Anthology of Poetry

Volume 4
Summer 2009
Welcome to the fourth volume of the Prisoner Express poetry anthology. I am mailing this to all who submitted poems for both Vol 4 and Vol 3, as the poems came in at different times during our poetry collection period, and some of you submitted poems for Vol 3 but they arrived after the poems had been selected. We have received many great poems these past months, and a team of student and community volunteers read thru your poetry, and select the entries to be included. We will post the anthology on our website www.prisonerexpress.org. Please know our volunteers are choosing what resonates with them. What they choose does not signify what is best, and if you are not chosen for inclusion in this particular anthology, I encourage you to continue to send in your poetry. As we depend on volunteers to type your entries, sometimes poetry comes back to us without the name of the author on the poem. I have searched the paper copies but could not find a couple of the poems and guessed as to who the author was or just wrote author unknown. If you find a poem of yours that is not attributed to you, let me know and I will be sure to correct it in our next newsletter or poetry anthology.

We will begin collecting poetry for Vol 5. In fact any poems received this past month have been assigned to the Vol 5 collection, and we will begin the process of having volunteers reading and selecting entries for this work. We are also illustrating this anthology with some of the art that has been sent in for inclusion in the Fall 09 Prisoner Express Art Show. Please consider sending in any art you might like to have included in the show. Money has grown tight in the free world, and any stamps and donations you can afford to share with the program help defray the cost of our operations.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with you all on expressing your creative side. Please send any feedback that we can use to help design courses and projects that you find meaningful.

Best wishes for a bright tomorrow.

-Gary

“The Thinker”
Author Unknown

There is this statue, a man of stone –
In the midst of a part, its plot sat alone.
With this pose, as if in deep thought –
I wonder, what it is that he sought

There was no theme, any more, then what the eyes had seen –
So, it leaves one to stretch their own
daydream.
What drew the man to such a pose?
A worry of the world? Or something as simple as the clothes?
Was it frustration of a matter – maybe
topics of love –

Ponders of friendships – or quotations from above?
Whatever it was, he’s been captured in time

Without the answer yet reaching his mind.
But now, I must be moving on as well –
With no answers, of what story did the
mans pose tell.
A gust of wind brushed across my face –
In that instant, I knew why he was in his place.
To have one stop, and take in the air –
Maybe to question, also, why he was there.
Not to enjoy that certain place – nor – time

But, to search the thought, and expand ones mind.
Within your thoughts, you can find yourself

And honestly knowing who you are, is true wealth.
Maybe, that’s what he was doing, while sitting alone –
When someone came along, and captured his pose in stone.

“I Picked You a Flower”
Marigolds
By: Frank D. Johnson III

There’s red, orange and yellow marigolds
Let me tell you how this story unfolds
I walk by these marigolds every single day
They always have something refreshing to say
I wish, I had time with them to sit and talk

But the guards always shout “less talk – more walk”

There’s an un-written law that says do not touch
When I see them I think of you, who I love very much

This garden is where I escape in my dreams
There’s no more reality, life isn’t what it seems

I know the trouble that comes when acting out a thought
I wasn’t concerned with getting caught
See, in that cluster of flowers I saw you
Remembering the precious moments we had, I knew then what to do

I didn’t hesitate, I had already picked and chose
The orange and yellow ones, with two I couldn’t lose

After grabbing them I ran quickly to my cell
Lieutenants and sergeants looking for me, someone had to tell
I hid them under my mattress in a dirty shirt

They asked me to consent to a locker and bed search

I didn’t want to lie so I had to submit
In my heart you lay, there they could never get
Handcuffed then marched to segregated solitude
Twenty days in lock up for violating prison rules
I know that our love possess unlimited powers
I have no regrets for picking you two beautiful flowers
I hope you truly enjoyed this story I’ve told
Remember it everytime you see an orange and yellow marigold

“The Senses of Love; [Revealings]”
Peter K Holmes

To see you,
Reveals the eternal beauty that is love.
To touch you,
Reveals the softness – the tenderness that is love.
To smell you,
Reveals the sweet enticing aroma that is love.
To hear your voice,
Reveals the captivating and delicate music that is love.
To kiss you,
Reveals the desire and passion that is love.
But, without you,
The heart that is love reveals only loneliness,
Only sadness and despair – you are love

“Through These Years”
Robert W. Price

Even though the miles between us are so long;
Your sweet voice and precious memories are where they belong…

Deep in the center of my heart is the place I speak of;
They will remain there, always, along with your love…
I know a lot of good times between us are lost;
If I could, I’d change that, regardless of the cost…
You’ve been there for me thought it all;
Picking up the pieces when I took a painful fall…
The appreciation…..I can’t even find the words to say;
My mind so clouded like a dark rainy day…
I try my best to think of thankful things to do;
But just come up empty, with a simple “Thank You”…
I sometimes pray that this will be enough;
Never forgetting I made your life quite rough…
Please forgive me for the things I do and have done;
Sometimes choosing the wrong ways to have a little fun…
These things I do, are not to cause you pain or shame;
And you must know your not the one to blame…
Do remember this, my years left, a lot or just a few;
It’s from my heart mom, when I say “I LOVE YOU”…

“Dreams”
Terry Ellis

As nighttime is falling I look towards a dream.
An image of you is such a beautiful thing.
I fall into slumber and your vision appears.
There you are standing with eyes full of tears.
We walk and I hug you with a gentle embrace.
Your tears are resolved and a bright smile in there place.
The just when I’m about to hug you again.
I awake from my dream and realize where I really am.
I’m locked in a cell I almost forgot.

“High Clouds”
Thomas R. Lundehl

High clouds
That shine bright
Make me happy
Sunsets beautiful
And dreadlocks nappy
Take a second, and forget
My gaze on Him is set
As I step
Out of the boat
And walk upon the water
The Father He smiles
At my wonder
Atoms split asunder
In the shiny glory
Of a sealess world
I take my rest
In the high clouds
The dust of His feet.

“An Appeal”
Leslie S. Amison

Our basic crime is no crime at all.
Mental illness is only a break down
Of the biochemical levitation
That keeps us on good terms and working
With our fellow men and women.

But, we are demeaned for not carrying
The torch of normality.
And even those who are normal
Are often labeled grossly:
A Jesus complex because of a beard.
A homosexual because of long hair.
Seldom are our personal mythologies considered.
Seldom do psychiatrists even speak with the patient.
Too often psychiatrists shoot from the hip.
Seldom does the Public Defender even speak with the client.
Seldom are hearing in the back room anything more
Than kangaroo fantasia done to Star Chamber

“I sometimes pray that this will be enough;
Never forgetting I made your life quite rough…”

Pollution in the air
People are terrible
They just do not care
The cops take control
Of everything we do
There’s nowhere to hide
That’s why I came to you
The Devil shook his head
With a great big grin
He opened the door
And welcomed me in

“Pablum and psychiatric(k) flap.
Too often drug overdoses are substituted for humane social interaction.

When can the mentally disabled see justice
Under the USA Constitution?
Neither mandatory jury hearing nor accurate records.
America is too often darkness.
The public does not even realize we are less dangerous
Than the average citizen, especially on proper medication.

Why not show a USA son or daughter some light?
Why not peel away the indifference
That so often murders a mentally disabled individual’s spirit

The list of the wrongs is so long,
Not even sure where to begin,
These words could be put into song,
It would still add up to great sin.

No mother should have to endure
Or try to cope with all the pain.
In your mind, I’ll be just as pure,
Into your arms, I was first lain.

Spent many a night up weeping,
Then, was only thinking of me.
Not even worried with sleeping
Nor what my ways would bring to me.

I know this is so hard for you,
Worked long and hard for me to thrive.
Now am forced to wear only blue,
Some act as if I’m not alive.

All the people I tried to please
Have vanished and abandoned me.
Plagued like I have a bad disease,
Their goal now, far from me to flee.

Pray I could do it all over,
Would heed all that you taught to me.
Crystal clear now that I’m sober,
Hear, I now, in my mind, your plea.

I’m sorry are the words that play,
So sad they’re all I can promise.
Over and over, all the day,
Right now I know its all amiss.

Untitled
Edward Dwight Chapin

I crawled on my belly
To the gates of Hell
I reached forth my had
And rang the bell
The gate sung open
With a terrible clatter
Out stepped the Devil
He said: “What’s the matter?”
Life up on Earth
Is so terrible and blue
Can I come in and live with you?
Society is so horrible
It makes me so sad
Living up there
Is really that bad
Crime in the cities

Pollution in the air
People are terrible
They just do not care
The cops take control
Of everything we do
There’s nowhere to hide
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Have vanished and abandoned me.
Plagued like I have a bad disease,
Their goal now, far from me to flee.

Not long ago, we were like one,
Times were so god, all were around.
I see now, as bright as the sun,
No hands reach down, I’m on the ground

Pray I could do it all over,
Would heed all that you taught to me.
Crystal clear now that I’m sober,
Hear, I now, in my mind, your plea.

I’m sorry are the words that play,
So sad they’re all I can promise.
Over and over, all the day,
Right now I know its all amiss.
Soon these fences will be knocked down, 
Believe, and don’t give up on me. 
These lost days will again be found, 
We’ll rejoice! How great life will be! 

We surrender our love to the dark 
And we weep for the stigmata children 
Bloodied with the kiss of God 
Listening to the calling 
The wasted barren head space that only the wicked perceive 
Bowing low to the silent gods that once held sway over man 
The ancient leaf crumbled to yellow dust 
Breathing the mélange of illusions 
We dream of lovers 
Folded upon each other 
Lethargically the willow men cure their offspring by the flame 
Pulling the nectared sap from their tear filled eyes 
Slowly the manger cracks 
Frayed by the passage of the owl 
We surrender our love to the dark 
An offering to appease the wicked 
Praying that somewhere it will be returned magnified 
In hope that we have not become the vain child that throws their pearls before the swine 
Curled in the webbed corner we slice the heart from the center 
Bleeding the last liquid love that runs red 
Head cradled by the maggot we slumber 
Dreaming of the last taste of flesh, the last feel of teeth 
The last sensation that we were once mine to hold 
Filtered, her voice slips through the thoughts that bind me 
Hooked on her tongue she pulls me 
Closer and closer we become 
Only to be separated again 

Roger Vasquez 

If I could, I would paint a perfect picture 
You and Me the perfect mixture 
To be with you, it’s like being in the sky – 
If I could have you I’d probably break down and cry 
I used to dream for someone like you 
But it was only a fantasy 
But when I met you it turn into reality 
You show me dream really come true 
From the first time I laid eyes on you 
Sometimes I get lonely 
Only in search for a hug with two things in mind 
Freedom and the woman I love. 

Untitled 
Ross Bonilla 

The shackled flesh hangs heavy from the bones of this sinner 
And we weep for the stigmata children 
Bloodied with the kiss of God 
Listening to the calling 
The wasted barren head space that only the wicked perceive 
Bowing low to the silent gods that once held sway over man 
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“Picture Perfect” 

Tomieko N. Davis 

Prison is something different to each of us. 
Like the changing colors of the setting sun, 
Its impact differs from one to another. 
It is up to you to paint your own picture. 

Prison is home for those with a life sentence, 
Nothing to look forward to but these fences 
Most have given up, for all hope has been lost. 
When they take their last breath, their time will be served. 

Prison is a haunted house for so many. 
Memories play vividly in our minds 
Invading dreams and all waking moments, 
Seen on the face of the one with the blank stare. 

Prison is a playground, just like being home, 
Hang all day with friends or play cards in the park. 
Family is here, “brothers,” “cousins,” and “mothers,” 
Prison kin – no blood shared between them at all. 

Prison is a stop sign, a time to reflect 
On your past mistakes and how to do better. 
Ignorance has brought you to this place this time, 
But stupidity will bring you back again 

Prison is my ringing bell, loud and so clear. 
There is a greater plan for me; it’s so near. 
It’s time to study and gain understanding. 
There’s so much for me to do when I’m released. 

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“Picture Perfect” 

Tomieko N. Davis
“The History of the Universe Lies in the Children”
Dr. Richard Sunday Ifill

Somebody needs to “love them”
They are the cream of the planet earth
The CHILDREN that is…
They are God’s greatest gift to us
They represent our “FUTURE”
If they perish…
Our future,
Will enter into a dark age…
The SUN may not shine
And the MOON may not cast it’s glow…
But the children represent our future
They are our passport to create…
Everlasting history.
If “we” do not love them NOW
We may not get another chance to love them…
TOMORROW!
See the children standing there,
Don’t be blind…
Look at them from the corners of your mind…
See them “growing with the sunlight?”
They are the real PYRAMIDS.
The KEY into tomorrow.
We determine how they will bud…
We determine whether they will become:
Dr. King, Malcolm, Garvey, Rosa Parks,
The Queen Mother Moore or Corretta.
The doctors, lawyers, judges, governors and Presidents
These little one’s are our Christ’s…
Our Buddha’s and Muhammad’s…
The one’s our there, standing with –
Tears as big as raindrops…
Because we are neglecting them.

Didn’t someone teach you that through the children…
We live “forever?”…
Therefore, love them and hate them because no one…
Taught them
To see them, is to understand them.
Because the children will create tomorrow’s history…

We create today’s history,
We create our future…

Ah, but the children are our seeds of tomorrow’s growing tree.
Therefore, we must be careful how we plant our seeds,
Least they get caught between the thorns and…
Come back to “sting us” in the spring.
Or they can spring up with the sunshine,
Like EVER GREEN TREES…
Bearing good fruit all year around.
Cast them not to the grown,

Least the pages of our history…
Becomes shadows written in the ground…
That will fade away with time

“I Changed For You”

“CHILDREN…”
You are the essence of my life,
The spirits moving within my soul,
My breath of life…
And the “purpose” and “reason…”
For my existence.
You are the seeds of my heart,
And my “life line” into tomorrow.
I could not go on living the way…
I have been, because I realized—
Hat my “actions” and “decisions”
Were hurting your lives.
And destroying your chances…
Not only to grow and mature
Into “Kings and Queens,”
That you all are destined to becoming,
But, they were also destroying. And
disconnecting my “bond”
That a “Father” should have with his children,
All of whom I love very much.
So…
I CHANGED FOR YOU.

I have up my old negative ways,
The bad habits,
Misdeeds, imperfections and wrong doings,
I realized that I had to sacrifice…
These bad images that made me a poor example—
Of a Father, because as a Father,
I came to realize that my “CHILDREN,”
Are supposed to be the most important—
Aspect of everything that I do. I realized
that I had to start setting a better example,
Because without my CHILDREN
Life would have no meaning…
So
I changed for you

CHILDREN.
You are my anima…
And being by anima’s,
You animate my life in such a way—
That I breathe because of you
Your energies motivate me
Your vibes feeds me strength…
And inspired me as a father
To want to change for myself
When I look into your eyes,
I see the “reflections of the universe.”
Like “Sunlight”…
You sustain it…
You made me realize the fact, that if “I failed”…
Your worlds would have shattered like
“Broken Glass”…
So:
I CHANGED FOR YOU

CHILDREN…
Never again will I ever leave you…
To journey through life alone,
Without direction or guidance;
Or without the kind of father—
And role model that inspires you to
greatness…
And motivates you to become the best in
and at what ever you do in life.
I promised myself that I would strive to
make your “WILLS”
And destinies become a reality…
SO: I CHANGED FOR YOU.

I changed because I realized,
The pain and suffering that I was causing you,
And because I saw that I was the reason
For your empty thoughts, low self-esteem,
Broken dreams, sadness, nights of tears,
Growing with fears and endless nightmares.
SO:
I took pride in myself…
And in doing so,
I CHANGED FOR YOU.
I knew that one must change so that this child
can become the future leaders of our civilization;
The doctors, lawyers, judges, governors and presidents
That can lead the world into…
Phoenix of Paradise.
For these reasons my children…
“You” can proclaim to the world…
That “your” Father.
Changed for you.

“Beautiful Fall”
Author Unknown

As a gentle wind caresses the sun-kissed leaves
The birds nonchalantly flit here and there
Beautiful reds, oranges, golds, and yellows…
Colors so profound pervade the autumn air.
The leaves rustle, whispering of days to come
Enchanting those that walk below
Sunlight glints off the upturned foliage
In harmony the leaves wave to and fro.
Though at times we may seem to be caught up
In the mystery or the magic of it all
We’ll always have a deep appreciation  
For the beauty known as fall.

“I’m Just a Mouse”  
Ricky Pearson

I’m just a mouse trying to find a way  
through this labyrinth life searching for the answers to questions I know not and of  
course the cheese. The trappings of this maze have me in a constant daze, so all I do  
is wander and here and there I hope tests of time that I’ve withstood up to now, beyond  
have prepared me for this rat race that I continue to run.

A race from start to end with smell my only  
clue. I race headlong into walls and now headlong into you and reality. Screaming,  
with a jolt I come to the day of flesh and  
blood where skies get blue and gray and  
blue again. And though I succumb to this  
umbness that I feel I know inside,  
That the cheese is getting closer.

Do I count?  
Am I superficial?  
Are you?  
Worries consume  
Eat and eat and eat  
And tweak  
And cry.  
I want to live,  
But then again,  
Do I?

“A Letter Never Sent”  
Charles Marques

What’s up bro. Long story short, I need to  
use your address for parole and if I had  
your phone# that would be great. I hate to  
bother you but my date is coming up and  
I’m having a ball. I ain’t mad about it just  
know where you’re at. At least I think you  
know where you’re at.  
Worries consume  
Eat and eat and eat  
And tweak  
And cry.  
I want to live,  
But then again,  
Do I?

“The Message”  
Brian Roberts

What separates us is not our skin  
What we have or where we’ve been  
What oppresses me oppresses you,  
It is to each other we must be true  
We are torn apart by society, lashed at with  
fists.  
What is missing is kindness, a brotherly  
love.  
This is a world subject to ruin  
Hateful words and weapons. What are we  
doing?  
We have all in our lives prejudged someone  
Labeled a book by the cover  
Prejudice is a choice, ignorance and fault.  
Why must we pay the price so easily  
bought?  
The choice to hate goes deeper than  
generalizations.  
Let’s stop the tearing down time for new  
creations!  
Do not justify oppression,  
We must learn that all things are connected.  
Society has branded itself with a racist mind  
Children are taught to hate, not to be kind  
We do not live with spies, crackers, niggers  
and chinks  
Can’t you see we are in this together? Please  
stop and think.  
We are all the same, my blood too stains  
red.  
We need to awake the soul from the dead.  
Remember the message of the mountain  
top  
It doesn’t matter what others think,  
There’s only one colour, or together we  
sink.  
Through love we may just one day succeed  
One blood, one God, that’s all we need  

“Stuck”  
Brian Roberts

I’ve entered a world of sorrow and hate  
Because long ago I made a mistake.  
I sit alone, watch life pass me by.  
It all started with a little white line  
Walls surround my every move  
A golden life, turned to blue.  
A letter, a visit, that’s all I ask  
Laughter, a smile, a thing of the past.

There’s no place to be myself  
No corner, no hole. No damn help  
Every day I’m told to walk a straight line  
The road ahead, a tough one to climb  
Play the game of appealing your case  
But deep down you know there’s no damn  
way  
Some coffee, arip, a little canteen  
The power of persuasion, that’s all you  
need  
A world built on bricks of despair  
Separation by design, that much is clear  
I walk the track, around and around  
Searching for peace to block out the sounds  
A hole, a ditch, stuck like chuck  
Pray for a ladder, or just a little luck  
Some give in, change their name to missy  

“A Letter Never Sent”  
Charles Marques

It is to each other we must be true  
What we have or where we’ve been  
What oppresses me oppresses you,  
It is to each other we must be true  
We are torn apart by society, lashed at with  
fists.  
What is missing is kindness, a brotherly  
love.  
This is a world subject to ruin  
Hateful words and weapons. What are we  
doing?  
We have all in our lives prejudged someone  
Labeled a book by the cover  
Prejudice is a choice, ignorance and fault.  
Why must we pay the price so easily  
bought?  
The choice to hate goes deeper than  
generalizations.  
Let’s stop the tearing down time for new  
creations!  
Do not justify oppression,  
We must learn that all things are connected.  
Society has branded itself with a racist mind  
Children are taught to hate, not to be kind  
We do not live with spies, crackers, niggers  
and chinks  
Can’t you see we are in this together? Please  
stop and think.  
We are all the same, my blood too stains  
red.  
We need to awake the soul from the dead.  
Remember the message of the mountain  
top  
It doesn’t matter what others think,  
There’s only one colour, or together we  
sink.  
Through love we may just one day succeed  
One blood, one God, that’s all we need  

“Stuck”  
Brian Roberts

We must learn that all things are connected.  
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sink.  
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“A Letter Never Sent”  
Charles Marques

What’s up bro. Long story short, I need to  
use your address for parole and if I had  
your phone# that would be great. I hate to  
bother you but my date is coming up and  
I’m having a ball. I ain’t mad about it just  
know where you’re at. At least I think you  
know where you’re at.  
Worries consume  
Eat and eat and eat  
And tweak  
And cry.  
I want to live,  
But then again,  
Do I?

“The Message”  
Brian Roberts

What separates us is not our skin  
What we have or where we’ve been  
What oppresses me oppresses you,  
It is to each other we must be true  
We are torn apart by society, lashed at with  
fists.  
What is missing is kindness, a brotherly  
love.  
This is a world subject to ruin  
Hateful words and weapons. What are we  
doing?  
We have all in our lives prejudged someone  
Labeled a book by the cover  
Prejudice is a choice, ignorance and fault.  
Why must we pay the price so easily  
bought?  
The choice to hate goes deeper than  
generalizations.  
Let’s stop the tearing down time for new  
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sink.  
Through love we may just one day succeed  
One blood, one God, that’s all we need  

“Stuck”  
Brian Roberts

I’ve entered a world of sorrow and hate  
Because long ago I made a mistake.  
I sit alone, watch life pass me by.  
It all started with a little white line  
Walls surround my every move  
A golden life, turned to blue.  
A letter, a visit, that’s all I ask  
Laughter, a smile, a thing of the past.

There’s no place to be myself  
No corner, no hole. No damn help  
Every day I’m told to walk a straight line  
The road ahead, a tough one to climb  
Play the game of appealing your case  
But deep down you know there’s no damn  
way  
Some coffee, arip, a little canteen  
The power of persuasion, that’s all you  
need  
A world built on bricks of despair  
Separation by design, that much is clear  
I walk the track, around and around  
Searching for peace to block out the sounds  
A hole, a ditch, stuck like chuck  
Pray for a ladder, or just a little luck  
Some give in, change their name to missy
The pacmans of the system, each day a new sissy
Food so bad, tasteless and raw
I force it down, no money for the store
Maybe someday it will all get better
I hope so, cause I’m stuck here forever!

“In the Beginning”
Johnathan Thompson
In the beginning God said “Let there be light,” then he punished me
He said my life would be full of drama,
surrounded by death and the penitentiary
Plagued with a disease to be the darkness
and bring harm to others
So I disrespected my father and turned a deaf ear to my mother

From the start I was put here to be a nobody
But I’m built with fire in my heart, I came here a somebody
From the beginning I was told I was worth nothing
But with my head held high, I turned my nothing into something

In the Beginning God said “Let there be an arch to divide heaven and water”.
Then dropped me off in the desert – a lifeless place where I turned darker
So they called me black meaning I was hostile and stained,
And I’m treated as such. That’s why I’m filled with hate and pain
In the beginning God said “Let there be grass and seeds for fruit trees”
Then in spite brought forth a different grass that harms my community
But who am I to ask God about the grass or its seeds?
My judgment stayed cloudy from the smoke of the strange weeds
In the beginning God made stars to bring light to the dark
So I smile because I was thought of from the very start
Knowing that I was on God’s mind in the beginning when he first made seasons
Tells me that I was part of the plan to uplift myself from the Demons

In memory of my mother
Anner Lee Thompson

“My Black Heart”
Johnathan Thompson
Go ahead and laugh, I see it in you
You wanna see me fail
But I stand strong on my own
I’m a strong black male!

So real
You would think I’m made of gold
Out of my suffering
Came the strongest soul!

So deep is my heart
Yet it’s a scarred place,
Beating at rapid speed
Unable to catch so don’t give chase!

I know no such thing as defeat
For I am born to use my mind,
My heart is the sun after the rain
A black man born to shine!

Beating hard for those of my community
Leading brothers from the darkness
With my head held high
I give you my black heart!
To those who wonder…

“Truth by this Species of Property”
Marcus Bailey
We’re locked up, doing time for things we didn’t do
We’re locked away, for things that certainly aren’t true
It was self-defense I swear to god, it’s how I felt
The life of a slave was too much weight for my belt
See I was raised by the system, even trained by the system
Now I’m being blamed for their living
It’s kind of ironic,
That this illness I have is chronic
Centuries of desensitized brains,
Government developed pains
Slave mentalities instilled from the date of our births,
Leading us to believe that we’ve chosen our worths
But it’s all a mirage a psychological barrage,
meant for distraction
To lead our attentions away from their actions
Which are the same as ours,
Made legal by their state and federal laws
Just let me explain
We all have choices but who do we blame
It’s an obvious matter!

Just look at the patterns
A sensei teaches his pupil what he knows,
But holds back just enough to keep in control

Then a teacher or coach teaches their students strategies, on how to defeat their enemies
Before long, it’s not only learned
But a part of you’re anatomy instinctively served
Psychological breeding in its purest form
Passed on and on to generations born
Leaving them with no option to think
Destined from the start to sink
Mentally locked away doing time behind
untruth
Past down making innocents pay
Giving them internal time to do
And that is the truth, but this species of property

“Lessons”
Like you, I grew up doing most anything I wanted
Even when family and friends became
dubious or daunted
Physical harms now hurt like in my mind and it’s jaunted
Sometimes it’s alright at others to get foggy
and haunted

Even still I do my best to stay focused
doing what’s right
Sometimes ’cepted like when my mind
battles giving me fight
I see and hear phantoms attacking from
darkness and light
I duck, punch, and run still they find me
and inflict great plight

So I try over and often to keep on truckin’
like ya’ll would
It gets very tiring though like my mind’s out
choppin’ wood
Few days I’m elated when all is well and
things are good
But on most I get miffed cause it’s
bad or not as it should

Some folk just don’t get it they think you act as you’ve been taught
I know that ain’t true else victims behind
would number naught
Yet I’ll not lay it down now see over all I’ve always fought
One new help I’m learning to ply love n
truth as I ought

Oh life has its rules which ain’t always writ’
just ask some crooks
Ain’t no harder followin’ those in the tomes
of two books
Mustard-grain-size faith is needed you can’t see it by looks
It shows out by whose laws you keep and
prayin’ by the nooks
Now I pray all to seek truth n love to soar
high like birds
And making peace by way of killing
Where blood and bombs are the norm
As dismembered humanity attacks us
There's no way of getting it out of my head
There's a man running—he has but one
Well, let me introduce you to something
That life has, oh, “real, heart felt meaning?”
And you have the audacity to tell me
Well, what's left of him
We don't pray to them (instead of God) for
And we're all glad to see them
Teah, red smoke brought 'em in this time
As tracer rounds and vapor trails
The shy is on fire—Death's angels in flight
As men lie dying on the godless ground
It's how we make our living
'Cause a soldier fights for freedom
Do our best to keep breathing, not dying
'Cause a soldier fights for freedom
It's how we make our living
Where blood and bombs are the norm
And making peace by way of killing
Becomes just another job we're paid to be doing
Napalm, flashing in the jungle at night
A man has to stand and fight
Never will I forget that smell
I know the smell is the same in Hell
I lean down and kiss her on the cheek, dark
and leathery, hickory smoke smelling
sanctuary
She takes me in her arms, hugging me—
how much time’s left? I'm scared and
wondering.
And another…
In the middle of the night, coming in from
out of own, unexpectedly
Knocking on her door, waking her up,
patiently, “Who’s out there?”
“It's your wandering grandson, I got a
surprise,” door opens slowly but wide
“Who's this pretty girl with you?”
“Grandmother, she’s, well, meet my wife.”

“Hummingbirds and Runningbears”
Kenneth Humphries

Listening to the birds singing, she begins
humming,
As I sit at her feet, under this big o’
cottonwood tree,
Waiting for another story that recounts
history
Her every word carved in stone to me (the
child I used to be)
She’s looking older than these Ozark
Mountain hills
Wrinkles as deep as this holler we live in
Brown eyes twinkling, contrasting against
her long grey hair
That’s flowing—sometimes braided—all
the way down her back
Now she's reaching for her cigarettes, her
red lighter,
For year’s she's only smoked one brand
(hers favorite) Vantage,
I worry for her—she smokes too much—I
couldn't bear
But she tells me not to be silly (and shakes
her head)
She'll die of something much grander than
cancer
She (my grandmother) named me yanu’adisi
(Running Bear)
She said my two year old legs were always
running EVERYWHERE!
Much like these forty-two year old tears, as
I remember her

“Granny, Granny, the little people are
hiding in your house!”
“Runningbear, are you sure? In my house?
Really? But how?”
“This morning I awoke and heard them
talking! About me!” giggling,
“Well, they are my friends of the Tsalagi,
you little halfbreed,” smiling
And another time
“Grandma, I brought you a picture, it’s me,
your runningbear, in the army…”
Sighing, rewinding lost time, “My favorite
grandson” reminisce, fading, drifting

“Heaven and Hell are upside down!
As men lie dying on the godless ground
The shy is on fire—Death's angels in flight
As tracer rounds and vapor trails
Perpetually fill the mirrored nightmare sky
(They were written by Puff the Magic
Dragon
And screaming phantoms as they fly)
As men lie dying on the godless ground
It's how we make our living
'Cause a soldier fights for freedom
Do our best to keep breathing, not dying
'Cause a soldier fights for freedom
It's how we make our living
Where blood and bombs are the norm
And making peace by way of killing

“Vapor Trails”
Patricia Barker and Kenneth
Humphries

“Hummingbirds and Runningbears”
Kenneth Humphries

Listening to the birds singing, she begins
humming,
As I sit at her feet, under this big o’
cottonwood tree,
Waiting for another story that recounts
history
Her every word carved in stone to me (the
child I used to be)
She’s looking older than these Ozark
Mountain hills
Wrinkles as deep as this holler we live in
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That’s flowing—sometimes braided—all
the way down her back
Now she’s reaching for her cigarettes, her
red lighter,
For year’s she’s only smoked one brand
(hers favorite) Vantage,
I worry for her—she smokes too much—I
couldn't bear
But she tells me not to be silly (and shakes
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It's how we make our living
Where blood and bombs are the norm
And making peace by way of killing

“I lean down and kiss her on the cheek, dark
and leathery, hickory smoke smelling
sanctuary
She takes me in her arms, hugging me—
how much time’s left? I'm scared and
wondering.
And another…
In the middle of the night, coming in from
out of own, unexpectedly
Knocking on her door, waking her up,
patiently, “Who’s out there?”
“It's your wandering grandson, I got a
surprise,” door opens slowly but wide
“Who's this pretty girl with you?”
“Grandmother, she’s, well, meet my wife.”

Another

“What ya doing out here on the back
porch, lovely lady?” alone, but animated,
pretty
“Oh just watching the hummingbirds fly
around the feeder… They're so busy!”
“Well, um…I was fixing to sight — in my
30-30. We're going deer hunting this
morning”
“Sit and watch the hummingbirds with me
a minute, son—They're trying to tell us
something.”

And finally

Another knocking in the middle of the
night—my door this time. “Grandma’s
gone”
She’d lost a leg, then the other – death
taking her piece by piece—my brave kolanu
We buried her under another big
cottonwood tree – oaks and cottonwoods
as far as the eye can see
I hung a hummingbird feeder from a low
limb, I couldn’t stop crying… “gv-ge-yu-hi
elisi.”

“My”
Cristobal Garcia

My drink
Will offend you
My hand
Feeling for some
My God
Will forsake you
My my my
Voice is the lion
That screams for attention
My words are the bullets that kill
The silence
My exploitation
My instability  
My tendency
My my my
My high
Intimidates you
My eyes
Pierce through
My demons
Chase after
Every pill
My my my
Cry of thunder
Trembles dwn like fire
My perpetual view
Sees you for who
You pretend to be
My thoughts
Provoke
Subconsciously
My smoke
Keeps you awake at night
MY!

"Silent Screaming"
Clifford M. Nowell

An ensemble of emotions,
Rage throughout a young mind,
Warped by incestuous acts,
Illegally and insidiously obtained,
By coaxing or intimidation.
Neglected of parental passion,
Cravin’ encouragement and approval,
Inviting acceptance of immorality.
Sadly taught sexual transgressions,
Are physical equations of love.
Invitations of lustful congresses
Are readily extended, bringing
Future harm, invisible dangers.
Psychogenic states go unnoticed,
Sexual improprieties deemed normal,
Gender lines drawn, then crossed,
As physical aggressions prosper.
Denial of sexual access,
Shock, stun, flabbergast, angers,
Introducing series of self rejections,
Accompanied by imagined verbal slurs,
Accompanied by imagined verbal slurs,
Destroying a fragile confidence.
Introducing series of self rejections,
Shock, stun, flabbergast, angers,
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Accompanied by imagined verbal slurs,
Destroying a fragile confidence.
Introducing series of self rejections,
Shock, stun, flabbergast, angers,
Introducing series of self rejections,
The parapet roof breached by waves finding escape.  The seams in ever wall washed and gave way.  The cell’s filled as if a river being forged, Under and around crashgates flowed this deluge.  Each tier a Great Water fall full of life.  Two Great Falls, ten and twenty feet high.  The poor fools below scrambled for higher ground.  Within this tomb, as in a ship were they thrown.  Waves washing their feet away.  Suddenly the Fool’s did pray.  “Pray ye cowards of nature’s fury!  Cleanse thyself of every iniquity!  Prepare thyself to meet the Maker of Man.  Thy wretched souls caught up in this storm.”  Grown men without futures cry out in fear.  “O” how in end-times we wretches doth care.  When caught in such storms we see, Our own petty mortality.  Come at me ye Great God of man.  Collect thy bounty the Great “I am”.  For I fear not man nor thy storm, Fear I not the days that will or will not come.  For after thy wrath I’ll stand tall once again Dancing with Rita and riding her wind.

“Picture of the Poet in Prison”  "Unknown"

The poet, sick, and with chest half bare Tramples his manuscript in his dark stall, Gazing with terror at the yawning stair Down which his spirit must finally fall

Intoxicating laughs which fills his prison Invite him to the strange and absurd With ugly shapes around him have arisen Both doubt and terror, multiform and blurred

This genius cooped in an unhealthy hovel Those cries, grimaces, ghosts that squirt and grovel Whirling around him, mocking as they call

This dreamer whom these horrors rouse with screams, They are your emblem, soul of misty dreams, Round whom the real erects its stifling wall.

“Nexus”  
J. Wilson

Like a half-seen trail in a sunny forest, Beneath a Canopy of leaves, barely Traveled by, in light golden tinted green. Always twisting and turning, In some Places rougher than others, And never in sight an end, For the trail always goes on, Ever with A new wonder around every bend

In a minute, minute particle Of time.

Never give up hope for a bright tomorrow, See a Faerie around every corner, Not a monster in every shadow, filled With these dark, strange thoughts. Sprout wings of gossamer and fly high enough To look Into the face of a god. Let your thoughts run deep Like trees whom put down deep roots, Until they reach the Nexus of the dream catcher

Color bleeds back into vision, Slowly, as if the world Would break around if not careful. Freed from ice, set loose like A bird of the air, Time has been paid

“Untitled”  
Jason Moreno

I don’t want to be consumed by the primitive attitude that premates American culture and convinces boys at a young age that the three most important things in the world are, “Money, Sex, and Power”.  I want to be a positive attitude about life.  I want to learn more about the world and less about the streets, more about romance and less about sex.  I want to ask for directions.  I want to go to church not because I’m dragged there, but because I want to feel free to get ‘on my knees and say long prayers’ and I want to do it and be more of a man, not less of one.

“Life”  
Tim Hampton

Sense of warmth desires of love Moments captured on a picture with laughter above Experience today the pain and sorrow Goin’ to sleep at night, knowin’ there’s a better tomorrow View the departin’ death as love ones While celebrating the birth of young guns Witnessing the first things and lendin’ to their strings As we watch them sleep at night, hoping they’re having pleasant dreams Seen’ them mature as they grow old Givin’ them encouragement so they could become bolder So sitting back and reminiscing is quite nice But we all should remember this is just a cycle we call life

“A Play on Words”  
David Freestone

These are but scraps of written expression—from pages of a few; Meanings vary with locution – which may be strange—not new. Their comprehension – without form – would be difficult indeed; Yet words are signs of our ideas and often not in need. We long for symbols excelling all others, And perfect syllabication; For without parts, and parse, and mood, there can be no punctuation!
With that in mind, I’ll end this verse, yet not with an apology,
But with ‘ado!” a noun of course, bursting with phonology.

“The Mighty Humble”
Francisco J. Lopez

I stood on the sand and gazed out at the mighty ocean. So powerful, mysterious, an untamed rogue—that appeared arrogant!

As if in a trance, I held my breath (hypnotized) unable to move as it approached me, and just when I was sure it would swallow me whole, I stared I was sure it would swallow me whole, I stared in awe as it bowed before me and kissed my feet!

Beside myself at this show of humbleness from the mighty waters, I felt the tears rushing to sting my eyes…

So I wept, I wept like a child, the tears rushing to sting my eyes…

As I shall never forget it’s a humble kiss…

“A Letter”
Darrell

You can never know what a letter can mean
Until you’ve been where I’ve been and seen what I’ve seen
I’m in a place behind concrete walls
Where nobody visits and nobody calls
Everyday and every night is a living hell
So I keep myself confined to my little cell

“A Letter”
Gary Jimenez

Prodigal characters
Raised and praised in the street
Stealing and beating those they meet
Street corners set borders—
Hence crime and graffiti rhyme
That play and prey our time

A Rival company comes cruising
Freddy and his friends expected no feuds
But death claimed one of those dudes.
Sadness and woe visit friends and family—
In the streets and all who hear
Grief embarks stories of fear.

Apologies do not stay the hate
Nor is revenge ever too late.

“Captive Audience”
Charlie Harbert

Don’t tell me about judicial system
And the white house massing some worthless bill.
I don’t want to hear about the death penalty
Or the next person they’re about to kill
Don’t ask if I’m going to vote for
A Republican or Democrat.
No more about Sept. 11th
Or the ongoing war in Iraq.
Don’t bother me about Israel and Palestine
Trying to kill each other whenever they can.
I don’t want to hear about North Korea
Or nuclear reactors in Iran
Forget about China and Russia
Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden
America has so many enemies
Who knows what’s about to happen
But who cares about this or the economy
And the millions of dollars being spent,
And just for the record so you will know
I don’t give a damn who’s the next president

All my dreams are filled with my greatest fears
Only to wake up and find ‘m still here
The only time I come out is for mail each day
But when they get to me, “nothing for you” they say
With my head hung low, I head back to my cell
Because once again I was not called for mail
A simple letter of encouragement, a letter of love
So please take a few minutes to write a small letter
It may seem nothing to you but it will make me feel better
Ti know someone cared to take time out of their day
To sit down and write a note and send it my way
You can never know what a letter can mean
Until you’ve been where I’ve been
And seen what I’ve seen

“Quagmire Dreams”
Gerald B Prisock

Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Tearing the soul asunder
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Roaring through the night like thunder
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Chilling you to the bone
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
They never leave you alone
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Into your psyche they creep
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Out of our skin you’ll leap
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Into the dawn’s early gleaming
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
WAKE UP! Terrified! Screaming!

What is poetry?
Poetry is me. In my true essence a Being of 360 knowledge; knowledge of pleasure and pain, knowledge of Love as well as hate; Every poet should know their place,
Because poetry can make one smile and another cry; poetry is an universal language used by every nationality in many different forms, some poetry is used to life an ill-hearted spirit;
Some poetry is used to express love, thanks, and
Some is used to simply express an individual’s emotions
So I’ll ask again, what is poetry? Poetry is Me, you, and everyone around us because everyone contributes to Poetry one way or another through our emotions;
Everyone’s emotions inspires an individual to write a poem about
Love, pain, life, thanks, mistakes, and sorrows
How would we all be if there were no such thing as poetry?

Please forgive me for my silly rhymes,
I try to enjoy every Breath
Pease forgive me for my silly rhymes,

“A Silly Poem to Pass the Times”
James Lee Beasley

Nothing can keep them at bay.
Chilling you to the bone
Roaring through the night like thunder
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
They never leave you alone
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Into your psyche they creep
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Out of our skin you’ll leap
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
Into the dawn’s early gleaming
Quagmire dreams, life sucking things
WAKE UP! Terrified! Screaming!

What is poetry? Poetry is me. In my true essence a Being of 360 knowledge; knowledge of pleasure and pain, knowledge of Love as well as hate; Every poet should know their place,
Because poetry can make one smile and another cry; poetry is an universal language used by every nationality in many different forms, some poetry is used to life an ill-hearted spirit;
Some poetry is used to express love, thanks, and
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“To My Woman’s”
Reginald West

After awhile you learn the subtle difference between holding a hand and chaining a soul, and you learn that love doesn’t mean leaning, and company doesn’t always mean security.

And you begin to learn that kisses aren’t contracts, and presents aren’t promises, and you begin to accept your defeats with your head up and your eye’s ahead with grace of a woman, not the grief of a child, and you learn to build all your roads on today because tomorrow grounds is to certain for plans and futures have a way of falling down mid-flight.

After awhile you learn that even sunshine burns if you get too much, so you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers.

And you learn that you really can endure, you really are strong, you really do have worth, and you learn, and you learn with every goodbye, you learn.

“Motivation and Inspiration”

To all my brothers and sisters still trapped behind bars but not yet lost in the struggle: I want all of you’s who’s reading this right now to know that there is one thing that I won’t et the system keep doing to me and that is continue to run my life.

If something controls your emotions, the it controls your attitude, then if that same thing controls our attitude, it controls your actions as well. But most of all, if your actions are controlled by someone other than you, then so is you destiny! Try to remember one thing in life if nothing at all: Tough times don’t last but tough people do.

“Broken Boy”
Reginald West

As a broken boy I go through life with only myself to please. I wake each morning just to see how lonely my life us, cause the world has turned a blind eye to me.

Wishing everyday for the friendship I crave, but always getting pushed away by those I meet.

Never feeling loved, never feeling brave, I let the loneliness inside me become defeat.

Life is passing me by never giving me the chance to redeem because the world only cares to see the path of a broken boy.

The world is stuck in my yesterday, never looking to see my tomorrow.

Always those around me seem coy to show their feeling of sorrow for a boy who may never have their tomorrow.

Greed fills their eyes. Forgetting those in need and refusing to hear a broken boy’s cries.

Too caught up in pride and embarrassed to do me a good deed for fear of retribution and criticism from the rest of the world.

“Enamor”
Reginald West

Afar, and beyond where the pale moon arises,
Midnight is slaved to its silent death.
For thou hast come again… again and forever more has come.
Transpiring before the elusive soul quite humbled and much in revive.
And where into dost hollowed eyes rest in dappling shadows of golden sun and gallant cries and squawk the blue carpet horizon in liberal song.
This be my good fellas
Where in valleys low, the valve dusk cloaks purple mountains
Steeps and the rivers stream quiets trickle the pebble sand flours although the tick tock hours.
And where through the vast and gloom dost black ravens take in flighting trails whispers of such sweet rapture dance along the knitted pine where fields of empty untilled inner entwines fields of splendored green dribbled in silvery dew.

“The Things You Do”
James E. Rogers Jr.

It’s not the things you do, Dear, it’s the things you leave undone.
That gives a bitter heartache at the setting of the sun, the tender words unspoken the letters you did not write, the flower you might have sent, Dear, its your frightening ghost at night, the stone you might have lifted out of your brothers way, The bits of heartfelt counsel you were hurried too much to say, the loving touch of your hand, Dear, your gentle charming tone, that you had no time or thought for with troubles enough of your own, these little acts of kindness so easily out of mind, these chances to be angels which even humans find, they come to nights of silence to take away the grief, when hope is faint and feeble and a drought has stopped belief, for life is all too short dear and sorrow is all too great, to allow or slow compassion that waits until too late, its not the things you do, Dear, its the things you leave undone, that gives a bitter heartache at the setting of the Sun.
Engaged in a fearsome battle for freedom… Everywhere I turn I see the enemy… I can hear the cavalry, but I do not see them… Continuous mortar blasts, gunshots, screams of terror and pain… I stalk my victims like a lion in the jungles, fighting instinctively for my survival… Bullets fly by, blood rains from the sky, I have to walk over the dead and the soon to be just to more forward… Still inching forward for a goal I’m not even sure of anymore… I hear people barking orders, guns drawn yet again, pins pulled from grenades, bodies soaring through the air, blood still raining… The noise has subsided, but the killing is persistent… One side has almost been defeated, a company of many constricted into only a few… No more guns we are forced to personally attack someone that is attacking us… Crying out to someone, anyone, to stop the blood from raining; it is only misting now… I feel the coldness of something inside me… I feel the warmth of my life ease down my legs… Blackness replaces the horrific visions of the events of the past days… Finally dead I no longer have to fight, but someone else already has reservations to take the place of the fallen… As I face judgment, I still can’t quite remember what exactly it was I was fighting for… Still, I have to pay the price for my unrealized transgressions… I guess I was fighting in the wrong war, for the wrong army…

“Nature Calls”  
**Bryan Webster**

Once upon the morning light,  
She yawns,  
Stretching a milky smooth neck,  
Craning,  
Hunting a dew glazed sun dial,  
With sleepy eyes,  
A silken cloth draped over ivory shoulders,  
Shivering,  
Golden hair lying languidly,  
Softly swaying,  
Upon toes so nimble dashing,  
Across the Cold Roman mosaic splendor,  
Quickly stepping off the well counted paces,  
Goose flesh,  
A chilled morning waltz,  
She glides,  
As nature screams it’s unavoidable song,  
Heaven merely a hushed sigh away,  
Welcome to a soft new day,

My lovely sunrise dancer.

“Revolutionary Warrior”  
**Shawn Houston**

Revolutionary warriors at the head of a mass movement.  
With iced out minds, bent on improvement.  
Looking through the glass clearly; with out eyes on the government.  
We have elevated our game & stamped out disillusionment.  
We need a troop for this battalion; cause it’s going down like Armageddon.  
So shake the shackles of deception and jump on the bandwagon.  
Sign up at education station located in the east.  
Come sup with us at our table and marvel at the feast.  
We got I-story, (our story), Religion, economics & Politics.  
We teach the ins and outs of business, the trades and the tricks.  
Import/ Export- International Trade:  
That’s the business baby;  
We hi-jacking the game, who cares if it sounds shady.  
Making moves like a chessmaster, politician, or business tycoon.  
Anything steps in the way best believe it’s doomed.  
We revolutionaries have no sympathy and zero tolerance.  
You can talk and backbite all you want; just don’t cross that fence.  
Our lives are dedicated to this struggle: And recapturing empires that was once ours.  
We won’t stop till we reach the top.  
We must by all means rise up out of the quagmire.

“Mortals We”  
**Dr. Boyce Lee Gowan II**

What is this I witness thee  
What is this I’m forced to see  
It renders grief to mortals we  
A plight of death calling many it be  
As frigid as the glacier to the heart it be  
Numerous decades counting they’ll be  
What is this plight I’m forced to see  
Whose grip is feared by thee and me  
Mightier then the kings own plume it be  
Behind his castle wall nay safely be  
Where fiery tongues there many be  
Spilling lies of thee and me  
What is this I witness thee  
Bringing useless cries of shame for all that be  
Which sets its teeth in the young of we  
In their hearts of innocents they be  
Taught to hate their lesson be  
What is this plight we’re forced to see  
To pass between all men that be  
Tis but a mortal soul astray  
Tis what I witness thee  
Tis thy own inhumanity  
Tis thy own plight I witness thee

“The Sea”  
**Dr.Boyce Lee Gowan II**

The naked waves sing  
Of lands of great beauty past  
To this their last shore

“Never/Never Again”  
**Dean Chacker**

The sound of Autumn leaves crunching underfoot  
The smell of a hot soft pretzel  
A dog being walked  
A cat sitting serenely  
The bustle of a store at holiday time  
Having real money  
A quart of milk  
Not leaving the table hungry  
A morning paper in the morning  
Real orange juice  
Calling someone when I want to  
A computer  
Sleeping in a real bed  
A real job  
Making my own decisions all the time  
Going to a ballgame  
McDonalds  
Owning a ferret  
A commode in a different room  
No razor wire  
Never having to wear cocoa brown again  
Maybe falling in love  
Going to a real library  
Sitting under a tree  
Visiting my mother’s grave  
Surf ‘n turf  
Seeing the ocean
Staying home or going out  
Starting a car on a cold winter’s morn  
Looking out without obstruction  
A hot cup of coffee  
Playing with a puppy  
Seeing my mom  
My sister  
Peace and quiet  
Mowing the lawn  
Blue jeans  
Pockets  
A belt  
A long hot shower  
Saying I’m sorry face to face  
Seeing my final resting place  
Sending an E-Mail  
Surfing the net  
Trading stock  
Volunteering  
Sitting in a real chair  
Having a “Rolling Rock”  
Eating shredded wheat  
A closet  
A pizza  
A decent haircut  
A real razor  
A shirt that fits  
A campfire  
Stone ground mustard  
Being out past nine  
Locking my own doors  
A real doctor  
Warm in winter/cool in summer  
A coin collection  
Opening my own mail  
Crème soda  
The smell of a Zippo lighter  
Watching squirrels  
Flowers in a field  
An ATM  
A thick fluffy towel  
A warm coat in winter  
Real silverware  
A china plate  
Cooking  
Making real friends  
Real carpet  
A window that opens  
Being able to be me  
FREEDOM

“The Darkness and Me”  
Mike Thompson

A cold emptiness has taken hold of my soul,  
Casting me to a dimension that’s never been told.  
This is the vast darkness that I call home,  
It’s a place where pain will leave me alone.  
This is the only place I can truly be Free,  
Because where I am, nothing can hurt me.  
Exiled to this realm until my demise,  
God laughs at me while Satan tells lies.  
My world is different than any others known,  
It’s a place where I’m destined to live all alone.  
The cold emptiness soothes my spirit,  
But if you were here, I know you would fear it.  
Cradling me in its cold nothingness I feel safe and secure,  
Compared to this place Hell seems so pure.  
There are no cars or trains passing by,  
No one walking by just to say “Hi”.  
There are no stars or flashy lights to see,  
I’m all alone, just the darkness and me.

“I can’t rest, until what I’ve lost  
Is regained and more for me to hold.”  
—Starkim

“Pain”  
Starkim

Pain, reminds me that I’m still living,  
SLAIN, are innocent children and women.  
Assaulted economically and I promised me that…  
One day I’ll be free.  
Walking with my shadow, singing to my heart beat.  
But Pain keeps me here,  
The rain means a storm is near, I could hear the thundering and lightning.  
Thought frightening, the electric bolts are a sight to see.  
I long for a life that’s free, traveling with my eyes closed guided by my senses.  
I’m traveling back and forth because my path was lost, and my past had cost me everything, my rights, my chances in life.  
So I gathered all the things that mattered.  
For strength and motivation as the older nation left without leaving the blueprint.  
I became a nuisance and mimicked the movements of the bad guy,  
Or am I,  
Functioning in something, designed, for me to do time.  
From sentences to expenses, it doesn’t really add up.  
Some say bad luck,  
While I say consequences of that fast buck.  
Pain is these numbers following my name as if I’m an item.  
If your just like them,  
What’s your motive?  
Hatred?  
Wealth?  
Power?  
Domination?  
Control?  
What’s the ramifications?
**Untitled**  
Mike McCoy

Sinister faces, dark unknown places  
Self-righteous judges, decide what my fate  
is  
Unknowing, uncaring, Truth does not  
matter  
Locked up in Prison – Gone is my laughter  
Crimes I've committed, of this, I'm guilty  
Locked in this moment, don't know even  
what will be  
Free in a month? In a day? In a year?  
Locked up forever? Am I to die here?  
This day today my body lies dormant  
My only respite a dream – for a moment  
A moment of freedom, glimpsed in a  
dream  
Gone once again, when I wake! Do I  
scream?  
Scream at these people, unjust fucking  
keepers  
Who sit in their courtrooms reading their  
papers  
These papers our lives reduced into pages  
One day soon we may give in to our rages!  
Anger and disgust at how we've been  
treated  
Straight out bullshit, how “Justice” is meted  
Chop off an arm or a leg or just kill me  
Mental anguish is not knowing what will be  
Life’s not a joke or a toy to be played with  
By people who know me only as writing on  
pages  
Written by others, not a clue what is right  
Our hearts are become filled with hate dark  
as night  
So people if ever you sit as “Authority”  
Look at the faces, the pages before thee  
Not living their lives free, but locked up in  
cages  
Soon they’ll be free – prepare for their  
rages!  
This rage is a cancer, eating alive  
With nothing to lose, what’s living?  
What’s dying?

**“Within these Walls”**  
Israel Vasquez

Within these walls,  
One can come to realize  
Life’s greatest treasures,  
And that time outside them flies.  
Your own pitfalls are laid bare,  
Before your very eyes.  
Solitude awakens understanding,  
Your not the only one that cries.  
Families are tests…stretched,  
And sometimes eventually love dies.

Within these walls,  
One’s will can sink in sand.

Desperation can perish hope,  
To meet al of life’s demands.  
One’s heart can rot and fester,  
Revenge… seems sweet and grand.  
Coldness seeps into the soul,  
And hatreds fire fans.  
Thus when someone offers help,  
One can no longer see the hand.  

Within these walls,  
Honor comes by distorted light.  
Reluctance is frowned upon,  
When it comes down to a fight.  
One hide’s behind their numbers,  
The weak falls to the might.  
Deafness is a virtue,  
As well as loss of tongue and sight.  
There’s levels to respect,  
And to what’s wrong or right.

Within these walls,  
One learns of ways to kill.  
To disappear off paper,  
Or bend one to your will.  
What is not taught comes to be,  
The most important of all skills.  
Patience and understanding,  
That you must climb your own hill.  
That there will always be,  
…hope… out there still.

Within these walls,  
Is not contained all of reality.  
That mostly everyone forgets this,  
Is sad beyond degree.  
Sadder still are those,  
Whom there own past life flee.  
So blind are they with pain inside,  
And broken down to see.  
That even within these walls,  
…they were always free.

Do They Want To Know  
Chief J. Ramos and BJ

Do They Want To Know  
Of the misery and strife  
That two or three times  
You thought of taking a life?

Raised in the system  
The game is nothing new;  
Toe-to-toe with the best,  
The lies all good to.  

You used to say,  
“They can’t stop the clock!”  
but neither can you  
now that your old bones  
are ticking too.  

Do they want to know  
That you will never walk out,  
Or that they really don’t know you  
Or what your about?  
That’s okay,  
Neither do you  
Lost in the game  
Until you are through.

Do they want to know  
Your now comfortable here?  
Your heart is made of stone,  
Never a tear.  
You don’t count days now,  
You count by the year.  

Do they want to know  
This is your future,  
Present and past?  
This is the only thing  
You can count on to last…

**“Home and Family”**  
Michael C.McCoy

Happiness was ours and shall be again  
The day I leave this place of shared  
showers  
Coming back to our little house; Paid for!  
Paid for with Sweat, Blood and money! But  
ours!

Homeward heading to you and our trailer  
Kitties, Cold Cereal, rad and flowers  
Late night bedroom, bowl of Captain  
Crunch  
Together Julie – I wish to share hours.

Strange Shadows, noises creak in the night  
Halloween Ghost hangs – guarding our  
front yard  
Squeezing you tight Julie, comforts my  
heart  
Matters not that I act so tough, or so hard!

My home, my family – I will abide there  
together again; I come! Never fear!

**Dawn**  
Roger B. Smith

Dawn breaks as twilight fades.  
The day comes forth like a crimson bolt  
across the sky.  
Hints of Gold thrust forward, as a magenta  
shadow withers.  
A Golden hue brings a respite from the  
dread of night,  
Where fears once ruled, and terror abode.  
A time to stow the fears of night and start  
the day anew.  
A reprieve to all, as light abounds and peace  
returns.  
All is well again, until…  
The angst of DUSK.
Ame de boue (Soul of Mud)
Roger B. Smith

Mired down with a soul of mud, struggling through a life of toil. I have become one with a soul of mud, A man with a hole where one's heart once lay. A soul of mud, empty and void, black as the night. Tension and dread builds each day, with nary a tear left to spill. My life has become empy and forlorn, along with a soul that is rent and torn. Intravenously intertwined within the mire of dismay. Nothing left but an Ame de boue.

Salinas Rides
John E. Christ

A man long held down Struggled against injustice Words as his weapons Poetry flows out In rivers of well-tuned verse Cutting paths of truth Some men forge chains Holding back all human rights A true travesty Words cut the steel bonds Carving away foul restraints Light dispels the night Bold activist gone His words remain to guide us We inherit hope

(The prison-poet and Chicano/Indian/Human rights activist Raul Salinas died in Austin last February at age 73. This is a tribute to his memory.)

I Have Not Wings
William H. Davis Jr.

It’s ironic how the birds flock here. How the ultimate symbol of freedom would so infest such a place of confinement...

As if the birds coming and going were some sort of poetic justice. A constant and poignant reminder of just how much we have lost in our freedom. Freedom, the thing all God’s creatures have in common. The thing man pursues so constantly. The thing we all now do not have. The thing these birds most represent as they fly about. Their wings give them such freedom. I long to fly free with them… But I have not wings.

The Earth Will Turn
William H. Davis Jr.

New life conceived A child will learn Man will grow The earth will turn. The moon eclipses And the sunset will burn The seasons change And the earth will turn. Young men wonder While old men yearn Time will pass on And the earth will turn. You live your life in longing And death is what you earn The cycle continues And the earth will turn. Humans have so many cares But it is really of no concern Whatever happens on it The earth will always turn.

Sand Castle
William H. Davis Jr.

I saw a young child building A sand castle by the sea; So committed to his work That he took no note of me. His dedication to his task Was a wonder to the eye

Bit by bit, the castle formed As the pile of sand grew high. I marveled at this child I saw The word he had at hand It was as if he saw his future In a million grains of sand. And then he looked upon it before his work he stood his pride did show, for the finished work and indeed, the work was good. Then I heard his mother call And in a moment he was gone But tomorrow another child will come And the building will continue on.

The Coming Storm
William H. Davis Jr.

Had I seen the coming storm I would have sought a place to hide The forecast spoke of coming storms, But these warnings I denied I refused to see the changing, Because I am a stubborn man And now the storm has caught me out I must take shelter where I can I shelter with the lonely As the rain falls from my eyes I feel the lightning strike my hear as I recall her lies Thunder pounds inside my chest As I long for the love we had now she is gone and I am alone, so I shelter with the sad All the broken hearted fools Who like me, are left in pain Remembering a time when life was good, Before it began to rain I stand here in hopeless wonder How long can this storm last? It seems there is no end in sight As my mind relives the past And so the sky, it finally cleared and for me the rain is gone but many are not so lucky for them the storm goes on Now I am in love again The sun, it shines so bright I love her and she loves me Not a single cloud in sight
And what is that the forecast says,
The threat of a coming storm?
I stand here with her laughing
As I watch the tempest form.

Your wants
By The Fallen King

You want us to have self worth, so you destroy our self esteem.
You want us to be responsible, so you take away all responsibilities.
You want us to be part of our communities
You want us to be positive and constructive
You want us to be nonviolent, but violence is all around us.
You want us to be kind and loving, yet you subject us to hatred and cruelty.
You want us to quit hanging around losers,
You want us to be part of our communities
You want us to be responsible, so you take
warmth from within your heart,
As I watch the tempest form.

Lost
Brian Roberts

No peace, no tederness. Contemplation of life’s reality – seeking escape.
Surroundings filling my heart with anguish.
A search for rest only liberty can yield.

Stuck
Brian Roberts

I’ve entered a world of sorrow and hate
Because long ago I made a mistake.
I sit alone, watch life pass me by.
It all started with a little white line.

Walls surround my every move
A golden life, turned to blue.
A letter, a visit, that’s all I ask
Laughter, a smile, a thing of the past.

There’s no place to be by myself
No corner, no hole, no damn help.
Everyday I’m told to walk a straight line.
The road ahead, a tough one to blim.

Play the game of appealing your case
But deep down you know there’s no damn way.
Some coffee, a rip, a little canteen
The power of persuasion, that’s all you need.

A world build on brick of despair
Separation by design, that much is clear.
I walk the track, around and around.
Searching for peace to block out the sounds.

A hole, a ditch, stuck like chuck.
Pray for a ladder, or just a little luck.
Some give in, change their name to missy.

Lost
Brian Roberts

I hope so, cause I’m stuck here forever!

“Let’s Go and Vote”
William Chaplar

Reds do it, blues do it.
Those who watch the evening news do it.
They do it. Why shouldn’t we?
Girls who lie out in the sun do it.
Nosy who don’t have any fun do it.
Let’s do it. It’s meant to be.

Folks in retirement homes do it,
Do students in their teens.
Some NASCAR fans even may do it,
The guys who work the docks do it.

Let’s do it. Let’s do it too.
Let’s do it. Let’s do it.

Cadets in school at the Point do it
Glaucome patients smoking joints do it.
Let’s do it, just me and you!

Obstetric nurses and docs do it
While they’re telling you to “PUSH!”
The Dixie Chicks, between mocks, do it,

But you can bet it’s not for Bush.

Cadets in school at the Point do it

Some NASCAR fans even may do it,
So do students in their teens.

Some members of Parliament do it
When they’re not busy slinging crap.

Juries who sit on the bench do it.

Let’s do it now!

Glaucoma patients smoking joints do it.

Let’s do it. Let’s go and vote.

Reds do it. Whites do it.
Even Donald Rumsfeld might do it.

Blacks do it. Whites do it.

“Let’s Go and Vote”
William Chaplar

There’s another proverb that goes, “Hence, Never argue with one with no sense.
For even those thought to be smart Wont be able to tell you apart.”

There’s another proverb that goes, “Hence, When on your life’s path you commence,
No matter how young or how old,
Better is it to get wisdom than gold.”

Still another old proverb goes, “Hence,
The glory of the young is their strength-
But of those who are older, it’s said
That their beauty lies in their gray head.”

Yet another old proverb goes “Hence,
To a person of intelligence,
One reprimand serves more to school
Than a hundred stripes do for a fool.

And another proverb that goes, “Hence,
Simple minds enjoy simple events.
And in the same light, there’s a rule
That knowledge is scorned by the fool.”

And one more proverb that goes, “Hence,
There are two fairly certain events.
To his vomit, a dog will return.
And, for folly, a fool always yearns.”

“Desolation Under Beauty”
Michael C. McCoy

Outside my window, Greenswards are flowing.
Intall fences, halogen lights glowing
Barbed-wire rolls top the galvanized fencing,
Army tent standing; medical patients resting.
Towers looming, armed keepers there standing,
Anyone thinking freely of zooming,
Over the fences, far away from these buildings,
Adrenaline flowing, desperate actions so thrilling.
Keepers of men waiting eager for killing!
A shot in the back! There greatest ambition,
For convicts not living up to societies conditions,
Their answer to crimes committed by people,
Refusing life under the great Mormon steeple.
Hypocrites all! These lowlife guards; wardens!
Guarding the greenswards, Satan’s own gardens,
These gardens are desolate, dried-up, dead landscapes,
Death is their goal – the only real true escape,
From this morally bankrupt corrupted environment,
Run by sick, pestulant, perverted higher-ups,
All claiming they do the word of society,

One day they will pay! For their self-righteous – piety!

“No Visit Today”
Michael McCoy

No visit today, God only knows why
Inside my cell I wanted to die
My life’s been destroyed, all taken away
I contemplated this fact all this lonely day

Taken away from all that I love
Removed from the world for things that were done
Seventeen years gone – so long ago
When will they even let past mistakes go?

I hope you are well, safe and secure
Never to feel life behind these steel doors
I’d wish this fate on no one; you see
Not you; not even my worse enemy

So closing this poem I’d like you to know
I think of your love daily, wherever I go
My world is so small, each day the same
You are my true love, I pray this you remain.
Prisoner Express promotes rehabilitation by providing information, education and opportunities for creative self expression to incarcerated individuals throughout the United States. Anthology free to prisoners. All others please contact Prisoner Express for rates. All proceeds are used to fund programming.

The Durland Alternatives Library, which finds Prisoner Express, is a project partner of the CRESP Center for Transformative Action. Additional Support comes from the Cornell Public Service Center.

About the CRESP Center for Transformative Action

Our Mission
We are an alliance of individuals and organizations inspired by principles of nonviolence and committed to bold action for justice, sustainability, and peace. Our Center supports change makers with the tools to build thriving, inclusive communities that work for everyone. We serve our member organizations, the public, and Cornell University by offering educational programs and strategic organizational resources.

About Transformative Action
Transformative Action is a model for social change rooted in the principles of nonviolence. It realizes a positive, just and inclusive vision by seeking to expose injustice, transform adversaries into allies, and evolve anger into goodwill. Authentic yet compassionate communication is a foundational skill. Our goal is to train and equip our member organizations and others committed to social change with the most effective strategies and experiences for engaging this empowering approach.

Our Project Partners

Alternative Media and Information
The Durland Alternatives Library
Positive News
TheocracyWatch

Simplicity and Sustainability
Simple Living America
Tale Back Your Time
Ecovillage-Sustainability Education
Engineers for a Sustainable World

Economic Justice
The Workers Center
Connecting the Americas
Committee on US-Latin American Relations (CUSLAR)

Transformation Through the Arts
Vitamin L Project
Ithaca City of Asylum