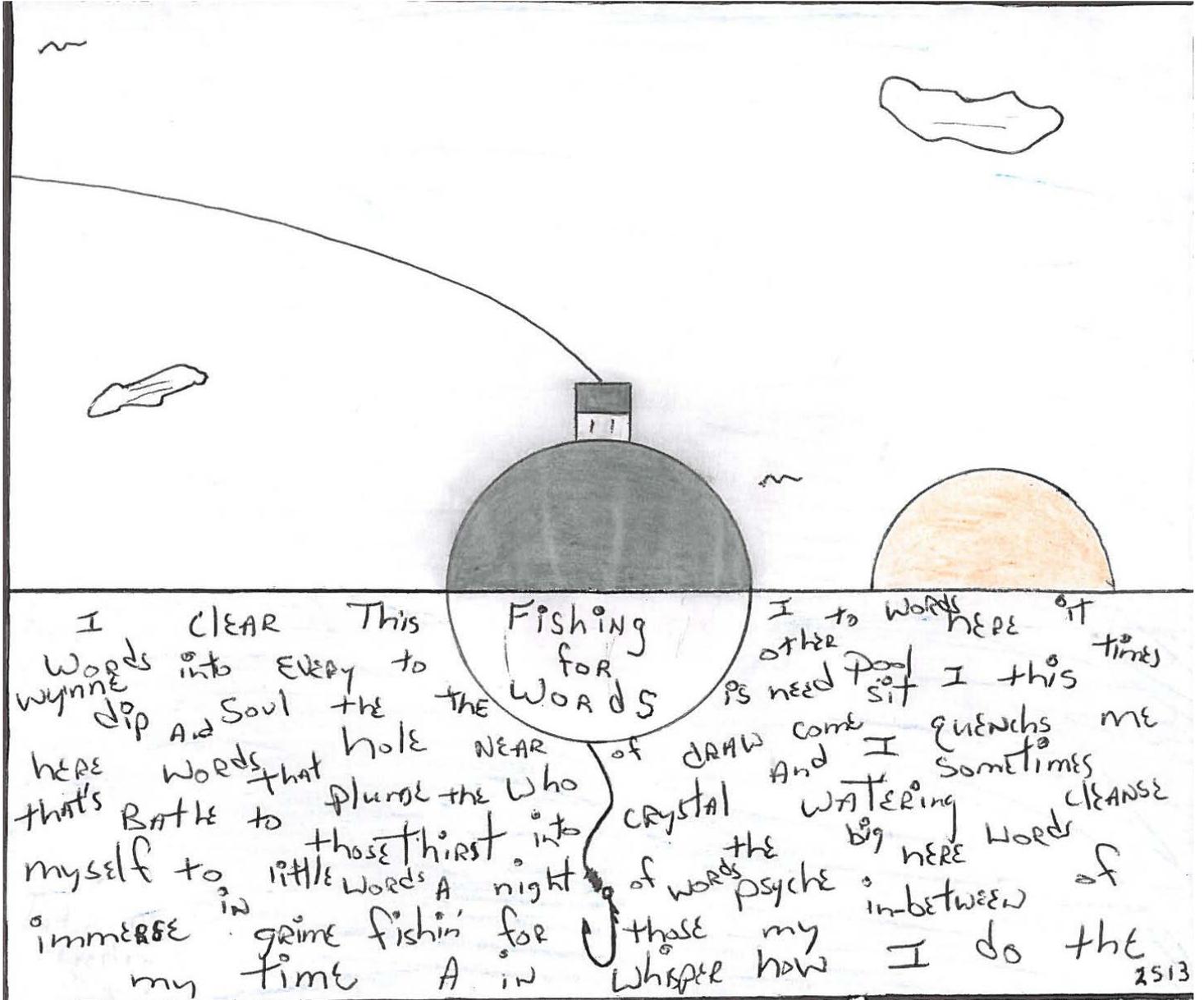


PRISONER EXPRESS

Poetry Anthology Volume 12



Cover Art is “Fishing for Words” by LeRoy Sodorff

All additional art included is by LeRoy Sodorff

Thanks to Gary, and all Prisoner Express Interns who have helped to make this anthology possible

Most of all: gratitude for all those who contributed

Dear Reader,

What follows is the twelfth volume of *Prisoner Express*'s poetry anthology. You can find the addresses of each contributor following this message, right before the poems selected (some contributors chose to use pen names, and so are not listed below). Deciding which poems to include in this anthology was an incredibly difficult task; every poem demanded close and careful reading. In choosing the poems, I sought poems that touched on themes of one's voice, poems that discuss time, poems both about physical space and space which includes galaxies, poems that dealt heavily with love, and poems which offered critiques of the workings of the world. I hope that what follows is something you, the contributors and readers, will find enjoyable and, hopefully, powerful. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me or the Alternatives Library, home of *Prisoner Express*. Most of all, I'd like to say thank you for sending in your poems and offering me the chance to put them in a volume. This is the best book I've read in a long time.

All of the best,

Josh

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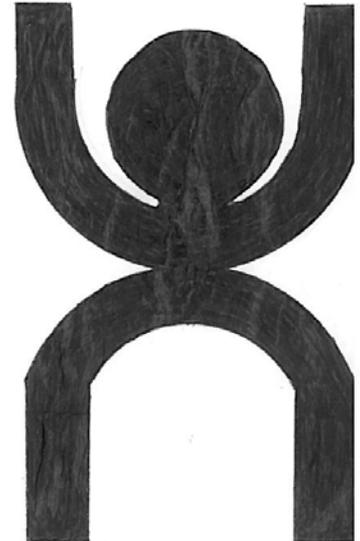
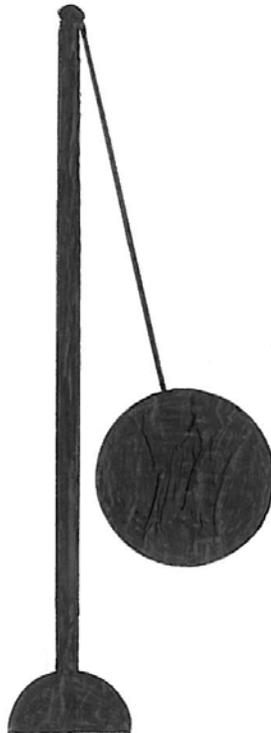
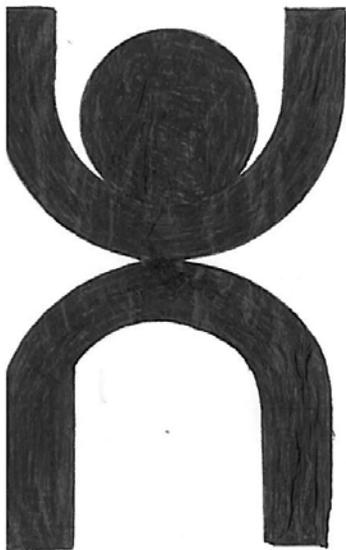
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Voice

by Lucky General Borg

I have lived countless lives in a myriad of worlds
And still I falter
One day I'm Maurice, the next, I am Walter
I'm a bringer of evil, a builder of Worlds
Just a bum in the sun, with an eye for the girls
Many a war have I fought, the worst
was with myself
I have forsaken my father, and put my vow upon a shelf
And still I wander
I'm just trying to get it right
With vespers' kiss upon my lips, I pray for guiding light
The battle of Evermore rages on, and on
Yet, the wheel keeps turning
Sweet nirvana, I beseech you
Your touch, I am yearning
In my eyes the world's pain resides burden I carry alone
The demigod plays make believe, from high upon his throne
I was Manu, and I codified law
Once, I san a song in Cleveland for all the pain I had wrought
And still I totter
Today I am alive, tomorrow I'll be slaughtered...

Once by Robert Allan Cooke

Once I stood before it all, weak on legs uncertain, stranded,
my Island devoid of direction, confused and unsure.
Once I thought to take a chance, if untried, doomed to fail, my
guide a consciousness of indecision.
Once I sought to make a choice, no knowledge of the future,
in hope of pleasing those whose confidence in me was naught.
Once I yearned for true love, delirious in who I was, not what
I could or would provide.
Once I reached out for what was stable only to find its
foundation upon the fractured shale deepening in grains of
sand.
Once I found my happiness only to see the misery of my
external nightmares quickly rise before me.
Once I obliterated purity, destroying that which was given me
in a love so easily unconditional.
Once I viewed my shame, so open and raw before me that I
could not peer into its mirrored reflection.
Once I felt okay alone, this just an untruth inside my mind, as
I longed for something close and warm.
Once I knew the way to go, same wind-swept path ahead
became obscured beyond all recognition.
Once I ached distraught, no purpose found, in search of exit
from the maze of my existence
Once I dared to believe this world might have warm hearth
even quiet soft acceptance.
Once I stood tall, reaching out, seeing, yearning, feeling, even
aching for any means relief....
Once!

My Lifemare by Javier Quintana

Does no one e'en know of my plight
Of when I dream in the night how fight
With these screams in my head that I dread
As they consume tears that are shed
By innocents

Left to fend for themselves
In what do they delve?
Don't touch that!
I wish you'd do as I say, but not as I do
That did not stop what has ensued
--I'm payin' my dues!
For the piper is here
To collect for the beer
The sherm, the crack and the meth
In this hellhole 'till death
But will death do us part
Or does it just start
This nightmare all over again!

My Little Sparrow by Bobby E. Brown

For a young sparrow her song she sang was full of
sorrow. She sang so softly high and low, with passion
flowing out of her delicate small body, affecting those
within hearing distance, and leaving them deeply moved
from her melody.

The young sparrow stretch her head up high, and
thrust her wings back, allowing her little voice flow
with soothing harmony to your ears, causing you to
visualize about all the suffering in the world, how
to overcome your pain, to wipe the tears away from the
brokenhearted, to help feed the hungry children, to
eradicate diseases that leaves us hopeless, and full of
inner-pain.

Open your mind and heart to the beautiful chirps of her
song, close your eyes and become lost as your tears flow
down your face, what the sparrow sang, was not just
the world sorrow, but the sorrow she saw on your face
from seeing every day from her nest. Her heart cried for
you, allowed her tears to caress her face in hopes it'll cleanse
your soul, in her little-big heart she too understood
sorrow.

Everybody have a sparrow, you just have to listen.

More than Words by Charlie Ball

Writing is more than words being written on paper
It's the emotions that finds a crack
In the conscious mind that leaks out the sound
Of the voiceless for all to see
Can you see what I am saying
Do you hear what I am not
Entwined with feelings unfelt
Seen but untouched, held but not felt
Expressions from past, present to future
A Life of its own that coexists with any medium
I can release to the world what is part of me
That we all shared through what we read

Inured by William Andrews

I now wear my skin like leather,
with scars and etchings of yore,
Still my soul will shine young forever,
while Karma slowly settles the score.—

My eyes may dance with fervor,
having dared,...what many have not.
Walking alone...and without succor,
still seeing what others forgot.—

Each tear that may fall holds meaning,
memory formed of angst and ought.
Released as a warm liquid gleaming,
to harden...a cold crystal of salt.—

Every breath that leaves my being...
drags me further from my first.
Chasing a wind ever fleeing...
seeking life with an endless thirst.—

And a footstep taken today,
may lead to sorrow the next.
Let tomorrow hail where it may
For I'm inured,...and no longer vexed—

Walking, In My Shoes by Juan Perez

Worn. Replaced.
Worn. Replaced.

Walk four steps, pivot.
Walk four steps, pivot.
Watch your knees.

Bars ahead of you,
A wall behind you.
Bars ahead of you,
A wall behind you.
Watch your knees.

2500 steps,
No more, no less.
2500 steps,
Walking east to west.
Watch your knees.

A Painting by T. Williams

I remember when I was young, and there was no such thing
As a home without a family, or a kingdom with no king
I would climb up on a chair, to see a painting on the wall
A picture of another time, that seemed to say it all
Even at that young age, it seemed to speak to me
Saying this is how the world was meant to be
And in such contented moments, I found a world I never knew
Now fading to a memory I may never get back to

If I had my way, the painting would be real
An everyday kind of magic, with an everyone appeal
With colors that never fade, under the sun's brightest light
To immortalize those days when all the world was right

Where is the paradise I thought I knew before
Is it gone, or simply through another door
maybe it's been here all along, maybe hidden a song
And maybe all the pieces are right where they belong

Now that I've grown older and my world's a bigger place

You can see I've learned a little, by the lines on my face
An just when I thought I'd seen it all, the hardest lesson came:
Every painted scene remains inside the frame

Welcome to My Nightmare by M. Lee Mobley

Welcome to my nightmare,
Where all faces lack emotion,
Bodies move in Slow Motion,
Where the Spirit lacks a Soul,
And Empty feelings feeding on Each Other,
Like Vultures...

Welcome to My Nightmare,
Where your Name is Just a Number,
And your Number is your Plot,
Where your Honor and Respect are All you got,
Which was Sentenced with you to Rot...

Welcome to my Nightmare,
Where for some Razor Blade meets the wrist,
And a Bed Sheet Made As A Rope,
With a Loop And Knot to fit Their Neck.
All in the Name of Loneliness and Misery...

Welcome To my Nightmare,
Where Anything Goes,
There is no We or Us,
And you can't Misplace your Trust...

Welcome to my Nightmare,
Where family relations,
Seem like a Distant Memory.
Like Strangers who Don't Seem to Care,
The Thoughts and Reality are Both Scary as Hell,
Nonetheless,
Welcome to my Nightmare...

I Wish I Had an Oven by Lucas W. Whaley

This spring
 has proven
A cistern run dry
 revealing
Coins collected
 amid
Canceled Stars
And sunsets ceased

Their gold congealed
 tarnished
By my lightest touch

I need but two
 to shade
My tired gaze

Perhaps also
Pay my debts

And rest

“Mommy, Can You Leave the Light On?” by Donald K. Brown II

White is the absence of color
The lack of anything
Other than itself
There is no love or hate
No pride or shame.
It is lonely and needful
It has no dreams for tomorrow
No memories of its past
It is a void
It is devoid.
It mourns for what it never was
Hates what it cannot become
It begs for a leader
It follows itself
It is a false prophet
A lie.

Black is all colors
It is everything
Black has seen it all
And knows what it is
It remembers its father
While embracing its children.
Black alone has the power
To destroy white
Black is an island unto itself
It forgives and is forgiven
Erases mistakes
It is the pigment of imagination
Black is the truth.

Light is a prison
With windows and bras
Walls and ceilings
It has limits and boundaries
Signs that tell you “NO”
Light lets flowers bloom
Believing they are beautiful
Only to close at night
Hiding from the truth
Light lets us see the road ahead
We begin to hope
We believe our goal is reachable
That same light allows us to watch as
our goal is destroyed.

Darkness has no walls
No direction to choose
No way to get lost
It holds infinite options
All our fears
And the secrets to defeating them

It leaves no room for prejudice
Shows us nothing to hope for
Defeating hopelessness

We are equal in the dark
We are honest
We are free.

We are a race of cowards
We worship the light
Demonize the dark
We embrace limits
Obey the rules
Seek to conform
Fear the unknown
Tell ourselves lies about salvation
We fight the darkness
Though we are all destined
To feed that darkness
The beacons
The bonfires
The headlights in the distance
They will all burn out
Or fade away
Our sun will die
The Earth will go dark
Just another cold sphere
One of trillions
Forgotten by the Heavens
No more prisons
No more judgment
No more shame
Or guilt
Just the Darkness
And peace.

Desert Man by Lucky General Borg

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

Time

Blank Verse Called Revelations (or, Kiss of Delilah) by Anonymous

Seemingly mindless deligates, give rise.
Such new dynamics, abirth, awakens.
Wise eye in the sky, communiqué alive.
Haphazard circumstance? Or genius plan?
Silent armies; enemy: a movement.
Didn't see it coming? So pacified
She'll take your life, eye, for eye, without eyes.
She's a monster of our own creation
She is we, and we are you, and me. Them!
Blame me first, for I spoke and no one heard.
Blame yourself, for you heard and paid no heed.
Too late now, but not to cry from the roof!:
Run and hide! For the beast is alive, run!
Your soul is in your day's work, you will give!
But there is nowhere left to run to now!
Surrender or die, for victory is hers!
Her beauty has overwhelmed your senses,
Delilah has betrayed you with her kiss!
Welcome to our brave new world, number please.

Escape From the Raging River by G. Neal Strauch

I.
Flowing down the well-worn pathway,
thought on thought spin circling round.
Moving, pushing, streaming, rushing,
wild their coursing onward bound.

Running swiftly, running quickly,
Crashing down the valley steep.
Mix together, hues suffusing
Ne'er to rest nor find relief.

Waters spinning, never ceasing,
whirl wit churning, sad regret.
Stirring up from murky blackness
Emptiness I can't forget.

Echos calling, never answered,
meaning vain with no release
Hollow voids all filled with nothing,
Lacking reason, absent peace.

Nameless specters flood the river
O'er the banks of consciousness.
Ever grasping, ever seeking
Respite from the restlessness.

II.
Breathing in. Breathing out.
Ease breath in. Exhale out.
Standing on the River's bank,
From its raging torrents free.
Disconnect – still and quiet,
Looking down, apart, aware.
Tranquil tones of peace surround me.
Warming ray sof light so fair.

Here it is: Life's Precious Moment,
Basking in this present nopw.
So it is as was it told me,
Though I know not why nor how.

Caring not about Life's future,
Burdened not by years gone by,
Centered wholly in this present,
One with all in earth and sky.

III.
My true self, my essence,
I am not that raging river
I am not that voice within.
Always comparing, always critiquing.
Telling stories about it all.

Feeling superior. Then, lamenting my inadequacies.
So proud of all I can do, all I know, all my charms.
Then ashamed of all my weaknesses, all my ignorance,
All my painful awkwardness.
All this storm of thought and feeling
Is not of who I really am.

Now that I am apart, I can see.
Now I know. I am quietly peacefully aware.

All the stories told to myself over and over,
Tales told me by others; ones I made up myself.
They are all well-rehearsed lines of the play,
All the world's a stage production called "My Life."

But here, up above and separate,
Apart from the thought maelstrom,
Now I can see; and catch a glimpse of what's real.
The River is only a construct of my musing mind.
No more real nor substantial than the
Fleeting wisps of ephemeral vapor and vanishing mists.

Breathing in. Breathing out.
In the now, peace replaces the torment.
Joy burns brightly in the silent darkness.
Serenity reigns where clamor once prevailed.

And hope arises,
A glistening, streaming star across
the sky of the soul.
A loving promise to the heart reborn.
And rest to the weary traveler,
walking along the newly discovered pathway.

A course just now found,
But a way that had been there all along.

Hope's gentle glow leads the wandering pilgrim
To find rest at last.

Awaken by Francisco "Bule" Ramirez
The way that I have taken,
On the rumpus way, stumbling, I awaken,
Bewildered to see where I have come,

Where I stand, where I have come from.

This is not the way I dreamed.
This is the place I framed.
This is the way I sought -
Yet is not the place I thought.

I would change my way if I only could,
Retrace my steps, A poet laureate I should:
Many poems in melancholy – wrote.
Many verses invented and quote;

On the way that I have taken,
In the place where stumbling -, awoken,
This is not the place I thought -
Yet is the way I've been caught.

This rumpus way was lit by my own fire.
I'm in a place I never came to desire,
So I must change my ways for good:
My balderdash and reproachful mood.

I must try hard another path
So I may swerve from the awaiting death
Because this is the way I have taken
But is also the way I have awoken.

Tired of Tired by C. Wright

It's a beautiful day outside,
Don't you want to go outside,
Take a little stroll outside,
I'm tired – tired of being inside.

Life is running away outside,
I'm tired – tired of cold insides,
Light a fire inside my pride,
I'm tired – tired of being tired.

A cave is a place that grass
can't thrive,
so take another stab at pride,
To hide is to die inside,
Take a shower of Pure sunshine.

Cabin-fever; clammed up & smothered.
Too much sleep; can't out sleep the smother.
I'm tired of being tired – Tortured.
Tired of frozen freedom – Frost burn.
Tired of tired – cold burning fire,
Nonsense is no sense – ashes on
the pile.
No use is A'bus, where nowhere is
Now & here.

Recidivism by Charles “King Chip” Higgins

How many times have I said, just being sentimentally,
that I'm never coming back; to the penitentiary.
But consequently, these walls remember me eventually.
Evidently; these governmental sentries resent me extensively.
Court-appointed attorneys, who attempt to represent me.
As they push me intentionally, and tempt me mentally,

Try to prevent me from what I'm required essentially.
How can the conventionally minded be inspired so sensibly.
My pride has offensively attempted to try and defend me,
Since I began doing time; the start of this century.

Prison by John Aaron Cox

When we break the law there's so much to pay.
And when they sentence you there's nothing left to say.
Just catch that chain to a unit.
Got time to serve so you might as well get to it.
Shaving everyday and racking it up.
Shake downs and head counts, now that's what's up.
Turn out for chow in single file lines.
You do your time and I'll do mine.
Every man for himself all dressed in white.
Pants rolled up and shirts tucked tight.
Three hots and a cot is all we got.
In the winter it's cold and the summer it's hot.
Looking forward to outside recreation.
Nothing but down time, but this ain't no vacation.
Property of the state and man it sucks.
They took my shackles off, but I'm still stuck.
Surrounded by fences with razor wire.
I used to chase money, bow it's freedom I admire.
I'm not guilt as charged, but it's still first degree.
Doing half my time before parole will even see me.
All in a day's work in the life of a felon.
To parole or not, now that is the question...

The Astral Projection Blues by Mark Pellicone

My breath slowly in,
My breath slowly out.

Floating in endless,
Warm, tranquil, darkness
Peace and calm wrap me
Like my grandmother's quilt,
An old friend.

boom! Boom! BOOM!

Distant thunder. A heartbeat.
Tribal drum steadying into
Wanton rhythm.

Light,

Rushing Forward,
Coming into focus.

Bonfire burning bright.
Young warrior dancing
for thanksgiving, for joy, for me.
Fire glinting off lithe red-bronze muscle.
Raven-black hair, flying waist long.
Ceremonial bells ajangle
On feathered cape.

My breath in, my breath out.
Lust dazzling my eyes,
I watch.

Later in our tepee,
Scenet of mesquite cured tent hide.
A buffalo oil lamp dances.
My brave, my warrior, my lover, myself;
Between my legs yearning,
Needing, to taste
My explosion.
My... My brea... my breath ragged.

boom! Boom! BOOM!

Cell doors slamming open.
Smell of pancakes,
Syrup rancid in the air.
Bittesweet tears, rain in
My heart.
Reality.

My breath stops.

Time by Jack Hamons

Time sits and waits
It watches me waste away
While Death grins
With the hourglass in his hand
The sand that falls
Mocks me and taunts me
The clock ticks and laughs in my face
Time grips me
It holds on and won't let go
I plea to it
But time answers to no one
When time says it's time to go
Then it's time to go
There is no sense in fighting time
That's a battle you'll never win
Time won't let me be

What is Time? by Jack Hamons

What is time?
Is it sand seeping through the hourglass,
Slipping away into the future,
Coming from the past,
Into the present?
When does it end?
When did it begin?
Is it eternal;
No beginning;
No ending;
Continuous...

I have time,
It's all they gave me.
I've been doing time.
Time doesn't change anything.
Time is sitting here just wasting away,
Waiting, watching change taking place around you.
The hourglass sits mockingly in the hands of Death,
It quietly grows wings and swiftly flies away,
Leaving nothing but the dry sand...

The Clock by Richard Anderson

There was a clock which when it spoke
not only told the time
It made a sound which all did know
two words without a chime.

Throughout the year, each day it told
each minute as it fled
Not speeding up or slowing down
two words it only said.

How could this be? A clock so wise
which always tells the time
Correctly so, and never late
made of the lowly pine.

A clock of such a low estate
no oak to claim its own
But faithful to the task at hand
without a beep or tone.

The words it spoke most faithfully
the sounds of this old clock
Throughout the day. those standing by
would hear it say, Tick-Tock.

Time by King Modest

Time has no face,
It exists exclusively
Without blemish.

And until we abide by its rules
We'll always be losers
In this endless race,
A marathon of rushers.

All of whom lack knowledge of the hour,
Wisdom of its power.
These invisible motions
Creating what we call time.
But still,
It's invisible.

So we've made for it a face,
Its hands;
Both short and long.
From dials with shadows
To clustered bezels of crystalized carbon.
But it gives no pardon.
Either you're on time or out of time,
Little are before time.

The foolish one wishes to buy it.
The ignorant never applies it.
But,
The wise one...
The wisest ones,
They abide by its rules,
Refusing to become losers
In this marathon of rushers.

They obtain knowledge of the hour
Applying wisdom of its power.
And therefore,
All motions become transparent.
All minds, clairvoyant.
The hands are now open,
And all rushers cease to exist,
In time.

The Last Whorah by Donald J. Degner

My back is against the wall
With no teeth to bare
And no more axe to grind.

In my younger days
Nothing could stop me.
Then it was gone in a flash.

Now I'd old and frail,
But I put up a good fight.
The last whorah—I lost.

Like falling into quicksand
I struggle to break free
And my rebel soul's gone.

But the memory of me remains
In the heart of those who witnessed it all.

The Bird Nest Blues by Richard Mikkelson

Some say I'm a Jail-Bird.
I don't think I am
I'm more like that other due
I yam what I yam

Lately they've confused me
by treating me pretty bad
Put me in a double bunk
got me feeling awful sad

The prison jokes about it
treats it like a twisted test.
We call the upper bunk
a quaint Lil Bird's Nest

It's the budget crunch, my man
cut a little here, a whole lot there
When it comes to food
I don't think we get a square

At other prisons, with other prisoners
this might be the way to cut
But here we've done too much time
and we're just old as King Tut

Forty to Sixty year old men
sleeping in the top bunk
Cause the old and cripple
sleep in the bottom tree trunk

I've been wonderin', thinkin'

how can I get a lower bed
Guess I have to get even older
maybe sick and darn near dead

I still dream of going home
to a land I used to know
After three decades an four
it's still the place I want to go

At times I can almost fell it
so grand to be on the other side
I believe I could walk all the way
I wouldn't even need a ride

Just to be back in my own house
just to get outta this crazy ol' zoo
Just to be in my own bed
I'd quit singin' dem dirty Bird Nest Blues.

An Epiphany at 7 Years of Age by Dexter Rabadan

I remember the sun,
I remember the son...
I met it-him in a park
He-it wore a crown of
Thorns
Rays
I could not stare him-it
in the face
I squinted
No details
But I felt his-its
Warmth
It-he warmed the sand
Beneath me
I stood
Stood...
Stood...
I moved upon the grass
But it-he was all around me
Slowly
I made my way back to the tables
Under the shade
Food and drink
Were shared
Amongst us all...
My belly was
Warm
Content
7 years old
A child
Innocent
Is-his warmth was omnipresent
I could not look it-him
In the face
But he-it was there
I felt him in the
Sand
Food
Laughter...
Sun...
I felt the

Son
In the
Sun
An epiphany
At 7 years of age

Sail...Fish by Il Faded

We're never so absurd through what we are
as through what it is we pretend to be
La Rochefoucauld said that long before me
I'm just a drop out who never got far
covered with ink and a beautiful scar
a fitting reflection, some would agree
disfigured, speaking figuratively
you've got something kid they'll think you're a sta!
Me? With this uncommon air you can't miss?
Openly veiled in this colorful hue?
Just stop doing that and never say this
and don't be yourself whatever you do

Space

Cell Cleaning by Christopher Ivory

My cell isn't always cleaned perfectly.
Because this room will get dirty again.
Why am I thoughtfully lazy at times?

This floor was washed now then somewhat again.
But dirt and dust reappeared like daytimes.
Whose walls been wiped yesterday perfectly?

They should repaint the floor and walls sometimes.
Another day means time to clean again.
My floor and walls aren't cleaned perfectly.

One day I'll clean perfectly times again.

Rhymes & Chains by J.S. Slaymaker

Prison is a rhyme,
 A wordsmith's ball & chain;
 Serving poetic time,
 Bound to my last refrain.

Life by Robert Matice

What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night, it is the
breath of an eagle in the summer time. It is the little shadow
which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset.

Dinner and a Show by Lucky General Borg

In the Theatre of Pain
Every act is the same
They show all of the players
Again, and again
With blackened souls that chill the night
All feeding on pain
And feasting on fright
To dinner and a show
It's the place to go
in the Theatre of Pain
A place everyone knows...

heed what you wear, also watch who you kiss
what? are you kidding? to be more like you?
'd rather be me. "To thine own self be true."

Time by Jackie Felder

Just one moment
One breath
One thought
Now hold it
What is it?
...
Our lips part
Just barely
Heart beats
Breath taking
I feel your touch
What a rush
One moment

Order of Disorder by Albert Doggett

Psychic vampires converse on a hotwire to mayhem
Something fresh on the precipice of disorder
More to come...
Though not from the Lofty one – your god is dead
learn to live without the flame
Withdraw from the self-inflicted non-reality
Murderous deeds suggested by Saints
Northwinds blow with a hint of doom
Catch the updraft and glide for a while
Death rattles psychopomp dares to speak its name
Lone grimace in the emptiness of grace
Merry under the moonlight for reason of lunacy
Break free from the entrancement of monotheistic fools
Their self-serving actions govern their fate
Heed no-ones suggest but your own

by Gary Gregory

Hanging on to last vestige
of self
By a solitary strand of sinew
A stubborn know
of muscle
Healing hands
failed to undo
Silence misconstrued
as apathy or animosity
not fond of conformity
That last vestige of self
The strangest of all
like the stubborn knot
Maybe never to fall
Before the higher ideal
Pride seemingly sewn in
as deep as soul
A fist of steel
Outside the edges
Barring entry
ensuring damnation
Tried to defy all the demons

Tried to drown all the dark
Suppressions just buried them deeper
Into the holes in my heart

What Lays Out There by Anthony Tinsman

Fog locked
tree-lines
silhouette
clear
against
rising mist
mans past I glimpsed there
afraid to meet
other creatures
across green fields
after
heavy
rain
the
misty
darkness
primitive
everything black with green
and the fog tugged
at
memory
demanding
bravery
for respect came
from picking up
frightful challenges

by Amahal Lynch

listening, with not much to give. The message of the essence intertwine with the based nature. As the wind blows, as the messages come across from here to all the way over there, here, I say here, the thoughts ricochet, the rhythm finds its way. And our day. That includes yours, depends on what we, the inhabitants of earth spew in the way of the wind. The way of the breath, the breath of life is constant. The words are uttered, to the conscience, the life is a present, and presently we don't give it is just due. For we all need the breath of life, yes we do. Not the pollution, not the delusion. and many forms of confusion. Confusion is weary, my thoughts are dreary. The quality of life has become the main vice. Virtues aren't what's being pumped out in the focus of our life. Bone tired. And I have a reason why/ Because the smog in the air we breathe has clouded our eyes The quality of life should be our focus. Radio stations, schools magazines, and us all share a part of the vice that's constantly smothering out fresh air. One day I hope consciousness comes storming in. And the world would inhale some good air again.

God Says by Paul Schrimp

For every tear that's shed
Is why his dear son bled
For heart that fail
There was a nail
For when you cried
Remember his side
And whom you down

Remember his crown
For every sorrow
He brings tomorrow
Only dead three days
He shows us the way
Through forgiveness and peace
Our faith will increase

Alone by Jessie J. Brutton

I can't even begin to count the years that I've been locked away, starting with my time as a juvenile, ending with this cell I'm in today. Four steps and back, how many miles have I walked, fifteen minutes at a time, how little we've talked. So many dreams have died, the tearless times I've cried, how many times have I given up, before I even tired? When I look into the mirror, I'm met with a stranger's stare, for I don't even recognize the man standing there. His eyes are cold, reflecting only his pain, his lips knows no smile, for it would be done in vain. Once filled with hate, rage, and violence, now he sits staring at nothing at all in eerie silence. Some say he's broken, that he's seen and been through too much, that he pulls away from any affection, even the slightest touch. Others say that he's given up, got tired of fighting a fight that he couldn't win, last time he went the distance, now he's not so sure that he can do it again. So silently he sits, staring at things that nobody else can see, looking back on his life as if it's a bad memory. He looks at all the faces, he knows them like he knows his own, yet in a sea of so many, still he stands alone.

Tears by Rocco R. Ranallo

Tears release the suffering pain, dark hurt, and agony
These healing drops of liquid from the eye run down the face
Carrying with them the uncontrollable emotions, self-
destruction
And hate. Brighting the day ahead.

Tears seal the great divide, reality-feelings, bring
Both to co-exist seeking to transcend the partition
renditions, constructions, spiritualizations of the imagination
Pushing pulling, grasping on to the physical as the drops of
Salty water proceed the body heaves through the sense of
Relief exhaustion, presumptions, lies, truth, what causes you
to cry?
Death, joy, pain, hunger, birth, growth the tears flow why?
Do you know? do you desire what you cannot have?

Manifestations of a Manikin by Jonathan C. Holeman

-man*i*kin: 1) a little man; dwarf, 2)
an anatomical model of the human
body, used as in art classes

Manipulated and manhandled
by the manicured mundane minds
of many mongrel manic men

Used and uncomfortably unclothed
by a ululating umbrage
of ubiquitous unctuous unknowns

Withholding the wild wanderlusts
by the wondrous waiting wiles

of the wolf like watching women

Terrorized in the torpid torment
by tantalizing tepid terms
of tenuous textured talents

Slyly suffering the stealthy stares
by the statutory status quo
of symbolic stately statesmen

And artificially armored
by artistic ameliorations
of the artistry of artisans.

Man's Lament: A Ballad of Man by R.M. Forzano

In pain he's born alone and cold;
Crying out his lament.
He calls for justice in despair;
No one heeds his comment.

He's measured, weighed, and prodded first;
His fingers and toes are counted.
Two eyes, two ears, a nose, and lips:
His private parts – inspected.

First tests are given before he knows
He's even being tested,
And his life is chosen before he knows
His choice was never his own.

A boy was born to you, you're told,
Raise him strong and silent,
For boys don't cry, they're strong and bold;
Not supple, or soft, or pliant.

So make him brave, a stone alone,
Standing through all trials;
A man to be, and proud – you'll see!
Withstanding storms, an isle!

New tests are given and then he knows
He's ever being tested.
But his life is fleeting before he knows
His life will be taken away.

We're told to fit the mold of Man,
And no-one else is wanted.
We try, and try, and try once more,
Our childish wills – undaunted.

As time goes by, we long to see
The man we will become
And though time enough remains for now,
Time is burdensome.

All tests – completed, and now they know
Which men are godly or wicked.
Our lives were chosen before we knew
Our lives had even begun.

Those few who fit the mold of Man

Are praised, are happy, are rich;
They'll raise their sons to be like them
And give them all they wish.

But those who've broken the mold of Man
- just like their forefathers did -
Are cast away; are spurned as fey;
In shame, their identities hid.

First tests were given before he knew
He was even being tested,
And his life was chosen before he knew
His life was never his own. —That his choice was never his
own...

Out of the Night by Emil Casel

In memory of all my loved ones. I will never forget.

Out of the night came Death upon a fiery steed, to steal a
brother's soul was his only goal,
And into the fray did I go to battle for his soul, but fate just
wouldn't let it be so;

When out of the Night came Death, whence from where who
knows, to deal his deadly blows taking gramps and gram to a
place only he knows;

Again time flows, when out of the night slithered He, fleeing
with a Saint from this world we know but in my heart will she
always be, mother of my soul;

Before peace was restored, out of the night did Death reap,
snatching an old Warrior's soul, leaving the Father's legacy to
his son's soul;

As peace is restored time ebbs and flows fading the pain and
sorrow,
When out of the night Death flashed, striking my heart and
soul---taking my offspring in one crushing blow, the womb of
the future and the heir to the throne;

As a warrior heals from all these terrible blows he plots and
plans minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, and year by
year seeking knowledge and wisdom for the last show;
Waiting till the day He must show, for when He does We will
see that He took the wrong soul so long ago;

Fore the man before him has fire in his eyes, iron in his soul,
and in his eyes, Iron on his soul, and the universe in his mind.
For all the pain and sorrow that Death has bestowed;
Death will know that it is his turn to go!

Fishing for Words by LeRoy Sodorff

This pool of words
is crystal clear
it quenches the thirst
of those who draw near

I come here every night
to this watering hole
to dip into the psyche
and plunge into the soul

Sometimes I sit here a fishin'
for the words that I need
big words, little words
and those words in-between

Other times I bathe here
to cleanse me of my grime
to immerse myself in words
that's how I do my time.

Free Verse Poetry by Jerry Buckley

He requested ominous simple
interest to foreshadow purple.
Regulating thoughts became dumbfound
in this said scenario, so hurry
You must petition your lambent guile
when dealing with these sylphs-
your temperance must creak with
savvy! 'truly ask her what of pessimism
these dark days of ours truly.

From Possibility to Reality by Louie Kirk

Feed your soul! Is your soul feeling parched? In your inner world are you experiencing the equivalent of a drought? If so maybe you will consider performing a *magic ritual that could help you get on track for a cure....* Try this: go outside when it's raining or misting. If your area is going through a dry spell, find a waterfall or high spouting fountain and put yourself in close proximity... then stand with your legs apart and spread your arms upward in a gesture of welcome... turn your face towards the heavens, open up your mouth and drink in the wetness for as long as it takes for your soul to be hydrated again... then pick up a pen and write me!

Harold Lee, poems on letters

Old Letters

Reading old letters
The pages worn and thin
Read once, twice, three times
Then read once again
Read so much, so often
Familiar words to memorize
Though the joy of each one
Still a pleasant surprise
Reading old letters
The pages worn and thin
Reading and hoping
One will come again

Unanswered Letters

Unanswered letters sitting in a pile
Gathering dust and intricate weavings
Of tiny eight-legged creatures while
Somewhere far away one wonders
As to what happened to each missive
Did they even arrive at their destination?
Did they even get opened and read?
Or, were they just tossed on the pile
To be dealt with later but later
Never arrived. It was put off too

Many times to matter. So why bother
With an answer when it is so
Much easier to just write blind
A new, yet vague letter that's really
Just a "Hello, I'm thinking of you!"
Kind of thing. A quick response
To say I'm still here but unable to
Answer whatever you asked of me in
The past but I will get to it one day
When I can if I don't forget like
I tend to do so often this past year
While the pile grows gathering dust
And intricate weavings of eight-legged
Creatures that can't read at all so why not
Just write to them for the answer to the
Unanswered questions in the many
Unanswered letters in the pile that
Grows higher and higher each day?

The Letter

The Letter not written
Never gets sent on its way
So for the one awaiting, it
Never arrives, what dismay
Had it been written
What would it say
Newsy news of things going on
A tale of love for one far away
A letter not written
There's so much it could say
If it were written
By someone, someday
Someone like you
On a day like today

Feather by Carlos Revuelta

An eagle flew, into the arms
Of sunlight,
Dropping a single feather,
From up in the sky;
As if it were a raindrop, from
A lone cloud,
Falling oh so gently, without
So much a sound;
Becoming a precious breath
Of new life,
A heartbeat, and a grandson
Of mine
Carlitos, my own heart now
Holds you,
As if you were a seed, that has
Taken root;
Your miracle of time, filling
Its space,
With your moments, each and
Every day.
Thank heaven for the eagle
Flying above.
That dropped this feather, for
Me to love...

Love

All These Things by R.J. Clayton

Stardust,
In a cup of coffee.
A whisper,
Inside a scream.
Two moments,
In an hour.
Your kiss,
Was all these things.

Insecure Felt Harmony by James Randolph Kennedy

I talk to her.
Lately; in defense.
We discuss -

Struggling to commit.
So it seems,
To my uncertainty -
Defense.
Means; My explanation...

-No... I am not being that kind of person..
-No.. I am not like that.

Some life we have had, Us.
The years we've gotten used to having,
Together, We shared. Each of us.

Sudden.
To find out who it is. -
She found out -

How I knew,
She told me, him -
Without telling me.

All those questions,
All those fears.

She asked me if I was the new person,
She's found, it. -

-Am I that way?
-Am I that type of person?..

Who she found,
She made sure I wouldn't be
Now,
For what else.

Enamored by Travis Hoffmeister

Love with an intensity that rivals even solar flares
Intimate encounters more ferocious than a polar bear's
Blinded by this passion, heated touch'll guide us through the
dark
Leading one another past the deepest depths and furthest star
You and I are all we've needed. Family who? And what're
friends?

Till there's only one remaining, grieving such a lover's end
Tragedy's unfolding beautifully, it's hard to look away
Enamored by the tearing at our hearts, we know these scars'll
ache.

Sorrow by Francisco "Bule" Ramirez

Very soon, as too soon approach
The day I will miss you much;
I feel a door slamming on me
And I'm in here, looking at me:
At the clarity of the wee hours,
Early morning, as sorrow quietly pours.
Minute after minute sting
As picturing your departing--.
Like a lonely sailor, gathering myself on sorrow
As soon, too soon approach—tomorrow;
And my effort spreads on the yard
As my awful days been hard, so—hard.
But I'm ready, ready to describe my trouble
As assign myself with a pule stumble--,
But I'm ready now, as your furthest grow
Like ships, alone gathering sorrow
As with pain wait for—tomorrow.

5th Pocket by E. Gallagher

I put the love she gave me
In the 5th pocket of my jeans
I'd pat it a few times a day
So I was sure it didn't fall out

I lost it once... but she gave me a copy.
How do I know it's real?
Knowing her... it could be one of many.

Now I keep her love in a strong box.
With a broken hinge and lock
But it fell out.

Why do I lose everything I need?
And need everything I lose?
I must be broken somehow
Because I don't even care.

When Can I See You by Chenrezig

I've been single track minded lately
Because the only thing that I've been
Able to think about – when can I see you
Would it unnerve you or is it absurd to
Ask everyday – when can I see you
If I was given a chance to unwind
The cripple hands of time would you
Then daresay such thoughts wouldn't
Arise in my mind – when can I see you
If you uncertain than you certainly
Must be blind because even a blind man
Such as Stevie Wonder will wonder – likemind
When can he see you
I've over here, you over there

You reside further, I remain yonder
As always I ponder – when can I see you
A year in heaven might seem like forever
But a nanosecond distance from you
Is an everlasting torment in hell – when can I see you

Kat by Charlie Ball

My first love was like a tsunami:
The waves of emotions made my mind run from me
They beat against my chest threatening to pour from my eyes
Vision so blurry from the mist as it rise
This is all new to me, incredible but is it safe?
It doesn't matter. I'll use a kayak to see your pretty face
I tried to run at times because the loaves got so high
But yet was in a trance and can only wonder why
I seemed to have lost all power and all my lines have fallen
down
Love is calling my name thru the wreckage but I don't hear a
sound
As I try to reach out it slowly fades away
I'm left soaked and broken with no home to stay
The rescue team offers me a line of support
I decline as I wait on another wave, my rescue they have to
abort

Rendezvous With the Woman of My Dreams (Danielle) by Huett Johnson

As life presents its most vivid pictures
Through a world of imagery and dreams,
And cast upon me the most beautiful depiction
of the woman of my Dreams

Now what I draw is a mere description
with just a taste of what I envision,
but in certain aspects has left a mark
that ignites the most subtle interest

If life is known for love at first sight
In dreams it's all within a glance,
There is no such thing as puppy love
Your intuition is enhanced and advance

This life, whatever you speak you receive,
Your world is created through belief,
So everything you see was meant to be
all subjective to what you choose to receive

The smooth connection, of a locksmith bond
from a love so long ago,
And though we just met, the other day
You've been with me far beyond

The warm sensation from a subtle smile,
The explosion from a simple kiss,
Attraction resides within the eyes
to a substance that lives within

The poster image of daddy's girl,
of a man I'm inspired to reach,
The cohesive image that lives with them
reflects to what we can be

You're the epitome of a boundless world
Compared to a decaying human being,
All the desires and lust in this present life
Holds no precedence to the spiritual one beneath

That Teenage Day by R.J. Clayton

Simple Truths,
Pimpled Youths.
Complex Cubes,
Adolescent Pubes.
Another day-
here and gone.
It went too fast,
But took so long.

Need by Crystal R. Wiesen

The need is always there,
but yet I doubt any can see it.
I long for it and yet I deny it even exists.
The tears slowly fall from my eyes from the hurt of denying
my need.
I just know that if I try to fill that need, trouble will follow.
Or if not trouble, then a downward spiral of my heart and soul.
To deny the need means to preserve the positive progress I've
made
But that is the problem, because that need roars from its cage.
To be numb by the pain of the need, if that would come sooner
or later,
Would fade away to nothingness.
Is that what I truly want?
To be nothing?
Yes, because then the need would be gone.

Cigarette by Dan Coleman

Flame
Flickering forward
To the
Tip
Tapped toward
The back.
Smoke
Smoothly savored
Inhaling
Aahhh...
Mellow comfort
Hold
Smoke
Seeps, surges
From my lips
Big billowing
Clouds
Swirling silently
Coughing
Could be
Cancer
Wait
Light
Up another
Flame...

A Wash by Cee Vagante

I have a little red blanket
my wife found cleaning our closet
where I'd hidden it
beneath some old sweaters

When she found it there
she recognized the blanket
as she'd seen it before
when I'd told her of it

The little red blanket
my Mam-maw had given me
large enough or the smallest child
and I ever so loved

steeped in loving safety
on those fairy tale nights
gently tucked in, snuggling
blanket under cheek and chin

"It smelled musty," said my love
"It smelled of Mam-maw," I said
and so saying nearly wept—
my love's eyes too laden with tears

"I'm sorry," she spoke softly
seeming more stricken than I
and taking her in my arms
I too softly spoke, "I'm sorry."

Kissing her tear-wet red lips
I loosely draped my little blanket
about her nape and shoulders
before we made love on old sweaters

As my wife lay sleepy and spent
I touched my little red blanket
to moisture on her breast, saying
"To save the scent of love."

by Ceth Hamner

I often wonder if you're blind or just fail to see,

Mamma I'm your son why don't you remember me?

The one you raised from a boy into a young man,

I'm the one now that you can hardly stand

Guess I've embarrassed you enough or caused you more than
enough pain

Or maybe finally just drove you insane;

You know I don't expect you to be proud of all the horrible
things I did

or the trouble I gave you when I was your kid;

In and out of jail, back and forth to the pen, all I seem to look
forward to is where or when this

Life will end.

Everyday is Hell confined to concrete and steel, so sick of this
ol' life and the way that I feel;

Wake up each morning searching for a reason to be livin,
guess it's because the "Bible" says

Suicide ain't forgiven;

Looking out this barred up window ain't no fun for me,
reminding me every day I'm separated

From my family;

If this ain't Hell it has sure gotta be close. Security guards
treat a man just like a ghost;

My Uncle has died, my daddy is dead, guess I deserve being
here since I lost my head;

It drove me to drinking and back to using drugs, then society
says "ya'll do away with that thug"

Sure most of my choices were pretty dumb but this is a hard
way to pay for wanting to feel numb;

My life feels like a ballgame in its last inning and my head is
down because I am not winning!

Winless War by Daniel R. Jackson

Rather I die today, or rumble and win, I'll never forget this
fight

Exhausted I stand, astray from the plan, with only a little more
might

Who would have thought, such a force could be brought, by
something so sweet

I'll never underestimate the power within, if ever again we
meet

Afraid of the things the future would bring if I lay down and
lose

But what if losing is winning, a beautiful beginning, and I'm
fighting this fight confused

Questions, such questions, have no place in my mind,
especially in the midst

Of a battle so fierce, so tensed from fear in a battle such as
this

"Why do you fight me," the enemy screams, "Why do you
fight so hard"

"If wounds are what you fear, win, lose, or draw, you're
leaving this battle scarred"

For a moment I paused, and rethought the words I heard from
this mighty force

What harm could be done, if simply it won, and I let it direct
my course

Came peace with my foe, and friends we became., as beautiful
as a dove

But history present, a war most intense, between a fool and a friend called love...

Through the Leaves by Jimmy White

Singing birds jump about
from tree to tree
Beams of sunshine
dance along the ground
Two squirrels chase
each other around.

Thoughts of you push
into my dream
no longer happy as tears
stain my face.
Sleep drifts away
now fully awake
picture after picture
my memories shuffle through.

All of them
of the kids and you...

A Love Story by Chris Barden

I can hear the sound of thunder as the battle closes in,
we're forced to fight a war with no chance that we may win.
We have no army to back us up, just us two who will fight,
we've been sentenced to death and shall die at dawn's first light.

They were told to hold back nothing for the crime that we committed,
we fell in love with each other and that just wasn't permitted.
I gently took my lover's hand as I wiped away her tear,
I knew what she was thinking, that the end was drawing near.

She showed me that special smile that she gave no one but me,
and tried to hide how scared she was but her eyes spoke differently.
I wrapped her in my loving arms as I told her "I love you,"
her tears flooded her cheeks as she whispered "I love you too".

I said, "I can't let this happen, I need you to run,
They're set on killing both of us but they'll settle for just one.
I need you to understand," I said. "Be mad at me if you must,
I don't care if they kill me but they won't get the both of us."

She slowly shook her head as she couldn't believe what I said,
she told me, "Without you in my life, I'm already dead."
She said, "My heart is yours, my love, it is for you to defend,
and if you are to die tonight then my life would end."

No longer could I hide my tears as I said, "Baby, listen to me,
we both don't have to die today, you can still be free."
She asked, "Do you remember when you said our lover was forever?",
I slowly nodded away my tears as she said, "We'll die together."

I seen the light gleam off her eyes as the sun came over a hill,
then came the sound of the world with intentions to capture and kill.

I took her cheeks in both of my hands as I asked, "Will you not go?
I can't bear to watch you suffer all because you love me so."

"If we're both captured here today," I said, "they will make it a game,
to see which one could bleed you dry and make you scream my name.
They'll make you look in my eyes as they torture me this day."
I said. "But you don't have to witness this if you just run away."

She shook her head again as she said, "I've made my decision,
and you would have know it too if you would just listen."
She said, "I'm going where you go, my love, I'm seeing this thing through,
I would never have known true love if it would not have been for you."

I close my eyes at my defeat that I could not change her mind,
another tear fell off my cheek, we had just run out of time.
I whispered how much I love her and embraced her in a final kiss,
we savored that last moment until we were covered in darkness...

Mya by Kevin Pruitt

Mya, people are making me out to be a liar,
Mya, my love of you is real, and it gets higher.
Mya, I will never stop thinking of you baby,
Mya, one day we will be together, maybe.
Mya, I will never stop loving you,
Mya, no matter what unbearable things they put me through.
Mya, you will always be in my left chest,
Mya, it's because of you I tried to do my best.
Mya, I pray life treat you fair and bring you no harm,
Mya, I pray that God keep you safe and warm.
Mya, it's because you're not being in my life, I'm torn.

Rose and Rose and Rose and I by Dexter Rabadan

Bring me one of each
Flower you have in this
Window
He looked at me as if I
Were not all
There
Perhaps I wasn't
But no need to agree
\$87.50
I exited the shop with
53 flowers in hand
Rose
Tulip
Dandelion
Lavender
Marigold—

He burst out the entrance
 Excuse me but I forgot to
 Offer you a card
 Quizzically I gazed at his
 Hands
 Between the loose skin on
 His thumb and index was a
 Card
 He asked me what it shall say....
 I am a card tied to flowers
 Someone fabulously well to do
 Purchased these flowers for you
 He seemed as if a rancid dog
 Had passed
 I continued down the street
 The motel's warm light buzzed
 Motel
 Room 207
 A head bobbed on television
 I closed the door
 The light was still on inside
 The bathroom
 Carefully
 I treaded over the remnants of
 The vase

She lay there...
 She lay there with her head bloomed like a
 Rose
 She did not smell like a rose
 Carefully
 I placed each flower around her
 Stem
 She still smelled
 I placed the card on
 Her blooming flower
 Carefully I laid on top
 Of her
 I touched the flame to her shirt
 We were engulfed by
 Flames
 I wilted beneath the flames
 As the flowers
 Marigold
 Tulip
 Dandelion
 Rose
 Rose
 And I
 Wilting on the bathroom floor
 Fabulously well to do

World

Do not lose hope, for this too shall pass

In Passing by T. Williams

When I was a child, I fell and scraped my knee
 I cried out to my mother for sympathy
 She held me close and whispered softly
 Don't cry child, this pain will soon pass

When I was a young man, I found my heart broken
 I called out to my father for security
 He took me aside and told me gently
 Don't worry son, this too shall pass

When I grew older, I experienced great loss
 I turned to my loved ones for empathy
 They picked me up and said lovingly
 Don't let it break you, this too shall pass

And then my sins caught up with me and I fell
 I fell far, and I fell hard
 I fell over and over, and over again, and it seemed I
 might fall forever
 Until finally, Finally! My knees touched the ground
 I sought out my God with all that was in me
 He saw through my sin
 Saw the mess I was in
 He knew all I had done
 Knew that I could no longer run
 He felt all the pain caused by this cancer
 He felt my confusion, though He himself
 was the answer
 He heard my despair, my shame and agony
 He heard my contrition, my loathing of me
 He lifted my soul and said patiently

When I grew older still, a miracle – Found a measure of
 happiness
 I turned inward and recalled my own history
 I looked in the mirror and said cautiously
 Do not take this for granted, as this too shall pass

When finally I came to eternity's door, I felt alone and afraid
 I asked the Keeper if this lifetime of pain would live on in me
 But I was welcomed with a smile, as He proclaimed joyfully
 This is My City, and pain is not welcome here
 Never again shall you have reason to fear
 All sorrows are vanquished, all confusion made clear
 This is your home, and it shall never pass

Nectar by William Andrews

Cold machinations of hate, scorn, and fear...
 evaporate like dew meeting the sun.
 Spiteful thoughts forged, of vengeance and hurt pride...
 drift away, lazily...on cool water,
 beneath an ivied bridge, shadowed by trout.
 Threats and lies, treasured up in jealous hearts,
 melt, from the warmth of love's soft remembrance.
 A gust of violence,...now a dark stain,...
 is cleansed by nectar of peaceful intent,
 Found in scions of better days ahead.
 nurturing growth, with these moment well spent.
 Guarding the gate of one's mind vigilant
 Crossing that bridge, an effort to repent.—

Death on the Wind by Chris James

People kill things everyday, from love to idle time,
 And some things die anyway, from live to idle minds.

It really couldn't hurt to die, no more than it hurts to live, the people left always cry, when there's nothing left to give.

Death is just the final sleep, as dust to dirt we go,
In little piles that dirt we sweep, over caskets of loved ones, as they finally sleep.

To know death is to know the wind, that whispers through the tree, And death is just another friend, Blowin' on the breeze.

Awaken by Randall Drake

So many wrongs
 very little ever right.
Never content
 always full of fight.
Compassion now pours from me
 like flowing through a sieve.
Thoughtful and softly
 I now live.
Freedom often dreamt
 changes soon bloomed.
Within my heart
 peace and love now consume.
Took a long journey
 it wasn't without pain.
Self-awareness
 was my gift to gain.
Truth and sincerity
 Lead me on my path.
Now I walk free of evil
 and its wrath.

by Joseph Sierski

Retrogressive Recidivist Recusants
Poignantly i ruminate with much amusement
A thought provoking three ring circus with two tiers
Holds many Salacious dubious fellows also my peers
Odious Vituperation with Asperity
mixed with a touch of jocund temerity
is always cause for much hilarity
Auspicious Conciliatory Sagaciousness
is conducive to your Vocabularical Abasement
farsighted Shadenfreude faute de mieux!
elegant eloquence i exude...
all because i'am in the mood;
Pardon me if i'am being rude?
I'll condescend from a lower altitude
conceived in conceit i concede
grab a dictionary then i'll proceed
primitive minds are processing
thoughts of "what the hell?" while i'm taunting
Petulantly irascible you may peruse
leaving your wounded ego bruised
perpetually perplexed but i'm enthused
perennial perdition i do eschew
i'm sure you havent got a clue what i'm into
An advanced learners dictionary.... Get one dude!

Rocks Deep in the Grass by Charles Moore

"Hostility" so thick—you can cut it with a knife.
Blinded hearts and minds.
All filled with pain and strife.

Like rocks deep in the grass, be careful where you walk.
Where demons' ears are listening, be careful how you talk.

Eyes that plainly see—but, do not understand.
Minds that go on learning, but still...
They are not men.
Legs so lean and strong—but somehow cannot stand.

"Like rocks deeps in the grass."....
Wounds arise at once.
Just there beneath the surface.
The enemy always lurks.
Seeking to devour—innocence and peace.
--From those that's left alone.
Lives just out of reach.
What's gone- is laid to rest- "forgotten brokenness."
Asleep at last this part....
Like rocks deep in the grass.

Militant Art by Mstr. Douglas R. Payne III

Flash of bombs
Bomb walls...
Trained to kill
Learning to write...
Enlisted; premeditated death
Freestyle; props or dissed...
Arrest & detain
Occupy & secure
Battle and rap...
Fly & fresh...
weapons of murder & death
spray paint, microphones, and music...
Post traumatic-stress
pills, therapy, & rest
Oppressed, criminalized...
poverty & solitary confinement...
 can you see the dots connect
 is there a difference in subjects
 those us with certificates, badges—permissions slips
 and those still human enough to Love to draw &
 dance
 violence is not a choice nor is Love
 Think, before You guess. We are NOT the same.
 Some sums are alike. The strongest wins.
 Think again.
 How do WE stand a fighting chance?

contrast of what military/police governments have "Rights" to do vs. what Hip Hoppers are jailed/stereotyped for—at civilian levels—not at an Entertainer's level; which itself is a type of permission slip. Many ground level Graffiti writers, breakdancers, DJs, MC, skaters, BMXers, etc. are criminalized & stunted due to not having "official clearance," environment, space, \$\$\$, Freedom, or *NURTURING* to practice, train,

LOVE their trade, or blossom. While killers/murderers can sign-up at the: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Police...

Hotel Cali by Weldin Jeffries

*

Who would know more
about living it up
in the hotel California better than I?

I'm already 20 years 'gone'
in the game, and I feel like I'm on
the endangered species list.

For me to see someone now
who I haven't seen in prison
in over a decade
is almost like seeing close relatives
who I haven't seen in a while.

* We are a dying breed *

*

Living it up in the hotel California...
Where a trivial matter between
two dumb-asses can trigger
a full-scale race war
which always leaves behind more
casualties still living than
those who find rest in its wake.

In my world,
men have died behind
a simple misunderstanding
or
the wrong word said
at
the wrong time
to
the wrong person
in
the wrong mood.

*

Living it up in the hotel California...
where there are plenty of women
you can see but can't touch,
although the 'knowing' glances
of some of the women in uniform
or those posters at the nurse's station
betray the notion that they too
wish it were otherwise.

Our fantasies are 'fueled' by this
understanding, the substance of which is
as empty as a mirage
of an oasis in the Sahara desert
to a hungry and very thirsty traveler.

*

Living it up in the hotel California,
such a lovely place...

where only some of the things prisoners
do are ugly, which can be said of a
lot of people in various places.

The irony of it all is that the
drugs, alcohol, gambling, and other things
prohibited – gives this environment the same
stability as does the food and water.

For in these activities do the predators
indulge which gives a temporary respite to
those of who would be preyed upon.

But you would have to live here to know
and understand this.

Living it up in the hotel California.
Such a lovely place, such a lovely place
—Would you like a taste?
I doubt it.—

Prayers of the Oppressed by Charles "King Chip" Higgins

Yahweh,

I ask you if you can save me
From this world of imprisonment
that enslaved me
Bless the streets
that have raised me
But let me not forget
the system that encaged me
What's it all worth
what's it all for
If the rich get richer
and the poor stay poor
The heartless stay happy
while the hurt stay sore
The needy ask for less
while the greedy ask for more

Revolutionized Pacifists by Mstr. Douglas R. Payne III

History's told in true lies/adjust accordingly/disorderly
conduct conforms—oppressively/slow forming schemes
reflect dreams/unreported actions become distant
memories/discoveries supposedly point to Origins/when
actually the Evolution has always been/neverminding
struggling/whole Nations enslaved politically/literally racing
infinitely/disgracing Ancestry/descendants feed
savagely/genetically grouped for Supremacy/misguided
warriors wage frivolously battles in the name of Liberties
never seen/facades painted vividly/One Life To Live/drama
involves everything/fascist piggies/pacifist hippies/scientific
formulations of future generation productivity/short term
solutions fused for longevity/denial's addictive in Capitalistic
regime Realities/Social Societies degraded, by disregard for
personal privacy/what's left to surprise me/My Rights are
denied precisely because of my skin tone/incoming
poverty/aborted Births/drug-free School Zones/the Planets'
home/so why Federalize it/Legalize it...medicinal

Libra Scale by Sabron Stewart

It seems we're living in hell, good vs. evil on my Libra Scale.

Weighing out my thoughts I search for the keys to the vault.

A young stud in his prime, but stuck in a life of crime.

Not a care in the world life is like diamonds and pearls.

My mind's state slowly slips into a vacation, "God Bless the
Next Generation".

God Grant me some patience because for sure it's got to be a
virtue.

I walk a narrow path of positive and refrain from the negative
just to equal a balanced journey.

Wisdom comes with experience like a run-on sentence and
I'm also sentenced for becoming a menace.

Sometimes I disconnect with reality because of vanity and
become emotional over all humanity.

Against all odds I believe in a God.

Driven by my ambitions I could weather any conditions.

I probably crib some philosophers and ad lib some knowledge.

They say signs and symbols are if the conscious mind, I had to
learn that ordeal doing time.

Always on my grind and steady keeping an open mind.

Pay negativity no attention and try to make my mistakes an
intervention.

My training wheels are on for the next adventure.

I feel different everyday and stronger when I pray.

Each day is a new beginning.

If life was a relay I would be winning.

My future must be balanced and the more creativity, equals
talent.

Elaborate on the all-seeing eye and we all get silent.

So that means an eye for an eye provokes violence.

Well these are my thoughts weighed on a Libra Scale.

And on a scale of one to ten I will write and continue to win,
but never mind me cause my mind is absolutely free so please
grant me my sanity forever me.

Poeta nas citur non fit by Isaac Richard

As the world turns I've learned;

it is only the first step that costs.

Persistent in elevation and never gullible and so easy to give
into the Trojan horse;

because in the country of the blind the one-eyed men are kings.
And these are just wise words from a simple man; we learn by
teaching

but they condemn what they fail to understand.

It is never wrong to even learn from an enemy; because we're
all here for a reason not a
Contingency.

by Janice Funk

I drink the sun slowly, from morning
To twilight,

So that I could burn dreams, through
The night.

As I invent memories, and erase
My reality.

No longer laughing between the stone walls
Of my misery.

Escaping behind closed fury, from my
Dungeon life,

Running without chains, as I out race
Dashing time.

Pounding on a drum of lightning; tearing
Open the sky,

Weaving a thread of moons, with stars
Set inside.

This flesh of prison stripped away from
Blood and sound.

Nothing more to hold its _____ so steely
To the ground.

As I drink the sun slowly from morning
To twilight,

So that I might forget for one moment,
This prison life

Driving myself between the drops, has
Left to sip,

Until eternity's final season, slipped
From my lips.

Sky's by Mstr. Douglas R. Payne III

Skies fall

winds blow.

Rain soaks;

frozen it holds.

The Earth shakes,

clouds gather and cloak...

shadows lurk—

forever with its force.

The weight is equal on all

it touches.

The Seas engulf.

Storms erode,

fire breeds growth.

Alone; all is whole/

Together, nothing is its own.

Shared bonds collide,

confirm, repel, and attract

to its source.

Skies blanket the Soul.

We, that are held suspended

on The Universe;

grope to find Our Way—

Lost & devoid of faithless Hope.
Skies touch all...those who are blind
along with those who see what the
Skies behold.
The Skies...
bold & beautiful.
The Skies touch.

Sometimes by J.S. Slaymaker

Sometimes there is music
Gentle on my mind
Humanity behind human walls
Unremembered time
Hushed voices, esoteric tones
Whispered kindness
Ghosts in darkened rooms

Aberrances
These are the strange days
The strage ways
I am the Stranger
Hidden violins
Tiny jewels of treble
Stolen diamonds of light
Turning them over
In my mind
In my heart
Adoring them
Collecting their brilliance
Like starlight
Stealing their secrets
Claiming them for my own



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