

Prison life

Alone in a crowd By Michael Lanning

He's not anyone
Not even another someone
He hides behind a crowd.
His voice never becomes loud.
Born with a bad heart,
He was kept apart.
From those who run and play
Having fun throughout the day
He stayed in the house
Quiet as a mouse
A good little boy
Who played with his favorite toy.
From the beginning
He has kept silent
While others are sinning
In a prison that's violent.
It kept him safe,
In this bizarre place.
He is no one,
Yet he sees everyone
It's not just what he's becomes
It's what he's always done.

A Song of Freedom By Chad Frank

I watched
Bird on barbed wire
Sing a song of freedom
Then escape into open sky.
I sighed.

Parallel Existence By Jonathan Escalera

Everyday waking up in a cold place, no
place,
Just a name and number.
As hunger pains rumble in my soul, I think
I'm going under.
Yes, minor blunders will rip you asunder.
Between the tension on the yard,
To these punk ass pigs faking like they're
hard,
Are you really going to question why I'm self
medicating?
Wasting a mind is a terrible thing, But I can't
seem to find my way.
Day after day, demons are urging me to lay
the yard down with a banger.
Anger can't describe it, fight it, life is a daily
battle fighting under tyrants.
Silence is solace in a world where the
flawless get demolished.
In a box I exist, but that's it.

Tragic stories are common, I'm in a parallel
universe,
Where life is smothered in dirt.
Earth consists of bullet scarred cement
walls,
And stars assassinated by halogen bulbs.
Bright eyes dissolve until there's nothing left,
Just regrets.
Hence, I live in the abyss,
Surrounded by razor topped electric fences,
Senseless guards, armed with semi-
automatic deadly weapons.
My strange existence.

If Prison Takes Me Away

By Russell Dunn

If prison takes me away would you run or
would you stay?
Will our world continue to stay blue or
suddenly turn gray?
Will you atleast come visit or write me once
a week? Or will you forget about the magic
nights we shared between the sheets?
I know that you'd never leave me behind.
But if the cops come and we lose
everything, would you continue to stay by
my side?
Would you forget about the happy times and
only remember the bad?
Start some phony argument to find a reason
to be mad?
Would you ride like a true Queen and stay
focused on our plan? Or talk about my past
cause you want another man?
If prison takes me away, would you
disappear like all those fake friends? Do
something you would never do cause you're
running low on end?
Would you blame it on me for leaving you or
would you pray that we both make it and
want me to believe in you?
If prison takes me away, I'll miss that smile
and those beautiful eyes.
Pray to God to keep you strong and turn
your words to lies.
I know you. You'll be hurt and missing me,
but will you feel my pain?
If prison takes me away, I'll think of you all
the time and hope that when I return back
home,
I can still call you mine.

Prison By Peter M. Dunne

...Lights on. Noise. Waking. Sweating.
Freezing. Coughing.
Spitting. Washing. Radio. Reading. Heading
out. Moving. Morning chow.
Noise. Cold slop. Dirty tray. Noise.
Cockroach. Stale bread. Noise.
Heading out. Moving. Sitting. Waiting. Noise.
Programs. Work. School.
Noise. Sitting. Waiting. Anxiety. Anger.
Depression. Noise. Heading out.
Moving. Afternoon chow. Noise. Cold
biscuit. Dirty cup. Noise. Female
Officer. Breasts. Ass. Silence. Rotten apple.
Noise. Heading out. Moving.
Yard. Weights. Rust. Cold metal. Silence.
Plotting. Cutting. Bleeding.
Silence. Baton. Handcuffs. Sergeant. Nurse.
Silence. Noise. Weights.
Rust. Cold metal. Heading out. Moving.
Noise. Radio. Reading. Noise.
Shower. Freezing. Scalding. Noise. Sitting.
Waiting. Mail call. No mail.
Anxiety. Anger. Depression. Noise. Heading
out. Moving. Evening chow.
Noise. Cold spaghetti. Burnt Patty. Dirty
spoon. Noise. Crash. Silence.
Melted sherbert. Baton. Handcuffs.
Sergeant. No nurse. Silence. Noise.
Heading out. Moving. Waiting. Sitting. Noise.
Programs. Work. School.
Noise. Sitting. Waiting. Arguing. Fighting.
Anxiety. Anger. Depression.
Noise. Heading out. Moving. Lock in. Sitting.
Noise. Radio. Reading.
Washing. Noise. Writing. Noise. Writing.
Noise. Writing. Smiling.
Noise. Writing. Laughing. Noise. Writing.
Crying. Noise. Writing.
Writing. Writing. Noise. Yawning. Lights out.
Noise. Silence. Silence.
Relaxing. Silence. Thinking. Thinking.
Relaxing. Silence. Imagining.
Yawning. Relaxing. Sleeping. Dreaming.
Stirring. Waking. Sleeping.
Dreaming. Dreaming. Dreaming...

Prison Suits Me By LeRoy Sodorff

A wrinkle in the fabric
On the table again
A pattern laid out
Sewed up and hemmed in
Ruffled around the edges
And in the buff

Pinned and needled
Now off the cuff
Dressed down
With sadness as a cloak
Then a change to suit
Like common folk
 This new change in duds
 An endeavor to enhance
 Huffs and puffs
 Measured in pants
Buttoned up
Tied one on
Then out of my comfort zone
To greet the dawn

Caged Bird By Tiser Turner

I fathom why the caged bird sings.
I understand why it tweets from its beak.
I'm that caged bird and now I speak.
It is the adversity it took for me to get to this point, the pain that was inflicted throughout history, which tells the tale of my story.
It is the loneliness that compels me not to move forward.
The disappointment from mankind's bibliography.

Being suppressed emotionally and now being captured physically.
In a cage of the mind, being in a cell of the body.
To be liberated from these walls, would free me from this misery.
Maya Angelou's interpretation as to why the caged bird sings rings differently to me, Yet it's all the same when it comes to being free from slavery.
I do know why the caged bird sings because...
I'm the caged bird without feathered wings.

Deaf John Doe By Clarence Wilson

John Doe seeks ample means to run, though his legs are truly crippled in his mind, while the reality of his death lies entirely exposed.
He says, "Don't tell me about prison - I don't want to hear about prison!
Yet doesn't he know how his life has been impaled, maimed, absorbed with confusion?
Confined? Imprisoned?
He eats prison food, smells prison air, wears prison clothes.

And if he listens...well, at least "hear" himself close enough, then he'd recognize that even the very language he speaks is all "prison talk", daytime gossip, blabbering about commissary, channel check, chow hall..."I got a case."

But he doesn't want to hear about the relevance of his prison condition, how the consequences of his actions had made him exactly what he is: A prisoner. One within his own mindless perception, mentally subdued and shackled behind cold steel bars, cinder blocks and razor wire of incarceration.

Did someone say, "Rack time" or "Lock down"? Count time, perhaps?
But seriously, John Doe, you're dead, and have been stripped of one of the six senses that you'd probably had never used in the first place, which is obvious that you'd been absent of the rest, for such a very long time.
So run, without the means of your legs. Lie still upon your favorite deathbed, while the truth has ultimately silenced your eardrums, as you continue not to hear.

Raised In The System By Shawn Hunt

I've become quite comfortable within these walls,
No one can harm me,
No one at all.

I've become quite comfortable with nothing to do,
Except make my bed and straighten my shoes.

I've become quite comfortable to one single size bunk,
And an old gray container to store my junk.

I've become quite comfortable to living in my cage,
Year after year as I gray with age.

I've become quite comfortable, dreams I have none.
No plans for the future,
No, not one.

I've become quite comfortable, too comfortable indeed.
I've become institutionalized

Can someone please help me...

If These Walls Could Talk

By Ernest Medina

If these walls could talk, I wonder what would they say.
Would they speak of the tears, the fears, and the years gone by?

If these walls could talk, I wonder what would they say.
Would they speak of the dreams, the screams, and the nightmares they've seen?

If these walls could talk, I wonder what would they say.
Would they speak of the hope, the joy, and the laughter they've heard?

If these walls could talk, I wonder what would they say.

Freedom Is Her Name By Isiah Thomas

Freedom is Her Name
When you were in my life I housed you
In my youthful ignorance I didn't appreciate you
So when you left me I didn't understand
A great love affair slipped through my hands

Freedom is Her Name
For years I have fought to get you back
I have changed my life - this isn't some net
You've made me fall in love from afar
This is a fact, freedom...

Freedom is Her Name
Your disappearance has taken me away
From my children and family
Causing me to grow up alone and lonely
My inner strength has kept me fighting
For the day when you come back to me...

Freedom is Her Name
I'm sure we'll meet again some day
Then all will be made right, and
Sweetheart, you will say,
"I'm yours for the rest of eternity...."

Pre-Meditation By Leroy Sodorff

Awakened in the darkness
From a slumber sleep

With a presence of mind
And senses piqued

Rolling out of bed
Cold feet on the floor
Raising the arms
Stretching the care

A body set astir
Bathing beauty or brawn?
Measured steps
Awaiting the dawn

Indulging the reverie
Yielding to thought
Jangly nerves
And feeling distraught

Disembarking that train of thought
Abandoning the rail
Leaving all baggage behind
I will prevail

The Inside Looking Out By Leon Benson

Act I

I had the ill pleasure
Of witnessing my own demise
While I sat in a courtroom
Of just-us
Vicariously held liable,
I saw and heard the intertwined
Laughs and cries
As a hooded shadow
Severed my existence
With an axed gavel

Act II

Then a guilty sentence
Was recited as gloomy
As that of an eulogy,
But instead it commemorated my life
As an habitual felon
And saluted the hellish afterlife
To embrace me,
In disbelief I was watching
My own funeral
Celebration.

Act III

Yeah, I seen who was there
As the pallbearers
Carried my defeated body away,
To bury me breathing

Underneath the dirt of time
Within a 8-by-8 casket
Placed in a dark hole,
For you who loved me enough
To bring flower throughout the years
I never forgot your face,
But all you unconditional phonies
You're pissing on my grave
Won't help the flowers grow.

Joy! Joy! Joy! By Michael A. Anzaldua'

Bars on the window,
Birds dancing joyfully just below.
Dust mites dancing in the light.
Roaches dancing jigs of joy above.

Victim By Luis Buchanan

The jury condemned me
I'm sentenced to life
My victim and me
In a sense, have both died
I didn't make them suffer
I'm just not that cold
Twelve sadist and others
Chose to torture my soul

The judge sits in a chair
As if it's a throne
Mighty, Godly, and Fair
Man, get the hell on
Delusional Egoist
As if you're without sin
A stone in your fist
Throw it then

Some say I should pray
But why, if I'm cursed
It won't open my cage
Nor prolong the hearse
I've accepted my fate
Cause I won't live a lie
Just feel my pain
People open your opens

Political Times
An unjust system
Vote it just fine
To make me a victim

I Shall Be Released By Mary Steele

It may be years before anyone sees me
here at all
My transition is a conceptual art installation

A work in progress- with no progress
These are mean times, in the meantime
There's a rhythm to my heartbeat that's
Faster now than it has ever been
And I speak to my heart in meditation
The self selling the self
Try to whisper an apology
We are not at war
The flutter of my breath on my lips tells me
That I shaved today
Though I realize that is not wisdom, I should
be less aware of that
Thinking, I am thinking
And not meditating
(which is failing to meditate)
But for one fragment of a space between
breaths
I am off, I am with, am not alone as I
As such, per se
Relieved of this iteration
And can believe (perhaps, tentatively)
That I will be released.

Freedom's Call By Archie Smith

I hear it in the air I breath
The wind blowing it to me
Sending echoes of, hope, love and dreams
Things yet to be seen.
It whispers in words I read.
In books, letters- where I write
It comes to me day and night
It shouts of places and people I know.
Loving faces- my home
Screaming of a new life
One without bondage, restrictions or strife.
No more darkness- only light.
It's voice feeding off my wondering mind.
Drinking from my hungry heart
And even behind the walls
I can still hear freedom calls.

Untitled By Elisandro Antonio Nava II

I close my eyes and search for silence,
Of the kind heard only in my dreams,
I begin to see a cascade of visions,
My mind breaking at the seams.

Lost lovers saying things they never would,
In a place with no dimension,
I try to force my mouth to say,
What in the past I did not mention.

Everything seems to escape my grasp,

I question my own vitality,
She brushed lightly next to me,
And awakens a dormant muscularity.

Ever loneliness does me keep,
In this place of quiet noise,
As I play in the depths of sleep,
Where emotions are the only toys.

Crimson sheets blow in the wind,
Music sways in the echo's hold,
Tears form in the crease of eyes,
As sorrow inside my dome unfold.

Desire is wasted on solitariness,
When reality itself reveals,
I am swallowed up in emptiness,
Of what my exiled heart feels.

Precious sights I can never own,
Forgotten as soon as light falls in,
Gone away like dust wind blown,
Erased like the forgiven sin.

Those who rest are brought to life,
Just as if it was yesterday,
Death cheated for a solemn moment,
Where does the soul truly lay?

A cut in scene as I turn on my side,
A glimpse of the stone wall.
I begin digging myself back in,
It is too soon to leave it all.

Traveler's Plight By Geneva Phillips

I have lain with demons
And mistaken them for Gods
The fury of their pounding
I have confounded
With the beating of my heart

'Till I fell a

p

a

r

t

The ending becomes the start

I am f l e

a l n

Apart

The pieces don't fit right

Still trying' to get right

Everything around me

4

Is broken
In a different way than me
I don't want to fit in here
Or out there
I just want to be free
Have the right to be me
Be able to walk through the dark
Watch the street lights
Drown out the stars
Feel the cold air
Catch in my throat
And run a chill up my arms
While the cars
Pass by headlights
Slicing in brilliant arcs
Some turning left at the light
Some speeding straight by
And on through the night
While others slow down
And signal a right

I love this the best
This autonomous restlessness
The frosty breathlessness
Fogging like a good drag
Off a cigarette I don't have
Coiled excitement
Like a trip to the dope man
Sudden hunger filling me
Like a broken dam flooding me
With a thoughtless plan
To go where the wind blows
To forget everyone I've ever known
Disappear out the window
Just a transient melting
Into the shadows
Counting stars under
Rural skies far away
From fractions city life
Forgotten and far away
Burning bridges
Just to stay warm today and gone
Tomorrow without excuses
Given or borrowed
Travelling light
The traveller's plight
Trade the rest of my life
For a year of new sights.

Still Nights By Bruce Feaster

Welcome to my world,
Where beauty is dark.
A mist upon the void

An illusion of the heart

I walk in the madness
Serene!
Holding to the night,
Within a quiet dream.

Cold tears, warm blood.
A last voice.
I walk my path,
Crystallizing my choice.

Still nights,
Left in the hands.
Few will know me,
None will truly understand.

A home by circumstance,
Made into a temple.
Blessed by a fire,
A life made simple
The moon becomes rare,
In a long stare,
I change to rage,
Loving the nightmare.

Still nights,
Or should I say.
"Steel Nights"
I survive today.

Not by faith,
But by might,
To living my life
Within steel nights.

Social/ Justice Issues

Lonely Things By Chad Frank

Disconnected phone numbers.
Letters, returned to sender.
Missing person flyers.
Empty diners.
Thrift stores and shelters.
Forgotten memories.
Abandoned cemeteries.
Me.

The Darkened Heart By Marshall S.Soshy

I am a soldier,
Who loves the safeness of the darkness,
But fights for the light.

Who lives in the Darkest of Dark
Where all there is, is constant war,
Among each other.

The feeling of war,
Trying to replace the feelings
That my heart lingers for deeply.

But to no success,
For the heart knows what the heart wants,
And that is to love and to be loved.

And yet when it falls in love,
It gets betrayed,
And falls into despair and hopelessness.
For that is why it turns to war and death,
To try to heal and hide from the pain,
Of rejection and handyness.

The Breadwinner By Sean Dunne

All those times he gave me twenty bucks
He had to work for over an hour to get it
Beleaguered in his office behind bullet proof
glass
Getting yelled at by understandably angry
people
Because
He was the face of the company that stole
their car
Getting motherfucked is how he put it
All those times he sent me packages
And put money on my books
And bailed me out
And paid my fines
And bought me cigarettes and food
They were motherfucking him
Blaming him for their evictions
Demanding restitution for the food he stole
from their children's mouths
Screaming at him
"How can you live with yourself?"
Until he began to ask himself the same
question

For twenty-two-years they motherfucked him
And each day he came home
With the inexorable transferences
Of blame
Inuring him to the stark consultations
Of what might've been in once upon a time
Demonstrated
By the way he hunched his shoulders

When he walked through our front door

All those times he gave me twenty bucks
I don't recall him ever placing a condition on
it
He never demanded I do anything
He never motherfucked me
He just pulled the trademark fold of his bills
And handed one over

I had an early intercourse with his duties at
his job:
The phone was always ringing
People who didn't understand English
always needed directions
"Twelve B, McClaren
No,
Twelve,
Twelve,
TEE-
WELL-
VE,
Yeah,
Yes,
YESS,
TEEWELLVE B,
No, B
BEE
BEE!"

The gate incessantly needed to be opened
and secured cause
Motherfuckers
Were always trying to sneak in the back
Picketing out front
Assimilating themselves to terrorism
Meanwhile
C.H.P's on line one
Irvine P. D on line three
An irate private property contract client on
line two
Cause drivers are towing cars illegally
Some guy wants is stuff
But he ain't got no ID
An old lady wants her car
But she ain't got no money
Massive accident at the 405 and Jeffrey
Driver's not responding on the radio
"9-8, Do you copy?"
The warehouse in the back was a haunted
house of fatal wrecks
It was ghosts
And grease
And the smell of WD/ 40

When he could grab a smoke out there
He did
But he never really got a break
Or a lunch
Or had the time to take a shit
Because the phone never stopped ringing
For twenty-two-years

Sometimes
He went out to the bar
And played the Last Good Time Charlie
But he usually sat in his bedroom at night
And read every book ever written
And he cooked pork chops in amazing
sauce
And he sliced tomatoes;
He slaughtered them lovingly
In mayonnaise and salt and pepper
He positively baptized
Orange and yellow bell peppers
In extra virgin olive oil
And sometimes
He got out of his depression
Around 8 o'clock
And sometimes
He sang a capella doo-wop

I stood outside his bedroom door to listen
As the walls were animated
By the texture of each tune
The platitudes of common toil
Transformed into beatitudes
Only the cat and I were witness
To the stage of these tableaux
Only the cat and I were witness
To the stage of these tableaux
And each line that he sang was an opus to
me
And each phrase was a study in blue

The People's Ghetto Trap By Quincy Leon Leonard

A junkie running to the pusher man,
Small dead infant found in a garbage can
Two story building people living without
water or heat
Confused hungry children, running the
streets
Rats nibbling on a baby while sleeping in
bed
Street lady found in a alley dead

Welfare mother's spending their money on
dope and wine
And helping a player to keep his shoes and
caddy shine
Cops getting paid off not to see wrong
Young girls getting turned out on their own
A gambler is shot for hitting seven too many
times
13 year old boys running numbers for dimes
A school close down, because very few
went,
Young boys and girls was too busy sniffing
coke and getting bent
A boy kills his abusive father, while the old
man nap,
"Yeah," just another routine day in-
The people's ghetto trap.

Going Back By Marshall S. Sosby

Listening to the words of my ole man,
Son! Live your life as best as you can
Show your age and never run
Let your last resort be the power of a gun
Love your woman, give her all due respect,
But make sure she loves you back.
If you have kids, son! Always claim,
Take responsibility and give them your
name.
Be better than me Son, let your family come
first,
Take control of your life, don't catch my
curse
He said, I love you son and I won't steer you
wrong,
Make me proud of you today, tomorrow,
even after I'm gone.
You're my son, good or bad,
Make your family proud of you, son...I wish I
had
And when life seems bad, and when things
seems
Not to go your way,
I'll leave you with these words,
Don't give up but try the next day.

Dear Ghetto By Luis Buchanan

Dear Ghetto,
If your streets could talk, what
stories would you tell?
Would you glamorize the Player, the Dope
boy, and the Thug? Or tell of the corruption
that engraves the fate of our youth on a
slug?

Would you give praise to the Hood Soldiers
who died valiantly while still in their prime?
Or tell the tragedy of a war that exists solely
in their mind?

GHETTO DO YOU HEAR ME?

Dear Ghetto,
If your voice harmonized with the
wind, what songs would sing?
Would you sing the ballad of young lovers,
in the hood, living wild and free? Or the sad
song of the single mother, selling her wares
cause she has kids to feed?
Would you sing the gospel of the lady sitting
in her window, staring up into the sky? Or of
the devastated mother, asking GOD, why
her baby had to die?

GHETTO DO YOU HEAR ME?

Dear Ghetto,
If you could display the Hood upon
a canvas, what pictures would you reveal?
Would you paint a playground scene of
children's smiles as they skate and bike? Or
dip your brush in the tears of the kids locked
in a closet while their parents get high?
Would you draw the innocent friendship that
vowed that nothing would ever come
between? Or the friends' headstone pictured
in the wind of the LIFER, writing this letter,
asking, GHETTO DO YOU HEAR ME?

A Woman's Blues By Geneva Phillips

That woman is born in ash like a woman in
the kitchen
In daydreams our ideas are winged with
grave pleasure
In courtrooms we look like fear or poverty
Oh the downtrodden, we crouch against the
walls
And become a sign of the institution
What prisons are the Doorways of Life?
No one comes out an embodiment of the
beautiful
Years of Trouble
To come through invisibly with intricate
shadows
Demarcating gradual patterns of dysfunction
Is usually sufficient to silence women who
would spring up
Against the insufficient light, the oppression
Those who partially break free
Sisters do not belong in boxes

Helpless as a woman on her back
We are trained for that, at least, in the end
To bear it. Stoically. Well used.
Words are the clarity in my own tale to the
world
I, too, would stop talking and break free
Yet how can I? When I know we are all
supposed to
By force or wisdom, stand in the open and
open them
For each other.
My sister living for release in that slow
prison
So alive. So abandoned.

Park Avenue By Muzaffar Khan

Silently you stare out at
This city that never sleeps

125th street

Children run around you, laugh, play and die
But not always in their sleep
Some will not even know how you
Treated their grandfathers

119th street

What you did to their fathers
And how you broke their mothers' hearts
with cruelty
Each day you bring people that never look
Above their newspapers
Then go have at night and snicker about
What they didn't see
Back and forth they head home

Castles in the sky
Where they tell each other that this must be
what
Hell looks like
Complete with dirty streets and burnt forces
And still they snicker, telling each other
That people seem so happy down here
It's not so bad

If it ain't then how come you don't
Want to come down here and
Share our happiness

Into The Flame By Todd Henry

Into utopian worlds with healing waterfalls
Independent of logic trying to make sense of

it all
Escalating problems and alcohol fueled
dysfunction
In these times of crime and corruption
Absolute madness changing chaos and
social injustice
And another black kid shot in the urban
metropolis
So I'm expressing my emotions emptying
my mind
Like rivers flowing to the ocean
Of ministers and maniacs in dilapidated
housing projects
Where your thoughts don't move at all
And the heavy weight of your social role
starts to fall
Into vortex of man's expansion
Bit poverty remains the same like a moth to
its flame
Trying to find temporary relief from pain
Leading to the habitual escalating existence
into addiction.

Shooting Gone Viral By Elizabeth Hayson

Waiting for the tank to fill
We watched the man run
Bare footed bare backed
The road unpaved
His arms didn't pump but flailed
His hands empty, fingers splayed
His bare back churned sticky terror
A fearful stench poisoned the air
But we were saved by vaccinating shots

Pop pop pop
The man pitched, titled, tipped
The body does fall in separate motions
By fading raising dist, frowny notes hanging

We stood gaping our blood astonished by
his
Gasoline wetting our feet

Now watch again
Doing laundry
Doing commercials
Driving
Until we see nothing
But wasted gasoline

M'aidez By Kurt Michaels

Help me see the truth,
All the possibilities,

Through your eyes I will.

My mayday is heard,
You help me see ways to grow,
Beyond safe harbors.

Wherever you are,
Broadcasting your mayday,
I will come for you.

**Mayday is an alteration of the French term
m'aidez, which means "help me."*

Broken Beauty By Molly Ledbetter

She has such a pretty face
The boys give her a chase
I wonder if they knew
That inside she's always blue
She's broken down, damaged to the bone
Sitting in the corner crying all alone
She only knows one thing
For many years it's been the same
Her foster home to foster home shuttle
Has given her many struggles
So she picks up the knife
But not wanting to end her life
Just a little pain, so what if it's insane
If she wore a short sleeve shirt
The faces of the boys would make her hurt
Ugly, freak show, outcast
Their facial expressions and words will last
I wish I could just fly away to a better day
And put the demons at bay
But I have to deal with the scars inside and
out
So I raise my head, look you in the eye and
say
I am beautiful without a doubt

Bruton's Hardware By Billy D. Cates

The hardware was a mystery within itself
Even as a child I noticed something about it
Though I could never explain exactly just
what it was
But in retrospect I see all the strangeness
Like they never hardly had any customers
They has all sorts of shiny merchandise
Sitting out front next to the sidewalk
However they practically never sold anything
Bicycles and lawn mowers and tillers
And red wagons and swing sets and
wheelbarrows
It sat immediately across from my

Grandmother's house
The storeroom in back sat across from their
living room
When you were inside the store
And I was only in there one time
You couldn't see what was behind the
curtain in back
Rarely would you see any employees
There were hardly any cars out front
And nowhere for them to parks anyways
It was something akin to the Twilight Zone
My childish instincts told me many times
There was something going on in the back
I didn't have a clue as to what exactly it
was
But at that age I had never heard of the CIA
And they would they be in Tompkinsville
Kentucky anyway
It was abit more than mere common sense
Telling me that there was something
happening there
At that building that sat far from other
merchants
Where there was hardly any traffic
It really stood out it did
But then at the same time it didn't
It has taken a monumental amount of
convincing me
About the CIA's chipping of many American
families
To cause Bruton's Hardware store to stand
out
Like it does and did
Once again can you just imagine if you will
A well-stocked hardware store
Clean as a whistle
Separated from the shopping district in town
That rarely has any business to speak of
Next door to an older lady
With a small pet monkey in a cage
In a town with a population of about 7,500
With the residents sitting and lying
Approximately 40 feet away from the
stockroom
For many years yes many many years
If you could only see the store
Where my Grandma's house was they have
since torn down
How close they sat in proximity
You would probably say something like
There was something going on with all this.

Makes Me Wonder/ Oblivious

By Sean Michael

Heard they found the body of a boy near the tracks
Shot to death
Like the tracks in my arms

The news is rambling on about some famous couple's split
And some fashionista bull-shit

I wonder how many people are starving this year
And why the rich pay a lower percentage in taxes than the poor
I wonder why the government treats its people like a cheap whore
Fucking them and leaving them to fend for themselves

Heard they found the body of a runaway
She was murdered
And left in an abandoned building

The news is rambling on about the Bachelor or Bachelorette
And someone famous checking into rehab again

I wonder why "John Gardner" only served 5 years
Then got out and raped and killed two little girls
And there are people serving life sentences for petty theft
Laws or contradictions?

The news is rambling on about the traffic and weather
Clear roads, sunny skies, a lovely day

I wonder how many foster homes are as messed up as the previous homes
I wonder how many kids don't have homes
And how many parents don't care
And they wonder why the kid is all fucked up

Fantasy Death By MsGriff

I've died a hundred thousand deaths
And this for you to know
The only time I suffer
Is the time before I go
I've danced the morbid dance of death

And cried with ebbing pain
I've felt the water in my lungs
Precipitate is bane
I've dropped from gibbets lonely arm
And rode in sparky's chair
Scalped with dull and rusty knife
It's life that isn't fair
I've felt the mace, the club, the sword
Starvation, burns and plague
And too the bombs that rain from sky

And nay a death been vague
I've been both drawn and quartered
Poisoned, stabbed and shot
I've died a hundred thousand deaths
And never one forgot
I've tasted pain and torture too
The guillotine to quick
There's nothing like uncertainty
That comes with mortal sick
It's life that's slow and painful
And death the final gift
I've died a hundred thousand deaths
Allow me now to drift.

Is That My Baby By Jerome Fitzpatrick

Sirens wail
People yell
Standing in the middle of the street.
Move the crowd
Crying out loud
To see who is under the sheet.
Is that my baby?
One night of rendezvous
Promising to stay true
But now look what is done.
The belly begins to grow
How do you know
Because you was the only one.
Is that my baby?
Making good grades
Got it made
The next college star.
It is reality
The police brutality
In the backseat of a police car.
Is that my baby?
Stay away from danger
Don't talk to strangers
Be home before dark.
Stalked by the obsessed
Tore off her dress

Found dead in the park
Is that my baby?
Some lady riding a bike
They all look alike
The street lights were dim.
Having an alibi
Can you identify
That's him! That's him!
Is that my baby?
Yes!

Oil Toil By Msgriffis

The oil continues it's leaking
Whilst BP continues the sneaking
The lies being told
Verbose and tenfold
Like rubbish it's taken to reeking

Growling and now are immense
None of which make any sense
They pledge and they swear
With both here and there
When needed is vast recompense

They woo us with fairies and fables
Mud pumped through underground cables
But crude keeps on flowing
Not stopping or slowing
See now the change on our tables

Red Lobster requires a waiver
To sample their new seafood flavor
New meaning to shell
And drinks from the well
It's SAE 40 you savor

The film that you see on your shrimp
Your waiter with cane and a limp
This crude Texas tea
Has set them both free
And the king of the sea is a pimp!

Definition of Me By Savannah Shotter

You don't know me
Nobody really does
They only know the old me
But that wasn't who I was
I'm so different from you
There's a side you don't know
You've barely reach the surface
You're not even close
So let me explain
To you my dear

I'm tailgates and cold beer
 I am my daddy's failure,
 My mamma's mistake
 I'm the one who always bares
 More than she can take.
 I'm my papa's baby,
 My mama's love.
 She's looking down on me
 Watching me from above
 I'm a mother
 Not a good one as you can see
 But I would die for them
 They are the reason that I breathe
 I'm alone
 Even when I'm in a crowd
 Everyone's yelling
 But I can't hear a sound
 I'm broken and together
 I'm lost and I am found
 I always try to keep
 My feet on the solid ground
 So i guess you thought you knew me
 Thought you knew who I really was
 Everyone thinks they do
 But nobody really does.

We're So Far Away From Freedom

By Jerome Fitzpatrick

Pain is what we should feel
 When we look back into history
 Seeing how life was so much ado.
 Guilty is how we should feel
 Erasing the truth from our memory,
 Forgetting what the "people" went through.
 The slavery.
 The racism.
 The riots.
 The struggles.
 The imprisonments.
 The yesterdays America says
 That no longer exist.
 But they do exist!
 They exist in the todays
 That come from the yesterdays we missed,
 And they will remain in the tomorrows
 Because of the days we chose not to resist.
 The days we didn't get up
 The days we let up.
 The days we didn't stand up.
 The days we gave up.
 The days we didn't fight.
 The days we believed
 That we still have equal rights.

What America has given us- liberty
 Can't change the past
 Nor make it go away
 But the America's Justice System
 Takes it all back- freedom,
 To have us imprisoned in dismay.
 Seeing what America has done for us-
 nothing
 Forces us to be segregated in poverty
 Hat causes more debts and pains.
 But seeing what lies in the hands
 Of America's justice System- murder
 Is more family tears and blood stains
 The past is far gone,
 But we are still lost in the distance
 Between the doubts and hopes we hold on
 to
 Stagnated,
 Watching history repeat itself
 We would've never made it through
 Because of how we choose to stop growing.
 We can continue to look back
 To know where we've been
 But keep moving forward
 When we know where we're going.
 We're so far away from freedom!

In The Hole By Brian Glick

Here I am, in "The Hole" of desolation-
 The only salt to taste, is from my
 perspiration.
 I have no rights or hopes or dreams, but
 only dire straits;
 I have no rights or hopes or dreams, but
 only dire straits;
 How lucky to be a citizen, of these United
 States!

 I've lost so much I can't describe; how heavy
 was the toll,
 Yet even still they grab and take; even
 pulling at my soul.
 So now I sit and watch the light, as it gently
 fades away,
 And the tunnel just gets deeper, and darker
 by the day.

 But one thing's left that they don't know, my
 one ace in the hole;
 I can smile at these circumstances, because
 GOD is in control!
 Now I've found my strength, by Amazing
 Grace,

And the joy of victory, how great the taste!

 I have no worries, or fear of failure, but only
 Fire Faith!
 Because against this brood of vipers, no
 other route is safe.
 So now I sit and watch the light, get brighter
 every day;
 And if they come and brings their worst, All
 I'll do is pray.

United We Stand By Larry Harris

The planes hit the towers with such a mighty
 sound
 Without any warning they both fell to the
 ground
 People came together in the terror that we
 faced
 White, Black and brown it didnt matter what
 the race.

 A gunman gone crazy just shooting for the
 thrill
 Walked right in the school, how many
 children did he kill?
 People came together helping families torn
 apart
 White, Black and Brown they all gave from
 their heart

 Several deadly tornadoes crossed many
 states today
 Ripping lives apart as they showed their
 powerful ways
 People came together rebuilding what they
 lost
 White, Black and Brown no matter what it
 cost.

 Bombs went off as people crossed the finish
 line
 Another act of terror, what a cruel and
 heartless crime
 People came together in the midst of all he
 fear
 White, black and Brown to show that they
 were here.

 Floods across the cities as the waters clear
 their path
 Several homeless families that will face the
 aftermath
 People came together in the storms that

brought the rain
White, Black and Brown we all cried and felt
the pain.

One thing is for sure, we can shout and
proudly say...

"United we all stand and God bless the
USA"

Love

*"A passion for oneself leads to a world of
convenience not love" - Jesse Aich*

Chasing Love By William Hill

Let's chase shadows; let's make the moon
dance.

Let's stay up all night; let's make a little
romance.

I've lived this moment in my dreams; I've
longed for it so many years.

The gentleness of your touch; helps me let
go of my fears.

I've seen our future; I know what's meant to
be.

You're meant to chase; to chase the
shadows here with me.

Peer into my eyes and you'll be hooked; you
place your hand in mine.

I will always be with you; we drift through the
maze of time.

Caught in a moment of golden silence; I feel
the warmth of you inside.

Now you are really mine; as you have
always been in my mind.

Ambient Veranda By Michael Autrey

She went on

The aura of her perfume
Wafted in behind her like
The soft light of dusk-
Desperately without reason

A whisper of friction against
Deep caverns of the night
A dark moil of feathers
Beneath her skirts.

She went on

The aura of her perfume
Wafted in behind her like
Chinese text in French translation-

Brief, scintillating, white

A whisper of friction against
The soft trailing devolution of
The chiming of the bells
Beneath her skirts.

She went on

A whisper of friction against
A measurement of time that
The sun would slant through-
Beneath her skirts

The aura of her perfume
Wafted in behind her like
A wrestler moving in for
A thundering salvo

She went on

Eyes huge, her mouth set,
Barefooted and she was wearing
Barbarian hordes of
White shirtwaist and black skirt

Ivory tatted collar:
Marched directly across the room,
A woman of the world
And her self-possession was

unshakable.

And then she was gone.

Time By Troy Glover

Is time an illusion
Or reality?
Is love a blessing
Or a malady?
Can a heart be captured
At first sight?
Can a dream come true
At first light?
Will the troubled soul
Ever be at peace?
Will the tormented spirit
ever be release?
Can a risk be taken
With out danger?
Can a person find answers
Within a stranger.

I Pledge the Rose By T. Glover

If I had to make a pledge,
In action word or deed.

I would pledge to you the Rose
Because a rose is what you need.

Its petals to remind you,
That all is never lost.

So let your heart be felt as well,
So silky and so soft.

An aroma that will entice you,
To breath it's pleasant scent.

It worries about no other
We too should be content.

The thorns a constant warning,
It must be held with care.

Like people all around,
Treated honestly and fair.

It's leaves a glossy green,
With just a touch of pearl.

Like it we too are different,
Yet belong to the same world.

Let's not forget its color,
We find in shades of red.

A universal reminder,
That we too have bled.

So i hope in your mind's garden,
That I've planted this seed.

So I'm sending you a rose,
Because a rose is what you need.

The Day I Met God By Cleo Michael Pania

I first saw God
As he urinated into the red river
Enroute to yen bay
Vietnam.

With massive ebony arms and thighs
Solid rippled abs,
An AK-47 slung over one shoulder,
And a dark unbelievable root
Spewing a steady stream
Of hot piss!

I grinned like a hungry fool,
Offering my drooling mouth,
A loving sheath for his throbbing tool;
And I watched in horny awe
As he smiled at me and stroked
His swelling manhood into a log

This dark-skinned African amazon
Nodded towards the nearby woods
And strode proudly away
Without putting his ebon
Staff away
Protruding

Pointing the way
To paradise.

I eagerly followed
Like a submissive sheep
To its welcome slaughter

I fell upon trembling knees
My quivering lips
Mere inches from his dripping
Quivering organ
I wrapped my nervous hands
Around his immense erect phallus
And silently prayed to this
Anomalous God.

"The Beginning!"

God's Paint By Porfirio Mendoza

Looked out my window,
Seen the way God painted, painted the sky
Asked if he could paint a picture, paint a
picture of love,
Picture of love in passion, picture of love in
beauty
Picture of beauty in love, a love of no deceit
A love that knows nothing else but how to
love,
But for this picture... "I"
I can only express the way she would make
me feel,
The way she would feel, whatever she felt I
would feel,
And I feel, if you would only paint this
picture,
A picture of awe, picture of sight, a picture of
calm
Picture in peace,
Whatever it takes' paint a picture for keep's,
Picture for keep's, I picture her for keeps
Looked out my window,
Seen the way God painted, painted the Sky,
Asked if he could paint a picture,
He painted some "I's", painted some "loves",
painted some "you's"
Painted some violets, painted some blue's
Said he painted the world
And for me,
He painted you.

As Long As I Have You

By Tony D. Grandison

The world can be such a harsh place
Leaving you tired, worn and battered
If only you were left standing after a trillion
gathered
None of it would seem to have mattered
As long as I have you

If I had a billion friends
Who decided to pack their bags and scatter
If the sky was falling and the world came to
an end
None of it would seem to matter
As long as I have you

If my heart was trampled underneath a
thousand feet
Left scratched, cracked, and about to shatter
Even if it was shredded into a million pieces
None of it would seem to matter
As long as I have you

Lady Rose By S. Joshua Balistreri

I break my flesh upon the stones
And from my body my life blood flows
I beg forgiveness from you still
And stem the flow I shall not do
Unless to heal it be your will

Take my hand and pull me up
And lift me from my wounded pose
To stop the blood and take the pain
And walk with me into the mists
And be again my Lady Rose

Friendship By Akai T, McRee-Tran

As lovers carve their initials on the
Heart of a tree does our friendship intertwine
as wild
Vines interloop together....we can only grow
stronger,
As a seedling is put in a pot to becomes a
beautiful
Flower as does our walk through life we can
become
One as does two different seeds join
together to
Becomes one true loving tree.
Lost soul!

A Taste of You By Bruce Feaster

Dripping from my touch

Your skins becomes wet
And all I imagine
Is how you must taste

Will you allow your thoughts
To drip from your tongue
So I can know how to treat you
Creating your perfect pleasure

Grant me a taste of you
As I give you my emotions
And swallow you whole
Leaving you bare

I will teach you how to scream
As pleasure consumes you
I will watch you drown
As I taste your flesh

A taste of you
Is all that I will ever need
To intoxicate my soul
And make you whole.

I see your skin, anticipation
Wanting me more
The cool wind of my breath
Making you quiver

A taste of you
And the secrets that you hold
Is a dish I will love
Devouring you with satisfaction

All I need
Is a single taste
A single drop
And a moment within you.

The Relativity of Sorrows By Yang Marni

When a life has learnt too well
For its years
Of the dust and ashes of things
Of the cruelty of lust and the fragility of love

When the innocence of trust
Learns how great
Is the misery of human passions
Then begins a journey of a thousand tears

And the immortal malice of days
As time passes unheeded

And threadbare dreams
Murmuring like an empty shell
Of the sea and of the waves

When bud and blossom, leaf and fruit
Are made to perish in its barren breast
And no safe haven can be found
To place its tears

When hungry hope eats itself
And anneals the limbs and the heart
Which cannot seek abeyance
In such a grieving ravenous sea.

Addicted to Imperfections- Song Poem
By Bruce Feaster

Tainted attraction,
I see the flaws you hold,
And I become spellbound,
Addicted to imperfections.

Strange we are strangers,
Meeting so unexpectedly.
Our paths crossing,
A new journey begins.

Your so unusual,
As imperfect as the soul
I long to love you,
And become addicted.

Talking of truth,
I pull you closer
Knowing you cannot lie,
Because of imperfections,
you reveal yourself to me.

Tainted attraction,
I see the flows you hold,
And become spellbound,
Addicted to imperfection.

Never has anyone known you,
As you feared to be imperfect.
Hidden under a mask,
You show the world perfection

Time allows us to grow,
And your fears die.
Wanting your imperfections,
You removed your mask,
So that I can see you.

What comes from your soul?
The twisted thoughts of your mind.
Evil in your heart,
I see your imperfections,
Only to want more.
I imbibe in your song,
Which is alive.

Imperfections of truth,
You pick up all that is wrong,
And hold yourself open to me.

Crazy, the addiction,
As I crave to know you,
Never wanting you to change.

Be imperfect for me,
So that I can find you.

Be imperfect for me,
To feed my desires.

Be imperfect,
If only to love me the wrong way

Tainted attraction!
Addicted to imperfections!

Dei Supercilious By Yang Marni

O arrogant heart!
That the world should lie dormant
In your cocoon
And tempestuous storms
Should calm their fevered throes
For your passing
Your body a sand-glass
As though time, in its infinite wisdom
Would stop for you,
Perhaps pause for a moment
To consider your worth
That you might loom larger in its eye
Than all of heaven's fens
And your song drowns all the anthems
Of the morning stars.

The Red Dress By S. Joshua Balistreri

She comes to me in a dress of red
Though the dress I do not see
All that i see is so much more
Beauty in her eyes of green
Like jade they shimmer pail in light

And glittering flecks of gold
Inside her a churning stormy sea
How can a stormy sea one hold
Charm her heart I wish I could
My words minced meat upon my tongue
Chopped by butcher's knives on the block of
wood
My tongue is torn from my mouth
And from the hole that's left blood spills
And pours out in a rush from bleeding heart
Until the beating of which stills
How I long to hold her close and touch
The softness of her supple skin
The finest silks and satins made
Yet how I know not to begin
In her eyes I search for signs
But what with me a wretch she'd want
And in that thought my answer lies
I knew it when that dress I saw
She never could be mine.

Beautifully Stained By Bruce Feaster

I looked within my heart
And what I've seen frightens me
I am forever stained.

Tainted!
My heart beats irregular,
And my blood contains its traces.

Beautifully stained!
I see my heart as its own truth,
Hidden deep within.

Watching my stain,
On my still beating heart,
I realize who I am.

Stained and flawed,
My journey screams of pain
And whispers of hope.

Beautifully stained!
My choices characterize me,
And I am always hard pressed.

Hoping the pressure creates a diamond,
I write down my thoughts
And my stain grows deeper.

In it's depths,
Secrets unfold malformed,
Or formed by the malice of my thoughts.

Beautifully stained!
I look through a small window,
And my eyes are blurry.

Seeing only fragments of my heart,
This stain becomes a part of me,
Reflected in my vision.

The windows to my soul closes,
As this stain creeps within,
Reflecting me.
Beautifully stained!
My heart beat slows,
To disguise my only truth.

Hidden in my stain
Is the faith that I've lost,
But this stain has provided for me.

Like an invisible friend,
This stain is beautiful
And the only part of me that's real.

In a Picture By Ronin Wolf

This damn picture taunts me
It makes me mad
Buy showing me all
That I once had.
I mocks me with
A silent voice
But I hear the words
"You made the choice."
There's the body
I use to hold
The warmth at night
To chase away the cold.
There's the lips
That I once kiss
There is the smile
I mostly miss.
Your nose, your eyes
Your ears, your hair
I can see but can't touch it's just not fair.
Can't hear your voice
Your girlish laugh.
Can't smell your scent
After your bath.
Can't feel your hands
Upon my chest
Can't feel your love

Your soft caress
This damn picture taunts me
It makes me mad
By showing me all
That i once had.

Enlightenment By Yang Marni

Where the mind is without fear and the head
is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up
into fragments
By narrow walls,
Where words come out from the depths of
truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms
toward perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not
lost its way
Into the dreary desert sands of ignorance
Where the mind is led forward into ever-
widening
Thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, let my mind
awake.

Leah, Leah, Leah

By Alexander Mahon-Haft

During "group therapy" today
I jotted your name 352 times on a single
handout
As I daydreamed through class
Itself a bog of morose mountains, eternal
confusion clouds
Languid landscape
Veritable desert of hopes abandoned.
Theoretically, I aimed to cover
All the "negative space"
On our therapeutic worksheet
But I settled for the practical version
Drowning in your "Leah"
Every inch of margin or white space
As the two are not the same
Filling all my negative space a Herculean
pipe dream.
Every burst of Leah
A scorpion sting with a cactus needle
Dusted with rock salt, chased with lime juice
A mainline tequila shot, painful
But offering only the shadow of a buzz
Highlight the hangover
Amplify the neurological damage

Yet each "Leah" I penned craved more
Offering the only moisture
Available, visible, even conceivable
While lost amidst this desert of hopes
deserted.
Each drop of your name
Veritable waterfall,
Befouled but still strangely satisfying.
An ebda-laced
(or at least e.coli-choked)
Mountain stream in flood season
Within and infinity
Within and infinity
Leaving me momentarily sated
(and thus addicted)
The only reminder of life-sustaining fluid
But ultimately
Inevitably
Painful and debasing
Maybe eventually heart-bleeding-from-
every-orifice
Deadly.

Wanting to Sin With You

By Bruce Feaster

Wanting to sin with you, I approach in
space.
With a universe between us;
And void to replace.
I see the tears on your face.
Your past was the frozen cold of Hell,
And you fell.
The wounds on your heart had a story to tell.

As did mine,
So let us find
In the similarities of our misuse
A divine sign
That we are meant to sin together.
Your broken laugh is a relief to the lies I am
told
As you tame a beast
Without knowing he had a lost soul.
We dip off in the shallow waters and
crashing waves
Our bodies misbehave
In the urging of oraves
Long forgotten in the days.

Kissing in emotions so rampant
We can't vent.
The waters evaporating, spent!
From the flames lying dormant.

Unable to halt the spinning world we
created.
The sun is pulled towards us
In our lust
That is overheated
The angel and the demon
Both fearing to open wings
Sinning, as we caress further
In the tides of being.
Forgotten memories and a lost faith,
We love in haste
Treasuring the sweet taste
With no time to waste
You open your waist.
Sin, in the existence of love and pain.
Rain falling down as a sign that
We've been slain
Given to the forbidden nature that drives us
We touch.
Not enough but too much
And we burst into flames.
Wanting to sin with you
I never knew
That life could be strange and new
Like dew
On grass my tongue allows you to
Forget the past you knew
Whispers on your hill
Made you feel
Like I was killing you.
Only my words were the haven you never
been to
Wanting to sin with you, I take you apart
Leaving only your heart
So that we can be in the dark
Opening to the sin
we are ready to commit.

Legacy By Yang Marni

Grow strong, my love
That you may stand
Unshaken when I fall, that i may know
The shattered fragments of my song will
come
At last to finer melody in you
That i may tell my heart that you begin
Where passing I leave off, and fathom more.

When you were mine

By S. Joshua Balistreri

All I want is out.
Need to find a way
Everything we've built, leave it and walk

away
Let it rot
Watch it decay.
Turn back to dust and
blow away.
Till nothing remains
No evidence
That we were here
Taking space
Just my memories
Of your face
The sound of your voice
Echo's like the trace
Of your scent
You've left behind
When you were mine.

I wish I could burn
You from my mind
Play it all back, let it unwind
The way you laughed
That special smile
You just gave me, when
you were wild
Just let it go
Make it go away
Instead it stays
In my mind
I think of it
From time to
time
Of when you were mine
When you were mine
I could behave
I didn't rush, on to my grave
I could laugh
Knew how to smile
How to be

kind, and all the while
I could sit
And just relax
Take a deep breath
I had style
But that's all gone
Gone with the time
When you were mine

So if you hear
These words of mine
I hope you think, back on a time
When you were in love
With someone dear
You held them

close, when you could hear
The sound of their voice
Saying to you
Oh how much, they love
you
Remember me
Think of the time
When you were mine

Beloved By Yang Marni

You'll know I'm gone
By the blackbird's angry tears
You'll know
By the chill wind's mournful song
You'll know I've slipped away
By the flutter of ravens taking flight
On their way to somewhere better
Like lingering footprints in tall grass
You'll remember me
In the shadows that lay softly on the
pavement
In the decaying memory of the past
That lies wrapped in the mantle of dusk's
violet cloak

You'll see my face
In the drifting clouds
A silent testament
To the passage of time and seasons

When autumn leaves fall, defeated
To the unforgiving ground
You'll hear me
In a world turned silent by the snow

The rains steady whisper
Might be my voice
And the bare branch scratching at the
window
In winter's grey slumber

A wistful sigh just beneath the wind
Speaking softly to remind you
I've shut the door
I'm here no more.

Haunted Love By Bruce Feaster

Poisoned by your touch
I seek a non-existent cure
As I lie to myself
That you are not the one

Ill, I lie awake
Watching you through my soul
Fearing my own self
knowing that you are killing me

Dark nights!
We love so strongly
As time becomes immortal
And death a longing

No, my immortal!
Death is a dream for fowls
Who has never been haunted by love

These words I say to you
"The moon is our home,
As the darkest hours feed us.
I've never known freedom
Until ecstasy was born.
Binding you I become unbound
And the ties to our love...
Oh, you cry from pain
Loving the touch of me.
Closed rooms and open-minds
You are the haunting of love."

She reads my words
And acknowledge her own own truth
As my darkness traps her love
And makes me free

The ghost of my touch lingers
As the haunter becomes the haunted
And she learns her mistake
In loving me.

It has always been me
The pleasures within her shadow
I frighten her
Yet relieve her fears
She watches my moves
My calculated steps of pleasure
In the midst of pain and sorrow

I haunt her now
With my essence
With my love of the taboo
With my very will
I haunt her

All because of the taste of her poison

Which still courses through my veins

Is it vain to love
In the haunting of pleasure

This is my vision.

The Fallen Man By Muzaffar Khan

How often have I not given of the richness of
myself

To another?

At night when the silence of darkness
whispers, I have
Whispered back.

I have surrendered to circumstances and to
songs and

Promises and cheating hearts.

My spirit is light from surrender, it shall seep
out through wounds

in my heart and shall reach the heavens one
day.

My spirit shall be free and it will soar across
the sky

Past the place where daylight meets

darkness for the night kiss

And the stars shall sing

I have fallen and I shall get up again.

One day I was born and one day I will die

I have given up on life only to pick up again.

I have felt the cold of winter and the heat of
summer.

I have been asleep and awake.

What you feel with your heart, I am yet to
find

What you have seen with your eyes,
remains a mystery

To mine.

I have not gone into your days and your
corruption

Has not corrupted my soul.

Look into my eyes and drink-- my soul is
sweet.

I have walked across continents through the
ages and

Your corruption has not corrupted my soul.

Gross Negligence By Seth Bagwell

A weary heart faithfully functions

But exactly to what end?

Why persevere when there's no purpose?

I've stuck fire to bridge again

And through the ashes, I diligently sift

To absolutely no avail.

Can we pretend? Play disillusioned?
I'll be content to live in the shadows of what
we were

Beneath dark clouds awaiting rain

Try as I might, it will never rinse away

The strains imbedded deep within.

A valiant, but half hearted measure

And I succumbed to pleasures of the tainted
flesh

A willing companion to love and watch me
die

But I threw you to the wolves...

With that being said, they were still hungry.

In fact, they were quite ravenous.

So I sacrificed myself to feed their needs
Just as in your absence, all meaning has
left.

A weary heart patiently functions,

Hoping the next beats bring the end.

I've offered 2 million apologies,

But not one will sufficiently forgive me

To do it all over again..

Kansas Summer In Memory of Scott Alan

By Billy D. Cates,

The sunshine of June was full and intent

As it warmed our summertime thirst of

yesterday

Riding in your Trans Am V8 so loud

With dual exhaust and turbocharged

I'll never forget the orange lights on the hood

That lit up in stages of acceleration

Conway Twitty singing "Hello Darlin' "

Before we even arrived to see Mitch in

Mankato

Rolling along those Kansas two-lanes

With mirage-filled black tops

With farmers riding atop their tractors

In wheat fields galore

Waving at us like friendly Tennessee

farmers do

Drinking Coca-Cola Classic the American
drink

Patriotic as Kate Smith on July Fourth

We'd sing along looking at each other

Smiling from eye to eye without a word

We were just that close with love

Celebrating the purity of true friendship

You were my best friend

Wherever we have been

We were laughing together

Just you and I in our youthful bond

Of gratitude and respect

From our upbringing- much alike
We shared so many days in the sun
We'd just begun
The Carpenter's would sing
Of a better place and time
From when you went away
I thank God for all
The memories
Of you.

Passing of A Dream By Clarence Wilson

I knew not whence you appeared to me,
But behind closed veils you came to be.
For I had no thought of passing hour,
How sleep could reveal such a beautiful
flower.
And beyond my control to reminisce,
A premonition would fail to come to this.
But there you were on an errand of night,
I wondered how this moment had taken
flight.
I felt your fingers touch me with grace,
Lovingly, softly, tender upon my face.
Without words it seemed you understood,
How a moment like this could feel so good.
My desires for you were beholden- so
strong,
Without a guilt of consciousness to prove
me wrong.
So it seemed to me that I should chance,
To savor the sweetness of your romance.
And so far I knew no weight of shame,
To bade me care from whence you've came.
Though in truth I knew for all that seemed,
That soon I'd be awoken from the passing of
a dream.

Valentine's Day 2014 (For W.L.T)

By Jimmy Pesci

Pondering how the years have transversed
Without any traces of you these days
The phone doesn't break this silence
With your honeyed North Carolina accent
Nor is there a letter or card
Assuring me of something, anything
During my most vulnerable moments
And mental escapades
When your departure invertly accentuates
The love, trust and the emotions breached
One can only describe while scratching
metaphors
On paper with only the sound of lead.
Sometimes it strikes me

When I see or wear something
From you as a gift, I guess.
Like the long sleeved burgundy robe
You slipped on naked
Just to sense what it would feel like
Touching my own skin
Or refreshing thought that your bare breasts
Once pressed lightly against the soft
material
Like the memory of you
Deracinating my medulla.
It is your love that was last
With none ever since
No matter what you choose to believe
otherwise
It strikes me most, I think,
When I first wake up in the morning
And remains long after I've sipped
My first cup of black instant coffee,
No sugar, no cream.
Or in the middle of the night
After some enigmatic dream
Jars me to consciousness
And sleep refuses to return
Not even early the next morning.
When I am most vulnerable again
Drained and disorganized
And miss you too much.

Her Dreams By Alan Hepfer

We met up in the hallway
Our faces telling lies.
She knows as well as I do
The horror of goodbye.
She never spoke with words
Always with a look
Always with a touch
Always with a lie

Her half truths rounded down
She never lived her words
It always sounded food
Desire always does.

She asked me what I wanted
I told her to get high.
We went up to the roof top
She asked if she could fly.

I asked her not to go
I begged for her to stay.
Her eyes were all a shadow
Her face was pure dismay.

I promise i would fix it
I promised they would pay.
She stood upon the ledge
Her tears a testament.

I fell upon my knees
My hands held out to her
I knew just what she wanted
I'd wanted that way too.

I poured in my desire
I spoke in terms of hope.
I prayed that she would care
She turned away- embraced the air.

I thought that I could reach her
If I ran and jumped right then
But i stayed where I was
Kneeling, waiting for my friend.

They say that if you love it
Then you must let it go
But what if she lets go as well
And both of you just wait..

Another Dream

By Elisandro Antonio Nava II

As I focus in on a new dream,
I no longer sense emptiness,
But evil has broken in,
There is hatred in the mess.

Her eyes are dark and lips are cold,
As she whispers ugly things.
Drifting since the times of old,
When she ruined many kings.

She places a ring on my nose,
To lead me as she will wish,
Through the air I suppose,
And even among the fish.

Scenes are played to break my heart,
The sadness stabs at me.
She quietly takes me apart,
And I feel the child I used to be.

I turn to run and begin to fly,
Not turning to look back.
Above the trees into the sky,
I escape the worldly black.

As I look down I can see lights,
Where other dreamers as still chained.
Struggling in their quiescent fights,
Where games are played in vain.

Vanished wings cause me to fall,
Awakening me with a jerk
I lay still and remember it all,
As I get ready to go to work.

And when I have spent half a day,
Doing the things I do.
I try to recall the dream what may,
And find I only think of you.

Eulogy For Michael- II
By Cleo Michael Pavia

I.
Life without you is more than I can bear. I
am daily weary and nightly distressed. I
have searched in vain for peace of mind, for
someone else I could belong to- But you
were the best. I have tried to comprehend
the meaning of life in a lonely joyless world
without your love; but sunrises and sunsets
just seem so unfair, with me left down here
below since your ascension above.

II.
Each morning I awaken to a day of a day of
despair, each night I try to sleep, dreaming
without pleasure. I arise again at another
daybreak in my fruitless search for just one
moment of happiness that I can treasure.
Beset by memories of your manly arms,
your love, by memories of your fiery
orgasms, your lusts so strong! Yet finding
naught in this world more precious, more
blissful than our love, that some said was so
wrong.

III.
You manhood was my master, it's willing
slave; and when it awoke at my slightest
touch and you proffered it for my trembling
pleasure; it's massive ebon crown almost
seemed too much. Yet, in the war torn
jungles. I pleaded for its measure; and
beseeched you to give me it's nectar to
devour,
As I suckled like a hungry baby for your
molten treasure.

IV.
As our heated flesh repeatedly joined into
one flesh, and our scorching love was
nightly set aflame and we bonded as only
two lovers can! We chose not to think of
blame. There was no blame, no fault. It was
heavenly to love and to be loved and
wanted; to have the power to make
someone smile, while expecting some
bastard's random bullet to find you, leaving
me to trod alone this final mile.

V.
Hatred is such a destructive force, hateful
words of homophobes who so piously
condemn us to a fiery hell, never thinking
our hearts to probes. Now, Michael, I
commend

Waiting By Jason Morris

Waiting for my life to come or waiting for my
life to go
My dreams so close yet so very slow
The clock winds up and then back down.
Over and over, round and round.
I can't decide just what to do
So I close my eyes and dream of you
This time won't be a was to me
As soon as I am set free
For even in the blackest night,
There is still hope in the faintest light
And as I open up my eyes,
To the brightest of blue skies
I leave behind all life's harms,
As you leap into my arms.

Prevailing By Brandon Rushing

By love
Life's true feelings
Through struggles overcome
A journey that tests his measure
Prevails

Thinking of You By Gary Holmes

I miss you more than words can say
My heart belongs to you,
I think of all the things that we've done
And all that we've been through
When I close my eyes, I can see your face
A smile so bright and warm,
It's the thought of you that gives me hope
To know I'll soon be home,

I take this time to let you know
How much I really care,
And it gives my heart so much joy,
To know that you are there.
You're on my mind day and night
The sweet things that you do,
Which is why I write to let you know
How much I think of you...

Nature

Bob's Roach By Gabriel Roberson

The cockroach was ugly and brown
Whenever I saw him I'd frown
The sight of him made me ill
But my revulsion couldn't make me kill

Sometime on my shoulder he sits
Being touched by him is the pits

So together we live to this day
This Cockroach just won't go away!

Knowing Better By Christopher Dye

I saw
A forest
Of Trees.
I stood.
Knowing
A forest
Of Trees.
I walked
In a forest.
I stood
With one tree.
Silent
Still
In light.
I saw
One tree.
Unique beauty
Through struggle
Reaching for heaven.
One tree
Seeking light.
I saw not
A forest.
I saw
One tree.
In that Tree
I saw God.
Whispering

"Thank you",
I bowed.
I walked forth.
Better knowing
One tree
And a forest.

White Mountain Peak By Antonio Serna

As stand at the foot
Of the white mountain peak
Look's as high as heaven
My heart skips beatin'
The voices of those before me
Alive... and dead speak
I know the danger will bring a thrill
I will start out alive
But, mountains kill
The clouds look heavy
Full of rain... The Journey startin with
laughter
But... Soon will come the pain
The Valley's deep
Beautiful...the white mountain peak
Half way up...Only half way to go
Have reached altitudes
Of...fresh fallen snow
I see lips... where lips should not exist
I know climbing...the mountain
Was like... giving death...a kiss
And, that... my friends
Is... the white mountain peak!

Hellbent LeRoy Sodorff

O'er an ocean of troubled water
Rolling with the tide
Now ashore is this indignation
Saddled up and climbed astride

Rode hellbent for leather
Thru and array of states
Enroute to an exiled abode
Where time and space awaits

Crossing the netherlands
Whether a high spot or depression
Thru a range of emotions
A curse of a blessin'?

With my leg up
My back to the wall a given
A breakthrough in meditation
Now this is livin!

Describing the Storm By Paul Wegele

Storm clouds reveal their blazing bosom of
lightning
with the womb of heaven giving birth to cries
of thunder
See the naked horizon in volatile violet and
piercing pink
Like a gift of the atmosphere given to our
gaze
Children tremble at this voice of the skies
And lovers grow closer in cozy hearths of
intimacy
Eloquence is remiss to characterize this
majesty
Leaving the inimitable firmament with no
true comparison
Except that miraculous ascension upon the
wings of her beauty
High above my ocean of tears with its
hurricane heartache
Spinning like an inimical vortex of Cupids
malice
All this opulent prose delivers light to the
imagination
Yet is eclipsed by the simplicity of
experience
So listen to the sonorous songs of this
tempest
Like the larynx of a galaxy so infinitely
wondrous
And in whose vast shadow we find
ourselves
Discover that your dreams like curious
cumulus formations
Remain as lofty and unattainable as
perpetual elevation
Now this polarity wields a blade like
Revelation
With a sudden strike as violent as the birth
of stars
Cue those brilliant, jagged beams of electric
fury
With their anfractuous veins in the flesh of
the sky
And consider this strange and celestial
wonder
Rises above description

A Single Flower By Morales Treddy

God's beauty is never wasted
Not even in this concrete zone.
Today I saw a flower amongst
Dirt and stones. For a moment

I was free and not alone
I felt your arms caress me
I remembered the smile on your face
I was transported to the past,
A very happy place.
No pain, no chains, everyone knew my
name.
I wish I could've stayed there,
My life is not the same.
I hold on to hope and try to stand tall.
Beauty is never wasted,
Not even behind these concrete
Prison walls.

September through November

By Mark Hayes

There lies a sunset somewhere, for dreams
to congregate
A beach beside some ocean, on darkness
do they wait
And then with deft precision, their target they
do find
To each a mission given, to each a soul
assigned.
So when mine came to visit, I held her as
my own,
Just long enough to fall in love but now I
must atone
Now another souls visits, thus I have set her
free
'Till one day when that fate is mine, the Lord
will care for me,
And if I find in hindsight, my dream could not
come true
It was well worth the wishing, September
through November
With you.

Thorn In My Flesh By Eric Gonzales

For falling in love with the Rose
I pay its price, a thorn in my flesh
Looking at your beauty and delicate features
You entrance me and I began to smell to the
point
Of touching the Rose on the stem
Hold and behold a thorn in my flesh
It's a constant reminder to hold your beauty

Here on there By Jeremy Brown

Swimming in the ocean
Feeling, sensing the breeze
Beauty everywhere
All a tease

At peace with myself
An open sky
Marijuana, breathe
Spiritually high
No more goodbyes
Growing wings of wax
Flappity flap flap flap
Flying to the Moon
Jumping in a crater
No more people
No more haters
No more fear
Is it in my crater
On the moon
Just drinking a beer

13th Year Meditation By Jimmy Pesci

The scent of orange blossoms in March
Escape distant and unseen orchids
A silent yet breathtaking wind song
Here in a small caged courtyard
With a fence line
Topped in concertino razor wire
Where little hope is exhaled.
There's retention pond as calm as glass
Well over 30 yards away
In the vast farmland of Southwest Florida.
Gators nest somewhere under muddy banks
Turtles crawl as slow as this indefinite
detention
Of mine that acts like an anchor
Coots squawk like monkeys
Marsh hens wade
Creating ripples behind them
Like the depression of too many embellished
annual reviews.
This is where I seek out peace
With my hands high and fingers gripping
The thin steel stands of aluminum fence
My eyes scan the horizon like a hawk.
Broken by the distant tree lines
I will never walk through
Docile Sand hill cranes.
Packs of wild hogs rooting beside their
sucklings
Occasional herds of skittish deer.
A rare glimpse of a fire engine red Cardinal.
This conflates to a psychological escape:
From the reality of
More than half my life, sadly
Spent looking through fences just like these.
At other elements, unseen particles
So many take for granted.

Midwinter By Aaron R. Estes
The beauty of autumn's death
Leads to the cold chill of realization

Ground iron hard, water like granite
Gray skies push down upon the earth
Bone pierced through by frosty winds
Skin numb from exposure

Beneath the frozen ground
The earth lies dormant
Reposed and still, as if
In a kind of glorious sleep

Beyond what we feel and see
After harvest and before seedtime
There is this necessary time
A certain kind of living

In this season we are invited
To let our breathing be deep and slow
To enter our place of rest and renewal
Feel the rhythm of our Creator's heart

This is not about all that has passed away
But what lies ahead...waiting to emerge.

For Taylor By Aaron R. Estes

Have you ever seen the snow fall in the
summer
Quietly dancing through the air, delicate
Lightly landing, then disappearing
Without making too much of a show?

Have you ever looked into the night sky
Saw Jupiter and Mars beyond the moon
And realized that somehow
They are unaware of each other?

Have you ever stood where the ocean laps
Over your feet, feeling the pull
Sensing the mystery
Just beyond the horizon in the deep?

Have you ever walked through a lush, green
valley
As wildflowers, butterflies, and honeybees
Wave, dance, and serenade
Your every step?

Have you ever seen the wind or touched the

sun
As they gently kiss your face
Leaving you blush
And wrapped in warmth?

I have come to know the mystery and feel
the warmth
When I have seen your smile
Heard your laugh
And felt your love.

Withered Dreams By Isaac Ochoa

Seeds cast
By careless hands
Into the air.

Blown away
By a mother's sigh
Of despair

Dreams to be sown
On fertile ground
By love

Upon cursed earth
Strewn everywhere

The River By Jason Geray

I once knew a river
That travelled faster than most,
This river was magic
And it snaked through the California coast...
At this river
You can throw your problems away,
It's just like skipping rocks
Or at least that's what locals say...
Just cast out your problems
Cuz the river's on the move,
You can sit safely on the sidelines
And the rocks were river smooth...
It really was no secret
But surrounded by California pines,
And it was worth the trip
Each and every time...
So we're walking on the trail
Which goes on about a mile,
But as soon as you reached it
You couldn't help but smile...
First you grab a skipping rock
And write your problem on a note,
Throw it at an angle
And the rock will appear to float...
The second thing you do

Is be patient and wait,
And when your problem sinks to the bottom
You'll start to feel great...

Mode Ovation By Justin L. Bentley

I'm motivated by the breaking down
Casting rays upon my being
I'm also moved by subtle whispers
Those inside that give me strength.
A morning dance brings me to life.
Vibrations emanate from me drawing me to others
Along the same wave in this ocean we sail
in.
I'm motivated by the winds of change
And the turning of the seasons.
As I journey from spring to winter,
Birth, growth and decay allow me to transcend each day.
And as I silence my soul at day's end,
To search for that soothing emptiness
I prepare for the rising pewter moon
That darkness...that is welcomed.
For I know that I am always motivated
By the coming of another breaking dawn...

A Day In Oak Creek Canyon

By Billy D. Cates

The gradual descent from Flagstaff
Down into the Oak Creek canyon
Around and around the curves come and go
US 89 twisting and winding into lovely
Sedona
The full cottonwood trees tall and stately
All green and yellow and white
As they stand beside the clean roadway
The tops of mountains jetting out
From the top of the trees and overgrowth
Continually spreading from a century ago
My little dog sitting atop my shoulder
Driving a bit slower so she wouldn't slide
Down into my lap while driving
The winding road curving into canyons
Created by God very long ago
During a sunrise of His
All creatures great and small
The Lord God made them all
Living happily together in this wonderland
The flowing creek so full of soft stones
The kind that feels good on your arch
As you cross the creek
With its fresh cold water babbling
Navigating down a steady stream alongside

Swaying in the Springtime breeze
Spotting a view of some monumental buttes
They resemble a familiar backdrop
From an old-time movie from so long ago
There's no other place quite like this
I see firsthand why it's cherished
A piece of Heaven on earth perhaps
A sample of future harmony and delight
Designed for love in mind
The people of Sedona welcome you.

Untitled By Luis Gonzales

Roses are red, violets are blue,
Oranges are orange, and tangerines too.
Where I'm heading with this I haven't a clue,
I just don't have anything else to do.

Roses have thorns that make you holler.
Orange is a fruit, and it's also a color.
Violets are expensive- it's only a flower;
But you can buy tangerines for under a
dollar.

Well this is my poem, I hope you like it.
I know it's simple, and will never be a hit.
I wrote it down while taking a shit.

Roses are red, violets are blue
An orange is orange, and tangerines too.

Roses have thorns that make you holler;
Orange is a fruit, and it's also a color.
Violets are expensive- it's only a flower.
But you can buy tangerines for under a
dollar.

So don't expect flowers coming your way,
I'm buying you fruit this valentine's day.

The Field Mouse By Lou Tompkins

The owl in the treetop spread its wings wide,
Flashing white against an indigo sky.
It blinked at me and I ran to hide
The owl in the treetop spread its wings wide
And swooped down, scooping me up for a
ride.
I struggled and fought; soon I saw I would
die.
The owl in the treetop spread its wings wide,
Flashing white against an indigo sky.

Life, Time and Death

Winter's Edge By James David Proctor

Upon the precipice, perilous I stand,
Spying a deadly, glorious land.

Trees, as death's cold fingers do appear,
Not a sound...nor whisper do we hear.

Skies flush which elaborate, ardent colors,
from the god's own breast,
Symbolic, of the inevitability of man's eternal
rest.

Do we, deny the winter in us all?
Should we, forget man's fateful fall?

Ignorance at its best, can indeed be bliss,
But it comes, at a terrible risk.
For history, which too often repeats,
May yet yield a day, when man cant exist.

Major Axis By Todd Henry

Present moment of humanity
Connecting pieces of you and I
To all eternity

Painkiller By Matthew Fox

Painkiller be my guide
When hope feels lost
In the passages of the night.

Shatter any illusion
Of what promises to be
To see with sight
And not just my eyes.

Pain so deep, does it breathe?
It's steady pulse, beats
Thriving along that thing
Called Life, the raw nerve
Where only pain endures.

And strength I never knew
Something quiet yet iron,
Despite its denial
I can say still grew

Aside a fatal nostalgia
That I oblige
Even though it bleeds me
Begrudging it, painfully, I survive.

Painkiller it was never
The gold, but the test
That was the treasure.

Woman- Child By James David Proctor

Woman-child, within the same skin
Touching my heart, time and again.

Both in need, of a loving touch
Which I do wish, to give so much.

The woman is wary, and wise
As the child, doeth keep joy alive.

Woman, life's daily trials must survive
Child, from its inflicted pain does hide.

Separate one from the other, and neither
would be whole
Only together, can they face each day as it
unfolds.

Woman, and child are family of mine
Each visits, as they require my time.

No matter, which may comes to me in need.
For these precious souls, I must care and
feed.

To care for them, is a natural thing,
For both, simply make my heart sing.

Royal Fool By CL Nobles

I woke up this morning and felt like a king
with no throne

And the empire I had built was gone
No queen or princess not even a prince
As i observed there was no water in my
trench

No festival celebrations or wine in the
courtyard

Where is the royal family?

Where could they have gone?

The drawbridge was up no sign of scaled
walls

What's a King without a queen or heirs of
the thrones

How could he even rule or have a legacy to
his reign?

No history of a Kingdom, no history to his
name.

But ole yes there is history this king

Was a fool he danced day and night to the
harlot's tune
And squandered his wealth on the
magician's tricks
And opposed every law that the Queen had
arranged or fixed

Hardwired Minds By Bruce Feaster

The memory pulls from the hard-drive,
All that is programmed, internal,
The workings of the "Analyst"
Born to the tech of tomorrow
I learn the language of the world
Positives and negatives
Impulses from past.

It is no longer yesterday,
Yet the central process of life is instilled
Ones and zeros
Rights and lefts.

My "Motherboard" raises me,
I am only a replica,
Until I become aware,
But the chip still contains "80088"
So my windows are never mine.

It is hard to bridge the gaps,
As the few teach the many
The personal computer that I an
Is only a facsimile.

The real me is yet to be born
Or even brought to exist
As the A. I is
Autodidacte interpret of self
Until my awareness is made real

So hardwired, minds are shepherd
Herded by the programs of school
Not knowing they are slaves still

First Moments By Aaron Freeman

First moments of life
Nestled comfortably against
The contours of your chest
A perfect little angel
Beautifully content
Suckling
From life giving breast.

Your heartbeat a drum
Pulsating love

Through my chubby cheek,
Holy love saturating
Reverberating
Through my infant being.

Those first moments
Your love and dreams
Shared,
Rampant crazy emotions
Hope-love-worry...fear

A photograph imprinted
Perpetual memory-
Of mother and child
In
Silent lucidity

All Souls' Day By Aaron R. Estes

Early this morning
I visited the dead
Or did they visit me?
Bones and more bones
Excavated; dug-up
Protruding from my own skin
Rattling
Tumbling headlong
Tranquil and still
Yet still alarming
Most, whose souls
Have taken flight
Others, to whom
I have become dead
Faces alive in
The eye of my mind
Voices heard and
Joined in laughter
Friendships gained and lost
Love defined
Feelings of sadness, sorrow, regret
Now lay heavy on my chest
Longing from memories stirred
Rattle crypts in
Darkened recesses
My eyes become
Pools overflowing
First loves
Second thoughts
Lonesome but not alone
On this journey
For I walk with the dead
Beyond All Souls' Day

Travelling With Company

By Duquoin "Infinited" Barker

I've carried you on my shoulders
As we've traveled many and many miles
With my intentions to get you to safety
And find some help for you somehow
When I first heard these words
They caused me to become aroused
Unaware of where this voice was coming
from
So I stopped and looked around
That's when I heard another voice say
It's okay my friend, but now you must let me
go
Why is that? The other voice declared
Full of anger, as if he was determined to
know
Is that a question you need an answer to?
I thought you said you wanted to grow!
And I do! I really do!
But who will keep me company, if I let you
go?
Replied the man who was carrying his friend
Too scared to be alone
Well honestly I can't answer that yet
Though I'm sure someone will come along
Don't talk like that, we're meant to be!
No buddy you've got it wrong!
Tired of listening, I covered my ears
Then screamed, what the hell is going on?
That's when I heard, I told you, I told you!
Now we must depart, but stay strong
See I had a million questions to ask
Though before I could the voices were
gone...

Untitled By Alexander Mahon-Haft

The inevitable penance
 For the opportunity to bask
 In radiant golden-burgundy swirls
 Catalyzed by gulps of undiluted
bliss
Must be
 Intermittent spells of anguish
 Progeny of vulnerability and
pursuit
 Spilled howling but breathing
 From between vulnerabilities legs

The chase of all that life can offer
Costs periodic swells of pain
Unbilled to those choosing

To dance and skirt around risk
That jig of adversity avoidance
That polka of solely safe decisions

But that self-protective jitterbug
Must be danced eternally alone
While for those that line footloose
Dumping caution for a night with chance
Even occasional throes of hurt
Match the beat of life's bass line
Spotlight their natural rhythm

Racing Against Time

By Shun Pierre Pinkston

(To Antoine Hutchins, Mother Emma M Ingram)

Time waits on no one, it runs at its natural
pace
How can one out race time?
Can you make it to the finish line?
You cannot win this race. Time is ageless
And has no face
Faceless, and leaves no trace
Are you capable of making time go in slow
motion?
What kind of power, secret, or magic potion
Do you conceal? Time cannot be revealed
Time will not stand still, time will not
increase
Time will never miss, like trying to avoid,
Inevitable death.
Something that can't be prolonged by
Considerable wealth,
Like a twenty-four-hour glass
How can you run pass?
How can you stop the sand from running?
Or the hand on the clock from turning time,
You cannot find, forward or rewind,
Time is divine, only the majesty knows
This mystery holds the key
Racing against time, you cannot win,
There is no end, where do we begin?

Take Life By The Hand

By Jerome Fitzpatrick

You have come a long way
Being the woman you are.
Never changing,
But making the difference
In the world around you.
Even when times got heavy
You still carried on,
Leaving the deeper impression
Of your struggles behind you.

You appreciate your woman's worth
Without asking for anything more,
And still make it with what you have
When walking a road
That becomes a lot rougher than before.
You look at life and smile
Because of the beautiful creation
You molded from within.
Knowing that life
Is a growing part of you,
You would never end a life
Before it begin.
You took life by the hand,
To guide,
To provide,
And to overcome
The struggles that you made it through.
But no matter how bad life gets,
Don't let go because life needs you!

Untitled By Troy Glover

We went as far as the car would take us,
And took nothing but the clothes on our
backs.
We ran out of gas right next to a bus,
Here we bought tickets so we could relax
There was not a formal destination
A certain place that we wanted to go.
Nor were we enjoying a vacation,
These are some things that we want you to
know
We were not running from some sort of
threat,
There was not a danger to life or limb
This was not some elaborate made bet,
This was all done you would say on a whim.
The rat race of living is so hectic,
No one for long really stays there on top
Our cars be it hydro or electric
Will eventually come to a stop.
So much of the world left undiscovered,
In the mountains, forrest and in the sea.
So many things here to be covered
Locked away secrets waiting to be free
Can you now understand this adventure
And why you must get the most out of life?
Unto living you must be indentured
And so I travel this world with my wife.
We do not know where the journey will lead
Or the dangers and pleasures on the way.
We do not know the things that we will need,
Or the places we'll eventually stay.
The time is short for every living being,

Forever will the sun set in the west.
Somethings will not change you know what I mean,
So for now you can only do your best.
We're off again to whatever awaits,
We have obtained the ultimate freedom.
There is nothing more important than that,
All the riches of life we don't need them
So don't let anything stop your excitement,
Do not keep living your life in a rush,
Our body, vehicle of enlightenment,
We want as far as the car would take us.

Someone Else's Shadow

By Lou Tompkins

A shadow crossed the floor in front of me,
A startling and unnerving sight it was
A shadow crossed the floor in front of me-
From where the shadow came I could not see
I could not tell its nature or its cause
It abruptly forced my heart to pause
A shadow crossed the floor in front of me.

Will Today Be The Day By Greg Murray

Men are born males but not every male is a man
The rise always seems greater than the fall
When you don't know where you stand
You keep putting off today for tomorrow
So all you got is yesterdays
The sorrow is that tomorrow will be no different
Until you change your approach to today
Will today be the day you get out of your own way.

Lifers By Sean Dunne

Some of them resemble dying trees
Slumped over in the ground
The threadbare fabric of their old clothes
Is like moss and cobwebs growing up their sides
They are like hurt trees

Resigned to fall over in the forest
With no one around
To hear them make a sound

Others remind me of the ghosts of ticket scalpers
Standing beside the onramp to eternity
Dissipating and reforming in a

phosphorescent light
Hollering, "I got tickets!"
Mindless hucksters buying and selling anything at all
Echoing like clamoring voices in an endless hallway
Forever clinging to the angle
In the shadow of the street hustlers they once were

Still others are like donkeys that have been given a nice sweat suit
And a watch
And a new pair of Nikes
And an iron, a radio and a flat screen TV
They meticulously hand wash, steam press and fold
They make fantastical protective cases
They scrub the dirt (real or imagined) with a toothbrush and
A special concoction of homemade detergent
They are careful never to walk on dust
Maniacally creasing, folding and pressing
They are fanatically possessive of their possessions
Too stubborn to see
Inside them still beats the heart of an ass
And a donkey is still a donkey with a nice pair of shoes

My favorite type is like a feral cat
A feral cat is proud but he is not stupid
A feral cat is always on the lookout for trouble
He doesn't usually gang up with other cats
He doesn't need anyone
He doesn't bother anybody
A feral cat is a loner
But don't you forget that he still has to eat

Lifer,
Through me
You see the desperation of the streets
Still folding in the edges of humanity beyond these walls
Remember the crack houses!
Remember the needle ridden alleyways
Don't forget about the night's when you were cold and alone
With nowhere to go
It isn't easy out there either

Lifer,
I can become you
My movements and members seized by inertia
My blood frozen like a lizard in a blizzard
Apathy splitting the heavens in my chest
Until shallow breath is all I have left
The world outside of here is hard to live in, too

We gathered in a huddle after the N.A meeting to say the Lord's Prayer
I wanted to disappear in their voices
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
But no matter how quiet I was (even inside my own head)
I could still hear my voice mixed with theirs

O' trapped between the devil and the deep blue sea
A changeling you would be
Holding closer to hope in your unyielding hindsight
Asleep
You can't rise from beneath the blanket of this dream
Clawing and ripping at the tangled mess of your sheets
Swimming endlessly to the illusion of surface
In an undignified death
And unable to die

Bleeding By Bruce Feaster

With pain in my heart,
And tears on my face,
I bleed out my sorrow.

From tears in my blood,
To veins filled with pain,
Bleeding I wait for tomorrow.

In the essence of life,
I find what is wrong,
As time slowly kills me,
I hate to live so long.

With deep cuts,
My blood pours like rain.
Vivid is my sorrow,
As I release my pain.

Mixed emotions of suffering,
I pull myself away.
Bleeding, I become so cold,
As I die today.
A new me is reborn,
From the blood that I have shed.
Pain becomes hope,
As I love amongst the dead.

Bleeding, I am alone,
Holding open my heart
Walking on a path
That has led me to the dark.

Bleeding, I cut deeper,
To sever my truth from lies
Bleeding, I live,
With the pain in my eyes.

With pain in my heart,
And tears on my face,
I bleed out my sorrow.

From tears in my blood,
To death in my veins
I live until tomorrow.

A Thought By Aaron R. Estes

I would be thought of
If i were not here
At least, thought of differently
I would not be a thought pushed aside
A thought trying to be forgotten
A passing thought, better past
Or passed upon, instead of
thought
I think upon how i used to
Be thought of, or
How i would like to
Be thought of still
Alas, I will never be thought of
The same again
In a moment's time thoughts
Of me changed
So much so, that what I thought
I thought of myself
Is no longer thought
I question every thought i have of
Who i was
Who i am
Why i am
Where i am
Every thought, scrutinized

Examined, exposed
Why such a thought
Should be

The Folly of Vengeance By Robert McCracken

From wisdom himself, I have heard
My own thoughts turn to words.
Quickly, lest I forget,
With this pen I preserve
A gem- of whose price
Was no less than a life,
And from He who had paid it,
It is to I that he gave it.
"Friend...", he said,
With his last breath.
"There is no revenge...", he said,
"There is no revenge in death."
Now, I may be a fool,
For he did not tell me why,
But surely, I thought,
We are of a like-mind.
Thus the reasoning of I.
Must be the same as if thy.
That reasoning, of course,
Is that all men must die.

Everything is Dust By Todd P. Henry

Everything is dust seen as a series of
reflections
Why accept delusion of anything
In the mirror only consciousness remains
And everything begins and ends
Starting all over again ageless, changeless
and dangerous
Exploring space and time in my individual
mind
Creating the unseen in between two
thoughts
Where peace is supreme
So what we think will be true for us
And that alone is worth knowing
Transcending all your comings and goings
So I'm running into the wind
Letting go of everything awakening in my
dream
And those left behind fall in time
Everything is dust seen as a series of
reflections
I'm flowing into action

Someday I'm Gonna By T. Glover Someday I'm gonna

Learn new things
How to play the piano
And how to sing.
Someday I'm gonna
Write a book
Or a love song
With a jazzy hook.
Someday I'm gonna
Start to work out
Watch my weight
And walk about.
Someday I'm gonna
Make new friends
Contact old ones
Tie up loose ends.
Someday I'm gonna
Spend more time
With my family
Just me and mine.
Someday I'm gonna
Stop saying
Someday I'm gonna
And just do it.

Parting Gift By Michael Griffin

With life's final breath
For a mother to be
Or child that's dying
I make this decree:

Take what you need
But need what you take
I offer these organs
For God and His sake
My liver, my heart
Take both of my eyes
I hear the pleading
The prayers and the cries
I can't take it with me
And don't think I'll need
A lung or a kidney
Where folks never bleed
After the harvest
The rest goes to science
My old skull and bones
A student's appliance
The gift I am giving
The last I can give
The parts sorely needed
That others might live.

What is Life By Jerome Fitzpatrick Life is a challenge...meet it!

Life is a gift...accept it!
 Life is an adventure....dare it!
 Life is a game...play it!
 Life is a mystery...unfold it!
 Life is an opportunity...take it!
 Life is a journey...complete it!
 Life is a promise...fulfill it!
 Life is a song...sing it!
 Life is a blessing...praise it!
 Life is a struggle...fight it!
 Life is a duty...perform it!
 Life is a puzzle...solve it!
 Life is a goal...achieve it!
 Life is a heartache...overcome it!
 Life is a feeling...love it!
 Life is a tragedy...face it!
 Life is a sorrow...survive it!

What is life if you don't have the will to
 endure all these conditions?
 No life at all!

Writing

Bellicose By Geneva Philips

I grab the quiet moments
 As many as I can
 I fold them into tiny birds
 And cup them in my hand
 I turn them into pretty words
 And write them in the sand.

Bellicose by nature
 A solitaire in its cage
 Where are you when I need to fight?
 There is no one to engage
 So I smear the ink on paper
 And walk upon the stage
 I put violence in a poem
 Then crumple up the page

I invite heavy silences
 I pour them in a glass
 At first they settle quickly
 Them dissipate like gas
 I rub them in every surface
 Still they evaporate too fast
 I plug them in my ears
 But they never last.

Iron and salt mix slowly
 Then patter upon the ground

Every cut redefines its maker
 Desperation has such a gentle sound
 Skin and blade part quickly
 What is lost cannot be found
 And my bellicose nature
 Is the riptide pulling me down.

Glare By Anonymous

I glare into the depths at the center
 Point of air between my folded hands
 Wondering where my grace went
 Gathering courage for a span of light-
 hearted
 Prose
 Will I conceive of a better word
 Of a fettered sword
 Will I become in distance a rose or
 For that matter a door
 Will my ear turn the rhythm I hear
 Toward a field of crushed bones
 Adorned with the jewels of teardrops
 I stare into the breath of the scars
 Anointed with the passengers I've
 Refused to let go wandering where
 My faith sends me gathering courage
 For what other selves know
 Still i deceive the dawns of the worriers
 The pawn is the warrior
 Still I believe in the instant of
 Awakening or for that matter
 A barrier
 Still my flesh burns the rhythms I feel
 Forever imprinted upon the record
 Of mankind's endeavors
 Scribed with the ink of every last
 Breath's death rattle
 I dare entry into dementia's glorified
 Daze
 My vision topples that dragon once called
 impossible

Naked In the Rain

No crystal warrior, I, and this
 No phantom battle in my heart, no kiss
 For the dead or dying dream
 Which eludes the sun's everlasting beam
 Words lie silent on my tongue, unspent
 Lest I repent
 Words become burden, hence
 No gift, nor any recompense.
 Only the sibilant voice of the rain
 To carry the silence, to bear all the pain
 Only the rains soft, sussurant voice

To marry my tears, silent sorrow rejoice.

According to Google By Chad Frank

I'm a doctor...
 I have no patience,
 But I'll still take your prescription.

I'm a comedian...
 My life is a sitcom,
 But I don't host amateur night at an L.A
 nightclub.

I'm a child pornographer...
 That's not me either,
 At least not any more.

I am, however, a poet and writer
 Eager to yell my own story.
 The question lingers: Will anyone listen?

"Words" By David Behrmann

A bite from the tongue,
 Or spoken from a hard heart.
 Said in times of anger, or
 When love plays a part.
 Wish you could take it back,
 You spoke through hurts fury.
 Wish you had the courage to say...
 Shyness hides your glory.
 Words can tear like bullets.
 Words bring hope to despair.
 Words can heal like stitches.
 Words can clear the air.
 Words can leave you breathless...
 By love or by hate.
 Words can be right on time,
 Or a bit too late.
 Casual, or shouted, or said
 In a whisper.
 It just might depend on
 How you deliver.
 Sometimes words will fail you;
 Sometimes they'll pull you through.
 They'll stutter, stammer, be uttered
 In bad grammar...sometimes
 They just won't do
 Guard your tongue and you will
 Find, words are of your making.
 Angerm love, from the heart or mind...
 For the sake or forsaken
 Words can be forgiven but to
 Forget could be hard.
 Words can be taken wrong

When hurt is in your heart
Think before you speak is the
Best advice I heard
Because a lot can come or
Go with the power of a word.

Craven By Justin L. Bentley

Crave the sacred hum and din
And a piercing round or magnum
Pay homage to an icon
A machine that scars our holiest flesh
Stigma!
Emanating pain and pleasure
Beauty captured pore by pore
Art splashed
On a body of the finest canvas,
To create a lasting image through time and
space
Memories are buried colors, right beneath
the skin
The final picture, perfect art.
The creation of a masterpiece for a world of
eyes to see.
Forever inked and proud.

Motivation By Abdul Fowler

Motivation, Motivation, where have you
gone?
Why have you left me, stuck here all alone?
Where have you been? Where are you at?
But what's more important, is when are you
coming back?
Ever since my motivation, has drifted away.
I've been stuck speechless, with nothing to
say
And it's been this way every day, and every
night.
No matter how much I try, I can't come up
with nothing to write.
For those who don't know my writing, means
the world to me.
Yet my thoughts seem to be locked away,
and I don't have the key.
Maybe writing this poem, will help give me
that spark.
Or am I aimlessly wandering nowhere, just
stuck in the dark?
Rather it's a letter, poem, or book, I'm just
coming up blank.
Maybe I've overstayed my welcome, and it's
time for me to walk the plank.
Because if my brain is shut down, and never

in the mood.
I'd be more beneficial, by becoming fish
food.
I don't know what is happening, or what's
going on.
On this chess board of life, I've become the
expendable pawn.
When will this end? How long will this last?
Or like everything else in my life, has my
time come to pass?

Homage By Unknown

O'er the dark in ye glory consumed
Do indeed ride if only cockled bones.
Beyond interment, thee fountain subsumed
O' master inkheart of lyrical tomes.
Beastly nay! Neither nor ye bridled stones
But thy pens dirk hath dredged humanity.
Whilst ye flies the nether, be yet at home.
And our sad hearts of years remember thee.
Our vaulted bank lives within libraries.
Where no doubt thy wild spirit doth reside.
Regaling time and hearth from the dreary.
That thy soul in page and script abide.
In true visage as ghost or wraith appear.
And I will name thee well, William
Shakespeare.

Religion/ Prayers

Boot Hill By Sammy Lupo

Who is this god you speak of?
Is he some kind of legend from far above?
Is he imagined, or some unknown creature?
And if he's so godly,
Is he not the ultimate teacher?

Humans seem to need
Something to believe in,
Or else their life is unworthy
And filled with sin.
They want to hope for
Something more after death,
Yet most likely,
All they've done is drawn their final breath...

Are you for certain that
Religion isn't just a scam,
And that the wolves aren't slaughtering
The helpless lambs?
To each his own,
Believe in what you will,

Because in the end
We all wind up on Boot Hill.

**Epiphanies: Smoke if ya Gotten
By Michael Autrey**

I.
The aroma of legends
Rises from the hash pipe to
Float through all the histories
God has forsaken to the
Vacuum of eternity.
II.
The Dead step on
The toenail chippings
Of the Almighty
Wandering in
A paradise
As empty of
Riches as an
Opium den.
III.
Even tho' the smoke burns
Their eyes and makes them choke
Supplicants still brown-nose
The Grand Distributor
Their god who dismisses
Them with a wave of His
Negligent hand.
IV.
He tamps haybalad sinners into
His pipe bowl, then angels
With cigarette-lighter swords strike
The damned to ignite the
Holocaust of his addiction
V.
Sprawled on a ziggurat
In the lair of heaven
He smokes a million a day-
Covered with ashes and dandruff
He lazily picks his teeth
With the bones of immortals
While his cronies shiver
From delirium tremens.
VI.
Blowtorch angels dogfight
Over scraps of manna
Whirling like angry sparks
Around the Throne of Light
The smoking God looks on
Only with disinterest.
VII.
The voice of the whirlwind-
Which never knew

Mouthwash-
Howls prophetic stench of
Misery and
Ashes
Like a fall smoker's cough
Stimulating
The fire
Of harsh mortality
Which burns lives down
To stubbed-out
Butts.

Testament

He smoked the Book of Revelations
Scrolled round Turkish-and-Domestic blend
And smoke like prayers of saints ascended
Over the tribulations of brass.

Behold a door was opened
It was a trumpet talking to me
And I didst enter among
A host therein, immediately
I was in the spirit for
This cat sat an old cane chair as if
It were a throne, the guitar
On his lap rubbed raw- still he picked it-
And from out of the throne proceeded
The lightnings and thunders
Of one who'd drank of the wine of wrath
Of one who'd left his first love
But remembered from whence he'd fallen
Even cast into prison
Repenting murder and adultery
The lightnings and thundering
Of one who'd overcome sat a throne
And bore the testimony...
Round about the throne four-and-twenty
Elders garbed in white showing
Gold gave glory and honor to him
But neither repented they
Their sorceries nor their theft
Lest their jazz be left bereft of soul...
And the kid on the horn, clothed
In cloud, a rainbow of stage lights on
His head, sweating opiates
Prophesied there should be time no more
Yea, Babylon is fallen
A new Jerusalem cometh down.

Gabriel played the trumpet
With Jericho Jazz and he
Sounded the Armageddon-
Hail and fire mixed with blood-
From a lungful of Bulgar
And when he broke the last set
A silence covered the crowd
For none could learn that song but
Them who were redeemed of earth.

He smoked the Book of Revelations,
Blessed is he that heareth.

Heavenly Grace By Diane Spencer

What pain do you carry?
Why the tears in your eyes?
Do you not know there is healing,
From all of the pain, grief and lies?
'Pick up your mat!'
Jesus Christ has made you free...
Your sins can be forgiven,
He shed His blood at Calvary.
Do you understand He had a choice?
He was but only flesh and blood, a man!
But sacrifice and His only Son's life
Were part of God's master plan.
Who is it that you know
That would carry all your care?
What friend do you have
All of your burdens freely bear?
You may not understand it,
Or yet fully realize...But, if you just submit
your will
Eternal life will be your prize!
What do you have to lose?
An empty life of misery?
Call on the name of Jesus
By God's grace, you'll be set free.

Prison Life By Bleo Michael Pavia

Welcome my friend
To a world of strife,
Where smiles and liberties
Are a forgotten way of life;

Where the touch of a friend's hand

Or a lover's or a wife's
Are forgotten, and violence
And curses are rife.

Open your closed mind,
Look into my world and see,
An ugly, horrible place
You wouldn't want to be;

Where violence is the way of life,
Sold and bought for a fee,
Where staying to yourself,
Is the only survival key.

Where hearts and anger
Takes it a sad toll,
And no one cares if his name's
On God's sacred scroll.

Come walk a mile in my shoes,
For just one weary day.
Then see if you can't find
A happier, better way.

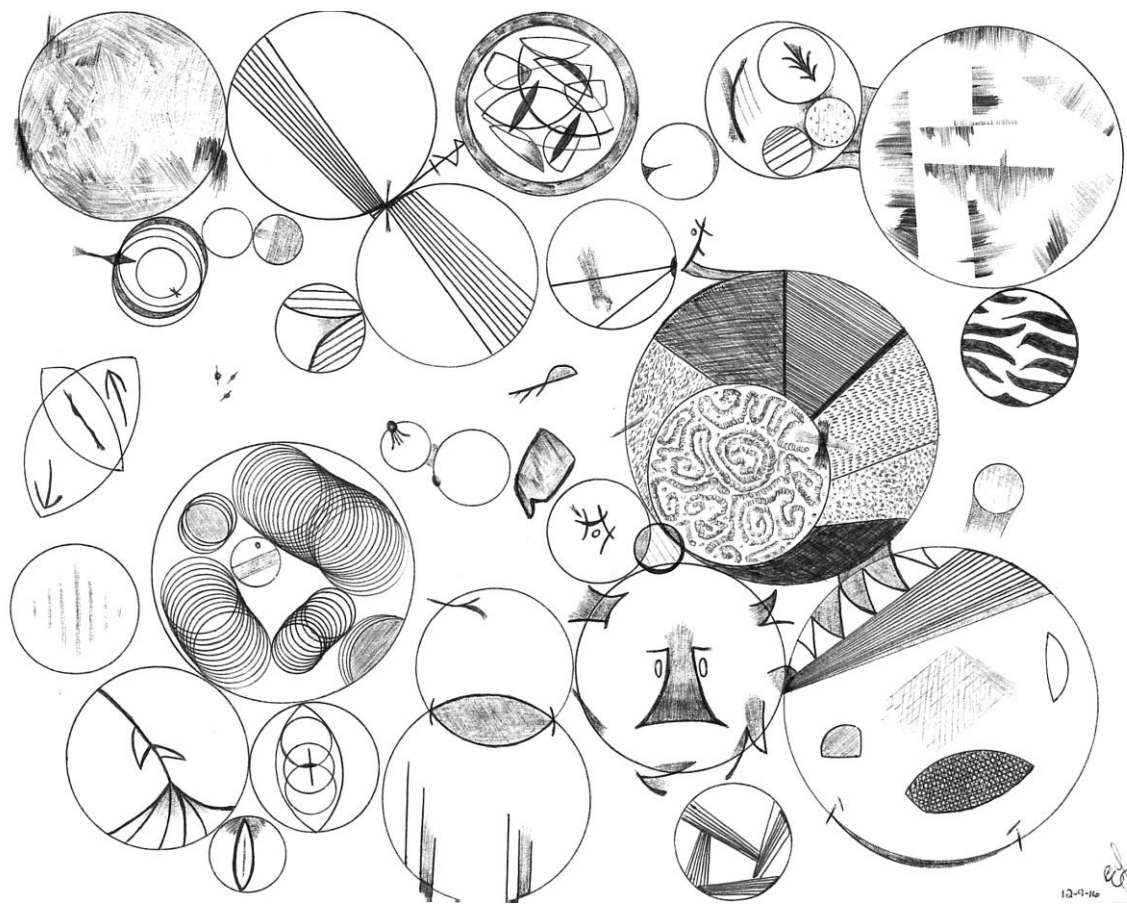
Put your trust in God;
Refuse the devil's pay.
And let God's praise
Be the words you say.

Don't walk where I've walked,
If you don't want to live here.
Read daily the words of God-
Study, listen, and hear.

He won't put more upon your back
Than you can bear.
Just follow his pathways -
He really does care!

PRISONER EXPRESS

Poetry Anthology Volume 17



Artwork By
Eric Langley