All that matters is this
love's continued existence
A gush of cold air pushed her into his arms
he seizes the intimate moment and presses his lips to her
full lips
She wraps her arms around him and deepens the kiss
and the passion
With the moment seized, the future mapped out
The Key to this Life and this future is Love shared
It's the type of love that started in a Moment and will last
a life time



Low Tide by Gary Farlow

Loves Young Dream by Sandy Blazinski

He smiles across the distance
Her face blushes
She smiles back across the way
His breath catches
The passion charged air crackles
Two hearts beating
Stars shoot through the night sky
Their bodies move
Leaning in to kiss her lips
She turns away
Reaching up to touch his face
He walks away
Another dream has ended

Embers by James Guss

A brisk touch, the whispering of the wind in her hair,
A fire entrenched within my soul burns for her.
A hunger, the thirst of pain like onto an arrow through
my heart.
My minds' eye sees her by my side. Days and nights
swim
through teary eyes. One year, two years, three years, and
beyond she's gone. Nevertheless the flame of my love
still burns bright - praying for her return - each day, each
night.

Untitled by Sandra Duval

Love is a contraband
I want to tell you that you're beautiful but you wear it all
the time from others
So what can I do to set myself apart from
all the rest
I'm sure whatever I come up with is not allowed here
Love is a contraband
Behind these walls
So why bother to pursue it
Instead I'll lay here
Drowning with memories
Of your laugh and
Beautiful smile
A smile that can light up the sky

I'm Sorry You're so Beautiful by Michael Wiese

people only see porcelain,
navy lace, and golden wheat.
The curve of innocence exploring
the world they crush by
handling, touching, and kneading.
I'm sorry you're so beautiful

people do not see the mortar
of your soul chipping and flaking,
in the shell that holds your heart.
I'm sorry you're so beautiful

people only see obsidian,
amber ribbon, and moonlit water.
The humid hum of hope
as fireflies pop dimmer
at curses, slurs, and hurts.
I'm sorry you're so beautiful

people do not see the eye shine
fading with each flick of a glance
to places not your face.
I'm sorry you're so beautiful

people only see cedar chips,
jade velvet, and cinnamon strips.
The heights of ambition grow
smaller with skipped heart beats
at smirks, winks, and whistles.
I'm sorry you're so beautiful

people do not see the essence
of your pretty, material of
your dreams, your kind smile.
I'm sorry people do not see your beauty.

Inside a Cage by Ed Rose

Somewhere, there is a woman
 With tearstained memories
 Of a man she loves
As she reads the letter again
 A single tear descends
 Upon the page.
She gazes up at the moon,
 Pain stabs her heart.
And she questions the chain of events
 That tore them apart.
But the questions remain unanswered,
 She must decide
How it leaved a ragged hole
 Where love is derived.

Somewhere, there is a cage.
 Inside there's another mind
 Dying with time.
And staring out is a soul
 That's losing all control
 At the end of his line.
As his heart begins to awaken
 To the sorrows inside
But there is no satisfaction
 From the tears he has cried
No one could give him advice,
 He had to learn the hardest of ways
Bow he's wasted two hearts away
 Inside a cage.

Somewhere inside her mind,
 There's a voice she just can't escape,
 Pain, only time can heal.
And stirring inside her heart,
 There's a longing for a love
 She really needs to feel.
As the letter she read from him
 News less with each passing day...
The picture in her mind slowly
 Fades away.
The walls that stand between them
 Severs the tie.
And the ashes grow ever colder
 As the years pass by.

Inside a cage..
Growing old with age.
He will never escape...
She got away.

Untitled by Jeremy Miller

She opened up and we became two beautiful souls
connecting,

Talk about the past in which we're dissecting,
Push play on the memories like they're our favorite films,
Pushing pause on the most precious with nothing but
our wills,
Push repeat on the good times while listening to our
most sacred songs,
And all this time will feel like it hasn't been so long.
Those seconds will give us peace as we look at the past,
It's a bit of solace we'll both wish would last.

She said anger then acceptance, but I don't wanna accept
this,
I want things to go back to the way they were, as she
does too, I'm sure.
The future's been forever changed,
And laughing will never be the same,
On those fateful days the world became a sadder place.
We'll whisper to God and ask him to tell you when you're
on our minds
And when there's no one else in which to confide,
Some secrets will be left forever untold
As you're here for them to hold.

In the end, we'll keep going, because the sun will rise
And God will hear our cries.
And though it will tear our pieces to parts,
With almost nothing left or either of our hearts,
What does remain will show a scar
But we will survive,
And it'll remind of us a hurt we'd wish never to revive,
Some points will be different, but some still the same,
I'm sorry we feel such a similar pain.



Protecting Memories by Autumn Murry

My Everything by James E. Schad

She's my sunshine and my cloud
lights my day and makes me proud
She's my map and my guide
with whom I'd walk side by side.

She's my strength and my hand
lifts me up and helps me stand
She's my laughter and my smile
keeps me happy all the while.

She's my ally and my friend
from whom caring has no end
She's my soul and my desire
for whom inside me burns a fire.

She's my love and my heart
Ne'er from her will my love part
She's the muse who inspires this score
I'll write of her 'til I'm no more

Once Was A Lady by Joseph Brooker

Many, many years ago, there was a Lady whom I did
know.
Not that I don't know her still, it's just that I'd rather not.

So pure, yet strong a Lady she,
My fondest of all loves she be.
She held my every single thought,
Her tempting me no matter what.
Her lure so hot, how was drawn,
From early dusk 'til next day's dawn.
She was my love, my every need,
How strange all this from but a seed.

Years have passed since last we kissed, She I've not truly
missed.
For she is but a leaf of pain, She be known as Sweet
Cocaine.

Last Hit by Darren Butler

I need something I cant put a name to.
A dire need to put my veins through.
Its not worth the pain inflicted on the ones I love.
When a million times is never enough.
Every hit is a phantom touch.
And I never felt the one that was too much.
I fight myself to breathe deeper than that last hit .
I cant get enough air to make the pain quit.
All of my stress is released in a massive cloud of smoke.
And when I came to. I realized my heart broke.
My feet are sore, walking the embers in the bottom of my
pipe.
Yet my soul is afire with the will to fight.
Tomorrow I will rise despite all the pain.
I won't have to hide my tears behind the rain.
I can love and I can be loved.
That last hit was the last one I will take.
I swear on this for mine and my family's sake.

The poems included in the anthology have all been submitted since the pandemic began in March 2020. The general public now has a better idea of what enforced isolation feels like, and perhaps that experience will change the way they relate to your poems. We had 441 individuals submit poetry to be considered for inclusion in the anthology. Some authors submitted more than 50 poems. While we could only present a selection of the poetry submitted, I hope all of you who submitted a poem will claim ownership of this publication. You all make Prisoner Express work by your willingness to share yourselves with all of us. This anthology is being mailed to every prisoner who submitted a poem, and it will be posted to the PE website for the public to read. Some of the poems will also be included in an online art show PE is creating. Keep sending in your poems as we are now collecting for Anthology #25. Write on-Gary



Owls by Robert Gray

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