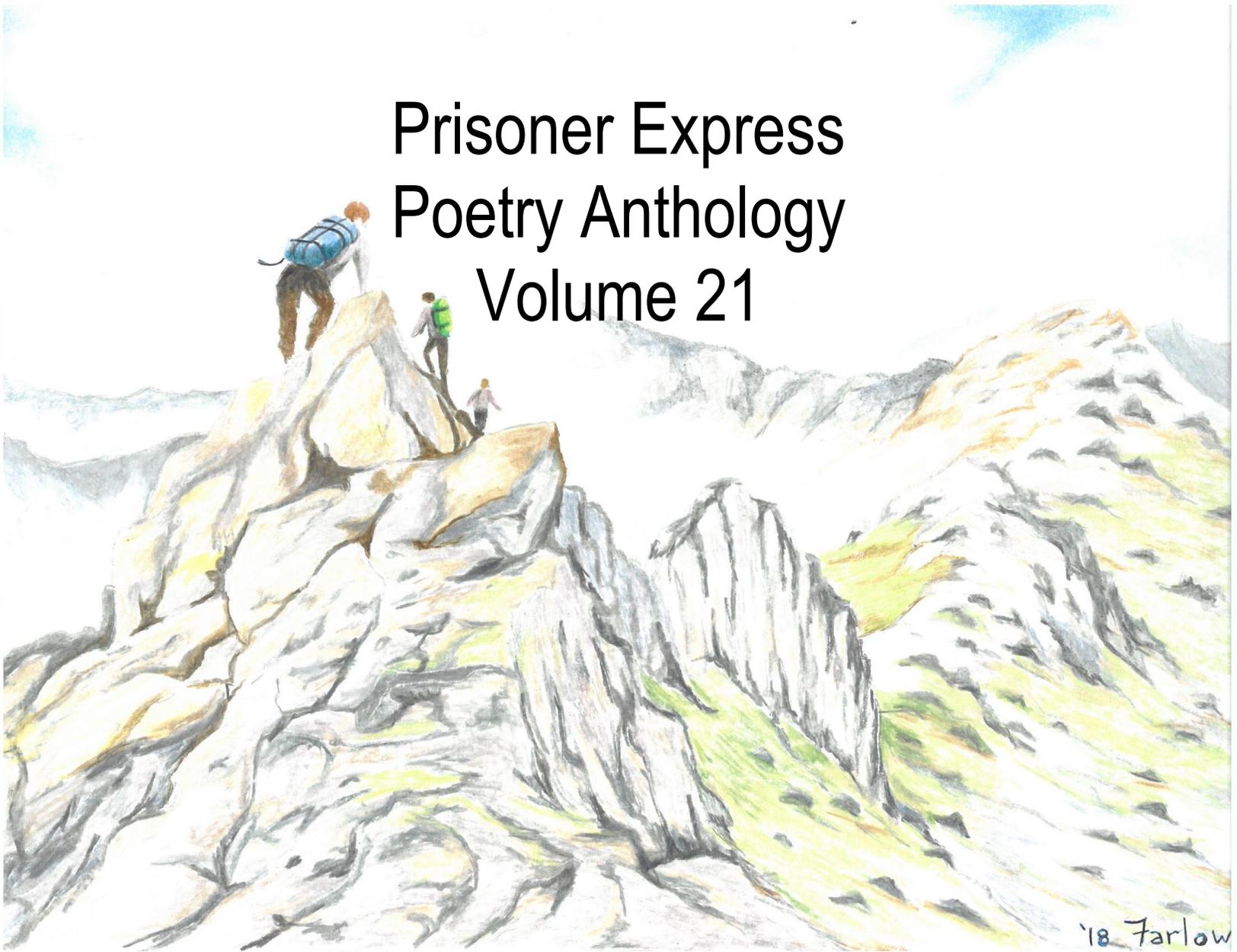


Prisoner Express Poetry Anthology Volume 21



Gary 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.



JP 2019
John Ponder

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.
 Liken 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
 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 dammed 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

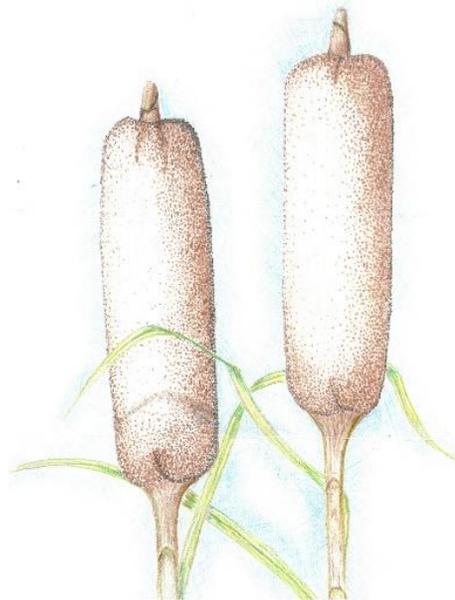
Rosebud mouth and hair just wisps.
Tomorrow the babe will disappear,
Replaced by a toddler with curling
hair;
Then off to school, playing ball,
Slamming doors and breaking
hearts
As he seemingly breaks all else in
his path
To his folks' dismay and often their
wrath.
Baseball, cars and then one day-
girls.
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
aflake
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,
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



Nate A. Lindell

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
Shakedown 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

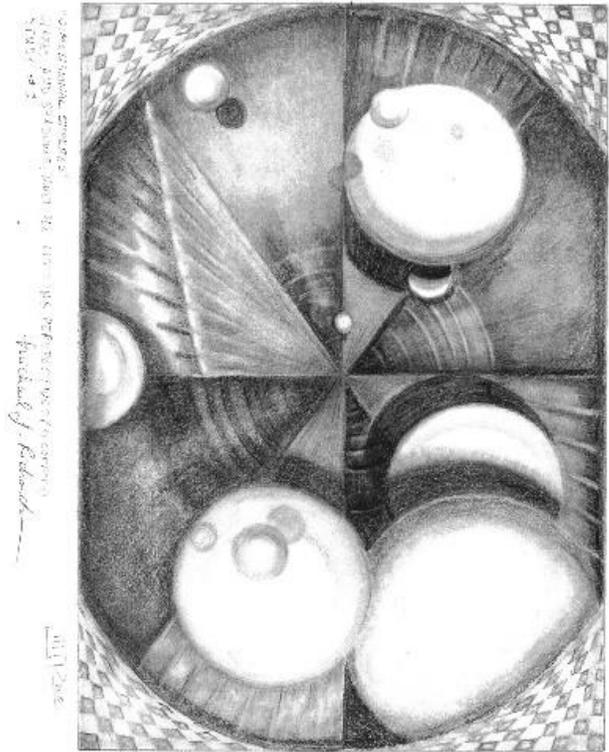
This cube of pure darkness
Where monsters are born
The cold
The heartless

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.
There were dirty pictures
everywhere
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

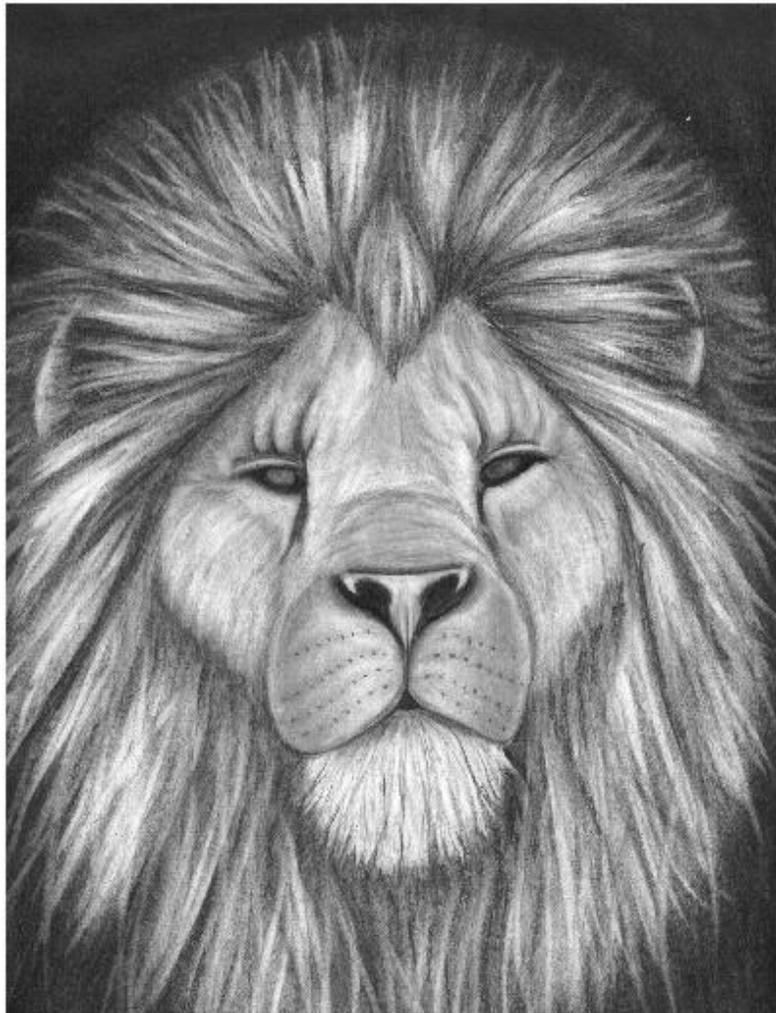
No Power For The People

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, inefficientm to a point.
Mundane appearancem so dark in
heart,
POWER IN PROPORTION TO
PROPITIATION
Bereft of reason, in delirium,
Predestined for ultimate failure.
Starving the people (Oh, but they

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!!!



do, can't you see? –
Antonio Andres Garcia

No? No! Of course you don't, and
people, what is your name?
John Q. Stockholm?)
Your sympathies and attachment
expedite your demise-

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 thw ound,
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.

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 by
many and answered
by few

To willingly pay the butcher's bill for
our Nation and for you.



Malachi Surber

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. This is a life-long skill that you are developing, and being creative and learning new communication skills will serve you throughout your life.

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.

I am sending this collection to everyone who sent in a poem for PP21 cycle and I am also sending it to those off you who sent in poems that are being considered for PP22. We haven't been adding new poems to the PP21 pool for the past 45 days or and have started a folder for poems for anthology 22. These will be collected until early fall and then we will begin assembling the next anthology. Sendin your poems for consideration for the PP22 Anthology?

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?. How do you deal with the feelings that arise when you do not see one of your poems included in the pamphlet? What do you think of the writing presented in these anthologies?

Whether your poem was included in the anthology or not you can and should be proud of yourself for having the motivation and follow through to participate in this process. So many people faced with hardship give up, and you poets are willing to feel and share your thoughts. It says to me you have healthy instincts to participate and belong in with other people. It may seem like a small thing to you,

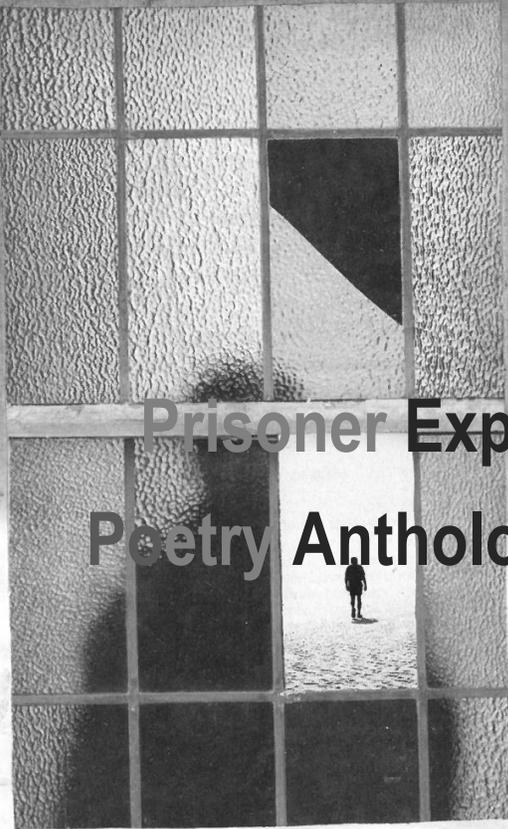
but I think it is a telling sign that you want to grow, have an inner desire to communicate and connect, and that you are willing to take some risks to further yourself. I applaud you and your creativity I look forward to hearing from you.

I would like to one day put out a pamphlet on how individuals in prison tune in to find their creative center. If any of you want to share your personal process with me, it might be nice to reprint it in a newsletter for others who are looking to open up their doors of perception and creativity

Gary

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Prisoner Express Poetry Anthology 21

George Bozeman

Bozeman '19