

Prisoner Express Poetry Anthology

Volume One

**The thirteenth amendment, Amended
by Name Withheld by Request**

A coffle of state slaves shuffles
Slowly into the radiant rays
Of dawn's early light.
Spartacus nowhere in sight.
Flight scarred all, and bone
Weary from strife and stress,
Destined to toil under the sun til
Twilight's last gleaming brings rest.

The tools are issued:
One hoe per man, each
Dull the blade, each
Seven pounds of sweat-stained misery,
Each, in proper hands,
Seven pounds of peril.

Let there be no peril today, we pray:
No quick and vicious fights, where, sweat stinging,
Fists flying, we cull living from dying:
No riots fought for fast forgot reasons___
Swinging steel scintillating in sunlight,
Blood gouting from the too slow heads___
Brown, black, white___
Our blood ruby red and thick with life,
No respecter of color or creed.

Let there be no peril today, we pray;
No dry crackling reports of leaden soldiers,
Chasing wisps of smoke from forge fashioned barrels,
Speaking the ancient tongue of Authority;
Guns guardgripped fast by bossfists,
In confederate gray cloths,
Their fire felling friends, freeing foes.

Let there be no peril today, we pray:
Today only hard work, for no pay.

~~"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except
as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall
have been duly convicted, shall exist within the
United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction."~~

So let it be rewritten.
So let it, at last, be done.

**Justice
By R. Dean Morris**

Justice...
Just ice..
Just us...
In the present cause
Not applicable
Unless one has
A million in the bank.

Cold
Impersonal
Lacking
In the better
Angels
Of the human nature
So seldom seen
And unfeeling...

Just-Us
A tacit
Agreement
Between
Members of the Elite
Whose eye
Is more
On who's living
Next door
Than on the Demons
In their own existence...

The stern faced
Cold
And distant stares
Carved from
A stone
Hardened by
The experiences of others.

**“So here I am in Amarillo, Texas, miles and miles
away from my family doing a minimum of 6 years
on the 12 years I signed for. I won't even see the
parole board until 2008. It is a long time, but what
can I do? My Direct Appeal was rejected. I stay
busy reading, writing, drawing, and sleeping. I
don't have many friends in here. It's almost
impossible for me to make friends in here because
most friendships are just game (hussle). That's all
some inmates know, how to be cruel!” Ruben
Barrios, “How I Got Here”**

Flow
by John E. Christ

...Hunger, lust, greed, desperation, alcoholic bur, drug haze, insanity, incident, allege victim, police, arrest, mug shot, finger prints, jail, arraignment, bond, Grand Jury, indictment, defense attorney, DA, postponement, defense strategy, witnesses, bystanders, experts, liars, jury, trial, handcuffs, holding cell, strip, jumpsuit, Blue Bird, transfer facility, classification, chain, ID-unit, security guards, sergeants, lieutenants, major, assistant warden, warden, superiors, overlords, bosses, third world rejects, cripples, dropouts, retarded egos, retirees, bored, unemployable, unambitious, self-righteous, cell, cellie, Hispanic, ese, Afro-American, nigger, white, peckerwood, motherfuckers, criminals, rapists, murders, thieves, child molesters, druggies, dealers, players, masturbators, homosexuals, punks, singers, fighters, gang members, Mexican mafia, La Familia, Crips, Bloods, Aryan Brotherhood, independents, work assignments, filed, aggie, sun, blisters, dirt, sweat, strip search, hands up, mouth open, hands through hair, lift nut sack, turn around, bend over, spread cheeks, lift feet, showers, necessities, recreation, Scrabble, checkers, chess, dominos, weights, basketball, TV, sports, news, movies, soaps, laughter, shouting, noise, rack time, lights out, count-time, violence, fiths, shanks, stabbings, rapes, riots, gas, lockdown, breakfast in bed,

silence, vacation, shakedown, contraband, paper clip, rubber band, magazines, cheese, disciplinary court, 30-30-30, major case, loss of good time, reclassification, time, days, weeks, months, years, loneliness, heartbreak, eligibility date, set-off, disappointment, frustration, anger, acceptance, church, chaplain, Bible studies, Voyager, Kairos, Jesus, Allah, Sabbath savants, choir, band, personal conflicts, hypocrites, heretics, ITP, school, GED, college, OJT, Project Rio, SATP, CIP, parole packet, parole attorneys, support letters, review, positive votes, Hunstsville, golden gates, release parole officer, restrictions, good behavior, zero tolerance, ex-convict, no voice, no vote, no hope, no dreams, hunger...

Sky
By Kevin Moore

Spent time directing the mind; forward.
The line from behind I have banished
As heated waters evanesces
Into vapor to billow upward

I give past woes to who created.

How many breaths are in a day?
Depends on how deep your light us;
On if you're frightened or relaxed.
We should ask: Should we count that way?
Or is the air best left as mist?

Underneath my thoughts I've found
Answers which lie in ambush;
There to take my breath away
As I see truths so profound
My soul lifts without a push.

How long should we question
Those things that disappear?
From the edges of life,
Out off the quiet ones,
Some things come that matter.

In these notions lie
Things from other sides,
Other places where
In a blinking sky
Belief can reside.

What would happen
If never comes?
If ever leaves?
Would we begin
To become one?

I will never find
That which is
As I search
In my mind
For what gives

Will we never
Come up
From thee?
Ever?

Then I wake
In sky...

“You know people on the outside of these prison walls think we lay up all day and do nothing...” C. Anderson, Journal Entry

Bernie's Poem
By M. W. Hauser

Day after day passes,
With barely a breath to define it,
Idea after idea flees,
With rarely a thought to remind it,

Explanations, instructions, rules,
They're all confinement,
Pulling, pushing, squeezing,
Always getting my mind bent,

Boundaries conceived are true cages indeed,
Yet only if I give into refinement.

I'm as free as I choose to be,
In the midst of turmoil or life's tendency,
Of containment.

Chop it down, cut it up, rewrite until it seems
complete,
Yet when I look again, always I see, not what I want to
perceive,
Hidden meanings, coy response, the opposite of what I
intended,
Never to know, what needs to be written, until my
poem has ended.

On that day, when my final choice is made,
My lasting word will only be heard
When I am in the grave.

So until that day,
I will continue to seek,
For the right words to write,
Or the right words to speak.

I will exercise my right
For you to hear my voice,
For the greatest thing I have
Will always be my choice.

Where the Angels Dwell
By Kelvin Dycus

In a world that mocks and kills with hate
How do I reach that exalted place?
Don't teach me peace, if you can't believe
Don't speak of life if you won't receive
From where I am, inside this cell,
How do I get to where the angels dwell?

In a society that lives to criticize,
Hopes are born to swiftly die.
Life's only purpose, to procreate death,
Hate lives and grows on every breath.
From where destruction rings its bell
How do I get to where the angels dwell?

In a day when all that was innocent is lost,
Love can't be bought at any cost.
Dreams are shattered by callous hands,
Chaos owns and rules the lands,
From where it reeks of hate's foul smell
How do I get to where the angels dwell?

In a place where the faithful are weak and small,
The children are destined to cruelly fall.
You are either the hunted or the possessed,
Few are the hunter, even fewer the blessed.
From this place of the feeble and frail,
How do I get to where the angels dwell?

Exclusion
by Joseph Jenkins

Separated from a life created
to grow without intrusion
Forgotten before the possibility of remembrance
Hurt by young confusion
Name and blood to share are one
Yet knowing not who or why
Eliminated by one's self doing
Due to some lost pride
Into a life of pain and tears
To live in the place of my conclusion
Never to see her beautiful young face
Nor her my own exclusion.....

{ Author note: This is a poem about my relationship
with my daughter. How, due to my choices, I have
negated the possibility of her getting to know who her
father is. As to the state of mind and problems she
might go through having a different last name. Feelings
felt and known to many prisoners. }

**“Don't take your freedom lightly. Recognize the
warning signs of danger that include addictions,
unhappiness, slavery, and especially listen to that
inner conscience that God put into you.” – D.
Gordon**

Death of a Dog
by Derrick Corley

I never cared for dogs
especially little ones
like the one
who pranced inside
the door left open
not to welcome strays
but to catch a breeze
on a hot summer day.
A silly little mutt
pushing its nose against
my hand it licked
wagging its tail while
looking into my eyes
before flashing out
the still open door
while I, compelled
for some undefinable reason
followed this dumb little dog
who ran into the street
got hit by a car
then waited to die
til I held it in my hands
it licked me
and wagged its tail
one last time.
And though decades have passed
Since the death of this dog
whose body I threw into
a dumpster of garbage and trash
I, who never cared for dogs
Especially little dead ones
Cannot forget this mutt
Who came into my life
For five minutes, no more

Broken Record
By Ben Winters

My mind is a broken record that's been overplayed.
Each time I revisit the past it fades further.
So much so that the needle of remembrance
Has worn the grooves smooth.

Or what use is a record that
Refuses to play my song?
For bare vinyl doesn't produce a thing
Except the memory of memory,
Or perhaps a few crackles that remind
Me that I can no longer be reminded.

The spinning only serves to make me dizzy.
Back again to the self same
Spot over and over
All to the point of being sick
Seems to be me totally ..pointless.

Of what use is a record that
Will no longer play the song I loved?
It is best fit for the trash heap
Or some yard sale where it'll
Sell for a few pennies to some poor soul.

If only I could recut the album,
Then I could start over again with a new ballas.
But lacking the proper equipment
For such an endeavor,
I consign this broken record
To the garbage can
Where, at least it's out of the way.

Mortality
By R. Dean Morris

Caught fast in the web
I am a moth
Who's flight
Has drawn it
To the light
Mindless of
The peril looming.

Thinking now
With heart racing
The struggle is on
The blue day gone
Strength wanes
The spider nears...

Caught fast
In a web
Knowledge
Comes screaming
Just like a nightmare
Dreaming
Wisdom bought
But at what price?

“All my fantasies and dreams about love and success have been launched right here - from within one of these dust bunny-infested coffins..” A. Perry

"And as I sit"
by Joshua Devore

I sit here slowly Thinkin' of all that oppose me
Checkin' the pressure from these cops Snoopin'
through my mail Invadin' my thoughts And when I
sleep I attempt to reach some peace But still they creep
Makin' sure that I'm watched And in their eyes I can
see that I'm slime Such is life in a swamp Of beady
eyes, badges, and plots So I'm cuffed up now Shuffling
hallways instead of Cruising the streets Phone home
Collect calls and tear-stained cheeks Freedom deserted
Alerted by keys now instead of a siren Brick walls cast
shadows That hide big tough men cryin' Babies to a
system corrupt Hard-headed crooks with mean mug
looks Lifestyle chasin' the buck And as I sit... A new
conscious contemplating the game My insides change
On the outside I maintain thru Convict fame Gettin'
older, my heart's much bolder I admit things just ain't
the same In the mirror My reflection makes it clear...
Tired of lying But there's no point in given up And not
trying So I elevate my mind to help me pass the time
Keep climbing that mountain! Always keeping track,
constantly countin' Never stoppin' Plottin' productive
ways to get paid Upon the release of the dusty cage
Ideas debating Contemplating daily Patiently waiting I
got the urge to feed the need to plead my case "Let me
go!!!" "Leave me alone!!!" I need my own space to get
in the zone This place is too slow Drip... Drip... Drip...
Like molasses I'm bypassin' these faces Laughin' outta
spite as these cowards Unite and kiss the mans asses
Words of insight Using rhymes to express my mind of
times When my plight was hectic Getting strength
when life seems Shitty like a septic Instead of seekin'
pity I accept it We've all made many mistakes My life
is like a book written by A pencil with no eraser Each
page I'm scribbling my guts out Onto this scratch pad
piece of paper Words of Insight

Void
by Gilbert M. Davila

Void
My body and I are locked in a cage;
I can feel my sanity slip, slip, slipping
Away, devoured by a dark cloud of solitude.
There's a never-ending pain in my head,
Like so many demons chewing on my brain.
There's voices laughing, screaming, whispering:
Insane! Insane! Insane!
But I'm saying! I'm saying! I'm saying

That I. Must. Surface.
I must surface for a breath, of reality.
But the weight on mind is holding me down.
I can't seem to find a shoulder to lean on--
Presently, no one's around.
I swear that I can hear the distinct sound
The pieces of my fractured sanity make
As they hit the floor of my mind and break
Into even smaller pieces.
I find myself on my knees, crying:
Tears streaming down my face, blinding
Me as I desperately try to gather
The pieces of my fragmented life.
I wipe the tears from my eyes,
Wondering how I can feel so cold and dead inside.
And how long can I survive as
The resounding tick-tock of the clock
Of confusion determines my time?
And how much more must I endure before
The wave of madness--that is sure to follow--
Comes crashing down upon me, flooding
The hollowness of my very existence?
Then, I ask myself: Does it matter? Because
What it means to me will ultimately be a memory.
And even memories, like the paint on an old car
That's being exposed to the sun's rays year after year,
Will start to slowly fade away.
So here I sit--cage--exposed to the rays
Of insanity, year after year after year.
Just me, my fading memories and broken dreams,
Staring at the blank, white wall that seems
To perfectly represent the emptiness that is--
My life.

Untitled
By Robert L. Glass

I know of no African that is a stranger to me.
We'll see real and true unity when application of what
we know,
Becomes the status quo.
To live and think righteously is not like a fashion trend
The truth doesn't change its essence from season to
season..
It's the identification with the person that's at the core
of the treason
Against the God within
An inner battle you must win
The alternative should never be an option.

The Dwellers
by Victorious Belot

For the days bright as the stark pain caused by ruffian
children slain for material gain;
For the money-hungry kids who life off pain.

Ain't that sweet? Same hot buttered popped-corned
feet.
Now, I'm hyped; down for pain and "Whatever,
Sister. Let's do this like Brutus. Hear me?"

Day creeps like a thief in the night to steal
Sleep from all them who pipe-dream Black Power...
Black...pride will always live a loveless...Death
Wrongs all right to the motherf'n bone-weary...

residents...sleep heavy on spine-backed beds
Fighting the cold with wallpaper blankets.
Day gets up to rouse them from their weeping;
To get up and stand still to chill with pelts

Of mink on corners knuckleheads wear out.
In the darkness with the heat of armed knights,
Subnlight lances the flesh and soul shouts...

"Black!".. boxes, uncurtained, stare like blank eyes..
Inside..of these stoned tenement tombs bake
Ancient newborns..awake with far to cry..
"Mother!" miraculously has fed eight...

Brothers..in two rooms fight and dress..Fly
..high as 'sons psyched with starched psychedelics.
Mother has 4 spouses who don't have wives.
Fathers limp out of closets dressed to get ..Down

is up! In the clubs, feet boogie and get
Down!! Go! Up the alley, over the fence,
across the yard, and into the cellar.
Quick! Quick!
Split the lot.
Stash the Eagle.
And one got killed
by a pig's bullet in the leg.

of Ham..in the bible sold on Sunday..
Mourning.. in the merchant's house, "Bingo!" plays.
Hymns..resurrect gold form shallow pockets;
Nuggets lint lent them when they gravely begged.

All through the night after the long workday.

Before.they stayed

Out all night: Fucked all day. Scored mad shine
to lynch thesmelves with shiny ropes. They think:
Drugs,Sex. And money. Then ole HIV
"Fuck the TV! That's me."
Cooped up and coached, many just watch TV
But then jump up: "Fuck the TV. That's me!"

On these Somedays sermons poured and..Spilled.
..beer flows at the picnics like piss on mattresses.

There's "Thank you, please's" for chickenheads
and cornbread and
phat backs
and potato salad and
macaroni and cheese.
And gizzards and the castrated.

Couples kiss, lounging under shady clouds..
Above ..on roofs of storied roach
motels are Scarab.. of beetles lay there
on the tarred beach of grains of goey
sand. dweller puffHyd ro and
zone out the hazy, sea side ho-
rizon that dawns with the shimmering heat
of Kn ight, spill ing its blood
'round the ole wide world- that
grind wheel that sharpens the lances of
light every one, every where feels..

Blessed are the roaches who die like flies-
Nawh! Hell, nawh! Nigga, we mutiply!

**In prison we all walk the razor's edge between
submissive obedience and violent revolt. That's a
hard path to maintain and in my thirteen years of
prison I've slipped off either side of it. You just get
tired of the struggle and want to be left alone to do
your time and find you are willing to obey if they
will just leave you be. Then something, or more
likely somebody, pushes you back over the edge.
There you are, battling the system, wishing only to
be left alone. For the last couple of years my life has
been fairly balanced, yet I recognize it can shift in
an instant. Being in ad-segregation helps. It gives
me time to think about the consequences of my
actions before I leap off the edge into that bleak
existence again. My locked door saves me from my
folly and I'm glad it's there. -D. Harris**

Solitude

By R. Dean Morris

Calling from a peak
Up to the sky
Who's burning light
Feeds my soul
And makes me yearn
For so much more
As the breeze rustles
Through the trees

Speaking in hushed tones
A language born cold
With words sharpened
By passing time.
I stand on the peak
Just spirit wishing
And dreaming heavy
As the valley beckons.

“Tion”

by S.N. Houston

As I sit in the midst of incarceration:
Feeling the sensations of my body's fermentation.
I try to practice meditation: searching for some
relaxation.
If only I could return to gestation, and start over with
present education: I could experience the intoxication
of a mother's close relation. But since I'm trapped in
this awful fixation, I've come to the realization: that I
must use the situation for the elevation of my
imagination. While trying to resist the temptation of
succumbing to the degradation of the location. To
achieve this I must put a limitation on my affliction
and protect myself from bad association. Whose
instigation causes retaliation and depreciation of the
black nations. Which goes all the way back to the
plantation and arouses lamentation: and the damnation
of my vexation. Remembering the mutilation, I sit in
frustration, praying in desperation for the cessation of
this awful vacation. Then I sit in fascination and
enjoy the radiation of the constellation. Without the
subordination, I will experience rejuvenation: and be
able to show appreciation for the awesome creation.
This is a dedication to the victims of incarceration. So
remember to use your rationalization, seek your
sanctification: Endure with me as we wait on the
manifestation of the revelation.

No Beauty in Cell Bars

By Spoon Jackson

Restless, unable to sleep
Keys. Bars, the guns being racked
Year after year
Endless echoes
Of steel kissing steel

Noise
Constant yelling
Nothing said
Vegetating faces, lost faces
Dusted faces

A lifer
A dreamer
Tomorrow's a dream
Yesterday's a memory
Both a passing of the cloud

How I long
For the silence of a raindrop
Falling gently to earth
The magnificence of a rose
Blooming into its many hues
Of color
The brilliance of a rainbow
When it sweetly lights up the sky
After a pounding rainfall

Picnics in a rich green meadow
We saw the beauty in butterflies
We made it our symbol
Tiny grains of sand
One hour glass
A tear that may engender
A waterfall

The memories
The dreams
Are now
Love is now

There's no beauty in cell bars

**“Be yourself and you will be the soul that others
aspire to be like.” A. Mayberry**

Wasting Away Me, Claim, Proof, Connection
By Joseph Byrd

I told myself
I wouldn't fall victim
To the dumbing and numbing
Of this slave system
But wisdom was missing
And I was wasting
Wasting time
Wasting breath
Wasting life and the ideas it moved on
Wasting thoughts that could have turned my life
around
Like reality live and up close
But what hurts the most
Is that I was
Wasting you
Wasting me
Wasting her
Wasting, wasting, wasting
Any dreams that could have been made
A difference in how this cookie crumbled
If this addendum
Of this syndrome
Had not been added to my life
I wouldn't have to
Waste sperm cells on
BVIs, Buttmans and Blacktails
In this modern day plantation
Twenty five years of life
Twenty five years of guards playing their part
"on the go around."
"Chow, shower, yard."
"Chow, shower. yard."
"Lock in."

I don't wantna suffer
From
Post traumatic Slave Syndrome
And
Be enraged when freed
From this cage
I don't wantna ease
My pain with
Novacaine, methane or cocaine
More stressing
Unanswered questions
People dying
Unprotected sexing
And
Aids killing at a rapid pace.

Pleading for deliverance and guidance
Economic classes on Tuesdays
Foreign language on Wednesdays
Learning from my Hispanic and Latino brothers
Amor paz y unidad
On Thursdays its Creative Writing
Now I have "Lifers"
Teaching me about
Stocks, bonds, marketing
Claim, proof, connection'
I don't wantna suffer
From Post-traumatic Silly Syndrome
When I'm freed from this cage
And be enraged.

His Own Prison
By William Keith Thomas

Before the darkness closes in
A man clearly sees all his past sins.

As the life seeps from the man's bones
He will travel the last 6 feet alone.

He gazes to the east
Is it salvation? Or the beast?

A vision of the cross,
He is knowing his life's loss.

A final darkness, a blanket of dirt,
His hard sad heart, his life of hurt.

Actions of pain & violence, and his one last yearn,
His judgment is passed, his soul begins to burn.

His judgment? His decisions? Or was it his decision?
That created his own prison?

He cried out to God, seeking his decision,
But knowing deep down inside, he created his own
prison...

**The edge, how close we live with it each and every
day in prison? You never know when you maybe
stabbed, jumped, or have to hurt someone! We live
each and every day like this because hate runs deep
in us behind prison walls. Those of us trying to get
off living on the edge live on it even more! -- R.
Hartley**

Remembrance
By M.W. Hauser

I forgot where I was...
After all I have a good job, a good roommate who makes sure we are never without the necessities
Like toilet paper or soap...
The community of people that I surround myself with are artists, poets, musicians and seekers of truth.
So I forgot where I was...
There was a concert last week that I would have gladly paid top dollar to see with performers of a caliber that spoke to my soul: and it was free!
I have more books than I could ever hope to read, more clothes than I could ever possibly wear, more food than I could ever eat, and more love than I could ever repay.
So it's easy to see why I forgot where I was...
Until last night when a man screamed in panic stricken terror. Pleading for relief to no avail.
"Stop! Please no more, I quit!" H screamed in the dark recesses of the night with no one to answer him.
He pounded on his metal door in the hopes that the ones who had the power to help would lend him a hand and stop the misery and chaos he was experiencing.
Over and over he screamed like a wounded animal caught in a trap. And, like an animal, I'm sure he would have chewed off his own leg if it would have allowed him to escape the torment and set him free.
I know I was not alone in hearing his desperate plea for mercy.
I asked the man I shared a space with if he too had heard and his curt reply was "Yes."
The conversation was over.
There are things that are just not talked about in here – see he has never forgotten where he is.
After all, he has been here and places worse, where the screams never cease for over eighteen years; half of my short life.
But tonight it was different.
Tonight it was me who heard a man cry for help that I could not provide.
My tears brought him no comfort and I fear neither did my prayers.
I had nightmares that night of me being in his shoes, pleading for help that never comes, and I fought back with all the strength I possess.
In the morning when the tray slot in the door was unlocked
And toilets were flushing up and down the tier,
I remembered...
I remembered where I was...
Then I tried to forget all over again.

Tomorrow
By Damion T. Bullock

Fantasy is not my life
Tomorrow is a dream
I act in the present & now
Peace within strolling through an
Orchestrated symphony of violence.
Physically the threat is minute
Mentally the reality is acute &
Felt
I've watched men melt as they
Spoke of their dream
Tomorrow

I see eye glasses made of spun sugar
How can the blind man see?
Looking directly at me his vision is
Blurry
He is lost & in a hurry at the state's
Whim
Look at him
He dreams in color with eyes open
Living for tomorrow.

Geese
By Derrick Corley

A gaggle of geese landed
Within the prison walls today
In the middle of the field
They huddled together
Seemingly unconcerned
With fences and razor wire
Gun towers and surveillance cameras
The men, standing around
Watching them with hunger
Hungering not for a meal
But to become a goose
To be able to spread its wings
Ride upon the wind...
The desire to be something
Other than what he is.
And as I watched, I wondered
About the thoughts in a goose's head
Whether it too, hungered
Wanting to become a man...
But as they took to the air
Honking their joy to the wind,
I knew then, that
Whatever they thought
What secret desires they possessed
None were to be a man,
For only he has the need
The desire to be something
Other than what he is.

Archipelago
By William H. David, Jr.

I was determined to remain an island when I
Came here... a man alone, here in this loveless
Hell I am confined to.
So many groups one can fall into...the gangs,
Hate groups, skin heads, black radicals, the gays...
The poor confused bastards that don't know what sex
They are, or the deviant monsters that don't care.
There are the bad asses, men who have only
Some badly misguided sense of pride that must be
Protected at all costs.
The poets, the artists, the writers, the performers,
The thieves, the killers, the game players...all here.
It is sometimes hard to tell who is who...so I
Remain an island in this sea of confusion.
I can identify with some, but never lose my sense
Of aloneness...I nurture it, feed it and it sustains me.

It doesn't take long to see who is who in here
And each man falls into his place.
Oh, some pretend to be what what they are not, or
Pretend not to be what they are, but it is far too small
A world in here for any pretense to last.
One is forced to keep his eyes open, least he be
Caught off guard,
In doing so, you see much more than you wish to.
Some things you can ignore, others you can't.
But look you must, just as I was forced to look.
In watching, I noticed something very strange...
That among the many here, there were others that fit in
No better than I.
What was even more surprising, they didn't seem
To try.
Them I realized, I was much less alone than I ever
Perceived myself to be.
Still an island am I...one of many.

Every Time I Close My Eyes
By Joseph Angel Cano

My AKA is SADD-BOY and I'm about to take you
Into my world. As I sit behind these walls of
Steel, Alone and feeling empty inside, the pain doesn't
Show, but the hurt still grows as another day is
Slowly fading away.
I close my eyes with rushing thoughts going through
My head. Days and nights in this solitary square, my
own prison hell.
Close your eyes and come with me, your image is the
only key. Follow your dreams and you may see beyond
the depths of reality,
Where you must fight for pride and dignity.
It's behind a number you now must abide
The strength for survival you'll find inside.
I know this world very well, it's my own private sort
of hell, Where others before once did dwell, in what's
now my cell,
You fight for life, you battle to win, only to find out
They've won once again.
There is a place you would rather be, far away from
cement walls and bars.
That place is just imaginary and it has no room for
scars.
Wake up, for now it's back to your world you must go,
This you should know, keep this one thought upon
your mind,
You went home, I remain behind.
So if you should think of me from time to time,
Just pick up a pencil and drop me a line.

Headlights
By Ben Winters

It seems everybody is moving on except me
I'm stuck right here, stranded
Left by the side of the road
While life and the headlights pass me by

All these cars with their happy people
Driving on to better places
I stick my thumb out for a ride
But no one seems to see me

Headlights, like hope, shining so bright
Only pass by in a flash
While I choke on a cloud of dust and exhaust
In the dim, red afterglow of faded dreams.

Is it wrong of me to hope?
To hope some fool wrecks their car
So I can play the hero
And be needed for once in my life?

I'll use my bare hands
To pull a child from the flaming wreck
I'll be on the news at eleven
Labeled "Good Samaritan" for my deed

Or maybe the car will wreck me
Tossing my fifty feet in the air
I'll fall down with a thump
Brains oozing red and gray on black asphalt

But knowing my luck I'll survive
And end up in a wheelchair for life
Unable to wipe my own ass
And dependent on people to feel sorry for me

Either way I still stand here stuck
On a lonely stretch of highway
With my thumb stuck out for a ride
That many never pick me up

And sometime I wander a bit too far
Drifting into the middle of the road
Into oncoming traffic, waiting for a wreck
Watching as the headlights gleam.

Humpty-Dumpty
By R. Dean Morris

And it's so odd...
The transparent facades
Lonely war dogs
Unnaturally shod
With steel toed
Resolve
And ankle chains
The hard and cold
Made helpless...

Weak little children
Claiming a strength
That they deny
Even exists.
They look in
The mirror
Without seeing
The real
Or a cause
To feel
Or hear
A deeper calling.

And all the while
Asleep
They're falling
Without realizing
That even if
They hit
In the midst
Of their slumber
No matter how deep...
What will be left...
Will not be
Enough...
To put back
together again.

**So we shouldn't worry about being on the edge,
over the edge, or at the edge, no matter what each
of them means to each individual. We should think
about what we have done to not only keep ourselves
from being on the edge over, over the edge, or at the
edge, but what have we done to keep others from
reaching the edge.—**

D. Dickson, Essay "On the Edge"

It All Comes Back to Me
By Spoon Jackson

It all comes back to me
The invisible man I used to see
It comes back to me now
The madness of Foslom Prison

Being on orientation
Is worse than the hole
No window, no sunlight, no books
One stamped envelope, two pieces of paper

One pair of boxers, no socks
A toilet paper orange jump suit...
I try to pace in silence
But flip-flop shoes won't allow that

I've never been one to sleep
All day and night but right now
I long too...not even a roach
Of a spider to look at

It all comes back to me
Metal blocked tiny window
Not enough sun light to warm
A bee's butt.

Sick Thoughts
By M.W. Hauser

Delirium shifts and my mind just drifts,
Across the chasm and into the rifts
Created by abstract thought and
Subliminal sound
Of me talking to myself, absolute pride,
Protection,
Memories unfathomable, destroy what is
Possible
While making an escape route...

If I'm stuck in the past,
I can ignore the present
And deny the future;
Elevating my importance and disregarding
Yours...

Snap into reality, witness the tragedy,
Of ego destruction, inner child
Resurrection.
Being locked into the moment,
Realizes the low rent apartment,

That I've been selling my soul to afford,
Absence of worries,
Quiets the flurries of inquiries,
Into the self and its role, nevermore!

Delirium resets, releases the regrets,
Out of the recesses of the black box
Confines,
Which infiltrate my mind.
I'm not in my heart anymore.

I've got to get back
For without it I lack
Any realizing of the facts
Of what makes me tick n' tock.
I choose to unlock and retain,
Whatever remains
In the burnt-out husk of my soul-shell.
If I do this soon I will be rell,
If not I return to my hell
Of uncontrollable feelings,
Yearning for heart healing,
And the pity party that never ends.
I'll play the victim,
Think that I've tricked them,
Never to know if they're truly my friends.

Delirium shifts and resettles.
It was all a test of my mettle.
I believe I have chosen right.
I'll not give up the inner fight.
I'll lay claim to the eternal light,
And understand
It's all just a part of the master plan,
To show me what I can
And can't do.
To let me know you've not given up on me,
So how could I ever give up on you?

What's even funnier then that is that one time I asked if they could order a book on how to sail a sailboat, well the library said she probably could not cause it would be an escape risk and here I am living in west Texas in the middle of nowhere and no river for at least 100 miles that's if it even still has water in it.--- C.V. Anderson, Journal entry

Justice

By R. Dean Morris

And the gluttony
In the eyes
Of the improverished
Is the result of
Another kind of
Hunger
That goes
Unsated...

Meanwhile...
Justice sweats
Under its
Own weight...
Laboring
To catch
Its breath.

Underdog is Here **By Victorious Belot**

In the nick of time
Fine drops of strong blood fill only to drip
Bits of mortal souls:
Old wound rehealed after new scabs are scratched.

Lapse of memory
Frees the pain, again, from collective wounds
Doomed from the outset
Fret not fear not: our Underdog is here

Seersucker suited
Blue, white-red matter stained from battles fought
Lost damsels, distressed,
Presshands together preying for her daily

Flaying to be seen
Keen sight in deep night, our hero's warship
Slips off her shoulder
Unholstered Reagans are sprung from the lips

Slick villains then run
From the scene –quick time – to hide under sees
Teaming from the grief
Thief! Halt or be civilly shot to death,

Left on right of ways
Days at a time for the nightly viewing
Brood entertainment
Reclaims drama from protesting damsels

Hansel but regrets
Wet kisses smother our hero with lubed,
Tubed lips on TV
See? Just in time to save the day. Just in

Trusting the star strangled culprit with just
Enough bullshit to change the subject.
Until the next episode
Until the next pine explodes
Until next fear,
Underdog will hear to champion your cheers
Not your tears.

Doors **By Ben Winter**

I sit here, not knowing if it's right
Not knowing where I'll go next
I'm here and I'm alone
I'm in a house with unlocked doors
Will anyone come in?
Will you share some time with me?
My doors are unlocked for you
Anyone come in and keep me company
My doors are unlocked for anyone
That's anyone, can anyone be you?
But all tomorrows become today
And they still stay away
But I still sit here and wait
For just one more day
And then it fades
The sun sets in the sky
And now I'm alone tonight
But I still won't lock my doors
Just in case you'll come in
And I ask myself
"Am I waiting in the wrong house?"
maybe I'll get up from here
to meet you on the streets
my doors will be unlocked
so if I'm out come in and wait for me

Authors Note: "Doors" was written after I was first sentenced in 2003. Knowing that the prison system would be my place of residence for such a long time made me feel totally alone. Being about 800 miles from my home in Southern California is a difficult thing. The poem came from my feeling of isolation from my loved ones, whom I have not seen since 2003. Obviously I am not speaking of literal doors, but rather the doors in my inner self. BW

Festival
by Derrick Corley

How strange to look
out a prison cell window
to see children running--playing
on a prison field: THE YARD,
and hear their voices, laughter
sights and sounds so alien in this
forbidding, bleak, hostile environment
as is seeing affection--love
given, taken, and shared freely:
lovers holding hands, kissing
a mother hugging her child
kids hugging, touching, playing with
an imprisoned father, brother, uncle
unaware of their surroundings, for awhile
the magic of love has transformed
this place of dry grass and pain
that holds the years, and bloody tears
shed by caged flesh and souls
into a field of hope and dreams.
And as I watched it came to me
the sum total of my life, and loss
a deadness within, something missing
from my life and what I was
what I am and am supposed to be
and, whether stolen by life or prison
robbed of healthy human contact, I am
yet able to find comfort in knowing
that something still lived within me
for I FELT the pain of my loss
and while my flesh was not upon that field
my soul was, and I
found hope that I would love
and be loved yet again, and so
later, when the festival was over
the field cleared and empty of all
my eyes saw again the magic
my ears heard the echo of laughter
and my spirit danced upon that field
that wasn't empty at all.

“I Had A Dream”
by Hilton Hines

This dream was so peaceful and serene,
We were living through the visions
of Dr. Martin Luther King.
I had a dream,
I visualized that every boy and girl
was taught to be friends,

And race is what they run for fun,
Not the color of skin.
I had a dream
That man had never created deadly diseases,
There was no crying nor dying
From cancer, AIDS or Hepatitis C,
There was no hunger and starvation
From the USA to Africa
And Africa wasn't stripped
Of gold, diamonds and oil
By no good scavengers.
I dreamed
That there were no wars.
Love and peace was the plan.
We destroyed nuclear plants
And purified our lands.
I dreamed
Osama bin Ladin came out'
Of hiding like a real man.
He knew Allah wouldn't justify
His evil commands.
I had a dream
We didn't have currency,
Taxes nor inflation,
No armies, only schools
And colleges for higher education.
We didn't lie or cheat,
We made our own clothes,
Grew our own food:
You had to work to eat.
I had a dream
We were all rich but
In our hearts not our pockets,
There were no such things
As computers, lasers or rockets.
I had a dream
That this world had
Forgotten about color,
We all loved one another
As sisters and brothers.
I had a dream
We came together as one
From the USA, Iraq, Cuba
to Afghanistan
and George Bush
Saddam Hussein and
Fidel Castro
Hugged and shook hands.
I had a dream.

**We are still locked down. No idea why this time---
From a journal entry**

My Prison Cell
By Michael McCall

Sittin' here in my prison cell
A dream or step away from hell
I've been asked, do I pray?
Why should I, when there's nothing to say
So I stay in my reality
Which is my prison cell...at times I allow my mind to
go free
Beyond what I can see
One place I can find peace
I'm grateful not to have a life sentence
But what's life? Without experience
So I sit in my prison cell...

Time seems to move like a snail
At least at 4 o'clock I can look forward towards the
mail man
In hopes I be asked for my last two, and imagine what
this letter might say
I hope it's all good
The best part of my prison day is yard release
But yard is on hold again
A routine which never fails
For what reason I don't know
But I'm ready for some fresh air and to enjoy the sun
rays across my face
The small things you miss from sittin' in a prison cell.

Fortune Cookie
By Victorious Belot

I
Sit
Alone
A stoned Buddah
Pissy drunk off the rancid rain
Drops falling from my eye that
Looks askance to heaven,
The million-dollar penthouse
The one with the gardens hanging
From the terraces under
Deep blue skies and
A lone
Gold
I

**You see, my family is also doing this time with me
in the mental sense of the form." They also keep me
focused and thinking positive thoughts. They alone
keep me from going crazy in this madhouse they**

**call a prison system. –T. Jennings, excerpt from
essay, "My Family"**

Featherless
By H.B. Grant, Jr.

From under the plot and plunder
Sessions of doubt reign high on today's agenda
Morning songs sound bluesy...footsteps weigh heavy
Socially I remain indigent
Exposed to cynical views, from my own scrap book of
course

I just couldn't do it right
I step out and my imagination claims another victim
As a slender frame with an unpronounceable name,
claims
My confidence to paper thin love letters
Sky high standards keep me disappointed

I search. Dance clubs sprinkle fairy dust from rooftops
On girls with tube tops
Hypnotic songs seep out speakers, and into seekers'
ears
I fear the worse, each verse same as the first

Even at the rally anti-Sally has a hint of name brand
loyalty
And speaks through Avon parted lips, I don't trip
These unobtainable standards I possess has left me a
mess
Then as if the wind could spell out friend
My doubt walked out and she walked in

Speechless features, silence teachers
She's the most beautiful. I am a believer

Her hair the color of cinnamon
Ladies and gentlemen we have a winner again
Skins as smooth as good news, I can't lose

She is a Featherless Angel, surely
She cast her eyes upon me, purely
I no longer need pretend, my love has found me once
again

She runs right through my glory be!
The perfect height of 3'3"
Jumps in my arms and sets me free
Daddy! Daddy! Look at me.!

Incarcerated
By Darrell Clemens

Incarcerated...has its ups and downs
To this day it's full of many silly clowns
All we do is sleep, think, play typical games,
Call each other junk. There are many names/
I can't understand why it's like that.
Probably because all our friends have stabbed our
back.
Incarcerated...we could really learn a lot,
Seek some education and see the future plot.
Computers are taking over as we speak
It's really simple, yet very unique.
Get some schooling or learn a trade
Instead of wanting violence under a blade.
Incarcerated... seems to play with our mind,
Watch, listen, learn, seek and you'll find;
We think we are strong, yet we know,
Our manhood is taken daily, really slow,
Open your mind, wake up, wake up, wake up,
We're being robbed, but who give a fuck!
Incarcerated...it's not very good on the soul,
If we finally snap, we'll be worth more than gold.
It doesn't matter if it's out first, or many times.
Listen carefully; do you hear all those chimes?
That's not soothing music, fool, those are brass keys,
If all else fail, look up, pray, get on your knees,
Yes, slowly, our hopes and dreams have
 Evaporated;
It's not over, if we use what we got, while
 Incarcerated!

Two Couplets
By John Henry Sanchez

Ghetto violence
Guns pop, tires squeal,
Lives cease, as bodies lay still

Two lovers
A cig-I-light
In clouds of bliss she sleeps

Emily
By R. Dean Morris

Emily died...
 In my arms
But I wasn't there
 For what I couldn't bare
 Her raven hair

Spilled over
My forearm...
As she closed her eyes
 For the last time,

The illusion
Within my confusion
Stripped me
 To the bone
As sure as
 Cat-o'nines...
Crushed and left bleeding...
 So deeply needing
 Dropped in the waste
That were once memories,

Emily died
And I kissed her lips
That were still warm
 Though only in
 My vision.
Her final smile
Spoke silently
 Good bye said...
My heart broke in pieces...

The desperation
Driving deep my confession
Bitter the lesson
 This concrete box.
Wasted...devastated
 So helpless..alone
She called out my name...
 But I wasn't there.

Trapped in this Jungle of life...
By Michael McCall

I'm trapped in this jungle of life/taking a stand
Cause this man has to fight/it's my life full with
negativity/ so what do you expect from me?/
When I'm trapped in this jungle of life/Hustle
Or a 9 to 5/you be the judge/would you hire a thug?
In and out of jail/searching for a change/nut how can I,
when I was raised to bang/all I see are drugs and death
in my community/ I'm trapped in this jungle of life...
I turn to weed, and get high every night/from my eyes
it's right/to continue this struggle means to
survive/trapped in this jungle of life.

The Vixen

By William H. Davis, Jr.

You frolic in the warm water
Building strength
You dance above the gulf
Keeping us wondering
You have the smell of sea about you
Your cool breeze turns violent
The, like some woman scorned
You pound our beaches
Thrash our city
Splinter hundred-year old oak trees
Razing our homes,
Making rubble of our work
You leave women and children homeless,
Then you pass from sight...
Leaving us to ponder our wreckage,
But the savage vixen you were...
We will remember you, Rita

Lifeline

By Derrick Corley

May and December
String strung
Across a cell
A line to hold
Cards which connect
Past to present...
A dying connection
As the years pass
And each year brings
Less cards to hang.
To not be
Forgotten, I am
Counting cards hopefully
Received and hung
In the light of day,
Then in the night
The darkness and quiet
A recount is taken
Over and over again
Evaluating the strength
Of this lifeline keeping me
From falling into
The abyss of loneliness
And despair, as I wonder
Who will fail to hang
On next time the line is
Strung across the cell
And the years.

I Always Hear

By H.B. Grant, Jr.

For the first time in a long time the morning made
sense
No longer an abstract yearning for a beginning, a new
beginning
But a colorful approach with electricity and sparks
Wrapped in an hour glass with salt instead of sand
Over a wall like barrier where the softer grass grew,
beams of brilliant

Voices rose high up over the rooftops shaped like hats
with chimneys for feathers and ancient sprawl, oval
shaped windows and rabbit trails
Piles of timber and sage brush wait to be ignited for the
use of there heat and there smoke
We see the coming of the clouds and think of shelter,
but don't seek it
I thirst for a different kind
The heavens are involved in personal business mere
mortals aren't privy to, so they close clouds of curtain
and descend fleets of mixed moisture to discourage our
curious ways
Children don't have the fear of sickness so they stay
and play cart wheeling between the raindrops, playing
out fairytales
Until the roll of distant thunder claps upon them
suddenly
Sending them under the fabric of their mothers' dress,
tunic, shawl
For soft keeping and soft weeping.
I personally never saw the rain, but I always hear it
fall.

Pop

By Victorious Belot

...is the sound dad makes
with his hand against a worried mother's head;
both concerned about that damn boy
out on the streets past his bedtime.
It's the sound and simultaneous
Cry of the child on the corner
Slumping into slumberless sleep
From the expelled cordite breath
Of his foster father.
The one that didn't bring him life
But damn sure took it.

Webbed Up
By Derek Corley

How like a prisoner be
An insect trapped
Caught in a spider web
By a hungry arachnid.
Spun chains and shackles,
No comfort to the victim
Wrapped up in silk
Injected with a paralytic
Helpless, awaiting its fate
To be eaten, siked dry
Till all that's left
Is an empty shell
The spider cuts loose to fall from its web...
Prisoner or insect

This Time
by Spoon Jackson

I passed a thorn-thick
 forevergreen desert bush
and a cottontail rabbit
 jumped out. She was spring
So beautiful with a small
 white powdered donut tail.
All I ask when this body dies
 this time when the life
inside is suckled into new life
 burn it Don't leave
this body imprisoned in an
 unconscious earth-killing
land of people. Bend, break, crush, grind, or beat
 Whatever it takes
to turn this body
 into ashes,
dark indissoluble
 snowflakes
that sail across the sea.
 back to Afrika, Sweden
back to a land rich in lore and love, laved in
 forgiveness.
When this body ceases to live,
 this time,
 set it free.

Obsidian Black
by Delvin Diles

now comes one blameless
giver in the morning
giver of mourning
adorned in granite
Obsidian Black
comes as the last
beginning of life
a true transition at last
fear it, ponder about it
wonder about it
it comes to pass
and after is then
so now savor laughter
and wind
and light
and rain
P.D.A's, L.E.D.'s, R&R's, streets and cars, drinks and
bars,
skies and stars,
loves and wars, hugs and scars
all that is
all you are
it takes then, so how
could you not,
in its shadow
live right now?

A Dream of Times
By Jeremy Towner

A dream to times
Long gone astray
A journey on towards
Dawns on new days,
The spirit of heritage,
And inheritance there lies
The blood of our kin,
In fields where they died
On lands forgotten
With borders that shift,
And their souls to be forever,
As god's one gift,
To a world reknowned
As a place of peace
And a dream of times
To live and be free

A Poet's Rebellion

By Ben Winters

Like a bawling infant who cries for lack
Of a better way to say he's hungry,
I put down a few feeble words in hopes
Of saying something, and I fall short

I use black and white words because
My palate lacks the color I need to
Paint a true, living expression

Where gritted teeth and tearful eyes
Say what the poet can't, words are
Nothing but a hopeless ignorance

Where seeing is believing, hearing these
Words is but a poor substitution for the
Experience of heart ache

This ink is not the red of blood
That pours from a living heart

Its flavor is not that of salt tears

This paper hasn't the power to open your
Eyes or take you away to another world

Both pen and paper are one man's futile
Attempt at communion with a world that
Speaks a different tongue

My words are empty babble with no meaning
...neither deep nor profound...

and my words are the howl of a lone dog
on a moon-lit night --- and but undefined

and my words are an infant's pathetic
attempt to say he's hungry with a cry

Bone yard

By Frederick Jones

Wrinkled dreams wrapped around
The bones of dead men laboring,
Clutching crusted-over-doubt-hope
To defiantly thwart years like mountains
Buried deep beneath dark seas,
Their remorseful tears staining the bottom
Where, in limbo, their bones scream
For mercy that hides unforgiving

And above, God observes stealthily,
His presence hard to feel,
Yet silently and aloud
He is constantly called upon
To free the bones of paining souls
Futilely trying to defeat time.
But, unlike those huge ivory tusks,
Who enter that final place,
Thoughts of animated roaming
Fill these wretched confines
As grim Reaper controls the pendulums
Of antique grandfather clocks ticking
Towards inevitable dark fates
Of dead men laboring through
Prolonged judgments of death
Executed by the hands of time.

Blue Rains

By R. Dean Morris

And what manner of convict
Curries favor with the unseen?
Who puts their hope in that
Which is beyond the norm...
Exception to the exception?

A haven born out of great travail
Where calm prevails...
Despite the thirst for blood
And for flesh.
Gurney riders into oblivion...
Never seen again...
Never seen again...

And what hardness pounds at
The periphery
Banished rudely
From
Its former claims
Where Blue Rains wash clean
Tie-dyed dreams
That never were...
Bound by time...

The Refuge City of Life
By Armando O. Solis

The road to somewhere
Becomes miles and miles,
Separating me apart
From the city that refuges
Part of me – my love, my life
And soul.

The road, long and lonely
to somewhere – a place
where love is denied, unwanted
and not cherished
where the wait is unbearable
and the longing is a nightmare.
The cries and pain of heartaches
Of men are echoes in the night
Of endless dreams to come
Yet the memories find their place
Where the tears fall like
A drizzle, and the cries
Are silent in the night.
Memoires taking me back
Yet separating me from the
City that refuges
Part of me –my love—my life
And soul.

The road to somewhere
Becomes miles and miles
Where the vision of you
Is vivid in my mind and heart
Yet a part of you-and-us
Is slowly fading away –separating me from
the city that refuges
part of me –my life—my love
and soul.

Original Haiku
By Dana Rapisardi

Origami's art:
Simple, intricate forms, all
By Implication

Feet, fins or features
Already there in the square
Embryo paper

Folder's magic act:
Where the paper vanishes
There's a grasshopper

Geometry shapes
Space and time,
Frames the cosmos
And this paper rose

Old Timer
By Victorious Belot

4:24 am is the past begun with these words
after a bad dream that I was in prison
sitting on a couch with associates:
Chillin', joking with the fellas
--which can be risky in prison—that
led to acting like I was gonna stomp
a drawing this prone thug was working on.

Oops I scuffed the drawing by accident.
Shit. I wipe the mark to no avail.
Pissed, he is.
What, wipe it again?

Nuttin' happenin', homes. (What, tryin' to punk me
In my dream?)
Walking past me now with barely repressed intent,
I get yep to not be caught sleepin'
Damn. A challenge to the corner
Where I poke his neck with my pen and give a swift
kick that kicked in reality;
My right foot launched the covers of sleep.
My heel hit either the metal desk attached to the wall
or the metal cot on its return
From the dream state, awake.
I turn on my up-side-down personal lamp with the
tissue with muslim oil on it on the bulb that perfumes
the air of stale cigarette smoke.
I tuck back in the covers pulled by consciousness.
The old magnetized medical timer on the metal locker
On the desk tells me what time it is.
Looking at it directly, the numbers are light and fuzzy.
On an angle, they are dark & clear, set 5 minutes ahead
of life, clockin' me, clockin' the time I spend primed.
4:54, 4:55 am.
Back to dreamland.
It should be safe now.

**There are many forms of prison. We have the
obvious prisons of Alcatraz, Sing Sing, and Ellis.
But others exist that have no need of high walls and
barbed wire. These prisons are made by our own
hands, yet once they're built, we call them
anything... except prison –Dave Gordon, excerpt
from Journal**

Humpty-Dumpty
By R. Dean Morris

I am not
As adept
In my
Advancing
Middle age
At finding
Compassion
For the inane...

At a time
When we
Should as men
At least begin to begin
To stand up...
We won't.

We don't
for the sake
of playground politics
which dictate
from a
piranha's
eye view that
what moves
Is subject
to attack a
and if it bleeds
it can
and must
be consumed.

In the meantime...
the better angels
within our nature
are left to starve
in a banquet hall
where tables are laden
with more than enough...

it goes far beyond
hatred, or bigotry,
it is a malicious tre
whose fruit
is eaten
first
by the eye
and then
the heart.
The poison song

Of a siren
Whose gift
Is a deep sleep
Which cures
Any burgeoning
Consciousness
And every buden
Of waking freedom
From enlightenment.

The haunted melody
Sang in an
Insidious tone
Carrying in it wings
Deliverance from
Love
And compassion
Sowing seeds of hardness
And shades its fear
As would a lion
Over its prey
Lest one strong
Come
And steal it away...

But I hear them, and see them...
As they boast
"I never needed anyone but myself anyway!"
at night, on the shelf,
they weep bitter tears
thinking no one sees...
but I see, yeah I see!

Mush
By Derrick Corley

Almost a woman, she was
Small and light
And loved to ride
Upon my shoulders
Begging me to
Pick her up, carry her
Until I did
Block after block
Not tired, never wanting
To put her down, and
Though decades have passed
Still she rides
No longer upon my shoulders
But within my heart.—
A weight I'll never, ever
Tire of carrying.

Untitled
By H.B. Grant, Jr.

Let there be no more cravings
For the unnatural niceties that plague the soul
And muddle the mind. Dare we breathe with the best
intentions
And place our names amongst the victors:
No longer a world leader without a world
But a star shaped spirit rising high above the ether

Face to face with the Renaissance Man himself
Poet Laureate, Artisan, Architect, Verb Surgeon,
Naturalist, Compose, Father and Friend
“What is your contribution”: He asks me.
“Fire meets water,” is my reply,”
We agree to meet at low tides, full moons and meteor
showers

Flawless to a fault. Bones double jointed and sharply
pointed
Amazing results from free time
“Acute perception,” he says. Then tells me “hollow
myself out and listen..”
Minutes pass in the green grass, shortly after we laugh.
I roll down the rolling hills, like a grandkid or
something.

Celestial bodies fall from the sky and splash down
somewhere deep in the Mediterranean Sea sending up
Spray .They fight to make it to shore. I gather a
handful of sand and toss it high
Above us. None return to earth, and neither do we.

Wisdom
By R. Dean Morris

I thought that
I was awake
 Until I
Became aware
That the depth
 Of my sleep
Was not illusion.

 Where goes
The golden fusion
That looks firm;y
 Eye to eye
 with a hope
 For all the
Creeping humanity

Who’s strength
Ebbs and flows,

Far beyond
harsh fate
that crows
over its
accomplishments
but then
suddenly stops...
long enough
to encourage another.

Hanged Man
By Derrick Corley

Ripped Sheets
Braid together
You made a rope
To hold your weight
To take your life
And hung yourself
From a basketball rim
In an exercise yard
Of the box you were in
And couldn’t get out of
To save your life---
Though you shed no tears
As your life choked away
It rained that day
After they cut your down
The world cried where
Others would not
And you could not.

Postscript
By Vernell Cable

P.S. It’s so hard to see
The sky from here
But a published poem
Would give me wings.

**The terrible tragedy of my life is that everything
that I'm now enjoying in prison was available to me
when I was out there with my loved ones. If only I
knew back then how to enjoy the simple things in
life, I would have never had to trade my children
for them.—Dave Gordon, excerpt from a journal
entry**

Too Late
By Delvin Dilles

I
It's a trip how the younger you are,
For some reason, time don't move fast enough,
And you can't really see that far
So you speeds through your teens like a fast car
Complaining 'bout waiting
At every pause accelerating
Acting before thinking
Thinking you grown 'cause you been drinking,
Smokin' and fuckin'
And them old folks can't tell you nothin'
Your choices is tosses of dice in this game of life
No idea of with whom you dealin'
Bettin' on a feelin'
Really you ain't even knowledgeable of all the rules,
Listenin' to them fools, who don't know no more than
you
The Dying young, I watch 'em swerve in the blind
zone
With no guidance or common sense to rely on
Being honest, what's ironic is ain't that long ago
I wouldn't even heed to the wisdom of my own song
Feelin' too good to see what's bad and all wrong
Missing freedom when it's all gone, and it's

Chorus
Too late, done did that
All gone
Too late, gotta live with that
All gone
Too late, thass it, thass all
All gone
Too late, done fucked that off

II
She was raised in the streets from 13 to 23
Used to fall up in the club with a fake ID
She got her curves early, thick body lovely
So she figured a -o-b she would never need
As long as the enterprise of whats 'tween her thighs
And her head skills pay,
All her bills paid
But on a typical day in her bizness of' lust,
One of her tricks crunk.
Hit her with gorilla thrust
She just got to buckin' back 'cause she like it rough
Yet that was too much action for the Magnum not to
bust
The poor child

Snatchin' up cash with a smile
Unaware of the virus, climbing up her vaginal canal
Wagin' war against her immune system
Vixen turned victim
Biological time-bomb tickin'
Too wicked how the bug hit
Round the time she quit whorin' for being lovesick

Too late, done did that
All gone
Too late, gotta live with that
All gone
Too late, thass it, thass all
All gone
Too late, done fucked that off

III
Goin' hard
Doing pull ups on a steel bar
In a chain -link fenced cage, single Rec Yard,
Talkin' to the Lord
Execution Date's a week away and
He's askin' Him who created him
If it's cool he wouldn't mind stayin'
A lil' while longer,
Before it's all over
With silence as his only answer, still he keeps his
hopes up, two cages down
One walkin' in circles, talkin' to hisself, lookin' around
A deep frown on his brow
No order in his thoughts
Main thing he hate going without in there is violent sex
When he ain't mumblin'
He cuss out all laws confrontin' him
And promise em
They won't inject him without rumblin'
Though both inmates is in the same place
They exist on different planes
Inner peace, and inner rage
One ready for the final fight,
The other for spiritual flight,
Remarkably they both believe it ain't

Too late, done did that
All gone
Too late, gotta live with that
All gone
Too late, thass it, thass all
All gone
Too late, done fucked that off

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Prisoner Express promotes rehabilitation by providing information, education and opportunities for creative self expression to incarcerated individuals throughout the United States.

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