

# **Prisoner Express**

## **Poetry Anthology**

### **Volume 21**



Gary Farlow

'18 Farlow



**Words**  
**By Phillip Johnson**

"A lot of meaning into a short form."  
Pulling it from me,  
something  
Different and outside the "norm."  
These words...  
They consume me, bringing to light,  
things.  
Long hidden; never heard and  
deep.  
These words  
Can be light, but heavy; connecting  
Others with me,  
After all, these words, and I, have  
A love affair.  
They attach us with our ancestors  
And antiquity  
As we both utilize this air;  
connecting  
Through one, in spirit, and one, in  
body  
These words...  
Spoken and written; together, in  
this  
Love affair, they  
Free me.  
Not just physically, but mentally;  
Allowing others to see  
Our love affair.  
"Words,"  
Be my gift, to a humanity, in  
Search of  
Meaning;  
A humanity hoping  
These words  
Can; spiritually; sincerely;  
Express, what it means  
To be:  
A human being.

**Domestic Violence**

**The Faces of Domestic Violence**  
**By Bobby Bunderson**

Deep, Slumber. Childhood blissful  
wonder. Ceased Forever.  
A slap! A scream! A crash!  
Unbridled confusion. Discord in a  
flash!  
Frightened innocent eyes struggling  
to pierce the blackness of night.  
A young heart breaking- perceiving



his mother's plight.  
Likened to that of a newborn foal- legs  
wobble- struggling to stand upright.  
The boy slinks like a criminal  
outside his night.  
Lungs filled past bursting with

*John Ponder*

courageous air- inching himself  
forward as fast as he could dare.  
Long and narrow the ominous  
corridor loomed ahead- concealing

calamities, danger, strife, and  
dread!  
Yet defiantly the small toy soldier  
continued to advance- braced to  
fight in advocacy, he would make a  
final stance!  
The hallway mirror echoed back a  
dreadfully shocking sight.  
The image was gaunt and shallow-  
young eyes so full of fright!  
The first face of Domestic Violence  
I had ever witnessed was that of  
my own reflection.  
Crumpled and beaten; eyes  
swollen shut; lips flat and puffy;  
crimson from a cut.  
Small hands flailing- common  
sense abating- cursed tears  
betraying.  
"Poor little Momma's boy!" The  
antagonist said with malice.  
"You damned little cry baby! I  
should have named you Alice!"  
Broken lip- sinking ship. Blue eyes  
so full of sorrow.  
Home wrecker- heartbreaker-  
Daddy, will you hurt us more  
tomorrow?

These are two more faces of  
Domestic Violence that my future  
would borrow...  
Divorce! Ugly and loud.  
Lives lived under this malicious  
cloud.  
Both remarried- again... and  
again... Same old song and dance.  
Same old violent sin.  
My friends were: abandonment-  
resentment and anger out-of-  
control.  
Preachers were always preaching  
son- "Ye shall reap what ye shall  
sow!"...  
Wedding bells and marriage bliss/ I  
said I do with a poisonous kiss.  
The birth of our first daughter. The  
A-B-C's and 1-2-3's. Playing on the  
teeter-totter.



Morals, virtues, and ethics are the lessons that I should have taught her.  
 Yet instead. She has to witness the violence which I had to release.  
 Never a man, a husband nor a dad, I had become the beast!  
 You bitch! You whore! You stupid cunt!  
 Words which roared like thunder.  
 Surely this is not what the preacher meant when he said: let no man put asunder...  
 Divorce- both remarried, again, and again. Same old song and dance, same old violent sin.  
 The cycle of Domestic Violence ends now!  
 No more faces. No more scars. Let there be peace under God's glorious stars.

## Environmental Poems

### Awaken

By an unknown author

Man wishes to equal all of God's creativity  
 In some ways we are fine  
 When mankind is inclined  
 But then with overwhelming sadness  
 It rains down like thunderstorms of madness  
 Sweeping us into anger and grief  
 We feel despair without relief  
 Look at what we have done  
 What we have created, what we have become  
 Look at all the years of destruction  
 The acid rain and chemical production  
 We build nuclear weapons out of hand  
 When drugs run rapid across our land  
 We have smog alerts and greenhouse gasses

Will life on our planet slowly fade  
 Our natural resources the price we paid  
 We need to slow down and realize  
 To awaken and open our eyes  
 We are destroying our home  
 Now our future is unknown  
 Will we leave a toxic legacy?  
 To our children's destiny  
 We need to slow down and realize  
 To awaken and open our eyes

### FINGERPRINTS

By James Washington III

Broke within, falls lonely leaf  
 Lonesome life can see no one  
 Hear these silent leaves  
 Disconnect of family trees

With each pluck seasonal  
 Wing gust create the need  
 That leaves the ground relieved  
 Trapped the system-eco pleased

Rage voiced pleasantly begs and pleas  
 Face the rake who bag its deeds  
 Knots and ties or locks and keys  
 Fallings are rigged traces it L

E  
 A  
 V  
 E  
 S

### Wash, Rinse, Repeat, Wash,

Rinse, Repeat...

By Michael Griffis

I've mentioned again and again  
 How often and to where and when  
 Now I see coming  
 Disaster so numbing

It's tough putting paper to pen  
 It's ungodly fires and drought  
 Bout after bout after bout  
 The fires so grand

Once forest now sand  
 Removing if any that doubt

Where isn't a drought is a flood  
 The water too teaming with crud  
 It's raining, it's pouring  
 Arizona a mooring  
 And Utah is sticky with mud

Watch as the oceans keep rising  
 No longer a guess or surmising  
 Now you can surf  
 Where Denver once turf  
 Or so said the guy was advising

Where isn't a flood epic snowing  
 They're sledding where once they were rowing  
 That Ivy league school  
 New meaning to cool  
 And Three Mile Island still glowing

And once again taking our lumps  
 With Chicken pox, measles, and mumps

I see in the Hague  
 A brand-new type plague  
 Boils and cysts on our rumps...

Our medicines no longer killing  
 Germs once were able and willing  
 Where once were competing  
 The winner flesh eating  
 To say getting better at illing

No matter the scrubbing or cleaning  
 Bacteria stubborn, demeaning  
 Rub-a-dub-dub  
 That's staph in your tub  
 There isn't no time to be leaning

With every new drug new disease  
 On ticks and mosquitos and fleas  
 Now when you tan  
 You need DEET and fan  
 Ebola is carried on breeze

Healthcare will be in the sewer  
 The healthy will be even fewer  
 Doctors and nurses  
 Cast hexes and curses



An old-fashioned poultice for cure

Seemingly now after checking  
It's not just the future we're  
wrecking  
It's here and it's now  
It's Lyme and Mad Cow  
It's too many folks what the  
hecking!

## Family

### My Dad

By William James Jonas III

Larger than life, is a cliché  
Always for me, that's you each day  
Others were coach, you're my  
biggest fan  
Loving support, the model man  
Loss of control, you did not teach  
I picked that up, beyond your reach  
But you were there, stood in the  
breach  
Helped me heal up, and never  
preached  
Endured the drama, that has been  
my

Path

A safe place to cry, the best place  
to

Laugh

Tested, pestered, disappointed let  
Down

Without showing anger you still  
stuck

Around

To listen be helpful and providing a  
Plan

While showing the meaning of  
father

And man

One thing is quite certain, I don't  
meet your Best  
You gave me the goodness and  
forgave the rest

### My Mother's Eyes By Bernard Wroblewski (Shadow)

As my soul crumbles and emits its  
mournful cries  
My heart finds peace in the  
memories of my mother's eyes,  
In her eyes there was no limit to the  
love I always found.  
Pools of affection with enough to  
always go around.  
In those eyes I've seen joy,  
happiness, and cheer.  
But I also saw sadness,  
disappointment, and fear.

Through the world was full of  
smokescreens, fables, and lies,  
I could always find the truth of life in  
my mother's eyes.  
At times I would fail and find  
understanding there,  
That told me no matter my follies,  
she'd still care.  
When I was tempted to give in and  
meet my demise.  
I found the encouragement to fight  
in my mother's eyes.

When my tears fell unchecked in  
my times of emotional pain  
Just one look in her eyes was  
enough to stop the rain.  
She always gave me the comfort  
my heart would need  
So I could find the willpower to  
proceed.  
A woman of constant intrigue and  
surprise  
There were wonderful mysteries in  
my mother's eyes.

At times I was acorned, abandoned  
and extremely hated,  
Left alone to endure the misery to  
which I was fated.  
I was beaten, broken, and  
unmercifully abused

People's actions and words leaving  
me scared and confused.  
I walked the world alone from  
sunset to sunrise  
But I find a place of belonging in my  
mother's eyes.

### The Firstborn By Julia Tomlinson

He arrives with a lusty cry  
Already the apple of his parents'  
eye  
Cheeks so plump, waving fists

Rosebud mouth and hair just wisps.  
Tomorrow the babe will disappear,  
Replaced by a toddler with curling  
hair;  
Then off to school, playing ball,  
Slamming doors and breaking  
hearts  
As he seemingly breaks all else in  
his path  
To his folks' dismay and often their  
wrath.  
Baseball, cars and then one day-  
girls.  
Onward, ever onward he whirls  
Until one day-- She appears  
Awakening their deepest fears  
For the Boy is suddenly whisked  
away  
"I do" in a voice so strong and deep  
That yesterday was so light and  
sweet  
To the girl beside him and they  
suddenly face  
The fact that their boy has been  
replaced  
By this Man, that he has somehow  
grown  
Now with wife, family, his own  
home  
And they are to be left behind  
With only memories of a happier  
time  
When he filled their lives, their  
hearts, their home.  
But that is over, and he is gone.



**THE FAMILY**  
**By Chris Williams**

As a young couple spoke  
Of their new adopted son.  
As they talked of things they'd do  
In all the days to come.  
I could feel all their joy  
Through the expressions on their  
face  
And I thought of all the ups and  
downs  
That'd soon be taking place,  
I listened to their laughter,  
I heard the excitement in their  
voice.  
I knew deep inside  
This all started with a choice.  
Everyday we all make choices  
And with each one there's a price.  
In everything we do or say,  
There's always a sacrifice.  
This reminds me of my Father  
The greatest man to ever live.  
It makes me think of the sacrifices,  
That he too had to give.  
See, my father also made a choice,  
A long long time ago.  
But, then he made a showing,  
Of how far his love will go.  
Back then my owner was evil,  
He brought physical and mental  
pain.  
He swore no one would ever want  
me

And told me he was my only gain.  
I used to sit and think of  
different ways to try to escape.  
But, everything I tried failed,  
So I accepted that as fate.  
Every night I'd bow my head,  
I'd pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
Then I'd curl up on the floor  
And cry myself to sleep.  
So, I never will forget  
The day my Father came.  
He said, "I choose him,"  
Then he called me by my name.  
The owner said, "now wait,  
I'm not sure I'll let him go.  
But, if you "really" want him,  
The price will not be low.  
My father said, "I LOVE HIM"  
I know I want that one.  
The owner said, "Okay"  
The cost, your only son.

But, before you make your choice,  
Let me tell you what I'm gonna do.  
Let me explain the pain and  
suffering,  
Your only son will go through  
He'll be beat and abused,  
He'll be tormented with hell  
He'll be spit on and flogged  
And to a Cross he'll be nailed.  
He's gonna be crucified with  
thieves,  
On that Cross he will DIE.  
That's the cost of this one's soul,  
Som do you still want to buy?  
My father softly said,  
"Yes, I'll pay his sinful price"  
"I'll send my son Jesus,  
As a living sacrifice."  
But Satan, just so you know,  
His death will by no means be the  
end.  
For the third day after his burial,  
I'll raise JESUS again!!  
My father's promise to this world is  
If you will just believe.  
He'll wait with arms wide open,  
Welcoming you to the family...  
*Brandon Rushing*



**Freedom and Loneliness**

**Freedom and Pain**  
**By Gary Farlow**

I stand in the vastness  
The sea in front and sand behind,  
A seagull soars and a crab tries to  
hide,  
I feel small surrounded by such  
grandeur.  
My spirit flies with seagulls  
And know freedom with no limit;  
My heart hides with the crab  
As it creeps to the edge and can go  
no further,  
It disappears in the small cramped  
space for one,  
Just as I can go no further than  
wire mesh  
And retreat into my own shell, a  
cell,  
Where darkness surrounds, fear  
paralyzes  
And pain reigns.

**Not Alone**  
**By Jevon Jackson**

Loneliness



Is not a big empty house  
It could be a hundred people  
Crowded all around you  
Cloned in the chicanery  
Of wax, plastic smiles;

#### Loneliness

Is not a thousand miles from here  
Over and yonder and through  
The woods  
It could be  
A week of silence  
With the wide and thriving  
Sun;

#### Loneliness

She could be  
Solitude's most cherished daughter  
Who's come to collect her kisses,  
The love you give  
When there is nothing left  
To confound you

#### Lonely Adventurer

By Matthew Morton

Only a human and my limit break's  
out  
My XP bar's short, here enters  
doubt  
The inventory's dry and gold is low  
Map unavailable with nowhere to  
go

In Clan or party, I wasn't interested  
Why split the treasure, I've never  
been bested  
Most evil I face despises my  
essence  
Common creatures flee from my  
presence

These beasts however, aren't  
normal at all  
Outweigh me thrice and two times  
as tall  
Horns like my axe, claws just as  
keen  
Eyes shining red and teeth glowing  
green

If only I had the presence of mind  
To not leave all my resources  
behind  
Money in the bank does me no  
good  
I'm all alone and I'll die in this  
wood

The monsters that swarm press  
their advance  
Even attempted escape has zero  
chance  
Two potions left, no reason to use  
The next traveler may need the  
refuge

Better for them, t'would help them  
flee  
Now there is only one choice for  
me  
I growl in protests and enter a rage  
I discharge some magic, two levels  
in mage

As they close in I notice their worry  
The destruction I deal, no need to  
hurry  
However, I notice they're running  
away  
Not from me, something else in the  
fray

I see one monster take off in the air  
It speaks in its tongue, 'this isn't  
fair'  
A bright light follows and it burst  
afame  
The others start shouting, 'I hate  
this game!'

The rest try to flee in many  
directions  
The stranger and I make clear our  
intentions  
I give her a potion before she could  
fall  
We level up twice, killing them all

She thanks me and smiles, so  
casual and sweet

I feel warmth go from my head to  
my feet  
Never before have I traveled with  
friends  
Now, here's to hoping that it never  
ends



#### A Lonely Bird By Richard Atkins, Jr.

Tell me why I'm alone, in this cage  
My owners are somewhere not  
realizing my fate  
My tiny brain I try to use to escape  
This nightmare, my reality or just  
my pain  
Purchased with joy and much love  
Like merchandise am I to think of  
Tears are small, they can't be seen  
My screams are small, what does  
this mean  
I'll behave, please open the door  
If I fly away I may be shot to the  
floor  
Our time on earth has a meaning  
Someone shared a little secret  
So I'll keep singing  
I wonder if they'll like this tune?  
It's one I made up just this  
afternoon  
God help me, I want my freedom  
Once heard someone say; what if  
we eat'em?  
Almost lost my nerves  
My feet on a limb, at the edge of  
the curb  
It's been a short while  
Since I left my cage into the clouds  
Have to watch for predators, not  
only my words  
Who, who are you talking to?  
Oh just this Lonely Bird...



**Black Hole of My Mind**  
**By Patrick J. Pantusco**

Between Heaven and Hell, are the  
realms of my mind.  
Labyrinths to a world, which is one  
of a kind.

Acres of darkness, an all-  
consuming black sea,  
Clocks ticking backward, n' my only  
friend is me.  
Knowing it's not real, doesn't help  
me to cope,

Hanging on for life, to a barbed-  
wire rope.  
Only those who have journeyed,  
down a similar path,  
Legitimately understand, all of this  
pain that I have.  
Emptiness swallows me, and I feel  
all alone,

Overwhelmed and neurotic, in this  
twilight zone.  
Familiar voices speak volumes,  
which only I hear,

Mercilessly taunting, until I cower in  
fear.  
Yearning to feel normal, but as you  
can see,

Merely being normal, was never an  
option for me.  
I'm sick of the sadness, but I'm  
used to the pain,  
Nay destined to live strapped, to  
this runaway train.  
Do you now see, in me what you'll  
find?

I'm a prisoner confined, in  
the BLACK HOLE OF MY MIND.

**Hope**

**Morning**  
**Julia Tomlinson**

Shades of gray, pink and blue,

Sparkles of flashing from drops of  
dew,  
Air so sweet, pure and crisp,  
Wispy tendrils of pearly mist.  
These are the sights of early morn  
And I, like the day, feel reborn.

**The Weight of Hope & Promise**  
**Johny E. Manhaffey**

You are holding back four walls  
With all that you've got. They are  
close,  
And pressing ever so intently  
against you,  
And your every effort. Your legs  
and arms  
have long grown tired, and you are  
so terribly  
Sleepy. It feels as if you will never  
win,  
Against the days and the years  
That press upon you.

But, suddenly,  
The unexpected surprise: someone  
arrives!  
You are not alone in the dark  
enclosing room,  
And there is light, for the first time  
In years, as they kneel beside you  
to help  
Fight against the push and the  
turmoil  
Upon your soul. They pinky  
promise, and odd,  
Childlike things to do; but, it's there.  
Their dibs placed upon you. You  
rest  
Your tired limbs each day, as you  
both inch  
Closer to the door, together: you  
will be outside  
Arm in arm, hand in hand, when  
that day comes.

Then, suddenly,  
The expected show drops, only six  
days in:  
A buzzing just outside the door,

A phone set aside, gets their  
attention, and they go,  
A phone set aside, gets their  
attention, and they go,  
Run through the threshold out of  
sight.  
The walls press in, and you are  
unprepared, your hope  
Was up! You call, and you call, but  
there is no one  
There. It gets to your birthday, and  
you try  
To remember the time before, the  
dibs upon you.

You are holding back four walls  
That press ever presently, and it  
goes on  
For days, weeks, months, and  
years.  
Stuck so near the door, where you  
can smell  
And taste the air they share, sense  
the stars they see: and you right  
with all that you have  
With your every effort. Your legs  
and arms  
Long grown numb to the lonely  
plight you endure.

**Persevere**  
**Derrick Bartulio**

What gives us the strength to  
endure  
Is hope enough or can we be sure  
We don't have to be certain where  
the waves of life will take us  
Jesus died on that cross so God  
will forsake us.

Many live lives full of  
disappointment, suffering, and  
death and all we get is hope  
True, but with the faith that we can  
find love, that's our Christian shot  
of dope  
Love is God and we should be  
convinced our father never fails



Like that time in the storm, Jesus  
said have faith and set sail

Don't be a hearer that forgets or a  
doer who never acts  
Just pick up the bible and take a hit  
of that spiritual crack  
We need to feign for the Lord and  
inhale the holy spirit  
Then pick up a trumpet and blare  
the good news so that the whole  
world hear it.

As a degenerate gambler, I'm  
programmed to calculate the odds  
God made in in his image so we  
must love and forgive like we are all  
Gods  
1st Corinthians instructs us to be  
steadfast, immovable and  
abounding in the Lord  
Let me tell you a secret, we don't  
need armor or an army, all we need  
is a bible, God's sword,

Our fleshly lives are short and  
carnal death is near  
God promises he who endures will  
be saved, so always persevere

## Identity

### I AM... FROM

I Am From tree lined streets, full of  
big brick houses home  
To lots of big families. I am from  
open windows and unlocked  
Doors. Bicycles left outside all  
night. Friends and neighbors  
who treat each other right. I am  
from dream big work hard  
good family values. Good manners  
and grammar. I am from ugly  
diverse, rapidly changing times!  
Home invasions, guns, drugs,  
homicides. I am from loss of civility,  
and mass moral decay.

6 am from unkept yards, shattered  
windows, shattered dreams  
Broken homes and broken lives. I  
am from hope pushed further  
away with each passing day. I am  
from increasingly violent  
crimes and toxic water lines... I AM  
from Welch Blvd. I AM...  
From.... Flint....

### Untitled #68 By Jack E. Dyson

Lovelorn, in this jungle of  
steel and concrete,  
Forlorn, melancholy is what  
I excrete,  
Unborn, the ideas that I  
keep,  
Hidden from view, askew,  
Brushed under the rug, that  
carpets pews,  
Sitting there looking smug,  
we are two in one,  
Songs never sung, exiled,  
far flung  
One mentally, one  
physically, both restrained,  
Contained, and disdained,  
for being who we are,  
So close but yet so far

## Inspiring Poems

### I do not believe by Derrick Lynn

i do not believe in dying  
from green to red to yellow  
to brown to black  
beneath footsteps that  
have forgotten every memory of  
you.  
i do not believe in drowning  
submerged in baptismal  
pools of pain  
gagging on wormwood  
words, clawing for the vanishing  
light.  
i do not believe in dissolving

from hate to fear to misery  
to surrender to regret  
into dry-ice statues of hope  
blown by the breeze.  
i believe in dominating  
conquering life with  
objective moonlike sway  
so that storming sea tides  
still heed my every beckon.  
i do not believe in dying  
because perched on my  
soul's windowsills  
rest tears the color of  
forever  
chanting hurt to hurt  
"All that withers isn't old."

## Loss

### The Darkest Night By Devin O' Keefe

My phone rings,  
I yawn, stretch and  
Check the caller ID  
To my delight, it's Dana from work  
Hair of the blackest night  
Lips of the deepest crimson,  
Just like wet blood

I answer with a cheerful hello  
"Wanna see a movie?" she asks in  
a  
Silky tone  
An activity that changes me forever  
I take charge like napoleon,  
It becomes my waterloo  
With the movie my choice,  
I drive my rusty blue Chevy,  
That rattles and bellows  
Black smoke from the exhaust  
I see her standing there,  
Hair pulled behind delicate ears  
Her face reflecting the soft  
moonlight  
A smile brighter than the stars

The drive is smooth, like a polished  
Stone



I ask for two tickets to, the Dark  
Knight  
If only I turned back,



*Nate A. Lindell*

Used a different strategy  
Waterloo, tied around me  
Like a hangman's noose

I pull out my snakeskin wallet  
Pay for two cokes,  
Two greasy popcorn  
And a box of skittles  
I choose our seats  
The movie begins  
The terror descends

Shots ring,  
Shrill screams all around me  
I turn around and  
See him there,  
Like a black knight

Coming to steal the light  
I go to push Dana down  
But the bullet is faster  
Time slows, blood flows

I hold her right  
There in the aisle  
Chaos all around  
But all I see  
Is the light  
Leave her soft blue eyes  
The darkest night,  
Of my life

I lost more than  
The battle of Waterloo  
Haunted by screams in my head  
My phone rings  
I just wait for,  
The ringing to stop

## Love

### The Girl from South Spokane By Jevon Jackson

She only loves me when she's  
lonely,  
The girl from south Spokane.  
When the echoes of her house are  
empty  
She climbs into my prison  
With bubblegum pink polish on her  
toes,  
Berry blossoms for lips smacked  
together  
Like the inside of a warm, sweet,  
cherry pie,  
And the smoothest length of legs  
Living eyes will ever see in eighty  
degree heat,  
"I want to get your name, right  
here--" she said,  
Two fingers pressed against the  
hillsides of her bosom  
Three weeks after the disaster with  
boyfriend number three;

She only loves me when she's  
lonely,  
When pain has elected to use all its  
weapons

against her heart, her mind, her  
glow,  
She writes me six-pages deep  
About how boyfriend number four is  
a great big snore,  
And I listen to awaken the Light  
inside her, shine,  
Even after she disappears for  
stretches of time  
Unaccounted for, by Faith and  
Reason;

She only loves me when she's  
lonely,  
When her husband number one  
succumbs to lust that unwinds  
The soft, silky ribbons of her soul,  
She asks me, with a tone full of  
towering sorrows,  
"When are you coming home?"  
I carefully collect her every tattered  
ribbon from the dark  
And, gentle, revive them all into  
wide bright bows,  
"In a hundred years," I answer, "I'll  
be there  
In a hundred years, my dear."

Slowly, she survives  
Beyond boyfriend number five,  
She is blessed to find another  
To sow her fields, grow Happiness,  
And in this distance, we are distant,  
(same ol' song, jazzy blues)

She only loves me when she's  
lonely  
Yet, I  
Practice for her love at every chord,  
Every beat

### Real Love By Jeremy Geniuk

Every day I wonder  
And I plead with the one above,  
To allow me one more chance,  
With the one I dearly love.  
Your smile is like a rainbow;  
It's filled with warmth and glee;  
That laugh of you makes me  
wonder,



If I won the lottery!  
 I never will forget that day  
 When I first saw your face,  
 My heart stopped, skipped a beat,  
 And then began to race!  
 I'd never known true happiness  
 Before I was with you.  
 Without you here, by my side,  
 I'm not sure what to do!  
 This time apart has been,  
 Just like an evil witches spell.  
 I've been depressed, angry, and  
 sad;  
 I've hurt and hurt like hell.  
 No matter what the future brings,  
 I hope it includes you a LOT!!!  
 Not having you in my life is  
 comparable,  
 To a story without a plot!  
 I hope one day to show you,  
 Just how much you mean to me;  
 To give you more love and  
 happiness,  
 Than you thought you'd ever see!  
 As I end this poem, I wish for you to  
 know,  
 My heart is yours, if you'll allow,  
 And together, we will grow!  
 Hard times will come and it won't  
 be easy;  
 I won't even try to life;  
 Just know with certainty you're in  
 my heart.  
 And for you, I'd gladly die!  
 Until the time comes about,  
 When fate will seal the deal,  
 Know, without a single doubt,  
 My love for you is real!



*Edward Rodriguez*

### **Diamonds, Horses, And Grass** **Bob. H. Cook**

If you find yourself losing the joy in  
 your life  
 And your blessing is more like a  
 curse  
 And you wonder what's wrong with  
 that sweet little girl  
 That you've taken for better or  
 worse,

You look at her now and hear  
 yourself say,  
 "All she does is gripe and  
 complain."  
 But maybe if you took a look at  
 yourself,  
 You would find what exactly has  
 changed.

Now, you didn't used to call on that  
 girl  
 With chicken hanging out of your  
 teeth,  
 Your pants undone and your hair  
 not combed  
 With whiskers you've had for a  
 week.

You'd take three baths and put on  
 cologne,  
 Shine your shoes and wax your  
 car.  
 Then, you'd stand at a mirror and  
 work on your hair  
 Till you looked like a Hollywood  
 star.

You'd take three baths and put on  
 cologne,  
 Shine your shoes and wax your  
 car.  
 Then, you'd stand at a mirror and  
 work on your hair  
 Till you looked like a Hollywood  
 star.

You'd buy her candy and flowers  
 and gifts

And ask her what she'd like to do.  
 Now, you drop in a chair and turn  
 on the game  
 While she brings your supper to  
 you.

You'd brag on her cooking'; you'd  
 brag on her looks,  
 And she did the same in return.  
 Now, the only time you even notice  
 at all  
 Is if she happens to let somethin'  
 burn.

If the other man's grass is greener  
 than yours,  
 It's because it's been tended and  
 mowed.  
 A good horse'll die if she never gets  
 fed.  
 She wasn't just meant to be rode.

So, bring her some candy; write her  
 a poem.  
 Treat her like she's still your bride.  
 And that old lump of coal you  
 thought was burned out  
 Might still be a diamond inside.

Ask God to help you to care for her  
 needs,  
 And make her the queen of your  
 world.  
 And when you fall for her...just like  
 you did before,  
 You'll know why you married that  
 girl.

### **A Light in My Life** **By Matthew Morton**

The darkness entices as I go  
 insane  
 I try to fight the demons in vain  
 The strength of an army, inside my  
 mind  
 The control to use it, I never could  
 find  
 A rush in my blood, a feeling so  
 pure



There's no way in hell I'd ask for a cure

A battle I never wanted to choose  
More often than not, I purposely lose  
To give in to darkness as it purrs my name  
Other's opinions won't put me to shame  
And no worry or care for anything at all  
Normally I'm weak but, with it I'm tall

I see a light in the distance, my power's deflating  
It wants to help me? That sounds so degrading  
I don't need your help, I'm perfectly fine  
Content drowning in my river of brine  
I realize, I made it myself; from tears  
And tugging me below are the depths of my fears

Never before would I shout out a plea  
Loneliness was perfectly fine for me  
Then one day you appeared in the night  
Now I see why people come to the light  
A radiant flash and the darkness was flayed  
You came to me and vanquished the shade

I never knew that before, I was certainly lost  
Now to stay from that course, I'd pay any cost  
To have you, my light, in my presence abide  
Forever, my angel will stand at my side  
I'd give you my heart with my bare hands

And to darkness I'd never give its demands

Think of it a check you may never cash  
A possible ride I would never let crash  
A course in this life that could come to be  
If you so choose, when finally I'm free  
I promise you babe, I'm up to the task  
My biggest fear is that never I ask  
And that I could've had you, forever in life  
As my daydreams tease me, my beautiful wife

**My Photograph**  
**By Don Hughes**

I have a photograph  
And its image is of you.  
No one may duplicate.  
My picture-perfect view.

My camera is a special one,  
Though many are the same.  
Mine only pictures you,  
In every snapshot frame.

Each shot of you I take  
The negative turns our fine.  
The film roll's never ending,  
I rewind it all the time.

My photo lasts forever  
A

---- maybe

**Love Is Like A Perfect Rose**  
**By Julia Tomlinson**

Love is like a perfect rose  
Whose gentle scent beguiles the nose,  
Whose petals open graceful and prim

Revealing wonders buried within  
But underneath this Beauty rare  
Lurk thorns to pierce deep those who dare  
Approach too close and grasp too tight  
Seeking to take this Beauty with Might.  
But take away the piercing thorn  
And once again behold the form  
Of Beauty rare and Joy to share  
With tender loving care.

For love is like the perfect rose  
That languishes in sweet repose  
Returning your care again and again  
Or giving back pain for pain

**A Basic Fundamental of Love**  
**By Bob H. Cook**  
**(For Mary)**

The teardrops in her eyes  
Should come as no surprise  
When you tell her just how much she means to you.  
For ladies seldom hide  
The way they feel inside  
It's something they were just not made to do.  
Each simple, little token  
Or word that's sweetly spoken  
Will cause her heart to flutter like a dove.

And if you get sentimental,

It's not coincidental  
It's a basic fundamental of love.

A starry night in June  
And a big, old yellow moon  
Are Little things that money cannot buy.  
And on a night like this  
If you should steal a kiss  
Don't be surprised if she should start to cry.  
For hearts will find a way  
That words could never say



To let her know the things you're  
dreaming of.

And things so sweet and  
gentle

Will seem so  
transcendental

It's a basic fundamental of  
love.

(Bridge)

A heart is not a heart until  
it's broken

A man is incomplete  
without a wide.

Never let your feelings go  
unspoken.

For these will be the best  
days of your life.

Here's hoping that today

Will never go away

And love will last until the end of  
time.

But if today should end

And never come again

It's memory will never leave your  
mind.

And though you drift apart

That one who owns your heart

Will always be the one you're  
thinking of.

What seems so incidental

Can be so monumental

It's a basic fundamental of  
love.



*Edward Rodriguez*

### **Blank Canvass**

**By Michael L. Thomas**

The chips are down, the lights are  
dim

Does my heart stop beating? Is this  
the end?

The future is wide open, its  
canvass is blank,

How can I paint it with a mind so  
clouded

That I can no think.

The chips are down, even my  
patience are thin,

Do I roll the dice of the roulette  
wheel I spin.

Time after time I ask myself again,  
If it is true love, we'd be together  
thru thick and thin.

So I paint this canvass beginning  
as if I'm blind,

Trying to create a lovely picture of  
memories

From that lethal weapon, my mind.

Hoping and praying sugar coated  
canvass mountains,

And rose petaled stairs will take me  
to places

Heavenly, and you my Mona Lisa  
will always be there.

### **A Simple Fantasy**

I can't wait for the day  
I'm finally free

When in person your  
face at last I'll see

And we can walk  
beneath the stars in the  
sky

Even dance together in  
the full moon light

Until the time these  
wishes come true

Dreams, pictures, and

letters will have to do

As will fantasies in which we're  
laughing out loud

Watching a movie while plopped  
down on the couch

I use my imagination to pass the  
day

And climb with you aboard a train  
I hold you close as we pass the  
hours

Watching scenery of cities and  
fields of sunflowers

We often have conversations that  
are deep

Or sometimes choose to watch and  
not speak

These visions always have a  
feeling of home

When we're just holding each other  
and aren't so alone

With a blinding flash and audible  
pop

Reality brings fantasy to a sudden  
pop

But someday from prison I'll be way  
Gone

Then I'll help build a snowman on  
your lawn



## I See You

By Edward Cotton

Like the sun                    *you are*  
Shine so bright,                *you do*  
Like the wind,                 *your blow*  
Full of exhilaration,           *you are*  
Look into my heart,           *you can*  
Speak beautiful words,       *you*  
                                     *should*  
Make me smile,                *you can*  
Keep laughing,                *you should*  
Make me think,                *always*  
Think about you,              *constantly*  
Miss you so much,              *seriously*  
Seems like a year,              *everyday*  
Seeing you mature,            *memories*  
Each poem you write,         *touching*  
Such beautiful words,         *unbelievable*  
Trapped in this life            *you*  
                                     Your smile  
                                     Your thoughts  
                                     Your laughter  
                                     I see you  
                                     I really do

## Ocean Shores and Boulevards

By Matthew Morton

Taking a stroll, gulls screech up  
high  
Pay meter tolls as time passes by  
Clock always ticks, by no means  
aware  
Sand beneath toes, weather's quite  
fair  
Traffic lights passed, in shoes we  
tread  
Water on shore, bare feet instead  
Seldom, fish jump, infrequent  
splash  
A few blocks away, screaming cars  
crash  
Your hand rests in mine, our  
sandals behind  
Crosswalks we march, our fingers  
entwined  
Shrilly we speak over the noise of  
the crowd  
But we whisper with waves, no  
need to be loud

Through many different places we'll  
traverse  
Some may be tolerable, with others  
far worse  
With your hand in mine, you by my  
side  
And between ourselves we could  
always confide  
On the quietest beaches, or busiest  
streets  
Oh, the things we'll accomplish,  
improbable feats  
All doubt is defeated, all worries are  
banned  
By the might your grant me by  
holding my hand  
The beauty will stay, even after  
hard pains  
Like ugly graffiti on straight  
boulevard lanes  
For all of your love I'll give  
unending devotion  
Like the promise of waves that  
come from the ocean

## Burns

By J. David Brackett

Only by the beating of my heart do I  
know that I'm alive.  
On the other side of the looking  
glass is a world I long to feel.  
Down the river of Teardrops how I  
close my eyes so not to see.  
  
If she were to awake and find me  
there, who would my lady see?  
Would flowers bloom, would  
songbirds sing, would the world  
come suddenly back alive?  
Or has distance, time and darkness  
numbed that love we used to feel?  
  
Can a flame forget, where deeply  
burns, its birth by embers' feel?  
Unlike a fire's relentless scourge,  
quickly we lose sight of what we do  
not see.  
And only by the flames' reflection  
do I know that I'm alive.

It burns to see, it burns to feel, it  
burns to be alive.

## Distractions

By Benjamin Harrison

To begin most days in prison I'd  
just actually decide,  
To minimize all of my socialization.  
But there's no field guide, for  
dealing with a blindside  
Insult which may result in  
altercation.

Opportunists exploiting one-  
upmanship; braggarts on an ego  
trip,  
Proceed endlessly with  
exaggerations.  
There's an intended guilt trip, by  
some bitches who gossip;  
An attempt at character  
assassination.

Con artists with bad breath, that  
could cause an early death  
Have an agenda of  
misrepresentation  
For them it's life or death, to smoke  
crack or maybe meth,  
And they'll only settle for  
intoxication.

They believe they're shrewd, but  
their game is too crude,  
And this fact needs little  
vocalization.  
I'm not always in the mood, to deal  
with childish attitudes,

So I just cope by taking medication.

Welcome to the machine. You'll  
spend some money on canteen,  
And this amplifies my aggravation.  
I don't make it my routine, to eat all  
the prison cuisine.  
This may be risking hospitalization.

Here I must confess; I sometimes  
mentally undress



This actress on the television  
station  
I'm not one to obsess, but there's  
an element of stress;  
My release nears and there's  
anticipation

Many years I've spent, throughout  
this long imprisonment  
As the target of an investigation.  
The charges they can invent; For  
them I have no comment;  
These are all just false accusations.

It's unhealthy to depend, on mail  
from family and friends,  
Yet this has caused me much  
frustration  
I'll find a new girlfriend and the  
relationships I can mend;  
I've stuck this out through its  
duration

Much older I've now grown, in a  
world of brick and stone  
And I've now come to a realization  
My actions cannot be condoned,  
but the fault is not mine alone.  
Mine was an unjust vilification

### **Corruption and Tears**

**By Zion L. Thomas**

For every man that dies  
A son shall rise  
For every truth be told  
It'll be met with lies  
For each woman AIDS touches  
A generation shall cry  
For every politician who smiles  
It's just a disguise  
For every drug indulged  
You'll be lost on a high  
For every appeal put forth  
A judge will deny  
Sometimes I wonder  
Why even try  
Tears flow from my eyes  
Till my soul goes dry  
Wondering if I...  
Wondering when I

Will be free from life's burdens  
And enter the sky

### **"I Imagine:** **By Scott Solovic**

I imagine a world where war is not  
an

Option. I imagine a world where  
racism and sexism no longer exist.  
I imagine a world where politicians  
serve the well of the people. I  
imagine a world where democracy  
is the only form of government. I  
imagine a world where it's okay to  
have nuclear energy without  
nuclear weapons. I imagine a world  
where freedom and liberty are not  
just ideals but a way of life...

I imagine a world where knowledge  
and higher education are the  
inheritance of all people. I imagine  
a world where who I choose to be  
with is none of your business. I  
imagine a world where religion is  
practiced more and preached less.  
I imagine a world where children  
can grow up without fear of  
judgement because they're  
different. I imagine a world where  
we no longer allow juveniles to  
grow old and die in prison...

I imagine a world without poverty,  
violence, drug addiction, child  
abuse, prostitution, 3rd class  
citizenship, borders, prisons,  
oppression, and hypocrisy. A world  
where the institution of marriage is  
the property of all human beings, a  
world where what I am doesn't  
define who I am...

Question: Can you imagine what "I  
imagine"?

### **Emotion** **By Nathan J Boles**

Emotional waves to wash away my  
complacency  
Keeps me entertained most days  
On others it drives me closer to the  
edge of insanity

Those budding flowers of hate,  
anger, and jealousy...  
Love, compassion, and mercy  
sprout from my branches  
Some bloom, some I pluck before  
their poison devastates my roots  
Some I choose to feed; others I  
starve

Some I barely recognize  
"Oh shit, did that really come out of  
me?"

Looking from the outside in  
Is sometimes terrifying  
Emotions can be all-consuming  
They can also be the lifeboat that  
saves us  
Keeping our souls from drowning  
amongst oceans of uncertainty  
Hopefully love throws me a  
lifesaver

## **Poetry for blogs**

**Prey**  
**By MarQui Clardy, Sr.**

It's crazy the things we perceive as  
important  
... chasing a dollar, we lose a  
fortune  
Follow the American Dream is what  
we're taught, then  
We set out on our paths, but we  
take different courses  
...some lead to misery  
Others lead to wealth and  
prosperity  
The poor man sell his soul for a  
dollar  
While the rich complain, "More  
money, more problems"  
Insensitive culprits...  
The tongue weighs nothing, yet so  
few people can hold it  
You're never satisfied until you



can only see that blessing in the  
 past, in your rearview  
 Case in point, I'm waiting to break  
 in hip-hop 'spent the last couple  
 years casing the joint  
 Got a perfect strategy to go and  
 make some noise  
 But this barbed-wire fence  
 separates my voice  
 I'm like the tree that fell in the  
 forest, nobody's near me  
 What good are these words if  
 nobody can hear me?  
 ...I refuse to honor that fate  
 Forget "gate break," I need to break  
 out of this gate!  
 Shhh... that's between us  
 What I call planning my future, they  
 consider plotting an escape  
 Can't afford to cop another case  
 Failure's at my doorstep, I will not  
 become your... prey.

## Prison Poems



*Steve Feagan*

### Not A Dream By CL Nobles

Modern Day slavery, there is no  
 more reform.

I thought this system was built to  
 rehabilitate

A man, but yet, they plague him,  
 degrade him,

Strike him down by they right hand.

Then it

Became a custom and furthermore  
 customary. Man!

They playing the game so  
 unsanitary.

Discrimination of colors,  
 discrimination of wealth

A lot of great minds died to put that  
 bit on the shelf,

Then they asked, where do I  
 stand? I aid

the discrepancy, punch lines of  
 words, literal weaponry

Razor wire, fences, cages, this is  
 insane! They

Might as well bring back the ball  
 and chain

Listen, this isn't to be taken  
 lightly, so for a second

Disregard my humor, they never  
 meant for us to be

Free, its written in the  
 constitution, this aint no rumor.

Working me without pay, and  
 they barely feed me.

All parts of the ploy, in attempts  
 to defeat me.

Feeling like they want me to  
 perish, they supply  
 No sustenance.

Courts give men life plus 30, that's  
 to death, and

Than some, what I'm gone die and  
 come back

Finish the sum?

Yeah! That nefarious by all means,  
 Reality! Not  
 A horrific dream.

### A Response To "An Inmate's Lament"

By Jonathan E. Cantero

Are you surrendered to what  
 you deem inevitable?  
 Are the dreams of even the  
 prison-man unachievable?  
 Is the living of this steel-barred  
 Life undeemable?

Then, why do you toil at the word  
 and chisel out your art?

Why do you present to the world  
 The work of a hopeless heart?

Why raise a voice yet choose to  
 Remain apart?

Why mourn what life's become?  
 If it's over, why start?

Yes, this life sucks in every way  
 Imaginable.

And yes, I'd much rather be  
 With my loved ones, undeniable.

But it is what it is because I  
 Screwed up, unchangeable.

So, I must find away to live  
 amongst the horde's dishonorable.

Am I disillusioned, a hypocrite,  
 Or blind?

Am I searching for a treasure  
 That I will never find?

Am I panning through a sea  
 Filled with "pay no never-mind"?  
 Must my daily life be an ever-grind?

My soul cannot be tarnished by the  
 Much that all-surrounds.

I am not the product of the walls  
 That have me bound.

I can prosper despite the echoes of  
 Despair that do resound.



My hope is not diminished for I  
Was lost but now I'm found.

The ink in my poems is tinged with  
Blood, sweat, and tears.  
This is how I deal with demons,  
And how I face my fears.  
I write of live, success, and change  
As a wave of darkness nears.  
I will not be calloused by the  
Specter of forsaken years.

While we must call for change  
Whenever injustice has arisen.  
Our lives are not defined by the  
Injustice we live in.

So, until we are ascended and take  
our rightful seat in heaven,  
We must choose to hold to what is  
right and never give in.

**An Inmate's Lament**  
**By Gary K. Farlow**

Life in prison is terrible  
The noise level can be unbearable  
Our sentences seem unendable  
But what we eat is indigestible

Programmers feel we're incorrigible  
And look at us like we're horrible  
The public says we're unlovable  
But as taxpayers, they're being  
gullible

The health care is deplorable  
Our grievances treated as  
ignorable  
The parole board says we're  
unreformable  
And never will be "normal-able"

The shrink think we're unreachable  
While attitudes are impeachable  
The rec equipment is unusable  
And staff think we're abusable

Policies are unbelievable

While change is inconceivable  
Shakedowns are uncontrollable  
Our pain is inconsolable

This mess is unforgivable  
Let's face it, life in prison is  
unlivable!

**Cell V Heart**  
**By Damion Jackson**

This concrete cell  
This hell that is holding me  
This bedlam within  
It twists me  
Its molded me  
Through, my heart still pounds

My conscience, its scolded me  
Its dusted me off  
It lifts me  
Emboldens me

I get stuck between  
Lands of stagnation  
Lost between worlds  
of delusion

Imagination  
Cold slaps of reality  
Drag me  
back to my station  
I live to lie dying  
In eternal  
damnation  
In this concrete room

This place that has  
shaped me  
It adds and deletes  
It morphs me  
Pervades me

My chest still throbs

The spirit it fills me  
It coerces the pain  
It sustains me  
It stills me

Purgatory wraps around me  
Like snakes

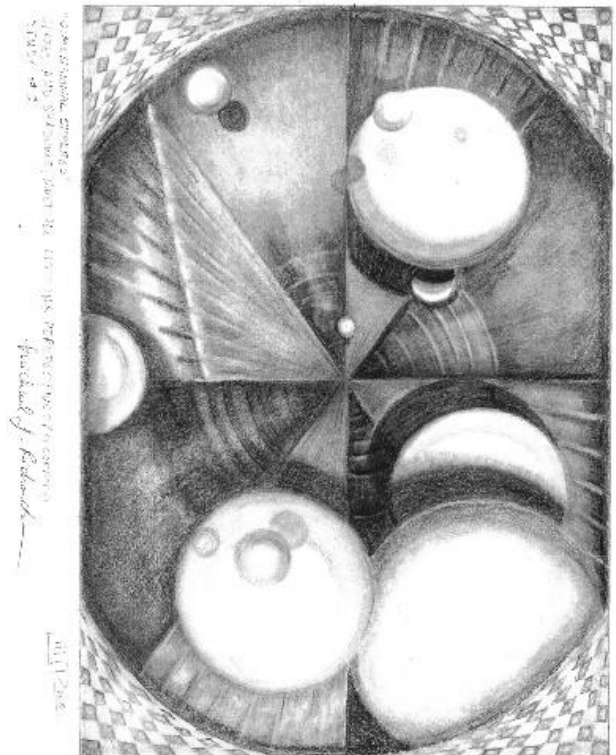
I sift through the scum  
Vermin and fakes  
Over and over I've felt  
My heart break  
Wondering how many  
Years it'll take  
To transcend this concrete box

This cube of pure darkness  
Where monsters are born  
The cold  
The heartless

I swear my soul is a gift

My life is forfeit, but my will, it  
persists  
To battle this lifeless thing  
Its pulseless  
A beast

There's no way to win  
Against the cell'  
Cause it cheats



*Michael Richardson*



**JAILBIRD**  
**By WWW**

A sparrow flew in this barn they  
call a prison dorm;  
He got locked in this  
human pen.  
Now he's a prisoner too and I  
haven't a clue  
How to get him back out to  
his kin.  
When he first came he must'a  
thought it a game.  
He's sit on the window and  
peep,  
While outside the glass, friends and  
family would pass,  
And they'd visit with many  
a tweet.  
But, they don't come anymore, and  
he can't find the door;  
Family and friends have  
flown.  
He flew the wrong way just one  
fateful day;  
Life as he knew it is gone.

At first, he'd sing ever' mornin',  
celebratin' the dawnin';  
His song brought joy to my  
life.  
But some other hard men purely  
hated the din,  
And this caused dissension  
and strife.  
Some bullies in here have made it  
real clear  
They want the lonely bird  
dead.  
But, damn! What they say, each  
passing day  
I smuggle my buddy some  
bread.  
It's been over a year that bird's  
been here,  
Circling in wary flight.  
The tough guys throw stones to  
break his small bones;  
I've barely avoided a flight.

Through quiet, lonely night I see  
him in flight  
Forty feet up by the beams  
As I lay on my back on this hard  
metal rack,  
He soars, but sadly, it  
seems.  
Under the constant lights,  
searching, circling flight,  
Driven by hope to survive,  
He yearns to escape from the fear  
and the hate,  
Through hope he continues  
to strive.  
I pray that one day we'll all find a  
way  
Back to the sun and the  
sky.  
I'll continue to feed him as others  
seek to bleed him,  
... I'll never understand  
why.

**A Conversation for the Prison**  
**Nation**  
**By William Chandler Byers-**  
**Augusta**

I'm disgusted!  
By a system that sucks,  
Whose concern is big bucks  
And is so damn corrupt!  
  
I'm disgusted!  
That men are locked away,  
While they hope and they pray,  
That their families are okay!  
  
I'm disgusted!  
That when I look around,  
The ones bringing us down,  
All us BROTHERS in brown,  
Are ourselves...

We poke and we prod,  
We joke and we nod.  
Bringing hate to situations,  
Instead of rehabilitation.  
  
We judge and point fingers saying  
"He's worse than me!"

An we stab each other up over  
nationality.

We have race wars and change  
wars,  
City wars and gang wars,  
Wars about clothes, money, and  
music.  
Wars about religion, sexuality, and  
politics.

But my BROTHERS, I ask you...  
Why are we  
fighting each other?

We are ONE common people,  
With ONE common goal:  
To get back to our Families, our  
Lives, and our souls!  
But how can any of us succeed in  
life  
When all we do is judge each other  
and fight?

Instead of working in Combination  
To correct our Situation  
Through Hard work and  
Rehabilitation,  
Perseverance and Determination,  
And uplifting Communication.  
We continue supporting a nation  
Who're enjoying nice family  
vacations  
While we sit and rot in  
condemnation  
And condemn our BOTHERS and  
OURSELVES even more...

It has to END... Are YOU Willing to  
be the Change?

**What Prisoners Are Made Of**  
**By J.E. Mahaffey**

Each refer to themselves as men-  
testosterone,  
penis, muscle, hair - what  
"defines" physicality;  
Each are grown, fully formed,  
except for the few



Brought in as boys  
 (convicted children) held here  
 Against moral. Each are men-  
 hands, feet, minds  
     unmolded- putty for the  
 system  
 Each prisoner is not made the  
 same. Each are  
     Jaded, yet erect; lost, yet,  
 fated.  
 Each are fright and fear, regret, and  
 shame.

A montage of human  
 emotions  
 Gone extreme, at the least  
 opportune moments.

The aftermath of  
 hypocritical fingers  
 On societal keys, and you may find  
 them

A bit embittered- as to be  
 expected.  
 Each broken down by the  
 molecular

Constituents,  
 corresponding to the sub=par food  
 They are forced to ingest. That less  
 of a dog.

Animal. You may find each  
 full of hate and  
 Blame- but, that is in due accord-  
 treat others

As you would never treat  
 you. The special.  
 A god/goddess image, pedestalled  
 above the

Lowly prisoner: left to find  
 out the true makings  
 Of his cellulite guarded world,  
     Fully formed against all  
 better.

### **I Am The Prison**

I am society's collector of debts,  
 and my purse is the  
 bottomless pit of time spent storing  
 the payment of  
 days totaling the months and years.

I am the abode of hope become  
 hopelessness,  
 Of a routine so deadly that the  
 mere act of  
 Living becomes weary -- a  
 numbing task

I hold within me, men who cling to  
 life  
 When hope is futile, men who  
 walk my stone-walled  
 Corridors in silent resignation-- in  
 Passive waiting.

I hold men who have been long  
 forgotten  
 By the world, callously indifferent;  
 when  
 They face no future but that of a  
 grave  
 Starkly numbered in a barren  
 cemetery.

I hold within me the flawed  
 unfeeling  
 Malformed works of an imperfect  
 civilization,  
 Men who not long ago knew the  
 peace  
 And freedom of a warm summer  
 day  
 The keenly biting freshness of a  
 cold  
 Winters nigh, and the welcoming  
 laugh  
 Of a child, men, who now only  
 know  
 Utter desolation of a life unfinished.

Yes, I am the prison and never can  
 my  
 Viciousness be truly portrayed, to  
 know it  
 It must be felt, it must be endured.

I am the faces in the visiting room  
 Their every word and action  
 reflecting the  
 harsh brooding watchfulness of  
 secreted eyes.



I am the tautly stretched face of the  
 man  
 In prison uniform remembering the  
 ghost

I am the gut searching anguish that  
 destroys  
 Those who wait daily for the visit  
 that never  
 Comes, the letter that never  
 arrives.

Always, I am cold and harsh, for I  
 am the  
 Intolerant conscience of society, at  
 times

I am vibrant with contempt for  
 those lost,  
 When the groping mass grows  
 within me by the day.

Yes, Yes, I am the prison, where in  
 the  
 Smothering confines of my steel  
 barred cage  
 That crushes those within, with the  
 weight  
 Of my inhuman reality, where the  
 endless



emptiness of the night and eternal  
loneliness  
Of the day destroys those who fall  
victim  
To society's unconscious  
judgement.

Repeat  
Repeat  
Repeat  
My message endlessly  
I am the prison

*David Corpie*

## Religion Poems

### Lose

**By Marcello Gibbs**

Losing yourself to senseless acts  
Knowing all alone the Satan will  
attack

Doing drugs to free your mind  
Losing focus on the big picture  
Because you're going blind  
Thinking you can take the pain  
away

But it still exists in your thoughts  
Willing to lose at all cost  
Went from a believer to a deceiver  
And from winning to sinning  
You suppose to have the heart of a  
chamo

Believing is achieving  
You've been spiked to believe  
In what Satan's offering  
Not realizing it's only for a moment  
God is for eternity  
If you want to win, I suggest  
You choose the right side

### The Carousel

**By Bob H. Cook**

'Round and 'round and 'round she  
goes,  
And where she stops, nobody  
knows.

The joyful sound of childhood bliss  
Enhances moments such as this.  
They ride the wind like Robin Hood  
Upon a stallion made of wood

The handsome steed strides up  
and down  
And rides the children 'round and  
'round.  
And my, but how they swiftly pass  
Like sands of time inside a glass!

Then I think, "What will the  
future hold  
When time and fate and life  
unfold?"  
Will faith and hope give away to  
fears?  
Will childhood laughter turn to  
tears?

Will they find God's  
redeeming grace  
And meet their Savior, face to  
face?  
Or will they ride the road to  
hell  
Upon the devil's carousel?

I pray that life will not suppress  
That sense of wonder they  
possess,  
Nor bow their head in sad  
despair,  
A timid fawn in Satan's  
snare.

Lord, help them  
not to fall or stray  
From off that  
straight and narrow way.  
But heaven knows  
and time will tell  
How fate will turn  
the carousel.

'Round and 'round and 'round she  
goes,  
And where she stops, God only  
knows.

### For What You Have Traded Your

#### Birthright

**By Bob. H. Cook**

Only a small mess of pottage,

Only a morsel of bread,  
And Esau traded his birthright  
That his flesh and his hunger be  
fed.

But before you should judge him  
too harshly  
And his failure to show self control,  
For what have you traded your  
birthright?  
What is the price of your  
soul?

Is your time better spent making  
money  
Than on children or husband or  
wife?  
Do you struggle in earning a living  
While you're gradually losing your  
life?

In your desperate quest to  
be happy,  
Are you anywhere close to your  
goal?  
For what have you traded your  
birthright?  
What is the price of your soul?

Perhaps it's a pill or a needle  
Or a bottle of bourbon or wine.  
How many times have you  
promised  
That you're gonna do better next  
time?



Has some little sexual  
pleasure  
Destroyed you and taken  
control?  
Has Lucifer stolen your  
birthright?  
Does he hold the deed to  
your soul?

Sin comes like a beautiful stranger  
With laughter and money and fun  
Till it robs you of everything sacred  
And send you to hell when it's  
done.

But God, in his infinite  
mercy

Has suffered that you  
might be whole.

Jesus, my friend, is your  
birthright.

His blood paid the price of  
your soul.

### **God Put On A Show** **By Bob H. Cook**

I sought the Lord in early spring  
When flowers bloom and robins  
sing.

I saw His hand in everything  
That happens here below,  
And God put on a show.  
I sought the Lord one summer's  
day,  
I watched the squirrels and rabbits  
play,  
The world was such a bright array;

The sky was all aglow,  
And God put on a show.  
I sought the Lord when autumn  
came,

The leaves were like a fiery flame.  
I heard the mountains call my name  
To where I longed to go,  
And God put on a show.  
When winter rested on my brow,

The leaves were gone from off the  
bough.

I heard a wild coyote howl  
Across the driven snow,  
And god put on a show.  
Across this land of fire and ice,  
I'd gladly take my journey twice,  
For all the world's a paradise  
That I've been blessed to  
know

And God put on a show!

### **Five Little Puppies** **By Bob H. Cook**

(first chorus)

Five little puppies in the  
window,  
Playing and wagging their  
tails,

There were six altogether,  
but one lagged behind,

Only five little puppies for.  
(recitation)

A little boy walked up to the counter  
And laid down two dollars in dimes  
He asked, "Can I please see the  
puppies you have?  
I'd like to make one of them mine."

Then he noticed the price in the  
window  
Was thirty-seven, fifty apiece.  
Then he saw the little puppy that  
had been cast aside  
And said, "Mister, can I see that  
one, please?"

But the man said, "No son, you're  
mistaken;  
I wish I could grant your request.  
But you see, that puppy's crippled,  
and he can never run or play.  
No, he'll never be as good as the  
rest."

The little boy said, "Take my two  
dollars,

And I'll pay you fifty cents every  
week:

The man replied, "If you want him,  
you can have him for free,"  
As the child wiped a tear from his  
cheek.

He said, "Mister, please take my  
money.  
You just can't give this puppy away,  
He's worth every dime that you're  
asking', and more,  
And I'll be more than happy to pay.

The man said, "Can't you see that  
he's crippled,  
And he'll never run and play like he  
should."  
He was standing on a leg made of  
wood.

He said, "You see, Sir, I'm not too  
good at runnin' either.  
Why, something it's all that I can do  
to stand.  
I think I know just how that puppy  
might be feelin' right now;  
He just needs to have a friend to  
understand."

(second chorus)

Five little puppies in the  
window,  
Playing and wagging their  
tails,  
But the sixth one is gone;  
he found him a home,  
And there's five little  
puppies for sale.

(tag)

Though worthless as could  
be, Jesus paid full price for me,  
And like a puppy, I'm no  
longer for sale.



**THE ROOM I TRIED TO HIDE**By  
**Bob H. Cook**

Once Jesus came to visit me,  
And I gladly let Him in.  
I walked Him through the living  
room  
And on into the den.  
    The floors were waxed and  
    shined like glass,  
    Not a speck of dust in view.  
    But He didn't notice them  
    at all;  
    He just seemed to walk  
right through.  
The kitchen smelled of lavender;  
Not a dish was out of place.  
And a picture hand on yonder wall  
Of an old man saying grace.  
    I asked Him if He'd like to  
sit  
    While I put on some tea.  
    "Maybe later," He replied,  
    "Maybe there's still a lot to  
see."  
Then, He stepped back through the  
living room  
And on into the hall.  
I pointed out the bible scenes  
In the painting on the wall.  
    But he just passed the  
opened rooms  
    And never looked inside,  
    Till He came upon the  
darkened door  
    Of the room I tried to hide.  
"Oh no," I cried, "Don't go in there!  
It isn't fit to see."  
But He paid no attention to my  
words  
And asked me for the key.  
    I fumbled through each key  
I had  
    Till the door swung open  
wide.  
    And I hung my head as  
Jesus viewed  
    The room I tried to hide.

everywhere      There were dirty  
                     pictures Of  
women and of men.  
A thousand books of fantasy  
Held a life of hidden sin.  
                     Cans of beer and dirty  
jokes,  
                     My greed, my hate, my  
pride,  
                     The part of me that no one  
could see  
                     In the room I tried to hide.  
Then, Jesus reached and took my  
hand  
Like a faithful friend might do,  
And He said, "My grace goes deep  
enough  
To clean this room up too."  
                     So side by side, We  
scrubbed the floor,  
                     The ceiling, and the wall.  
                     We took the books and  
pictures down  
                     And burned them one and  
all.  
Now, my old room of sin and  
shame  
Is cleaner than the rest.  
And this old house that Satan  
cursed  
Is a house that God has blessed.  
                     And I no longer live alone,  
                     A slave to lust and pride.  
                     For Christ, alone, sits on  
the throne  
                     Of the room I tried to hide.

**The Family**  
**By Chris Williams**

As a young couple spoke  
Of their new adopted son.  
As they talked of things they'd do  
In all the days to come.  
  
I could feel all their joy  
Through the expressions on their  
face  
And I thought of all the ups and  
downs  
That'd soon be taking place

I listened to their laughter,  
I  
heard their excitement in their  
voice.  
I knew deep inside  
This all started with a choice.

Everyday we all make choices  
And with each one there's a price.  
In everything we do or say,  
There's always a sacrifice.

This reminds me of my father  
The greatest man to ever live.  
It makes me think of the sacrifices  
That he too had to give.

See, my Father also made a  
choice,  
A long long time ago.  
But, then he made a showing,  
Of how far his love will go.

Back then my owner was evil,  
He brought physical and mental  
pain.  
He swore no one would ever want  
me  
And told me he was only gain.

I used to sit and think of  
Different ways to try to escape.  
But, everything I tried failed,  
So I accepted that as fate.

Every night I'd bow my head  
I'd pray the lord my soul to keep.  
Then I'd curl up on the floor  
And cry myself to sleep.

So, I never will forget  
The day my Father came.  
He said, "I choose him,"  
Then he called me by my name.

The owner said, "now wait,  
I'm not sure I'll let him go  
But, if you "Really" want him.  
The price will not be low.  
My father said, "I LOVE HIM"



I know I want that one.  
The owner said, "Okay"  
The cost, your only son.

But, before you make your choice,  
Let me tell you what I'm gonna do.  
Let me explain the pain and  
suffering,  
Your only son will go through

He'll be beat and abused,  
He'll be tormented with hell.  
He'll be spit on and flogged  
And to a Cross he'll be nailed.

## Social Injustice

### No Power For The People

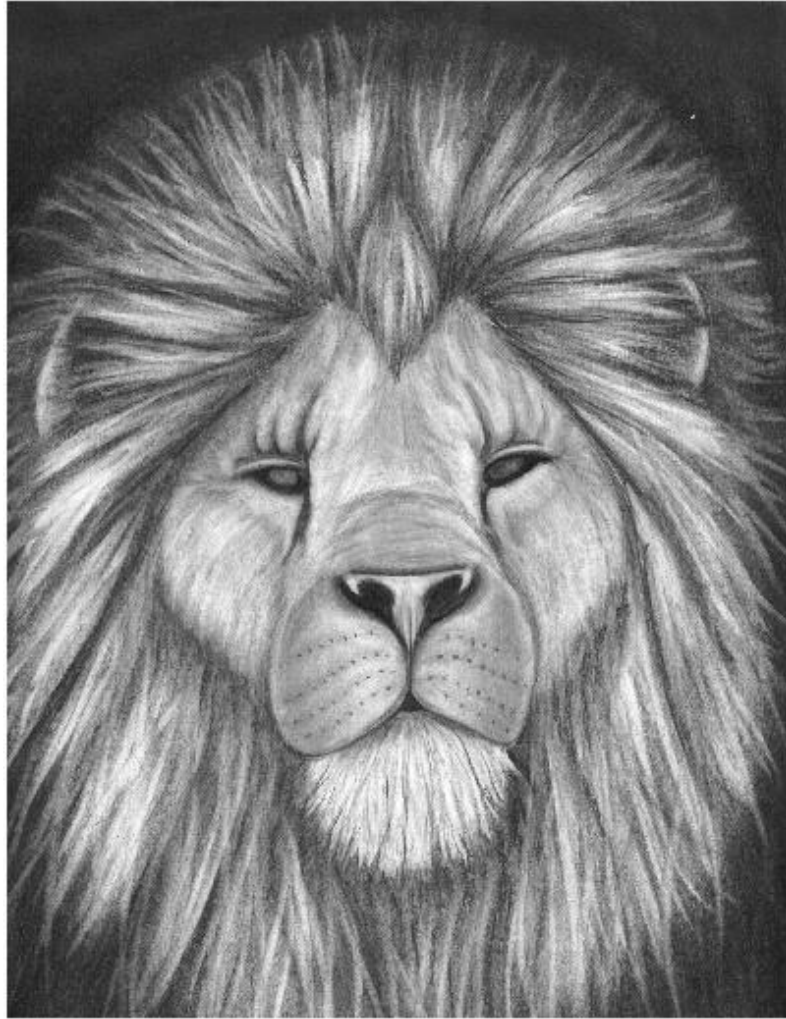
Bumbling Marionette, walking stiff-  
legged,  
Possessing spine of gelatinous  
substance,  
Appendages manipulated by  
unseen hand,  
Pulled by pellucid filament- truly  
just a strand-  
Dance this way, now dance that  
way,  
Raise your hand, now kick up your  
leg,  
Turn that way, now take a bow-  
good show

(Applause) - - but  
only briefly...  
Seek not selfish  
ways, dummy-  
Do as I say, not  
as you want-  
That is the order  
of the day.

Let us be your  
guide- We'll show  
you how-  
What to say, how  
to say it.  
You began as  
nobody, none,  
nothing  
Ending the same,  
yet  
Stellified by  
others during the  
interim.

Mr. Nobody, Mr.  
Noone, Mr.  
Nothing,  
President,  
Nobody one  
thing...

Though you'd  
never know, would you?  
To you, through you, the world  
turns,  
Seasons change and the sun rises  
and sets.  
Propagandize the flaccid masses,  
As ever one must, in order  
To retain your iron-fisted grip,  
Tightly pinching, squeezing,  
choking  
Until ejecta is seen- compliance or  
coin.  
Predecessor caught in flagrante  
delicto, Yet praised as God with  
southern twang,  
And good-ole-boy charm...  
Proficient in gaucherie and  
jingoistic vocalizations,  
Yet, safely, inefficient to a point.  
Mundane appearance so dark in  
heart,



### POWER IN PROPORTION TO PROPITIATION

Bereft of reason, in delirium,  
Predestined for ultimate failure.  
Starving the people (Oh, but they  
*Antonio Andres Garcia*

do, can't you see? –

No? No! Of course you don't, and  
people, what is your name?  
John Q. Stockholm?)  
Your sympathies and attachment  
expedite your demise-  
Oh, but Zeno would be so proud!  
Apathetic, incapacitated,  
complacent, yet sadly...  
Comfortable in your preoccupation.



So dummy made of wood and  
draped with cloth  
Is embodied, empowered, even  
worshipped.  
Power to the people?  
Ho! - But such antiquated notions!!!

**When You Prick My Finger**  
**By Timothy Lattimore**

When you prick my finger  
Do you truly see  
The blood "I" bleed,  
Not of my own  
But of humanity?

When you prick my finger,  
Do you hear the screams  
Of the elders, the youths,  
Of their hopes and dreams,  
Of the blood "I" bleed,  
Not of my own  
But of you and me?

When you prick my finger,  
The poetry unrhymes  
And the songs are sung off key,  
For the split blood  
Is in mourning,  
Not for itself--  
But for you-- and me.

Of the blood "I" bleed,  
Though its voice commanding,  
We fail to listen  
To the wisdom,  
The wisdom of the bloodline;

We fail to listen  
To the blood "I" bleed  
Of Harriet Tubman,  
John Brown, and  
Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. --  
The blood of strength, courage;

We fail to listen  
To the blood "I" bleed  
Of Amadou Diallo,  
Kimani Grey, and

Trayvon Martin --  
The blood of potential, possibility;

We fail to listen to the blood "I"  
bleed  
Of the Holocaust victims,  
The Wounded Knee massacred,  
and  
The "Pulse" 49 shooting deaths --  
The blood of solidarity, diversity;

We fail to listen to the blood "I"  
bleed  
Of slavery, wars,  
Genocides, terrorism,  
And other atrocities --  
The blood spilt  
By callousness, entitlement,  
And oppression;

We fail to listen  
To the blood "I" bleed  
Of bullying, suicides  
Rivalries, and jealousies --  
The blood spilt  
By fear, suffering,  
Ostracism, and indifference.

When you prick my finger,  
Experience and pain manifest,  
Civilizations and cultures resurrect,  
And bloodlines cry out  
From the centuries of lives gone  
by...

The lives of slaves,  
Activists, educators,  
And the collaterally damaged --  
And the Generations in the  
balance.

From a trickle to a gush,  
The blood flows,  
Hues of A's, B's, AB's and O's  
In a primal coexistence  
Struggling for oxygen.

Tempted to lick the wound,  
I must refrain,  
I must instead extend my finger  
For all to see,  
Educate as I bleed

Not of my own  
But of theirs, mine...  
And yours.

With finger aglow, heart in tow,  
Eyes wide sight  
I pray for the emergence  
Of the Danaus Plexipus Butterflies,  
To heal the wound,  
To flap their delicate wings  
And reverse time  
To a new beginning,  
One with a better understanding  
Of e pluribus Unum 00  
Latin for "one out of many."  
Translation: I, you -- us;

From Creation's beginning  
To that created by man,  
"I" have never been alone,  
I, we are the world turners,  
The brothers' keepers of ourselves-  
-  
And, sadly, quite sadly,  
The blood "I" bleed  
Is only acknowledged, only revered  
--

When you prick my finger.

**Mouthful**  
**By Orlando Mandela**

Rise and shine and give god... your  
wages

We're in the Triple Stages, of  
Darkness... trapped in cages!  
Missing pages, the Holy scriptures  
have been raided

Master Masons, they use the Word  
for your enslavement.

My Righteous Nation, has been  
tricked, stolen, and traded  
Harsh abuse, till they died, broken  
and degraded.

You sing that Freedom song, all  
day long, yeah we shall overcome!  
But overrun, water hosed down,  
now where's your sight sun?



We're feeling restless, whose got  
the answers to our questions?  
Where's my protector, when these  
devils come to oppress us?  
They seek to best us, they're  
bringing guns and I'm defenseless  
My God forgive me, blaspheme His  
Name in times of killing!  
What's this feeling? They kill our  
brothers by the millions.  
Raid our village, burned my home  
on Thanksgiving.  
These crimes are senseless! What  
can I do- I'm not a preacher  
Soldier neither, occupation! Poor  
Righteous Teacher...

## Special Occasion Poems

### A Time Afore Christmas By Michael Griffis

T'was a time afore Christmas and  
all through the world  
great violence inflicted and insults  
were hurled  
not all abroad, there was trouble at  
home  
one man's demise is the Griff's  
Christmas poem

It wasn't just violence but fear and  
disease  
knot heads and morons that do as  
they please  
third world leaders and dictators too  
with hands on the button but nay  
not a clue

The markets of finance and stock  
took a dive  
where once more than twenty now  
eight less than five  
the rich got richer, the poor  
remained strapped  
goodwill to making was once again  
lapped

This country had problems, we're  
not quite on course

so many killed by our own police  
force  
age mattered not nor did nature of  
crime  
even our children shot down in their  
prime

Gangs running rampant, mobs,  
hordes and throngs  
that seemingly know not their rights  
from their wrongs  
there seemed no safe haven, no  
part in a storm  
the killing in churches was way past  
bad form

We murdered our own, where we  
seem to excel  
beat' em and break' em then swear  
that they fell  
it wasn't just children but mothers  
and dads  
contracts were purchased on  
Craigslist type ads

Europe's been crushed by those  
refugees fleeing  
where no one can muster a plan  
pon agreeing  
they came from Tunisia and  
crossed troubled waters  
losing their parents, their sons and  
their daughters

The Middle East warring and hard  
keeping track  
who's fighting who and who's got  
who's back  
that airspace now filling with  
fighters and jets  
who's getting downed, I'm now  
taking bets

And ISIS kept busy with mayhem  
and violence  
for those who were murdered a  
moment of silence  
the French and the Russians, both  
sides of the pond  
my wish for this Christmas a magic  
type want

When what to my wondering eyes  
should appear  
A new improved sickness that adds  
to my fear  
much like Ebola but eighty times  
worse  
A vex to the world but boon to my  
verse

Disaster befell us both man made  
and not  
this year if counting was more than  
a lot  
volcanoes and earthquakes -  
tsunamis and drought  
we might be surprised by we're  
never in doubt

This year was something, each day  
brought new gift  
frustration and anger and quite  
often miffed  
I can't see the future, the sun much  
too bright  
so with my best language, I bid  
thee goodnight!

### Black Friday By Bob H. Cook

'Twas the night of Thanksgiving  
And all through the house,  
I could hear ladies chatting,  
Making plans with my spouse.  
While the scent of roast turkey  
Still hung in the air,  
I was munching peach cobbler  
Kicked back in my chair.

And I couldn't help thinking  
What my wife and her friends,  
In about seven hours,  
Had in store for us men.  
They were scanning the papers,  
Each coupon and ad,  
As that morning was nearing  
When all women go mad.

So I went to my bedroom,  
And I lay on my bed



As peace and tranquility  
Danced in my head.  
But in what seemed like minutes,  
The clock started dinging,  
And my wife hit the floor  
Like a springy spring springing.

And before the old rooster  
Could doodle his doo,  
We were out of the driveway;  
It was twenty past two.  
And with not a hint  
Of a sunny sun sunning,  
I could hear my wife grumbling  
How late we were running.

But I dared not to answer with  
grumbling or cheer,  
For a wife can be ruthless  
This day of the year.  
The first stop was Walgreens  
For a Barbie and Ken,  
Some Alien war games,  
And a monogrammed pen.

But before they would open  
At a quarter past three.  
There were two hundred women  
Looking angry at me.  
Then as the doors opened,  
I prepared for the worst,  
And we pressed through the  
doorway  
Like a dam that just burst.

There was kicking and gouging  
And Folks having fits  
Till it looked like a yard sale  
When a hurricane hits.  
Then we ran without checkbooks  
And coupons and all.  
It was mash-away, cash-away,  
Dash for the mall

Through the snow and the ice  
And the glaring of light  
And the cars in the left lane  
That need to turn right.  
And the blue lights and toy-flights  
And "clean up, aisle one,"  
As we tore apart K-Mart,

Up came the sun.

Then we turned Toys R Us  
Into Toys R All Gone.  
"There's a big truck at Big Lots"  
And the battle was on.  
There's a "Game Boy" at Wal-Mart;  
There's a tool box at Sears.  
There's always one somewhere,  
But there's never one here.

Hurrying, scurrying,  
Driving around,  
Whatever happened  
To shopping downtown?  
The backseat is loaded,  
And the trunk lid is flapping  
With three-hundred presents  
All ready for wrapping.

The snowflakes are falling,  
And I hear my wife saying,  
"Let's head for the house, Dear,  
It looks like it's laying."  
So, we empty the trunk  
And the floor and the seat,  
As the snow's getting harder  
And mixing with sleet.

Then, we both throw our coats  
down  
And fix us a snack,  
As we sort out the boxes  
And put them in stacks,  
I'm cold and I'm wet  
And I'm hungry and tired,  
And there's sixty-eight gifts  
With assembly required.

"We'll wrap all the others  
And hide, these away;  
Then, we'll put them together,  
A few everyday."  
But both of us know  
They'll remain out of sight  
And never be touched  
Until Christmas Eve night.

So, we hunt empty boxes  
My wife has been keeping,  
And I dare not to mention

I'd rather be sleeping.  
And the wrapping takes longer  
Then what we intended,  
But at last it's all over  
And the nightmare has ended.

So, I pillow my head  
Just glad to be living,  
And I think of the Pilgrims  
On that first Thanksgiving.  
If they could have visioned  
This Friday-turned-Black,  
They'd have set sail for England  
And never looked back.

### **A New Year's Lament** **Bob H. Cook**

In five more minutes, tick tock , tick  
tock,  
A New Year will come with the tick  
of the clock.  
I've bathed and shaved and  
trimmed up my hair,  
And I feel like I ought to be going  
somewhere.

There's frolic and laughter  
not too far away  
Families gather to welcome  
the day,

Banded together like we  
used to be.

Each one needs someone,  
but no one needs me.  
Just four little minutes, cuckoo,  
cuckoo,  
And it's out with the old and in with  
the new.

It's a grand celebration for both  
young, and old,  
But there's no one to laugh with;  
there's no one to hold.

There's no one to sing to,  
no one to cry,  
No one to care if I live or  
die,

No one to need me or the  
little I've got  
Or to care if my year will be  
happy or not.



Three dreadful minutes, ding dong,  
ding dong,  
And all of the world will break out in  
song,  
Forgetting the hunger, forgetting  
the need,  
Forgetting the rich and their  
arrogant greed,  
Forgetting the old folks,  
alone in their bed,  
And the ones who are  
thinking they'd rather be dead,  
And the one who was  
trusted as husband and Dad,  
But carelessly squandered  
those blessings he had.  
Just two minutes longer, click clack,  
click clack,  
If only those hands on that clock  
could turn back.  
If only our future could capture out  
past  
And all of the things that we cherish  
could last!

## Veterans

### I Will Never Leave A Fallen Comrade By Shon Pernice

I kept you alive,  
In the combat zone  
I'll help you survive,  
As we rest at home.

We've been on foreign soil,  
And weathered turmoil  
In far-away lands,  
Filled with desert sands,  
I patched up your wounds,  
And prayed for you too.

Now back in the States,  
You start to break plates  
I can't leave you alone,  
As you go into the zone.

Drugs and alcohol  
Temporarily relieve the pain,  
As the memories make you feel

Like you're going insane.

If suicide is a must,  
I'm the one you can trust,  
Let's talk and work through this,  
As your eyes start to mist.

I will always have your six,  
If you get lost in the mix  
I have the anesthetic  
Because I'm your combat medic.



### *Malachi Surber* Honoring the Troops By Bernard Wroblewski

I packed up all my bags and was  
shipped to this distant land  
Now on the front lines of war I  
proudly stand.  
Wading through the bodies, my  
blood soaking the soil  
I boldly press on, pushing back the  
dread and turmoil.  
Nothing could have prepared me  
for this carnage that I'm seeing  
Or this sadness punching through  
the core of my being.

We were warned what would come  
and that some of us may die  
But I was hoping we could prove  
that chance to be a lie.  
While our loved ones sleep  
comfortable, with peaceful dreams  
We lay awake haunted by  
exposures and blood curdling  
screams.  
I've tried to tune it out but I can't  
catch a break  
It's all I hear, whether  
I'm asleep or awake.

But we'll finish this  
war, of that you can  
be sure  
We'll endure this hell,  
so your freedom is  
secure.  
All we ask is that you  
remember the  
sacrifice of our sisters  
and brothers  
For we may not return  
to see our fathers and  
mothers.  
It's a call heard my  
many and answered  
by few  
To willingly pay the  
butcher's bill for our  
Nation and for you.



## Final Note

Dear Poets,

Thank you for taking part in this program. The volunteers who read all the poems you submit are impressed with the depth of your writing. They often stop reading poetry to share a poem with others in the room. We have thousands of poems submitted for each anthology, and the students choosing them can only pick enough for our slim packet. While I know seeing your poem in the anthology can be a positive feeling, I know many of you feel poorly about not being chosen. I am not sure what I can say to you, so you do not get discouraged. What I do know is that the students who chose the poems are not experts. They read all the poems and they choose the ones that touch them. Every editor is different and the poems they select reflect their inner world, more than they may reflect on the skill of the individual poet submitting the poem. We are not poetry experts and we do not pretend to be. Our purpose is to create a general selection that highlights the poems submitted in a 6 month period. Even if you are not chosen, please know your poem is read and your words are considered. While it is nice to be chosen, the real purpose of the project is to encourage you to write and express your thoughts. Who you are matters and your thoughts and experiences do to. People on the outside seem to be waking up to the issues of the criminal justice system. Your voice carries experience and can educate

people on the various issues around incarceration. Poetry can come alive, and bring movements to life. Your poetry expands our horizons, and I thank the 410 participants who sent in submissions.

This anthology was worked on by many different students so during it's coming together you may have heard from Clare, Lucy, Prashasti. The layout and design was done by Sam. Prisoner Express is fortunate to have a wide range of support in the Alternatives Library Community

We so appreciate working with you and hearing your thoughts in this, and our other Prisoner Express projects, and I hope you will send in submissions for Vol 22 of our series. We are collecting poems now for it and it should be mailed out in 6 months or so.

Please feel free to send feedback on this anthology to us at Prisoner Express. We want to know how participating in this poetry project is for you. How does it strike you when you read others poetry? How does it feel when you are selected to be published?. How do you deal with the feelings that arise when you don't see of your poems included in the pamphlet?

What do you think of the writing presented in these anthologies?

Thank you for sharing yourself and these poems. What ever else can be taken away, your feelings,

thoughts, dreams, philosophies, your poems, those are yours and you have final say on how it is all expressed.. Self-realization. Those pursuits are yours and we hope to aid you in all of the above

I look forward to hearing from you.  
Gary



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# Prisoner Express Poetry Anthology 21

George Bozeman

Bozeman '19