Greetings!

My name is Naomi! You’ve all already heard from me this summer but I just wanted to let you know how much of a pleasure it has been to spend my summer reading your poetry! I am currently a Cornell student, and back in May I was clueless on what I would spend my summer doing. However, I am so glad I literally stumbled upon the Prisoner Express program. This program introduced me to a community of people whose voices are silenced, whose humanity is often forgotten, and who are in essence forgotten: prisoners. This program allowed me to hear your voices, to see your humanity. In particular, working with the poetry program renewed my love and respect for the art of poetry. It is extremely powerful to see men and women sharing their innermost thoughts and emotions, candidly and without care for formality or correctness. Reading your work allowed to re-realize the power of words, and the power of poetry. Thank you all so much for your candidness, and your willingness to share, freely. I’m glad that you have chosen to confide in the Prisoner Express program.

And, I’m glad that I found the program, and you!

Stay encouraged,

Naomi

Hello to all the poets in the PE program. We received many submissions for consideration. Naomi and other volunteers read your works and chose the poems that were included in this anthology. A few weeks ago we started putting all the new poems received in a file for Anthology#7 as this anthology was completed. In the same way a number of these poems were submitted for anthology# 5, but as it was full we sent them over to this issue. The way to receive the next anthology is to submit a poem you have authored. This program is open to anyone who chooses to write. I understand that for many of you, your options for creative self expression seem limited. Through poetry, and any other writing you do, you have the opportunity to express what is inside you. Through the Prisoner Express program, you then have an avenue for people in the free world to read your words and

A Story That Should Be Told 4-8

Tim Hampton
Jackey R. Sollars
Robert Hambrick
Eric Bederson
William Miles
James E. Meier
Jackey R. Sollars
Eric Bendorson
Eric Remerowski
Ryan Collier
Ted Eason
Leslie Amison
Rickey Pearson
C.F. Christian
Frank Johnson III
Ben Winter
Jason Forbes
Robert Fuentes
Douglas Harris
Curt Gambill

The Air I Breathe 9-10

Robert Hambrick
Gerald B. Prisock
Buster Swafford
Jackey R. Sollars
Jose Lauriano Di Lenola
R. Bailey
Eric Bederson
Anonymous
John E. Christ

A Thin Line Between Love and Hate 10-16

Robert L. Hambrick
Tim Hampton
James Glaze
Dave Gordon
Jesus Fonseca
Albert Pena
Travis Standlee
Frank Johnson
Charles Christian
Felix Rodriguez

know more about the person you are. Too many stereotypes exist in this world, and while many generalities often contain some truth, none of us are generalities. We are living, feeling beings, and within that we all are unique. We intend to provide you with a chance to be heard, understood and perhaps to generate some communication between you and others. We will post this anthology on our website and your addresses will be listed if folks care to communicate with you. As you know we are on the tightest of budgets, and are always searching for funds to keep these programs functioning. All donations can be made to CTA/Prisoner Express, 127 Anabel Taylor Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853

Stay Strong, Breathe Deep, Write On, Gary
Steven Dennis
I AM –
Trampled and beat
Hungry to eat
Wearing state shoes on my feet
I AM –
Starting to bleed
Feeling the need
Not guided by greed
Always tempted by speed
I AM –
More than desire
Free to aspire
Ready to fly higher
Never a liar
I AM
What I am
Me
Steve Dennis

David Cross
Who I am
You think you know who I am
Even though you don’t give a damn
If I don’t know who I am to be
How can you think to know me
I’m the bad son of a good mother
Loved me true like no other
Broke her heart, destroyed her plans
Though I was in the best of hands
Father cared there was no doubt
Quickly forgotten when he’d shout
My love for him was deep and true
I never gave him his just due
A man of many varied faces
Different me for different places
Friends and family thought they knew
Could not fathom the man into I grew
You only know that which I show
A new me every place I go
A lonely road on which to travel

Joe O’Neal
If You Could See
If you could see inside me, what would you hope to find, would it be the loneliness or darkness that shows no feeling toward time.
If you could look inside me, and understand what others try to see, would you get lost in my soul or would you help struggle to see me free.
If you could see inside me and understand what I’ve been going through, would you stop, look and listen, or would you let this happen to you.
If you could look inside me, what would you really hope to find? But while you’re looking, just remember the best of us fall down sometimes.
If you could only see, this is not what will happen to you if only you listen to me.

Don Collins
Mind Perception
WITH YOUR MIND, YOU PERCIEVE BY CHOICE, take calling in the voice of trust…
OTHERS WILL BALANCE IN WHAT YOU CANNOT KNOW, for you remain alone until reality sets in…
SILENCE IS TO BE BLIND IN WHAT YOU WILL NOT SEE, come forward, heed to the voice of opportunity…
STAY CLEAR OF YOUR EGO, AS IT IS A STRENGTH OF WEAKNESS, keep open your mind and seek the path toward an open ear…
PATIENCE IS A CURE, WHILE.stubbornness IS A COP-OUT, awareness is to be alert, where isolation brings seclusion,
WE CANNOT READ THOUGHTS, NOR FORSEE YOUR NEXT JOURNEY, that is certain, you are here, you made a choice of reason.

Jesus Fonseca
I
I am Lenin, stillborn and hurled into a warped society, I engage in battle with those who diametrically oppose my ideology. I survive under an extreme situation called occupation, but I have managed to successfully reverse my indoctrination. I am civilized and refined beyond the dreams of the white man, and now I wage war with the parasitic cowards who raped our women, and stole our land. I look around only to discover that my kin has fled and forsaken me, and as a result I touch and can feel the scars seared on my psyche. I have witnessed my forefather’s war with racism, but now
I see I must do the same against psychological fascism.
I am reflected in the eyes of those who lost their children on the razor wire of social strife,
I march in the phalanx of the pillars who through sacrifice guaranteed me life.
I am repulsed to see my people bemused with a severe psychosis, but at least
I no longer have to endure society’s hypnosis or social neurosis.
I refuse to conform to society’s norms, so subsequently
I am eschewed and scorned cause I’ve elected to march to the beat of a different drum.
I value the methodology of the “eclectic dissector of doctrines,”
I seek to reduce to ashes those turncoats who’ve succumbed to capitulation.
I had no choice but to excommunicate him who was once me, for
I possess an arsenal of ideological purity.
I have long been labeled a recalcitrant by the establishment, yet
I will always conduct myself to the detriment of all governments.
I am drowning in a religious vortex that I declare my #1 enemy
I reply to myself For my ransomed words have been rebellious
Between honed blades by King of the knife
My spun life was finished
In dreams, by the mad spinning spider
For my death climbs the web with her...

William Chaplar
Talents
The talents we possess are what allow us to excel
And each of us can claim at least a few.
So rather than improving at those things you don't do well,
Get more proficient at those things you do.

Failed Rehab
I'm in jail for the times that I've fought.
With sheer violence my life has been fraught.
But when asked what I'll do
When my sentence is through, I simply reply, "not get caught".

Learn What Not To Do
When people teach you how to act, it's best that you give heed.
But just remember, knowing this is not all that you need.
It won't suffice to know the Dos if DONT's aren't in your view.
Learn, therefore, not just what you should but what you shouldn't do.

Those Who Can
There’s a saying that "Those who can, do"
But that's only partially true.
Cause it can't be forgot
That they wouldn't know squat
If a teacher had not gotten through

Chris Lockridge
Open Moments
Open moments, black days
My where question-unspoken
Of when I am going and who I am, I do not exist, so how am I here?

They lie about, the wolves of midnight
As wishes, softly they caress the mind
Mind blossoms, naked, raw

Emotions by another name.
I am not here nor do I exist
I reply to myself
For my ransomed words have been rebellious
Between honed blades by King of the knife
My spun life was finished
In dreams, by the mad spinning spider
For my death climbs the web with her...

Robert Hambrick,
The Wisdoms of Kropsometor-Vol. 1
1.1
What praise there is for man!
Vain, it is
What is man, but the vilest of bests.
No other creature commits raw murder.
Other animals indeed kill senselessly at times;
But man is the only one capable of murdering for pure selfish gain.

Man’s intelligence
Is touted as a blessing
And evidence of his superiority.
But see to what destruction and oppression
This ability has been employed since time began

Nay, cognition is creation’s curse;
The quest for knowledge is man’s damnation:
Had he but nature’s call,
All would be innocence.

The ignorant,
Yea, he it is which is blessed.
The secret of truth dwell with the simple
(Though he knows not that he knows.)
Work with the sun…sleep with the stars;
contentment with the day's bread. What happiness, in such elemental desire. Evil is known only to those who seek to rule anything but themselves.

1:17 Man has a talent for creating destruction. (What a contradiction-creating/destruction) His greatest inventions are designed To completely annihilate humanity. Yet he desires to be his own God!

3:9 To stand on honor In the face of sure defeat Is worse than foolish, It is prideful waste. Is not cowardice Simply self-preservation?

Paul Washburn
I AM A HUMAN I am a mother, I am a father. I am a son, I am a daughter. I am both male and female. But most of all I am human.

“ROSE AND BUTTERFLY” for all these year my true self I did hide, but deep down I love who I am on the inside. I hid for the fear of my life, seeing others who came out go through pain and strife. At my birth I was pronounced a male, but listen to me my true self is a female. so get over it and listen to what is say, for my true self I will be on this very day just as the clouds are in the sky, I am beautiful as a rose and free as a butterfly..

Tim Hampton
Hooditician
Here ye! Feel me! Can anybody hear me! They say that the revolution shall not be televised black, white, red, green or yellow it doesn't matter the color so open your eyes! Stop being asses and realize that by the selfishness of the world we're all being despised talking about fighting crime but all of them are crooks Democrats still smoking weed Republicans snorting cocaine out of match books Look at the senate getting down with China White Year, we gonna fight against crime aight. How would America feel, if I brought the ghettos to Fort Knox? We'll be getting rich and laughing our asses off Giving you 20 years, as soon as you get out of detox How in the hell is that justice, 20 years for 4 stanky ass rocks? Talking all that shit about vote or die Hell, you want to put me in jail cause I don't wanna fight your war! Matter of fact, I can't even get you to give me a damn job! So tell me Mr. President! What in the hell am I gonna go to war for?! The hood, ghettos and projects, been fighting since day one!!! I can't get my disability but you're talking about, I'm a Vietnam vet! Unemployment so high, people goin half on a cigarette!

time I turn on the TV, drugs this! Drugs that! Yet you say the war on drugs is because of crack babies Do you think we're some damn fools?? War on Drugs! It's a war on drugs because too many hood residents got Mercedes Benz, Tahoe's. So My, President, you say when it's time to vote, that you want our vote Here is my vote, Mr. President. Kiss. My. Hood. Ass.

Jackey R. Sollars
The '58' Ford
No wires, tires, wheels, but a good deal. A two tone green paint scheme, good chrome 'n' vinyl. Parked very dear, toward the back of the tool shed. “She's been there since back in sixty-eight. Motor's blown a thrown rod in my own raving race. When cut out of mind, blindly, I tested God's Grace. Pursuing a life taken by mistake. My son, a nations son, lost in Nam. All a rage, barely the age to be a man. Joined for honor [spit] to conquer a villainous regime. He died, I died, inside, I lost my dream. So here you see, sits she, a monument of sort. His insane pain coercing deep, forcing to part.
With the treasure, the barrier purchased anew. 
Pimple-faced, raced he with hopes of youth. 
Cruising around the home town, gal under arm. 
James Dean Flare and the bushy Beach Boys charm. 
A graduating Patriot with dispositions for war. 
The Senior trip that goes on forever and ever. 
Ne'r to return to burn rubber or double clutch the Ford. 
All chances of taunting and tempting the local law. 
Sat I there, wide-eyed, hands upon the wheel. 
Spirits now bound for the old man's pain I did feel. 
What pleasure this treasure brought to his boy. 
A reward to steward in this boy's last toy. 
It had no wires, tires or wheels, but what a deal. 
This iron horse of muscle with a heart of steel. 

**Robert Hambrick**  
**Virginity's Question**  
Naked before the glass 
She determines, 
"There must be a reason… these differences."

Oh, what price innocence, 
Tis not knowing. 
Is it better then… 
To love Love 
And to never know love; Or to taste love 
And risk disappointment and loss? 

Oh innocence, 
What do you hide? 
To keep another's secret Is virtue; 
To keep one’s own Is selfish and cowardly. 
Why, oh daughter of nature, 
Fear to feel? 
Why deny the understanding What knowledge the heart decrees? 

Oh innocence, 
Would you starve and strangle 
Life’s passion unfound?

Before the glass… 
She decides, 
"what is given cannot be taken."

**Eric Bederson**  
**Fingerprints**  
Sitting on the summer porch 
You in your sun dress 
Me in my short-shorts 
Nothing between us Just the laughter 
Denser than the humid night 
(Twenty years will pass before I share his secret)

I saw from my hiding place 
Butterflies lose their wings 
Invisible burns left like fingerprints 
We are as two rocks in the same 
River bath drawn in circles from 
The faucet’s drip 
Wishing the claw-feet to run away 
Dreams of the ocean’s vastness 
Untouchable open seas

I lied awake eyes clothes listening 
To the footsteps and the hurried 
Breath of your night-terrors 
Teeth grinding 
Jacob's Ladder descending my 
Cat's cradle string 
The pick up sticks 
Jacks 
Footsteps on Jacks 
And your suicide resounds

**William Miles**  
**Music**  
Music in it many different forms what ever you may prefer rock n’ 
roll, country (old), doo-wop, metal, chamber opera or our eldest form 
natural elements, thunder, rain, 
birdsong, animal song even sea or lake creatures sailors of old knew 
and may not have understood, whale song as it reverberated through the ships wooden hull lulled to sleep. Via nature or even artificial can cause paralytic depression, rapturous joy, anger, hate, lust, envy, excitement, dulled memories invoked by only a few strains of melody, perhaps music is an empathic form of communication. 

**James E. Meier**  
Ending of "the dream"  
Gaping holes begin to form 
Midst huddled masses 
American dream 
Turned nightmare

Hope dims 
And homeless 
Crowd alleys 
And scramble for food 
Gullible crowd pew's 
Seeking escape 
Amid rantings 
Of false prophets 
Deluded teachers 
Rant of salvation 
Beyond price 
Then itemize cost 
Babbling of free gift 
Without string 
Then tell what’s required 
To earn it 
Misery counted 
As requisite to 
Selected members 
This elite club 
Formed before time 
By a sadistic God 
Seeking adoration 
From victims 
Americans crushed 
By jackboots of hobnail 
And deprivation 
Wielded by profit 
Capitalist demand 
Reward for slave driver 
Ne’er-do-well 
Bloodsucker 
Who in greed
Drains the worker
With promise
Unfulfilled

**Jackey R. Sollars**
Gettysburg
(in passing through, 1990)
In Dawn’s thick fog, spirits
groaned, imprisoned
Echoes the brave with
fearful battle cries,
choking
in smoke of
Ancient fodder
fires.
Alive still among
grave
monuments over
hill and dell.

Those thousands whom fell in the
tumultuous hours.
Green fields, stained
meadows, rivulets of life doth
flow,
from man and beast,
friends, brothers now mutual foes.
And for what? A nation divided
with opinions of chaos?

Upholding the Gutless and
Armchair General’s points of
view.
Demanding of the
commoner his only wealth,
dust to dust now share
they the Valley of Death.
Where all men are equal after
paying a fool’s dues.

Among the anguished, cries
thunderous pain still heard.
For a moment sat I
listening to the fighting and dying,
as Death comes gaily
prancing and dancing.
Till the last claimed soul is
stricken unable to stir.

Came then that silence deeper than
death itself.
Tis more Treasure poured into
Liberty’s chest.
Less we forget,
without regret.

**Eric Benderson**
Oleander
We were in London on holiday –
2005
After Lola came my transfer
To Birmingham. London is a
Distant haze in her memory.
Two years removed her nursery
School appears smaller than my
Reflections and the tree she would
Climb to wave adieu had been cut
down.
These yesterdays were
within reach
For my wife and I
We could still touch and
taste
And smell the oleander at
the front
Door. Lola laughed at a
photograph -
She had been digging out the
raised
Flower beds along the fence.
From the few things, Lola
remembers
Being stung by a bee and a night
We spend combing nits from her
hair.

**Eric Remerowski**
Solitary
2001
I wake
Alone in my cell
Breathing yet another day.

I sit
Alone in my cell
Remembering all I’ve done wrong.

I eat
Alone in my cell
Tasting nothing but regret.

I kneel
Alone in my cell
Praying for a second chance.

I sleep
Alone in my cell
Dreaming of my former life.

I wake....

**Ryan Collier**
Listen to my Heart
What does it take...
to receive?
I know I’ve got to believe...
And I do....
that’s why I’m on my knees.
I don’t know what to say....
to speak....
or just exactly what it is....
that I need.
But these tears are real....
streaming from the loneliness I
feel.
So... instead of praying...
instead of what my mouth is
saying...
just listen to my heart....

**Ted Eason**
Broken
My word is made better by your
existence -
my heart stronger by your love,
my life, whole, by your
complementing me.
My pain, eternal, by your death...
my soul lies broken
at your
Grave.
Leslie Amison

The Backhoe Operator

What was a young man with an IQ of one fifty doing operating a backhoe?

TRUE

you were making 7 dollars an hour when that was a lot of money.

TRUE

you could manipulate the control levers to bring the scoop down within one quarter inch of grade. All I had to do was even out the grooves.

STILL

it seemed like such a waste of a keen mind even if you 1957 Chevy beat like a Swiss watch + your supercharged Corvair did wheelies at the drag races.

Perhaps

it was all in the father. He torqued + twisted your ego. You sought salvation in machinery + a school teacher lover who also loved the machined steel + the unguent that made it possible for the modern man to orbit the earth + to find balance at such a distance from Nature.

Rickey Pearson

I Live

Sentenced to a life time of inner struggles
every day I find myself hoping... to see the next.
God... I fight myself on many fronts - spread myself too thin but so far I've held I withstood the desperation and hopelessness that surrounds me, that occasionally resides within. In 10 years of incarceration I've only cried twice,

and even though I try (oh my god I need to cry) it's easier to get blood from a turnip.
Too much time to think on things on what I lost, on what I miss the bile coming to my throat as I forcefully push away my thoughts, memories, and broken dreams.
I only think in the abstract these days, no specifics, o particulars residuals only blink in and out and in and out.
I find I carry on my past, though living in the present - the here and now, and seldom I ponder my future. This is the life I live the life I chose, but would never choose again.
This place is a hell of the worst kind filled with ramblings and ravings that can rattle even the sanest of minds.
True, I earned my place here - trapped in time for such a thoughtless crime the taking of a human life has only brought me strife.
I seek growth, while desires are dashed upon the rocks that cause my mind to roll like an embittered ocean. Unbalanced, at times I think too much at others... not nearly enough. If I were a crying man, I'd cry... a praying man, then I'd pray but what more can I say? - I'm a living man, so I live...

Frank Johnson III

Continuation of a Dream Deferred
Tribute to Langston Hughes

Today, I hear the boogie woogie rumblings
Of a dream deferred Langston’s cry to his father- daddy ain’t you heard
The b-bop roar? … I hear the music in his head, as he taps his feet, a poetic genius at work words filled his sheet.
He wrote to the sound of music; Lead by the drummers beat, The high hat hit! While the piano was discrete, Then the change… his pen began to flow-
As his mind relaxed Responding to the commands of the soft melodious sax;
His feet again tapped as he raised both arms- In anticipation of the smooth brass blowing horns… Yeah Langston, I hear the beat the call of our mother AFRICA Yeah! The thump-thump chains of oppression, then the rapture: Animals and fruits run and grow wild Dreams were born then taken from the mind of a child… Yeah Langston! I hear the beat- There’s music in my head, I too tap my feet… There’s an AFRICA in my town just like your Harlem; Snare with high hat- trumpet a calling.
I can’t keep up like him but my feet still taps the beat is outta sync with my pen- still caged perhaps. Rat a tat- b-bop- thump thump-boogie woogie STOP! …now start again…

C.F. Christian

Too Full
One of the reasons
Why I believe in God
If I did not
Believe in God I would be so full Of myself No one could stand Being around me

Ben Winter

Thought
Silence is broken
No longer golden but tainted By the ever present thought That refuses to die
That thought repeated a thousand thousand times
Drips corruption on the peace that had finally come home
Until that hopeful place is lost
Lost like teeth in later years
No longer able to savor but
Simply to survive on mushy bits
That can hardly he considered...
Life

Silence is broken and
The only token left is stone
Gray remembrances cracking like fault line fissures to shake the world to dust under the force of that thought
That singular life breaking thought
That continues on and on
Like mountain ranges that no man has conquered or climbed
Silence is broken like a bone
With a sickly crack
Left to heal without being set
The able bodied would be king
Hobbled and wrecked
And left for dead
What is left for such a being?

Silence is broken and all that was
Golden has turned to rust in an open hand
Blown away like autumn leaves
Past their prime
Preparing for the time when winter reigns and freezes
The thought from a throne of white

Fists which bloodied my nose,
Pummeling paws have kneaded and formed
The day that I was into what exists
Now, I suppose...;
Another link in the chain from which I descend. But, I'll be the last in that tradition, because I decide that (with me) it shall end.

Robert Fuentes
A Father's Wisdom
Sit at a simple Roach coach restaurant,
I speak with my son between burger bites
And milkshake sips,
Casual conversation of life;
I tell him of things he should not do
And things of greatness that he can become.
He listens with half-stoned ear,
The same way I had listened when my father spoke to me,
Until I grew silent in my own realization that the things I so wisely tell him not to do are things I have done,
And things I so greatly tell him he can become are things I will never be;
And only now do I understand why my own father had told me the things he did.

When will it all end? Only time will tell,
Cause these are desperate times.

Douglass Harris
Unholy Peace
Bullets are flying,
Soldiers are dying;
Missiles in the sky.

Wounded are screaming,
Feeding the demon;
No their loved ones cry.

Driving the tanks,
Filling the ranks;
Blood thirsty wars.

Sons and fathers,
Mothers and daughters;
Domestic and foreign shores.

Following their orders,
Defending the borders;
Living in a man-made hell.
Burial with honors,
Sons and daughters;
Those that fought and fell.
Fog and pain,
Wars bloody reign;
Death shall not cease.

Curt Gambill
Desperate Times
A child cries out to a mother who is gone.
Lost to the streets, she’s forced to make ends meet.
Who’s to say if it’s right or if it’s wrong,
Cause these are desperate times.

A young soldier lies bleeding in some faraway hell,
Fighting a war without objectives for politicians without conviction.
When will it all end? Only time will tell,
Cause these are desperate times.

A widow drives slowly away from her home of forty years,
Her children are grown, her husband is gone, and the crops have failed.
So when the bankers foreclosed, all she had left were tears,
Cause these are desperate times.

A prisoner sits with a letter at his feet and tears in his eyes,
He thinks of his sister and the streets, his brother and the war, his father and the grave, and his mother, who, like him, is heartbroken and alone,
Cause these are desperate times.
These are desperate times.
Robert Hambrick
When Will It Be Spring
When sol in soft glory give his smile
And cold Mariah sleeps for her season;
When puffy clouds fly white and bright
And proud trees sprout leaves by reason;
When serpents dream upon the rock
And bleating bovine increase their stock;
When buzzing bees are busy
And eager eggs crack easy
And chubby cubs crawl from dark dens
And long lost lovers make amends;
When night winds warmer drift
And Ursa has made the shift;

When flowers sing.

Gerald B. Prisock
Rain
Gently falling rain
Awake flowers from their slumber
Stirring from where they’ve lain
Opening blossoms without number.

Buster Swafford
Lil’Star
So bright, such a sight,
Lil’Star, you are a fright.
Hanging there, among the rest, I bet you’re, scared to death.

Oh how you dance, and jitter,
May you never, lose your glitter.
Or fall across my sky,
To fade away, and die.
Oh how you sparkle, and shine,
A guiding light of mine.

Leading me, now and then,
Upon new paths, I’ve never been.
Flaming Sphere, so ghastly near.
Lil’Star, for you I fear.
If you’re plucked from Heavens hand,
I’ll make a wish, we meet again.
If the table should be reversed,
And I should, leave here first.
I hope you’ll scatter, beams of light
Upon my resting place each night.

Beyond A Window
(a day on the lake)
When I upon a pond do contemplate.
These days of hope God doth make.
On one world I see elements of two.
The pond and sky both deep blue.
In Ripples, geese duck and crane feed.
Finches wrens frogs
snakes in the reed.
Clouds pass o’er islands of white.
Where-in a heron is still in flight.
B’yon the mirrored plane mask.

Fish crawdad minnow and musk.
B’yon the deep endless sky.
Stars planets, great suns shine.
The blessings these days of hope God doth make.

When I upon a pond do contemplate.

Beyond A Window
(a night on the lake)
Whispering Wind, blending colors to dust.
A hera of spirit, living liberation.
Tails snap, manes ripple, shadowed imagination.
Quickened silhouettes to the west upon red dusk.
Feathers white down glides upon mirrored soil.
A handful of pebbles thrown against lucent glass.
Through dark of night apparitions pass.
Till first light when instinct stirs toil.

Mist hovering in Dawn’s graying light.
Lazily heads lift sniffing hopes new day.
Restless neighs softly, a coyote's last bay.
Stillness breaks with a flurry fowl taking flight.

Soaring high, the foal lifts its head,
bidding the pond elders a friendly farewell.

Jose Lauriano Di Lenola
Slow Movements
Slow movements of sound
Agitate my ears with Vague whispers that Echo and accuse Me with Every rustle.

R. Bailey
Without Hope
Dripping with creek water Hunting snails
A white egret
Impossible legs
Like straw
She turns to look
He kisses her exposed neck
She stiffens Unprepared
–
The name of another

The narcissus no longer sacred
Under the ant’s footfall

It passes
The paper bridge
Into September

Autumn of withered grass
Autumn of ghost-like winds

Eric Bederson
At the Riverside
The flow, smooth as silk
over sandstone (at times)
Coursing variety of turbulence,
cooling in shadowy pools of arching boughs.

Leafy fingers, gusting!
Parting wide river rolls
under strokes of light. Dusted
rays glisten off rapid reflections
of summer, floating in seasonal
rituals as adventure seekers hunt
polliwogs and single-minded beasts
chase sticks and stones
while safety-headed protectors
tote lotions to keep sunburns at bay
when splashing stirs with laughing
and sticks and stones are thrown
followed by plodding dives.
Then eyes gleam diaphanous
wings
of a butterfly in a wave of illusion
beneath the water as it dances
in the glow above with a heart-beat
cess to be thrown,
when rapids refrain from
cascading,
when the heart-beat of the butterfly
is all but cocooned, when I see
beyond this memory, free from my
loneliness, when
the sun’s rays warm
but do not burn my
skin when my
aged eyes rest to a
new spring in
bloom,
a riverside at play,
a fountain of youth
beside an ageless
citadel, where from
my time has flown.

Anonymous
Prisoner
OUT OF THE DARK
When rain pours forth from the sky
As lightning walks the land tonight
Striking at random with might,
It seems so much
like life.
No matter what sun
will shine again,
Nothing can remain grim
When something new is waiting to begin
Listening to the winds sigh Wondering if the time is nigh
Or Far like a star in the night

motion to its flight, dying at every pause in the wind.

Looking Up
Into the darkest void
Uncounted stars fill the cosmos
Waiting silently

Be guided by fate
Surrender your soul and allow it to take you where it may
Just to live another day.
Everything isn’t always great,
How can it ever be too late
To partake in this wonder
Rather than plot to tear the world asunder
Hear thunder roar,
Feel it reverberate in the floor
When the storm is through
Here comes light anew
Waiting to greet & guide you
As you walk under the moon,
while insects
Chitter and croon knowing this dark will part soon.

John E. Christ
Robert L. Hambrick

The Greatest Thief
The greatest thief
steals light
and changes it to shadow;
shadow, into oblivion…

steals ambition
and changes it to contentment;
contentment to sorrow;
sorrow, into apathy…

steals enjoyment
and changes it to mediocrity;
mediocrity, into contempt;
contempt, into loathing…

steals desire
and changes it to loneliness;
loneliness, into desperation;
desperation, into fatality.

The greatest thief of all
turns minutes to hours;
hours, into days;
days, into years;
steals all,
and leaves only tears.

James Glaze

Friendship
Friendship is a precious bond,
so fragile, yet so strong.
It’s nurtured by our deeds and
thoughts, and soothes when things go wrong.

Friendship is companionship:
the joy of sharing fun,
of bridge games, golf, and notes
we send, that keep us on the run!

Friendship, also, shares the times
when sorrows come our way.
To have dear friends, who really care,
makes “grey days” much less grey!

Friendship never can be owned:
a special gift from God
to bring us happy memories
as life’s long path, we trod.

Dave Gordon

Froggy Woggy
A froggy woggy in a pond
Spied a princess on her lawn
He strained to look with eyes
bulged out
With froggy voice he shouted out,
“Oh woe is me here in this pond,
If ere a princess came along.”
The princess looked and saw a log,
And there upon it sat a frog.
“Ah froggy woggy, sounding sad,
Did someone steal your lily pad?”
“Dear princess it’s much worse
than that
Could you sit with this frog and
chat?”

“Why yes, sweet frog, I’ll
sit with you
Now tell me why you’re sad and
blue.”
“An evil curse befell a prince
Which cost him his strong
countenance
His mighty stature in a fog
Changed into a slimy frog.”
The princess laughed, “I’m sure
it’s true,
But let me guess, this prince is
you?”
The frog he sat so proud and tall,
“One day I will be King of all!”
“So tell me frog – oops! – I mean prince,
How can we fix your
countenance?”
“A princess must fulfill my wish,
Yes her sweet lips and mine must
kiss.”
“Ah froggy woggy you’re so sweet
But our two lips will never meet.”
“Ah princess if you only knew
What to me your kiss would do.
I wouldn’t stay a frog for long,
I’d be a prince, so brave and
strong.”
“Ah froggy woggy, if I kissed you
I’m quite sure I’d need a tissue.
So soggy, wet and sticky too,
Won’t I catch a wart from you?”
“You silly princess, can’t you see
A single kiss will set me free!”
The froggy woggy pressed his will
Her princess cry continued still
“But froggy woggy have you seen
From head to toe your skin is
green!
For I’m a princess pure and true
Why shou should I kiss a frog like
you?”
“Tis silly NOT! Oh princess dear,
Please pucker up and kiss me here!
Why do you laugh? You are so
mean,

Tim Hampton

You’re Still a Lady
I’m feeling that! You grab life by
its reins, It didn’t matter that you
didn’t have all the facts, I look at
you with the utmost understanding.
 Doesn’t matter if you’re white or
black, Society tries to label you, So
I apologize for the mental abuse,
Because without your touch what
would we do, Our daddies steady
leaving us without nothing in the
cold, And now we’re an
afterthought, mama didn’t do all
that talking, She fought and
walked the walk, Your essence we
try to ridicule, Throwing
meaningless words that degrade,
Yet through it all you’re still a
lady, Many a times you’re alone
and on your own, observing those
shattered dreams, It doesn’t matter
if you’re a hooker and smoker, +
smoker, cause for your heart I’m a
fiend, and will always be, From
my lips you will always hear, no
matter what woman you’re still a
lady

“Why yes, sweet frog, I’ll
sit with you
Now tell me why you’re sad and
blue.”
“An evil curse befell a prince
Which cost him his strong
countenance
His mighty stature in a fog
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But our two lips will never meet.”
“Ah princess if you only knew
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I wouldn’t stay a frog for long,
I’d be a prince, so brave and
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I’m quite sure I’d need a tissue.
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Won’t I catch a wart from you?”
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A single kiss will set me free!”
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Her princess cry continued still
“But froggy woggy have you seen
From head to toe your skin is
green!
For I’m a princess pure and true
Why should I kiss a frog like
you?”
“Tis silly NOT! Oh princess dear,
Please pucker up and kiss me here!
Why do you laugh? You are so
mean,
When I’m a prince I won’t be green.
Nor will my eyeballs bulge at you,
For when we kiss they’ll turn bright blue.”
“Oh froggy woggy prove to me, Can you give me a guarantee?”
The princess laughed till her tears fell
The froggy thought, “Oh what the hell!”
“Okay sweet frog, but answer this, Will you be mine after we kiss?”
“Why yes princess, that part is true.
Once we kiss, I’ll belong to you.
I like the thought of owning you
To do all that I tell you to!”
So when the princess leaned his way,
The froggy woggy hopped away...
THE END
(for all inquiring princesses)

Jesus Fonseca
To My Soul Mate...
I am so glad that you are a part of my life. It is a privilege to know you, to share myself with you, and to walk together on the paths that take us in so many beautiful directions. I had heard of “soul mates” before, but I never knew such a person could exist. Until I met you… somehow, out of all the twists and turns our lives could have taken and out of all the chances we might have missed, it almost seems like we were given a meant-to-be-moment to meet, to get to know one another, and to set the stage for a special togetherness. When I am with you, I know that I am in the presence of someone who makes my life more complete than I ever dreamed it could be.
I turn to you for trust, and you give it openly.
I look to you for inspiration, for answers, and for encouragement, and not only do you never let me down, you lift my spirits up and take my thoughts to places where my troubles seem so much farther away and my joys feel like they’re going to stay in my life forever.
I want you to know that my world is reassured by you, my tomorrows need to have you near. So many of my smiles depend on you, and my heart is so thankful that you’re here.

May 4, 2010
Albert Pena
Forever With You
You will never know what you have
Never until it’s lost
Does it have to be good-bye
Paid such a heavy cost
You were given a heart and soul
But you really just don’t know
The pain you’ve left inside
Leaving this wishing he could die
But even thru the pain
I know just what to say
My Love hasn’t, Nor will it Ever fade away.
For my Love is forever with you
With each and every breath
Until I am with my Father
On the day I meet my death...

Travis Standlee
Forever
I would have stayed forever
Enchanted by your eyes,
Believing all the love songs
But the love songs told us lies.
I could have stayed forever
If given half a chance,
But Karma came between us
Without a backward glance.
I might have stayed forever
Flown home just like a bird,
If you had said you wanted me
But you never said the words.
And now we know its over

Our chance just passed us by,
So think about the future
Cause forever was a lie.

Frank Johnson
Cry Once...
Cry me a cry, one-my child
Let your untamed tears runneth wild
Let the rain fall from your fertile eyes
Let your daddy hear his daughter’s lonesome cries.
I didn’t see you fall from that wicked red bike
I didn’t see the wind steal your flimsy yellow kite
I didn’t see your lonely, sleepless nights
I didn’t see in your heart-loves tender lights
Fragment memories of a tearless cry
Never seen tears flowing from my daughters eye
Cry me a cry, once-my child
Let your untamed tears runneth wild.

Charles Christian
Prejudice
What is it about a crow
A black crow,
That makes me think of evil?
The shadow of a snow
A mood as dark as the blackest crow
A dark soul…
Crow’s sit high in the tree of evil
Watching me with black inky eyes,
Not a word said in judgment.
How did I find something to hate?
Why do I fear crows…
To hate a thing that just is..
What is the cost
Of not having an enemy,
Would hatred and fear die away?
Can God be trusted
In the dark, or
Only in the light?
Evilness of the crow
It’s not an angry bird
Looking to break bones or hearts….

One minded thinking
With symbols of eternity,
First, last, omega…

Can I put this away,
Black, crows, superstitions,
Eyes that accept no light.

Souls never die
Characters are formed
By the choices we’ve made.

Every minute of anger
I love 60 seconds of joy..
Bad habits can be broken.

A black crow, a!
Seeing something rainy,
To heal, I swear it smiled.

Felix Rodriguez
My Dwelling Place
Love, you are my refuge,
My abode forever.

Just as a joyous bachelor
may desire to be a lone wolf,
So as your spouse do I dream
of being more united in marriage.

Your body is a passage leading
through a golden wood;
your love is a clearing
in the midst of the grove.

Here have I built my residence,
here in you alone.
With you I know little solitude
deeper than my own.

One table, one rocking chair
by the hearth of you,
and in your face a window
more brilliant than the firmament!

Your utterance is more peaceful
than my thoughts. Gladly shall I spend
my life in the cool still hush of
you.

When you smile I’m warmed like
earth in the sun.
your laugh is the brook at my
doorstep.

Gentler are you than breath,
stranger than death.
Just to touch your crowning glory
Is more tranquil than slumber.

Surely all my wandering finds it
Expiration in you.
In your brown eyes may I safely
Perish.

Darling, you are my hermitage,
My dwelling for ever.

For (who else?)
“Many women do noble things, but
you surpass them all.”
Proverbs 31:29

J. Cameron
Why Did You Do It

Why did you do it; why
did you lie! Did you think it would
hurt less if you attempted to hide.
The facts are the facts, the truth is
what’s real; If you could have been
honest nothing could kill, the love
that we shared, the bond that had
grew but, you steady denied,
knowing I knew.

From the beginning I told
you to “just keep it real;” “Don’t
try to convince me, I’m not new to
this deal.” “I’ve done this before,”
“I’m not new to the pain.” I
attempted to warn you, and you
still tried to run game!

Why did you do it, why
couldn’t you see, that all that I
needed was you to be honest with
me? I knew that it hurt, I knew it
was hard, to try to hold on to a
man behind bars.

I knew it was tough
without the
affection you need;
I knew you’d go get
it and expect me to
believe, that you’d
never to cheat,
‘cause your not
human like me.

I gave you
the chance to be
real from the start;
“Just keep it one
hundred and don’t
play with my
heart.” “Don’t think
me the fool, don’t
sit there and lie, just
do what you do and
let sleeping dogs lie.”

Why did you do it, why
did you lie? You tried to convince
me looking me square in the eyes.
You could have been smart and
just not brought it up but, the guilt
was too much you had drank from
the cup; that cup filled with
pleasure, the pleasure you craved.
You used words of deceit
words
that could have been saved.
You could have been
silent, leaving the truth un-
spoken;
you could have stood firm in your
silence, leaving the trust unbroken;
you could have been real baby, and
we could have got through it, but
you chose to play games. Baby,
why did you do it?
Tim Hampton
Won’t Change
At the age of 23, I had experienced something new
A thing called sacrifice just to be with you
Having disagreements and arguments because you wouldn’t do the same
Not having trust in you ‘cause I knew you were still playing games

Trying to put up with your unfaithfulness, because my love for you is strong
You got me caught up in your smell, so I’m just tagging along
Hunt deep down inside, when you holla at other kids when we’re together
If I could just find the strength in me to break away, I’ll be much better

Our anniversary is next week, and you fronting like you care
Made special romantic arrangements in hopes you’ll be there
Just like last year, I know how it will be
A table of roses and champagne with a chair only reserved for me

William Chaplar
A Letter From The Inside
Sometimes I sit and wonder if you ever think of me.
I wonder if there’s someone else you wish that I could be.
I fully understand that, of me, you’re not very proud.
And over our relationship, there’s always loomed a cloud.
I guess I never really took the time to let you know
Who I’ve become since you saw me eleven years ago.
First off, I’d like to let you know-
That I’ve developed quite a fondness for the written word.
I’m letting you know this because I hope one day you might
Forgive me long enough to take the time to sit and write.

Robert V. Fryer
If Tears Could Build A Stairway
I thought of you today but that is nothing new
I thought of you yesterday and will tomorrow, too
My dreams are of you in silence and make no outward show
For what it means to not have you only those who love you know
Remembering you is easy I do it everyday
It’s the pain of not having you that will never go away
But if tears could build a stairway and memories were a lane
I would walk right up to heaven to ask God for you again
Our hearts words weren’t spoken and I never wanted a good-bye

Chad Lawson
Near But Far
You’re near but far.
You gave me the strength
Even though you’re where you are.
I wonder what I am, you told
Me, “I am A man.”
When hard times fell,
You dusted me off again.
When I got hurt you
Picked me up and told
Me to be tough.
I know I have become
A man that’s the part you
Wanted me to understand.
Now I am on my own two
feet again to let you know
That I still here, but feel
Your hands on my shoulder
“You’re near but far.”

William Chaplair
I Owe You the World
I owe you the world,
or as much of it as I
can give.
Because I wasn’t
there, you were forced
to live the life you
lived.
So I owe you the
world, but you’ll have
to settle for the life
It’s likely you’d have
lived if you hadn’t
ever been my wife.
In payment of my
debt, I promise to do
all I can
To prove to you that I
am capable of being the man
You’ve always dreamed about but
never thought that I
could be.
‘Cause I owe you the world for
everything you’ve done
for me.

Lysander White
Thinking Of You
I seem to find my head filled with
Thoughts of you as if I was writing
For something or someone.
Like the stars in the night sky
awaiting
The moon to pop out from behind

One chance to say I was thinking
of you today.

Tim Hampton
The Perfect Words
I wanted to find the perfect words
to make you realize just how much
I appreciate your time, and to say,
thank you. But the words continue
to elude me. What would they be?
Something poetic, I’m sure
heartfelt, and out of the ordinary.
But, I’m afraid, it’s no use. Every
time I look at your picture, or think
of your name, the words just seem
to come out the same. I often tell
you, I love you and say how glad I
am, we found each other. Talking
about how much you mean to me
and how wonderful life is because
of you. But I don’t recall, ever
saying thank you, for liking me
and accepting me, as I am. And for
loving me. For letting me know it,
and for sharing with me, in your
own special way. But, in my heart,
I thanked you all the time for
everything you had done. And for
most of all, for being you.

Billy Lively
Thoughts of You
For most people
Days are measured
In hours and minutes.
For me, they’re measured
In thoughts of you.
A more pleasant way
To track sand
Though the hourglass
Has never existed
The clock which counts
All the days of my life
Can now be set.
And its hands
Will point forever
To thoughts of you.

Ansen Stowers
On Dreams
I weep for dreams as yet
unknown,
When startled
from my restless sleep,
I know no reason to
bemoan,
The loss of things I can
never keep.
But bemoan their loss, I find I do,
Such passion spent on
fallow ground,
A senseless waste of emotion blue,
Yet to such fancy am I
bound.
Where dreams in sleep are playful
prose,
A respite from life with
nothing lost,
A place where censure never goes,
And fantasy is without
cost.
Righteous seems such burning
rage,
Like yon silvered star,
The spirit swept into this cage,
To repent of sins from afar.
Wrath and ire, like armor worn,
Protection from without,
Hopes and dreams now are torn,
Replaced by ceaseless doubt.
Such lofty goals as gone before,
Usurped by staid ideal,
Adventure beckons like an open door,
Yet there’s no passion left to feel.
Passion past with gavel’s break,
As judgment is incurred,
Life and freedom will they take,
At critic’s lonely word.

Santos Peña
Daddy Boy
I stumble through a restless sleep.
Then I saw your tender face of an angel.
In my dream.
Playing and singing.
With your smile and laughter.
It had put so much weight,
To my lonesome heart.
Wanting to hold you in my arms,
Which I miss you very much.
It's not the pain that hurt.
It's, not seeing you
that rip through me like arrows in my heart.
You wouldn't imagine,
how much I dream of you.
You will always be Daddy Little Boy.
I still see your precious smile.
And your brown eyes,
sparkle like the sun light.
I have dreams
Seeing you running around the house,
Not a care in the world.
So full of love
Yes,
You will always be Daddy Little Boy
for eternity.

Ted Eason
Always
I see you...
in everything I enjoy...

in the world around me...
in all I do -
There is a piece of time rekindled,
from the ashes of “Ago.”
It merges briefly with my now.
Only to fade, and die.
Taking with it,
Yet another piece of me as it leaves again.
Not entirely, unwilling to let go –
but unable.
Lives tied, souls entwined...
searching... ever yearning...
the close comfort of togetherness,
once shared...
now a memory...
held in every fiber of my being –
forever were
though always, you are gone...
from all but my heart and mind.
Ever with me now,
the emptiness, of life without you...
- of life...
…missing you...

Lucio Urenda
Have To Admit
I have to admit
I feel more at peace
When I look into those
Sparkling pools
Those beautiful eyes
That enchant the soul
For her pretty sight
Entraps one’s life
And doesn’t let you go

I have to admit
Its never the same
Once she walks away
My smile fades away
And the day
Just isn’t the same
My life loses meaning
And my world turns
to gray

Frank Johnson III
In Thought...
…She came quietly:
Disguised as a soft breeze,
A warm whisper.
As a gentle mist, she slipped into
my mind;

Turning pages back to
yesterday’s love.
As her breast pressed
against my bosom
Her joy became my joy,
Her peace- my peace…

…She then sat down in the middle
of my soul
We danced, to our song
Then we
created a new form of love
…I woke up---------In
thought…

Robert Deninno
The Magic’s Come Undone
Wild eyed golden child
Your placenta was the sun
Misty eyed and jaded now
The magic’s come undone
Your heart is broke
Your soul is bruised
You guard yourself
From being used
And try to keep yourself
amused
While the colors fade and run
Wild eyed golden child
The magic’s come undone.

Huero Williams
Never Unity
The wind screams over the gun tower
As I watch from my stone apartment.
Silence and sadness, here in brick city.
Death and vanity grin at me with menace.
Our anger and temper driving us apart.
Are we too stubborn, or too ignorant to understand.
Hatred flooded in while you were gone.
Brotherhood stumbled out to avoid trouble.
Colorless dawn has come silently.
The sky brightens alone, without
the nose of the sun.
Vincent Garcia
Inside
It’s a cold world we live in
where pity has nowhere to land
how can I come inside where it’s warm with lights to see?
It’s said that it’s the devil’s world in place we be.
Not even God lives the pain we struggle through,
and it’s said he’s the almighty, but nothing has changed.
It’s a cold world outside, but I’m so deep to feel the breeze.
It’s hard to understand life at times.
On how we struggle to live, and the cause we die for
it’s so twisted, the light of the world, to see
the beauty of what man does to corrupt what people don’t see.
I’ve followed the stepping stones we speak
and I’ve fallen!
I’ve asked myself over and over again,
what’s for the people and how could I help
if I can’t help myself?
What can I gain if I can’t see or understand
what this world has for me.
The touch of darkness is a touch of a disease
that you can’t please.
I’ll stand tall,
challenge the obstacles that come to me.
How could I recognize the goodness’ smile,
where there’s no light to see.
Where are the stones I climb from the inside?
I’ve fallen to my knees.
It’s a cold world I know because I’m in the inside I see.

Ray Charles Gary
Forbidden Fruit
From these walls my life has been changed in ways one wouldn’t believe,
due to what I’ve witnessed during my stay
in this nightmarish never-ending dream.
I try to wake up but can’t, no matter how hard I try, and the years roll on as time passes my by.
In this sleepless state I’m forced to endure,
I encounter many of life’s rejects – the tainted ones, the imperfect and impure.
We talk, we fight, we disagree and we learn and we come to understand,
that in this life there is no perfect man.
But all in all we are the same to some degree, we all desire to be all those in our lives want us to be.
The father, the brother, the son, the lover, hommie and friend,
But answer me this – who are we really in the end?
The misguided, misunderstood misjudged and forgotten,
or are we simply the forbidden fruit left to rot?

Tom Stone
Presents from the Dead
The songs reverberate in my head Slamming doors, still kissing still Sweet slop for every meal Very lonely-yet never alone Lots of calls, no one’s home Today just like yesterday Tomorrow brings timeless sorrow Such a waste till the end Take me God-be a friend Ease my emptiness, my hunger, the regret-Ringing in my head.

Dwayne Waterman
The World is not a Pleasant Place to Be
The world is not a pleasant place to be without someone to hold or be held by.

Remember Me
Prison’s no place for an innocent child,
no room for the meek, no room for the mild.
My nights are so lonely, I toss in my bed,
My days are so horrid and all filled with dread.
Grant me this prayer as you did from the cross,
For that man that knew his life was a loss.
Please come to this prison where I sit alone,
Surrounded by darkness, concrete and stone.
Broken and bruised, forgotten and lost
In the ash heap of sorrow in life was I tossed.
There’s no place left for me on this earth
I’ve lived in the shadows since the day of my birth.
Come to my prison, enter my cell, I don’t think I’ll make it out of this hell.
And if in this life, no home do I see,
All I ask God is that you remember me.

A river would stop its flow if only a stream were there to receive it.
An ocean would never laugh if clouds weren’t there to kiss her tears.
The world is not a pleasant place to be without someone like you.
Unfinished
I build these walls of steal and stone.
My unwanted home away from home.
I sit here undone and unfinished, but my spirit and strength have never diminished.
Who I am, I can not say, but who knows,
Tomorrow is a new day.
Who guides me, I hope to know To freedom at home, I hope to go.
Santos Pena
The Coldness I Feel
Sit here and lay my thoughts,
In black and white,
To inform the love and hurt that I
carry,
Please Dear.
Fin the time and space,
To depart your mind
Focus and be here with me
Life is passing me by.
I crave you with loneliness inside
me. I’m stuck with a path.
I live a life with action and
decision,
Hurting.
Waking each morning,
Just to see how lonely life is
I have hurt your life and mine.
These swarm of words you read.
They are falling silent, with tears,
Trapped behind bars.
I cannot continue living this way,
I will defeat the beast inside of me,
It has cause pain and suffering that
I cause you.
I have a burden here in my chest,
Crying out loud,
I feel the coldness of something
inside me
A connection of empty thoughts
Blank,
Black as the night,
I am tensely in pain today
With the path are empty
Except a few dreams
That comfort me for awhile.

Shaun Morales
The Distance
In the midst of it all I remain
distant. Distant to the world as we
know it. The pleasures and, pains
both, anticipating my return. For
those that enjoyed the distance, my
return may disturb your life style,
not that I’ll intentionally disturb
you, but my presence alone will be
of one who has over came many
obstacles, just as Booker T.
Washington has done. When the
judge sentenced me to death the
oppressors enjoyed the sacrifice of
one’s freedom for another’s well
being. Not only do I thank God
for his grace and
acknowledgement but also I give
thanks to those who doubted me,
your hatred is fuel to my flames.
The distance has enabled me to
find the inner strength and
ambition that Drives me daily.
Motivated beyond comparison and
Driven beyond Belief, A new man
I am, a new spirit built from the
steel and concrete that surrounds
me. Take heed from a dying
breed, a diamond in the dirt.
Never allow the negative input
from the enemy delude your
future, nor allow the distance to
defeat you
… Defy your fate…
(For all my incarcerated brothers
and sisters
Distance makes the heart grow
fonder
Free yourself from within, so you
can
Be free in the physical form)

Eric Martinez
The world in which I lived had
neither day nor night,
The sun continually setting so that
twilight
Fell over everything in perpetual
gradation,
Staving away both darkness and
cruel light.
The house I built with kindle
I left barren,
Mingled with dust and decay,
To be trodden down by rich
Victorian feet
This is where I had come to rest
my head,
All I ever had been,
All I ever was, All I ever would
be.
Poured forth into a torrent of thick
red
Catharsis still warm to the touch,
nothing flew higher than God
Only God flew higher than me
Only I knew how to fly.
How long could I have flown
Breathing but never having drawn
a breath
The humors still stagnant in my
lungs
This is the fate for all those like
me,
To walk the battlements till
morning.
Yielding, I beat my hands at the
sky and cried out.
“Am I so far gone that I am not
worthy of redemption?
He handed me a knife and
said,
“first you must learn to live
without!”

Buster Swafford
House of Steel and Stone
Can you see me,
In my house of steel and
stone?
I’ve a fence around my yard,
But not a white picket one.
I’ve broken all the rules,
Of things not allowed.
I’ve stood alone,
In the middle of a road.
Tho’ there’s been little
light,
Along this path I climb.
I’ve done it all…
My own style-my own sweet time.
Today I stand alone,
In a field of dread.
I’ e exchanged my soul for shame,
And made a prison cell my bed, oh
can you see me,
In my house of steel and stone?
If only you were with me Lord,
I wouldn’t be so alone.

David Cross
Lost
No matter what road I travel
My life slowly tends to unravel
Crying out for love and friend
Disaster finds me in the end
Born to evil guided by hate  
A mother’s love never too late  
Disciple of the darkened night  
Refuse to grasp the saving light

Temptation whipping at my heel  
Misleading me from life’s wheel  
Struggle and fight to no avail  
Satan has my ticket to hell

Down the road there is no hope  
Suffering mistakes how to cope  
Gnashing of teeth cry out in prayer  
How to escape the demon’s lair

In the shadows lie only death  
Fight and rage with every breath  
To reach the tunnel’s guiding light  
All one must do is force their fright

**Maurice Jones**  
**A Hole In Time**

As I hold my head high trying to hold on to the last shred of dignity and humanity I posses, I find that the system I have allowed myself to fall under was created to destroy those feelings. Fighting hard with all my strength of my inner soul I hope to uphold and maintain my sense of being a man.

Caught in a hole where time has no place, the aura of negativity seeps through the wall, somehow antagonizing me to become other than myself. The pressure of constant torment binds me to a feeling of being caught in a devil’s cove. Those that have come before me and those that will come after me are sure to feel the wrath.

Each day I rise with thoughts of beauty but by the end of each day those thoughts are shredded and torn into thoughts of hate, rage and revenge.

I often bow my head and fall to my knees asking my heavenly father to have mercy on me.

**Robert Fuentes**  
**Power of Poetry**

I often wonder  
If poetry sounds the same  
Outside of prison walls;  
Do the words echo differently  
In free silence  
Than that of dungeon’s grasp;  
Do the rhythms  
Roll and stop  
On their own or on command;  
Does the picture drawn

Within the syllables of unrestrained thought look the same as it does  
Through steel barred minds;  
But most of all  
I often wonder  
If the story of words  
Carry the outside world  
As far as they  
Each carry me.

**Sketch**  
**Scars & Bars**

Will our children sacrifice in time?  
The love lost, and hate they’ll find…  
Buried in cold concrete  
Carved my name in scars  
One’s story complete  
Written behind bars…  
The laws of my life  
Sentenced me in pain  
So damp and weathered  
Through cuffs and chains…  
So bitter, so sad  
For a life I’ve never had,  
Through the suffering  
Of family and friends,  
A man of conviction  
Is where it ends…

**Travis Standlee**  
**A Prisoner’s Haiku of Realization**

Sitting here inside  
These walls, uncompromising  
I am truly free.
Preston Smith
Hello,
I greet you with Peace and kind thoughts.
May your life always greet you in a very Pleasant Manner. May each day that you encounter in life bring you Comfort, and Happiness. Life is full of New Experiences. Each day is a Learning Process for us. May every choice that you make in life be well thought of and beneficial to you. Who we are today comes from the choices that we made yesterday, and who we will be tomorrow comes from the choices that we make today. Life is a long journey and we engage in so much around us. Let's ride down the best road that we know is there for us, and put our life in the best position that we know it deserves to be in. Let's reach forward and make our reality full of Beauty, Glory, and Serenity, and most of all – Satisfaction. May you always thrive on Pride, Ambitions, Consideration, Commitments, Hope, Confidence, and Understanding, Dignity, Morality, and Good Principles, Love, Pure Motives, and a Pure Heart. This will cause us to be all that we can be in this consuming, crazy, and unpredictable world. Let's push forward and make our dreams come true with much appreciation of touching our destination.

William Chaplar
Wisdom Protects

Wisdom will protect you from the ways of wicked men; From those who'd make you leave a path that's straight. It also can prevent those who delight in doing wrong From facing an insufferable fate.

What If...
Some believe it was Eve who went bad, But what if the whole world's been had? What if all of the hype's Just misogy's tripe? Wouldn't that make a lot of folks mad?

On Creation
People praise the creation of Man. And yet science does all that it can To prove that we all sprang From a cosmic Big Bang, Which some now claim was really God's plan.

Don Collins
THE NEXT DAY
At first it seems the world, is crushing down on you.... Thru those long stressful days, it seems they last forever.... Your strength is a test of wisdom, and what will-power you have.... Only in time things will reverse, and best of days are coming.... Like a scenic volcano erupting, Don’t expect it to go away.... Your life is to forever live, So be ready for a better day

Thee Gracious Poet
ARE W.E. WHO KNOW YOU Pipe dream b'kome pure scenes When seen thru mesh filled screams; Like Melvin said with his “Baaad
Woman iz the motherlode
Loveiz the karrier of the most hieh,
Children be the justice to kiss the sky.
Man be the substance of the all-eye-seeer,
When it all comes together, kulture in rootsiz how get freer.
SELAH.

I MAN I I-DICTATE
4skore the sin borrowers & pin followers
Who like to drag unkreased pants
Mean-mug & raag sag
w/the burnin fag out the lip..
4skore the krook whose living ah lie
Ah rook
Plaing big baller
30 piece of goal
paperbrawler
& all the while they just ah krawler…
4skore the gangeter thug
chetkolony pranksta
Whose larceny over intelligence
Professes their belligerence
While proklamating,"I’m a mane , mane..
4skore be-linches half a men pseudowenthess
Whose street reputation iz jumpin Kastle on park benches
Deceiving thy Brother & Sister
While in your eye iz ah herpe blister…
4skore the aggravator stankin kontemptor
Hoze adultous daze
Keep them hemmed in
Kan’t find exit from misery haze
& sandkrabbing the devil’s den…
4 you A>B=E> lite student
Who need to get eminent dome-ain
Engage self knowledge & be kome prudent..
It’s t.i.m.e. we desert the niggardly

Mentality
Pulverize niggardly ways & means
Emancipate niggardly anesthesia themes
Ascend niggardly drama skemes & plays
Crush niggardly thought knaves & knives
Eradikate niggardly word slaves..
Let the dead sleep w/the dead
Secret the living w/the living!

Brian Webster
This Chain
All my life
I’ve heard it said
That “every dog has its day”

But this poor hound
Has never found it
Ever to be that way
I’ve been caught and bound
Placed in the pound
Tethered fast to this chain
They no moral dilemma
Of euthanasia
No melancholy
For my pain

Through all life’s struggles
From on high…I fell
I never lost spirit
Never tucked my tail
But they bid me to live
In this well oiled machine
Like some piston, gear or cog
So it should never be said
“Every dog has its day”
But that “Every day has its dog”

Sheena King
Knowing our Communities and Ourselves
You have your way, I have mine
Stereotypical thought confine.
Our lives are different. Let differences define.
Separate worlds-don’t coincide
They should not meet, never collide

There is a bridge you could traverse,
Beware; your verdict may be reversed
And what you thought you knew-inversed!
The world is an integrated composition,
a whole by uniting parts was the vision
a universe of created equals in juxtaposition.
Yet a people unique, diversified-
No longer separated by terms that classified
With similarity in experiences, we are unified.

Duane Butler
Forgiveness
Mend for me my broken soul,
Fill for me my empty bowl.
Sing to me of your saving grace,
Show to me thy angels face.
Spread for me your chosen path
Spare of me your vengeful wrath.
Wash for me away my sins,
This heart of mine for me please mend.

And for you my lord I give my life,
To right the wrong, and end the strife,
I’ll lift my voice in praise of you,
And let your light come shining through.
Clear the darkness from my heart,
I’ll carry my load and do my part.
All of this I ask of thee
Your humble servant on bended knee.

Dave Gordon
A Nut Like Me
A lonely nut fell from a tree
Whose trunk was twisted and torn
Her branches yellowed very few leaves
To protect her young acorn

Without any help, with no father around,
Without any clue what to be,
The little lone nut sunk a root in the ground
Then began his new life as a tree

He saw his old twisted mother
And how she had grown all alone
He made the choice to discover
How to live a new life of his own

But each time that he spread out new leaves
In this wind and the rain and the sun
The insects and birds and bumbling bees
Would steal them everyone

This caused him lots of anger
For what right did they have to his leaves
But then he saw the great danger
That topples the greatest of trees

For trees they were created
To shelter and feed smaller things
Because they all are related
Through the life that each creature brings

The insects keep the trees nice and clean
As the birds sing out songs from their nests
The bumbling bees build their hives in these trees
Because to them a tree house is best

It’s the best place to have recreation
And the best place to lay safe in bed
It’s the best place to see God’s creation
When the storms of life pass overhead

So the tree all alone felt great sorrow
For that dry arid plain made him grieve
He envisioned a brighter tomorrow
Then spread out his arms full of leaves

His arms were soon filled with God’s creatures
He counted them all as his own
Then in the surprise of his nature
He started to drop new acorns

Young trees all around him soon sprouted
Growing safely up under his shade
So proud of their father they shouted,
“Hey look at the family dad made!”

It didn’t take long for these trees to grow strong
Under the shelter of their father’s strong limbs
For when these trees grew, the plain they once knew
Was a forest of trees thanks to him

The bees had increase their number
As the baby birds sang from their nests
The insects had no time for slumber
For the birds and the bees made a mess

So deep in this dark wooded forest
Surrounded by his family
Stands a happy old tree who laughs out in glee

“Life came from a nut just like me!”

I hope that you all grasp my meaning
It’s whispering through all of my leaves
For this poem that you’ve just been reading
Came from a man who began like this tree

So reach into yourself and discover
A truth that I know you will see
That all of us really are brothers
Since we’re nuts from the same family tree

Torrance Maddox
Untitled
Hardships befall all, success is the word that’s spoken
You should hold your head high and stand tall.
With the partnership of body and mind, anyone can overcome Achieve and hurdle barriers. Block of time.
Reach out and clasp, grasp a fallen man’s last touch
For this is the key to humanity.
Love through a gesture as such.

Jose Heladio Villarreal III
Cycle of Time
Born in a web without properties of silk or fabric, yet as complex as feathering of an Aztec headdress.
Graced with the fiery spirit, cast iron endurance and conscience to address.
A bronze embryo, then infant warrior who upon time will flourish as the Mexican empire once did throughout the valley of Mexico.
Devouring all erudition with the appetite of a Jaguar knight in his quest for betterment and self determination for the people, for books are his vehicle.
Heartfelt engagements and brutality of the baton will mold his character.
The cannonade will create a resistance, a thick callous as
tempered steel which will enable him to shine as leader of the people.

The lingering of fresh cordite in the streets of Aztlan are but screaming alarms from chicomostoc, the first barrio of Aztlan sent to these neocolonies we now call home. And the beautiful quetzal bird that gives us hope with its melodious song sang throughout the jungle kingdom, from the tops of the highest pyramids to the lowland mountain trails, the sharp cry of the quetzal rips through the silence of the valley floor only to echo from the deepest canyons.

From the farthest smelling earth to the concrete and steel cages, this is our cycle of time.

Greg Shattack
Yesterday, Today, + Tomorrow
The past? It's dead and stinking
There's nothing left but thinking
That's long come to an end
To never be again

The Future? an illusion
Realities grave intrusion
to keep you in the “then”
a time that’s never been

This moments all that’s real
To see and hear and feel
so live your life today
tomorrow, come what may

Michael Owens
Sentrise A Gusto Con Los Muertos
Awkward kinds of life play out
in the machine, teeth mark steel
etch a footnote to Achebe's last warning, things fall apart like antebellum afterbirth in the USA
grinds bones dull then penalizes their collapse, novocaine spirit
does not mind the sting of face down, obedience to that singular taste:
boot leathers and waffle soles, better to disappear than be next disappeared, that seems to be more common excuse and the catacombs ain't even 1/2 full, that's the sad, inevitable truth

Che's reward is a cement coffin
up at Pelican Bay, the boogeymen
get those worth talking, in time,
blacks and latinos are minorities everywhere but here, while world inside of a six-foot shelf space
the name of the game is control, everyone novice except the beast
(him! Challenge to wants one no)
that's as backwards as searching for revolt among the happy dead.

Ryan Collier
Unto Me
Tonight I cry...
Yes... The teardrops wash my face
I'm downcast and ashamed
lord, cover me with grace.

Joy comes in the morning...
oh tonight....
its getting late.
I need a blessing now....

draw nigh o-lord, draw nigh.... Unto me.

Leslie Amison
Thanksgiving Dishwasher
Old woman
you should be reclining
on the beaches of Florida.
How were you beached here?
Husband sick?
Die before his time?

At least
the waitresses are polite to you.
No one lends a hand though.
I am tempted to = To get off my fat ass
and stoop the way you stoop
and haul off those pits of dishes.
Are we a people filled only with the temptation to do good?

Though, behind those ample wrinkles
I can imagine trying
to pick you up some 40 years ago.
How is it, you don't even curse us under your breath?
Brought up the way my parents were?

None of those admonitions ever got me off my ass.

The 'new economics' is the “old inflation.”
With a statement like that, you can guess,
I'm known as a crank = Not your type really.
But, there's a minority dusting off those old books
that say = You are a part of the result.
Ben Winter
Glorious
It’s as if I wish to
Stave off the future with words
If I can somehow construct
meaning
From scattered fragments and
phrases
I just may be able to change the outcome
The horrid unknown reshaped
Between the hammer of will
And the anvil of circumstance
Each word born into the white
world
Is hurled in the face of time
In hopes of stemming the tide
With a mighty effort the
Offspring of my mind
Wrestle with disaster and ruin
On my behalf
Desperately seeking to form a future
Yet unseen
And who knows
I just may be able to build a world
And a future with these words
Better suited to what I deserve
So close to what I desire

Jason Forbes
Lunar Sea
Aspiring to be, I look forward
And up, onward across the Lunar sea, within grasp my Motivation—filled cup,
I’ll surrender not to the bleak And brackish past
The old mask is split and
Behind me cast,
For—driven, ahead pressing
Fast
Outcast but, not outclassed,
Nor defeated.
Not saddened or weakened by
Gestures for past deeds treated.
The suffering has ended
And now a force with which to
Be contended, a tardy bloom
Rendered and preserved, a
Success to be earned and
Well-deserved
The rolling stone not so hard
That I cannot bleed, my
Throbbing heart still humming
Your name as I traverse
The Lunar Sea.

Robert Hambrick
Going Away
When wondering
rabbits worry of
missing
disappointments…
and chessmen
scream curses cruelly;
If flamingos replace
readied mallets…
and hat men become
unruly;
When sightless
sound and soundless
sight prompt
colorless, toneless
flight—
Then it could be time.
When men bow to noble horses…
and ships sail amongst the clouds;
If dragons now become
men’s friends… as trolls gather in loud crowds;
When singing eggmen fear walrus
and wren—
It might be time.
When windmills become terrible giants… and the sun shines as you sleep;
If raving ravens cry “Never more”… And there’s laughter as you weep;
When thoughts are circles without
rims, and demons sing holy hymns—
It may be time.
When forests become a maze of steel … and the sky becomes a
ceiling;
If kropsometer’s mood dominates rhyme…depression unappealing;
When you add up the letters of your name and answer to the number of the same
—it is probably time.
When clocks tick only inside your head… not losing, but already lost;
If breathing brings you only
dread… and comes the terminal frost;
When home’s throne becomes cold stone—
Then it is time.
When love is but
a mourned
memory… and touch renders no feeling;
If mirrors show only what you hide… and the soul’s wound has no healing;
When you shout but no one hears, and you’ve finally drained of tears—
It is time.
Time to go…
Unless you’ve already gone.

C.F. Christian
Paths of Learning
Truth walks towards us,
On the paths of our questions.
As soon as you think
You have the answer,
The path closes…
And you miss
Vital new information
Wait in stillness
Do not rush to conclusions.
No matter how uncomfortable
The unknowing may be
Keep you path of learning
Open!
"Life inspires me! My experiences are uniquely mine, and they are all I have for there is one thing that everybody loves me, and my modesty."

I would describe myself as young at heart without being immature. I am a student of life and human nature also a practitioner of Zen. My aspiration is to mature into a Godly husband and father. I am more than my crime, my C.D.C. file, my CDC# …

I am a people watcher, Salinas Valley State Prison A5. I am an awesome co. A sprout from manure, slow to bloom am I.

I make things that come alive. I love the mountains, majestic full of life and beauty, they restore the soul. But my greatest change the way people look at life.

I have a fierce drive to improve. To better myself. And not allow this place or the past to define the person I am today. "My worst mood sets my mind. And my fingers proceed with action." Everything in and aspirations.

"Life is too short to waste, so I live and love like every day is my last." Life spires me to write what I write. 

"I try to look for the best in all things" "A sprout from manure, slow to bloom am I."

"For there is one thing that we do not give up, that is the power of thought and aspirations." THanks to all of our contributing authors!

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Shaun Morales B03747
Santa Rosa Correctional- E 5850 East Milton Rd
Milton FL 32583”Learning from life’s lessons, embracing growth is what inspires me to write from a personal point of view.”

A.N. aka Thee Gracious Poet
Upstate S.C.U.P. 9C2#30T309
Bare Hill Road Malone NY 12953-2001
“[I] have learned] that no matter what life puts in front of me I can overcome the obstacle… with a little patience and determination.”

Eric Remerowski 1145256
Clements Unit 9601 Spur 591
Amarillo TX 79107
“…prison can be an opportunity for much spiritual growth…”

Felix Rodriguez 1525427
Dolph Briscoe Unit 1459 W Hwy 85 Dilley TX 78017
“Reformed, compassionate, loyal, kind, forgiving, wise in heart yet humble.”

Jason Salas 663036
Allred Unit 21010 FM 369 N
Iowa Park TX 76367

Greg Shattuck 1342447
3899 State Hwy 98 S New Boston TX 75570
“I started writing poetry because I’ve always enjoyed the challenge of new creative mediums.”

Preston Smith 04103000
Federal Correctional Complex
PO Box 24550
Tucson AZ 85734

Jackey Sollars 646400
Stiles Unit 19-4-1010
3060 FM 3514 Beaumont TX 77705
“I can click a heel in a disco as easily as I can scoot a boot in a honky tonk.”

Travis Standlee 1241041
BMCC C-22-T 8500 North FM 3053
Overton TX 75684

Tom Stone 670145
South Bay Facility A3-105L PO Box 7171
South Bay FL 33493
“Moral of my story don’t rob banks.”

Anson Stowens 510105
Estelle Unit High Security 264 FM 3478 Rd
Huntsville TX 77320
“also like to draw and have a passion for good books.”

Clarence Swafford 1205928
Allred Unit 2101 FM 369 N.
Iowa Park TX 76367
“Studying American culture inspires me a great deal!”

Anwwar Tapia 1071564
Robertson Unit 12071 FM 352
Ablenene TX 79601

Lucio Urenda 710403
899 FM 632 CY Unit Kenedy TX 78119
“Wisdom and strength have inspired me to be a staunch person.”

Dave Villarreal 589341
Wynne Unit
Huntsville TX 77349

Paul Wasburn 478312
Estelle Unit 264 FM 3478
Huntsville TX 77320

Joe ONeal H02120
PBSP D9-104 PO Box 7500
Crescent City CA 95533
“[I have] the ability to laugh at myself and love life in spite of my unfortunate circumstances”

Santos Pena 1187353
Briscoe Unit 1459 West Hwy 85 Dilley TX 78017
“Wisdom and strength have inspired me to be a staunch person.”

Albert Pena 132360
Eastham Unit 2665 Prison Road # 1
Lovelady TX 75851
“My dreams are to find someone and get married, work on a book to publish all my work.”

Gerald B. Prisock 730014
Rufe Jordan Unit 192 Helton Rd
Pampa TX 79065-9655
"I hate okra in all forms! I am a rabid chocoholic!”

Joe Villarreal 589341
Wynne Unit
Huntsville TX 77349

Paul Wasburn 478312
Estelle Unit 264 FM 3478
Huntsville TX 77320

I believe everyone has the right to be you...”

Dwayne Waterman 1240913
Michael Unit 2664 FM 2054
Tennessee Colony TX 75886

Bryan Webster 1295022
Connally Unit 19-002 899 FM 632
Kenedy TX 78119
“[I have] learned] that no matter what life puts in front of me I can overcome the obstacle… with a little patience and determination.”

Lysander White 1382020
3060 FM 3514 Beaumont TX 77705-7635
“When I write a poem, each carries its own type of passion.”

Huerro Williams D16748
CSATF/State Prison E1-143 PO Box 5242
Corcoran CA 93212

Eric Remerowski 1145256
Clements Unit 9601 Spur 591
Amarillo TX 79107
“…prison can be an opportunity for much spiritual growth…”
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 Center for Transformative Action. Additional Support comes from the Cornell Public Service Center and the Office of Minority Affairs at Cornell University.