

# Poetry Anthology: Volume 23

## **Steel Hearts by Tavo**

Arrays of steel rule  
kids trained to duel  
as depression pools,  
flames of hate are fueled

By kingdom come,  
Despite hatreds put out  
The devil will tout  
Matches laid among

A pit full of fools  
In heaven's seven  
Basements, hegemony  
Sunk in the slain.

Lovebirds' memories  
Fading, inundating  
Minds' eyes lately.  
Tragedies—turned tools

High hanging fruit  
Takes a bit of shaking  
Happiness—made moot.  
Jailbirds stop singing

I am no menace  
to society,  
I know our bonds  
are stronger than the  
steel hearts keeping you  
from conquering.

## **Blue Birds and Barbed Wire by Nate High**

The world called her ugly, but all I saw  
was her beauty.  
When I was angry and on the edge, she was  
the only thing that could soothe me,  
She would send me pictures, and I would  
just stare,  
I knew that it was dangerous to fall in love,  
but I didn't care.

I called her Aphrodite, she was a goddess  
on her own,  
her letters were my weakness, but still she  
Prisoner Express

kept me strong.  
Like every woman I've ever loved, her  
time came and went,  
So I boxed up her letters and all the pictures  
she had ever sent.

I remembered her being beautiful, but no  
one else does,

Shes the one who taught me how to see thru  
goggles of love.

Our relationship taught me the importance  
of perception,  
and that was beneficial when my happiness  
was in a recession.

When the darkness creeps in, I see thru  
goggles of pain,  
I only see the dirt, the trash, the blood stains.

I only hear the silence, I lose the sound of  
laughter,  
I'm surrounded by violence and nothing else  
matters.

We all wear our goggles, some only see  
the flames in the fire,  
I used to only see the fences, but now I see  
the blue birds dancing on the barbed wire.

## **Stolen Identity by Michael Marotta**

Who am I supposed to be,  
Please answer this I'm not sure...  
Behind many masks I'll stay free,  
And through all things can endure...  
Blurred lines get crossed by choice,  
Mostly for stepping over the rest...  
Using one's often overpowering voice,  
Keeps them blood thirsty also obsessed...  
Look inside before it's too late,  
Seeing whom really have you become...  
You're not in any stable state,  
When into insanity you've already  
succumb...  
You'd better figure out something quick,  
Which person is pulling your strings....  
Once tender skin feels that prick,  
There's no secret what pain brings...  
If nobody knows then don't tell,  
First let inner feelings silently plea...

Afterwards lock sanity into a cell,  
Because without expression no one's me!

## **Stagnation by AJ Castro**

I've made mistakes  
But only because  
I am a human being  
I had similar dreams  
Though not similar  
To the ones of  
The reverend Dr. King  
I wanted to be rich  
So I hit the streets  
And got money  
By any means  
I've destroyed lives  
And hurt people  
Did some horrible things  
I yearn for peace  
But I am haunted  
By the faces and screams  
From a previous life  
That I can't shake  
So it seems  
My past is my present  
Gift wrapped with a ribbon  
Sitting under a tree  
My future is uncertain  
Who knows, what  
Tomorrow will bring  
Life is cold  
So I prepared myself  
So as, not to freeze  
Life is hard  
Especially, the part  
About not being free  
My heart is empty  
Yet heavy  
I feel so incomplete  
I juz wanna change  
But I'm being held back  
By the old me!



Life Behind Bars by Phillip L Roth

## The Etymology of “Inmate” by Johnny E. Mahaffey

### Inmate

noun & adjective (plural in•mates)

[pronounced in máyt]

ORIGIN Prob. orig. From INN noun (later assoc. with IN adverb) + MATE noun

1. An occupier or inhabitant of an institution such as an asylum, or sometimes a prison under the current Southern usage; used to dehumanize *non-mental health* prisoners; derogatory.

**Ex.** *The nurse at the asylum was aware of the inmates outside of their rooms.*

2. A person that is a stranger; not native to the location in which he (or she) is found to be living.  
*Antiquated*
3. Not to be confused with prisoner. An inmate is a person that presents a danger to themselves (or others), and in most cases are not aware of their own situation. The inmate is the dangerous version of patient that receives care for mental illness in a controlled environment; whereas, a prisoner is someone undergoing a form of societal reconditioning known as

rehabilitation, before being re-integrated as a productive and conformed denizen.

**Ex.** *The inmates of the asylum consider themselves to be prisoners in cells; but, the prisoners in the jail take offense at being called inmates due to the word's mental health connotations - nor do they approve of their cells being called rooms - or the building dorms.*

Attrib. Or as adjective. *That prisoner is not technically an inmate.*

Syn. CAPTIVE, detainee, internee; *informal* jailbird, convict, con, yardbird, lifer, prisoner

## Good Thieves: Don't Take Property, They Steal Time by David Hehn

The Rhymes of Reason  
 The Discontented SEASON  
 The Maletesense [*sic*] of it ALL  
 The Picture Perfect  
 The Discontented Dream  
 The Beguiled & Thee Obscene  
 The Photo Credit & The Dream  
 The Economy of “Distance”  
 The Unrequited Love of Misappropriation  
 “I’m sorry SIR. We're going to have to take your  
 Writer's license”  
 Largesse  
 The Largeness of Personal Distress  
 “I’m Almost Impressed”. Almost  
 ALL or None  
 And we’re back to where we’ve Begun  
 And A DREAM starts with one  
 Mine is They Ultimate Construct  
 Convicts bleed Tears  
 And Years Are Our Poison  
 We Drink Deep  
 Our Silence Speaks Legions  
 Wrapped in a sheet  
 Alone in the DARK  
 Lying face up in my own Self-Pity  
 Fingering my paper

Writing my Guts Out  
 This Page Will Never See The Light of Day  
 And Who CARES Anyway?  
 Tears Float and are Trapped in Time  
 And I own Nothing so The WORLD is Mine  
 “Sing for your Supper, Boy”  
 “Give us Our Evening Entertainment”  
 Bleed for us if you must, But we Trust:  
 You Will Not Disappoint us!”  
 And HE Suffers for His ART  
 And He is a Living Caricature  
 And Even “A Little” means Alot  
 “Forget me not” He cries  
 And Tries, tries, tries... Again

## Ira Furor Brevis Est by Franklin Lee

It burns,  
 That mind numbness.  
 I itch, I cry, but to no avail.  
 It eats me, craving, wanting.  
 I hear it! Don't you?  
 The red veil hangs over my eyes,  
 Silencing what I want to confide.  
 I feel the knives digging deeper into my  
 skin.  
 A beast clawing its way in.  
 I am teeth that gnashes,  
 Eyes stitched together,  
 Poison fangs that pierce the soul.  
 The dissonance of voices,  
 Screaming with no sound,  
 Pulsatingly mumble, consciously aware,  
 Fill my cerebrum with a distraught,  
 flourishing rampage  
 A flare searing the third eye,  
 Grating sandpaper on eyelids.  
 The acidic bloom in bloviate speech,  
 I wretch in vomitous fortitude.  
 Anger is a brief madness.

## “Untitled” by Lorraine Bennet-Kenitzki

What is love  
 But a thorn  
 on a stem  
 of a rose  
 a petal floating  
 on the wind  
 The syrupy aroma  
 of a flower

Crushed underfoot  
The now beauty  
inside of you  
that only comes  
out after I  
stomp on you



Untitled by Unknown

### Safety Valve by David Hehn

Too lazy to write a poem  
I don't want to think  
I just want to project  
To rid myself of the clutter in my mind now  
I don't know what is there now I am writing  
blind  
Without purpose, without intent, diligent in  
going nowhere  
Hearing one's voice hoping that if you let  
yourself go you won't scream  
Letting off steam and whatever else is up in  
there  
No this will not be remembered as some of  
my finest work but  
it did me a mountain of good to just write

### Slowly Healing by Julie Spencer

Something inside had died,  
And I was just left,  
Feeling hollow with regret  
With the strength of high tide

And feeling I could not forget

Prisoner Express

And yet, now I have learned,  
THAT feeling will also pass,  
That nothing forever lasts.

Though sometimes we wish  
The feeling were fading fast,  
I think it's best not to fight it,  
And to be what we feel,

Or to let your feelings show,  
But then I think  
Its best to let them go,  
Thats what I know,

When my emotions have fallen behind,  
This is how I've defined,  
My lack of emotional growth,  
Which is what I've needed the most,

To process strong emotions  
Without too much delay,  
slowly healing people, inside and out  
Strangers wanna know what your life is  
about,

I say "I'm healing now,  
Though I struggled for years,  
God showed me how  
To give him my fears."

### Self- Hatred by Carnell Wingfield Jr.

I may get in trouble for this one,  
I accept any problem I may succumb,  
I am only stating facts,  
I live in a world today where  
I hate being black.

May we start in a Courtroom,  
An African-American woman said I tried to  
kill her in a dream,  
What could be worse?  
Her brother pointed me out for the color of  
my skin,  
he said he did not see a thing.  
fabricated gang evidence,  
farfetched facts,  
four consecutive life sentences,  
I hate being black.

I live in prison with five different Nations,  
Within my Nation resides eight different

tribes of "Nig\*\*\*"  
all are oblivious to where we are at,  
Victims waiting to be made,  
I hate being black.

I have a higher education than those who are  
in charge,  
they give orders that make no sense,  
mindlessly I have to obey,  
I return to my space humiliated that I have  
Just done "that,"  
I hate being Black.

Mind over matter,  
You do not matter to mine,  
Only a glimmer of hope,  
I work hard to protect its Shine.

Even a small amount of faith is contraband,  
they own everything I once thought was  
mine.

Yet I wear a mask when I leave my cell,  
ashamed when I make it back  
for, ever allowing them to make me  
hate being black.

### My Thoughts by Mark Stebbins

My heart is stuck on calamity  
I focus too much on vanities  
My complexion is too dark to be one of  
those who plead insanity  
While life dismantles me  
My dreams be  
Thoughts of how this system mishandled me  
My light shines dim  
Like that flame on candles be  
As my eyes blurry from tears  
I scream calls for help that only my pillow  
can hear  
Incarceration  
I'd be a fool to say it wasn't a part of me  
Praying to the "Good Lord" hoping he hasn't  
forgotten me  
But the only thing I know the definition of  
freedoms wealth  
Oppressed by my own people but that's the  
hand that freedom dealt  
So I'm suicidal & I continue to rhyme until I  
lose my breath  
But then I stop to think cuz it takes a real

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murderer to actually kill himself

But these are just my thoughts...

### **A Love Affair by Andre Stuckey**

A Love Affair

Brings together two hearts

All in the name of

Joy and happiness

Love is a special word

That has a lot of meanings

For those of us

Strong enough to pursue it

Love can be expressed in different ways

Love can sometimes

Be a puzzle

And a process

That we must have

Patience with

Love sometimes connects people

From different social

And economic backgrounds

A Love Affair

Connects two hearts

Into one

A Love Affair

Is unlike anything

The heart has ever experienced

A Love Affair

Connects two spirits

And bodies

Into one

Love is a special word

That is spoken and written

With one goal in mind

To bring our loved ones

Unconditional

Joy and happiness

A love affair

Frees two hearts

Brought together

In the name of joy and happiness

### **Off the Hook by Mark Stebbins**

Off the hook

Poetry

From behind the wall

My heart is broken

But my soul still moves on

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Walking blindfolded

"Ye with lil faith"

I hope the sea parts

So I can make my great escape

Destruction of mankind

Secluded in this hell

Given another chance

I pray I don't fail

Determine right from wrong

What's up is down

Greatness through failure

Is how true success will be found

Struggling with confusion

Of my mind on it's own

Hearing my momma scream

Baby, please just come back home

Holding hands with death

Facing the ultimate test

What's next

Becoming a statistic like the rest

My brothas & sistas can we fight for peace

Can we fight to keep our kids protected on

these streets

Can we teach unity

To ours & all of mankind

Can we stop the killing & wars

Based on egos & lies

See we have our own problems

Throughout the states

Incarceration

Poverty

Gangs

& Hate

Racism

Discrimination

& Stereotypes too

Please don't prejudge me

& I won't do it to you

Suffering from insanity in this concrete

jungle

Experimenting with medication just to ease

my struggle

Off the hook

Poetry

From behind the wall

Its the convicted poet

Screaming come one, come all

From behind the wall it's off the hook

The convicted poet

I'll be back in a moment

Take a breath & exhale

As I then challenge you to a proper diagnosis

Of my psychosis

Cuz' it's off the hook...

### **Unveiled Truth by Charles Higgins**

For me, it's got to be now or never

Educate myself to grow and succeed

Or I'll be in prison forever

Thinking on how things could possibly be

I'm so exhausted of what might have been

Stuck in constant delusions of grandeur

Enemies still pretending to be friends

And so many questions without answers

Left behind and tend to fend for myself

where are these friends that I spoke well

about

No hand to lend, I can't get any help

I've got no choice but to figure it out

Rise above it all and stand like a king

And serve the people who don't see a thing

### **Minds Eye by Adrian E.**

From the window of my mind's eye,

I see various shapes and forms,

Some waiting to die,

Others waiting to be born.

I see the universe unfolding,

With remarkable design,

Stars and planets imploding,

Collapsing within time.

I see civilizations rise,

To great heights and peaks,

Then fall because of pride,

And often will repeat.

I see the weak suffer,

And the strong live lavish,

Ignorance of blunder,

Ordinary men become savage.

I see widows face of greed,

Well hidden breath a smile,

In almost every human being,

So many are in denial.

I see a world torn with war,

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Overwhelmed with corruption,  
Evil lurking at the door,  
Bio-nuclear destruction.

I see pestilence and famine,  
Nations stricken with grief,  
Children abandoned,  
As mothers and widows weep.

I have no wavering doubt,  
That the future will be bleak,  
Unless we take another route,  
And establish some kind of peace...

### **Am I Radical Enough? (In Response to Killa K.) by Carnell Wingfield Jr.**

When you asked that  
I believe that you are not radical at all.  
fuck rehabilitation, I sit quiet  
resilient within my silence  
listening to people say that there is no impact  
through violence.  
When Hip-Hop was at its prime  
there was a large promotion of crime,  
it felt like African-Americans were getting  
shot all the time.  
Majority of us know that fear of sitting in  
class  
and either after school, before school, or  
during class  
Somebody hops the fence and you hear a  
gun blast.  
They were gangmembers that do not count.  
Have you ever seen death in the face and  
watch as the eyes turn to void?  
It hurts when death come  
You no longer see your boy.  
Big Corporation raised gas prices to fight  
ISIS,  
I smiled at you,  
Because if you are radical  
I wish I can taste what that life is.  
Sentenced to die in the system  
I do not do drugs to escape the pain  
Nor do I lie to myself until I seem insane.  
They let us out now,  
Those who say they no longer bang because  
they are subjected to change,  
Will still get slaughtered in the streets,  
This life is not a game.  
Am I Radical Enough?

Prisoner Express

We are screaming we need more gun control  
Because white kids are now falling victim to  
their system.

We need more guns.  
Lets ban bump stocks,  
More people got killed at a country concert  
Than the number of those who attended a rap  
event and got shot.  
Why not up the production of bump stocks?  
You want to be in the fight,  
But the fight is not worth fighting for,  
You rather be seen holding a fist under  
rainbow colors  
Giving each other kisses.  
What Kind of Radical Shit?  
You want equal rights?  
To be equal a man?  
I know unique  
She is not a bi\*\*\*, a \*\*\*, or a freak.  
She's a God, we worship her.  
None call her lover,  
We call her mother,  
She is as radical as me  
I wish you were able to see.  
I will be looking out of a window of a  
corporate high rise  
Looking down at the encampment which you  
call "Radicalized."  
I will order you all breakfast, lunch, and  
dinner  
For all the days that are spent.  
Like, Look at this radical shit.  
It will be those who are like you who will  
say that  
I compromised, I negotiated.  
I will look your dead in your eyes and reply  
"I am so radical that I infiltrated".

### **Nhat Hanh's Exile Dream by Stephen Stoeltje**

I go to a hill in the north,  
I play there and leave things  
On that hill. I plant trees  
and build a wooden pagoda.  
I play in the water of streams,  
And from there I gain strength  
to go forth  
to meet friends and grow dreams.  
The hill grows – leaves, poems, flowers.  
The hill grows me. When I am gone  
I become sad—lost and lonely for my hill.

Yet the hill never remains the same.

### **Moments by Eathon English**

Moments alone from you are far greater  
Then I could of ever thought here it is  
I thought my ways were justified by  
The balance in your love but  
Reality show up with pictures of  
Truth and everything I did effected me  
And you.  
Now I sit holding hands with the fate times  
Alone with you are resting my  
Memory bank  
Up against those who proclaim something  
Or the other passion floats like  
Morning mist, like your love I had to  
uncover.  
Now I'm subjected to whatever sinks its  
teeth into my exposed mental flesh.  
As I long with a deep desire for you  
To lay your head upon my chest cried  
Times of both night and day at the end of  
This journey are questions, where will  
Her love be very close, or oh so far away.  
Whatever the result is it's meant for us  
Both tree today down the road I will  
Never let you go,  
moments.

### **At First by Guadalupe Jurado**

Here I am all along at night,  
Missing and wishing you were here insight  
I think bout you night and day.  
In my heart is where you'll stay.  
The day we met,  
I dont forget.  
Your the only lady I ever loved  
I'd give you anything and all the above  
It feels good to be in love  
Like some cute little doves.  
I love when I call you and you are there  
We can talk all day and have no care  
Its better to take it slow then fast  
It's me and you- lets forget about the past.  
The type to make you my bride  
I hated the world  
Till you showed me a different side.

## Yellow Truth Star by Jeff Links

My needle keeps me bleeding  
With orange tiger sharks, I swim  
institutional halls Razor-wire forgets me  
Tattoos hide tears that aren't coming  
Inked needles testify the length of my body  
Braid me to joys I'd forgotten  
Eyes meet a woman I've never met,  
But grew up with.  
Our tribal conversation soundless  
Written on an exposed shoulder  
Sunlight yellow spaghetti  
Strap limp useless, draped  
Against soft brown skin  
The convict blots my blood  
He smears my yellow fantasy  
His rag dripps the lies I've cried  
A connection to my inner skin  
Because I'm only honest with  
People I don't like.



Untitled by Edward Rodriguez

## Razor Wire by Louis Wilson

Life Surrounded by razor wire,  
Sun gleaming setting it afire.  
Tormenting the soul, fence of hell,  
Content because this is where I dwell.

Living within the terror zone,  
Twilight creeps in ta chill the bone.  
Frosting the gate cold to the touch,

These restraints with my mind I crunch

Moving forward I see it now  
These borders will not keep me down!  
So from sunrise to when it sets,  
I embrace life with no regrets!

## Let's Roll by Shon Pernice

I don't know who you are, Or what clothes  
you wear, But I want you to know, That I  
truly do care.

I came home from the war, And made a huge  
mistake, My life out of control,  
A life I did take.  
After years of denial,  
And living in an institution, It finally  
dawned on me,  
I owe moral restitution.  
Working through guilt and shame, And a  
promise to my wife,

That what I must do, Is give a new life.  
I avoid drugs and prison tattoos, No disease I  
can catch, Because I will not fail, Whomever  
is my match.

Push ups, sit ups, run on the track, Refuse  
drinks that are sugary,  
As I prepare this vessel,  
From whom gets my kidney.

What I Wear by Stephen Lawrence Stoeltje

Blues man "Blind Man Lemon" sang  
Wondering if his clothes  
Would fit into a match box.  
I don't own the clothes I wear-  
My shorts are even community shared,  
Including as well my socks  
And they don't always match.

Thomas Merton wrote in his journal on  
contemplation:

"What I wear is pants.  
What I do is live  
How I pray is breathe."

I liked that so I wrote in mine:  
"What I wear is white,  
Where I live is confinement  
How I breathe-  
Is prayer!"

I am not where I live  
or what I wear,  
Nor with a lot of words.  
What I am is in my prayer.

Johnny Cash wore black for the  
disenfranchised  
For the poor and the prisoner.  
He said, "until times are brighter."  
Now he wears white and sings a New Song  
He understands it all by and by;  
No longer now such a fighter.

When St. Francis naked abandoned his  
world  
Upon the first pauper peasant he saw  
He asked for his humble poor robe.  
This simple robe became the monastic habit.  
He wanted to wear only the lowliest clothes.

My simple prison white I wear  
Are my humble holy habits;  
Poor lowly and disreputable.  
So now I live without a care  
-to what I wear  
Now simply what I am  
Is only in my life of prayer.

## Unsure by Never B. Famous

Are we all not different  
But shades of the same being? Birthed from  
the same channel,  
Eyes open for seeing.  
Deep you should ponder,  
Far you should reach,  
Are you desperate to learn,  
Or eager to teach?  
We can speak a different language, And be  
saying the same thing. Knowledge means  
little,  
If you understand others and yourself. It  
doesn't bring...  
Connections past the flesh,  
Deeper than the mind,  
If you're happy living a lie,  
The truth you'll never find.

### Unbroken by Micheal Holiness

I've faced different kinds of trials  
 Conquered many incre obstacles,  
 Turned the nay-sayers into believers  
 And made the impossible possible  
 Broke the chains of bondage  
 Shook the snakes from my feet  
 With a spirit that wouldn't break  
 And a heart that won't skip a beat  
 As courageous as a lion, I won't see  
 defeat even when circumstances and  
 Situations beat me down, i'll still find  
 my feet, no matter, what life throws  
 my way i'll never fold, crumble, nor break  
 weak, put the weight of the world on my  
 shoulders. I'll just smile and plant my feet  
 For I am Mr. Unbreakable with the stillness  
 that you should seek..

### Take a Chance by David Hehn

He thinks so little of himself that he doesn't  
 feel the need to always try The worst  
 tombstone is an empty one devoid of merit,  
 devoid of trying Limitless intentions  
 Spare us the mental protections, give us the  
 mental projections  
 Risk making a fool of oneself  
 The results may astound you  
 And everyone else.



Seeking Renovation by Jesse Osmun

### Connected by David Hehn

A neighborless conflict, no such thing  
 Everybody is somebody's neighbor, if only  
 their own I LOVE Myself, I dare you to do  
 the same  
 LOVE Me, LOVE yourself  
 We are one in the same  
 We will be in LOVE together  
 No one will be to blame

### I Dare You by Richard Dixon

I dare you to live and let live  
 I dare you to harm none but do as you  
 ye will,  
 I dare you to take on the challenge  
 and fulfill,  
 your dreams and achieve,  
 I dare you to succeed,

I dare you to reach for the  
 sky, grab her hand, and give  
 Iit the sweetest kiss,  
 Collect all the stars in the  
 galaxy and throw them into  
 the well of abyss,  
 for every star make a wish,

I dare you to fly high above all others  
 look down to the ground and know there's  
 another world waiting to be discovered,

I dare you to look doubt in the face and  
 laugh,  
 to put away  
 self-pity, and to know *your* self-esttem  
 will be as high as the tallest  
 building in New York City,  
 I dare you  
 I dare you to look in the  
 mirror and say "I am a survivor  
 there is none like me."  
 I dare you to be the unstoppable  
 force that meets a brick wall,  
 The rumble in the Jungle,  
 the calm before the storm that  
 the animals run from, but no one  
 can see,  
 I dare you, I dare you.

### Untitled by Scott Madoulet

Spirit divided  
 The duality of man  
 Who am I really?

Slowly I'm sinking  
 Weighted by many mistakes  
 Drowning in my shame

guilt, remorse, and shame  
 have made me heavy hearted  
 forgiveness I need

I once was a child  
 time and can't be undone  
 I am what I am

### My Prison Job by Scott Madoulet

Recreation porter  
 Used equipment sorter  
 Prison restroom cleaner  
 ID thru the screen'r  
 Yard trash picker-upper  
 "Hey Brother, Whats up?"-er  
 Contraband hand-offer  
 Your shit, had enough-er!!

### #ENDCANCER by Hawkins M.

Show some love, fight to end cancer,  
 Because we can't allow it to win...  
 It affects us all,  
 Children, women, and men...

Inside of our bodies,  
 Is where cancer tries to cower and hide...  
 You can take my hair, my health, my life,  
 But you will never take my pride...

Here at the Old Folsom Relay for Life has  
 given us all a Voice to inspire and share the  
 raw emotions we feel... The idea is we all  
 can make a difference,  
 Thank Old Folsom Today for making this  
 real...

### **Enough Said by Bob Lee Handy**

10 years!

If I die now it'll be a life sentence.

Sequence of events.

Designed by a wicked inventor.

I have no respect for the creator  
that created this contraption  
that holds me captive in my own homeland

Home is a prison, a cave, a dungeon.  
—Enough said.

### **Reflection by Reynald Corey**

Looking out the window  
Reflecting upon my chaotic life  
It's been one helluva journey  
Either how big the buller nor how sharp the  
knife

People have left & bridges have burnt  
Now I'm all but alone,  
Wasting away in Concrete Hell  
Until I'm just a pile of bones.

Not all that long ago  
I really thought I had it made,  
Now I try to remember  
But it's all beginning to fade.

That truth really scares me  
Being held for what I can't even remember,  
One more journey around the sun  
marked by each passing December.

One day I'll leave this place  
Into a new world to explore,  
I'd be ill advised indeed  
To expect it to be as before.

For now I'll get back to my life  
meagerly existing in this little box,  
Surrounded by walls & fences  
Waiting for intercoms & clicking locks.

### **The Window by Nate High**

Sometimes I stand and stare thru the dirty  
glass, self-inflicted pain is all I gain by  
watching the world pass.  
I entered prison young, a child with a  
forfeited future,  
Life without parole creates gapping holes  
that cant be closed by any suture.  
I've become the man without a past. A boy  
without a story to tell,  
after 18 years in prison,  
all I know are days wasted away in a cell. I  
was 14 and in the 8th grade when I did what  
they say I did,  
but when it comes to murder,  
no one cares if you're only a kid. Sentenced  
to Forever, I no longer believe that I matter,  
I am just a broken soul whose  
every dream  
is eventually shattered. Self- gratification is  
the key to trying to survive,  
Just breathing is more important that finding  
meaning, when you're fighting to simply  
stay alive,  
This window is hell, it reminds me of a life  
that's not meant for me,  
But when you live in a cell, the darkness  
cant be all you see,  
So I embrace the pain and watch as the  
world passes me by,  
And I grow stronger with every tear that I  
Silently cry.

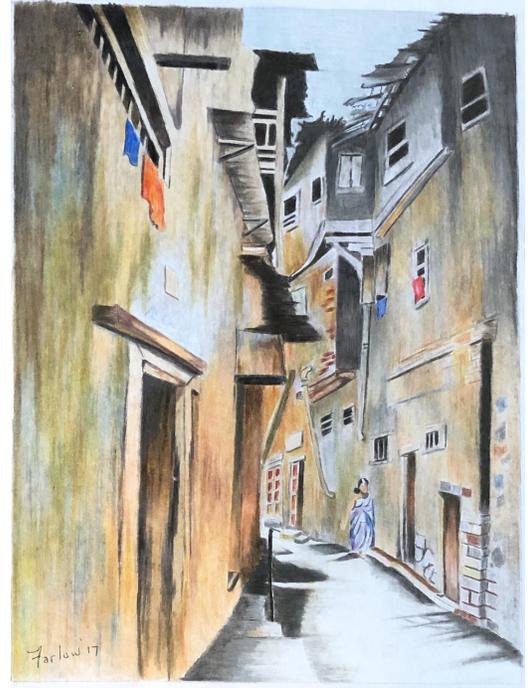
### **Luz Limitado by Charles Higgins**

A sol dejando  
De Domingo a Sábado  
Año despues año  
Oscurecerse vacío

### **Blue 2 by Anonymous Poet**

It's a sunny day. All is warm and  
bright except for me. No smile on  
my face, No warmth in my heart.  
Why must life be this way?  
The sun shines while my eyes  
Brim over with tears.  
The sky is clear, but my mind  
Is clouded.

If only I could be what I  
See instead of what I am,  
Wouldn't that be something?



*Untitled* by Gary Farlow

### **Fatherly Advice by Charles Higgins**

Son, I'm certainly not going to be the dude,  
Who tells you that you need to go to school.

Just to be successful and see the truth,  
That it benefits you regardless of what you  
do

Go ahead and accept this lesson neer  
expected,  
Take a second and just ponder the exception

Education is often regarded to perception,  
By textbooks that are guarded by deception

The god of my affection, Yahweh got me  
elevated, worked harder, but I'm smarter  
than college educated.

I'm no longer delegated to these moronic  
imitators, simple players posing versus the  
noble stated haters.

Take your time with your attempting and trying, Patience with your practice and reading and applying.

Learn from your mistakes rather than let them haunt you, And shine... regardless when nobody wants you to.

### Wildfire Haiku by Dwane West

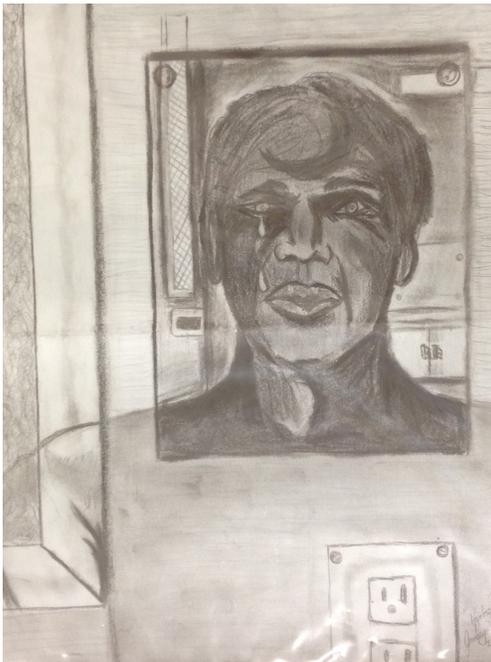
An empty pasture  
Lightning strikes the brittle grass  
Ghostly smoke rises

The horizon glows  
Wind pushes the hungry flame  
An inferno grows

Harsh thunder rumbles  
Rain calms the roaring fire  
Whisps of steam - scorched earth

### Seasoned Actions by Scott Madoulet

not too young to die  
not too old to lie  
not too young to cry  
not too old to try



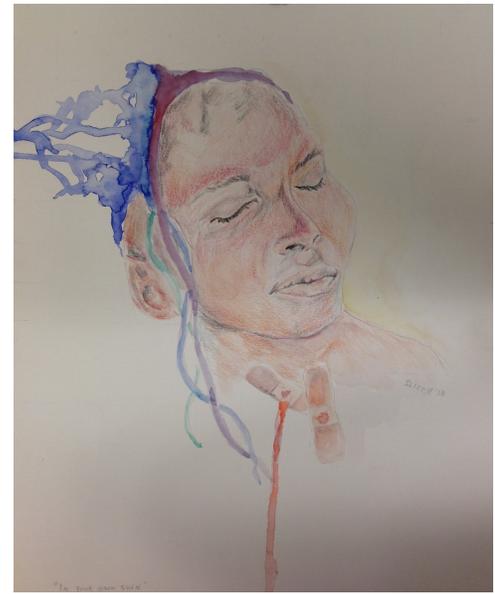
*Hopeless* by Jackey Sollars

### Reality Outposts by David Hehn

Signs points us in different directions  
Look toward the horizon you may see the  
Super Moon  
In the very merry month of May  
I was walking around the prison track one  
day  
When what should I see but a loss of dignity  
in a man with his head held low  
I asked him what was wrong? He replied that  
his mother had just died  
That she died 5 days ago, but they didn't tell  
him till today  
You see they said they had to verify and  
couldn't tell him sooner  
He'll miss the funeral, he'll miss the day that  
they lay his Mom to rest  
He seemed like he was in shock so I got  
angry for him at what they did  
Just to think it was 73 degrees and sunny at  
that moment  
And a minute before I couldn't think of any  
problems.

### The Resurrected Man by Liam Foster

As a cycle comes and goes,  
I oft wonder how time flies.  
It seems the world shifts and changes,  
Yet I alone am bereft of It;s touches.  
Isolation yields a complex clarity,  
For it reveals the folly of Destiny.  
Fallacious ideologies that shaped one's  
identity,  
Are liberated from ignorant obscurity.  
What is left to reconstitute,  
When the body mind and soul is rendered  
destitute.  
Seeing the brutal truth you cant refute  
This fresh reality forces you to be resolve.  
Thus from this enforced solitude,  
I've gained an enhanced attitude,  
Rising from the crucible with a sense of  
rectitude,  
Prepared to face whatever fate wishes to  
include.  
I, the resurrected man reaches,  
Striving to secure that distant liberty.  
For with it life will be absolute,  
Determination's my natural aptitude for I've  
the fortitude.



*In your own skin* by sleep

### Oceans of Eternity by Liam Foster

Sailing away now,  
Across the Oceans of eternity.  
I let the tide pull me away,  
As the waves lap and spray.  
Distance is unfathomable ,  
What is time,  
If duration is unknown,  
But perception.  
Lost in an endless moment,  
I yearn to escape;  
Absent any shores upon the horizon,  
I shudder in despair/  
Yes, the solitude of the sea,  
Is soothing as it gently rocks and sways;  
And it's depths promise change,  
But for fear I do not drive under  
Left adrift plagued by a storm of thoughts,  
I cannot flee this sea of memories.  
The stars above are hidden from sights,  
My world is filled with perpetual night.  
Obsidian waters as far as the eyes can see;  
I try to imagine what freedom would be,  
For it exists only in dreams,  
Yet I find not even sleep for comfort.  
Time crisp breeze,  
Does not ease,  
These feelings inside of me.  
This life is death,  
As absence is not existence  
So in this tribulation I seek oblivion,

Finding no succor to my plight,  
 I truly understand that I am alone.  
 Thus is the brutality of reality,  
 That the true prison is time,  
 The very substance of the waters we cross,  
 That fill oceans of eternity.



*From the Inside Out* by Dennis Sierra  
 (Kenika)

**A Moment In Time by Liam Foster**

Chance,  
 Smiles, Laughs,  
 Bruises, Strategies, scars,  
 Thoughts, words, sounds, touches.  
 Unions, separations, reunions,  
 Kisses, hugs, caresses, looks,  
 Fear, love, pain,  
 You, me,  
 Us.  
 Simple words do tell a tale,  
 They create a story to feel.  
 Can you see, will you hear,  
 The messages to draw you near.  
 Sweet lips can play with words,  
 Like beautiful singing songbirds;  
 But can you bring healing,  
 With what you're feeling.  
 This I try for you and I.  
 To give and take a moment in time.

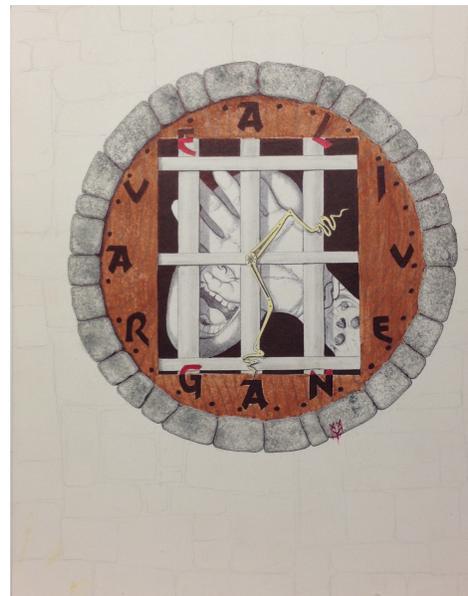
**Watchin' The Clouds Go by Ed Rose**

Clouds gather—rain begins to fall.  
 Lightning flashes— a warning for us all.  
 Can't say when life will be mine.

Don't know what's at the roads end I'll find/  
 Time for a new day—  
 Time for a newer way  
 Of lookin' at things.  
 Gonna sit back and listen to the birds sing  
 — watchin the clouds go by.

Gonna build a house on a mountain some  
 day.  
 Grow my food -n- herb and grow old and  
 gray.  
 Gonna find a pretty girl — take her for my  
 wife.  
 Hafta make her happy so she never says  
 goodbye.

Take her away with me—  
 Take her away with me  
 To the mountain where we will be  
 so satisfied...  
 Watchin the clouds go by.



*Alive NA Grave* by Cody da Criminal

**Freedom by CL Nobles**

Freedom is like a breath of fresh air  
 When your heart is lonely and your thoughts  
 are  
 In despair.

Freedom is like ice cream on a hot summer  
 day,

And humbling like a snowman melting  
 away.

Freedom is like lightning, striking through  
 the sky,  
 Softly like a tear forming out at thee eye.

Awaking like a kiss, gripping like a hug, it is  
 even enchanting, like the humming of a bug.

Freedom is like a volcano, lava dripping  
 down the sides and proud like a man beating  
 his chest with pride.

Freedom is like an earthquake rumbling the  
 grund and as sunset sweet as a puppy,  
 adopted from the pound.

Freedom is like a waterful splashing into the  
 ocean  
 Or a letter in a bottle peacefully floating.

Freedom is from the clouds, like droplets of  
 rain  
 In tiny little beads across the windowpane.

Freedom is like an adventure, a voyage out  
 to sea,  
 Tropical birds singing songs in a jungle  
 canopy.

Freedom is no restraint, restrictions, no  
 obstacles  
 You can feel it, you can hear it, it is  
 apparent,  
 No optical.

**A Ticket to Die by Paul Baber**

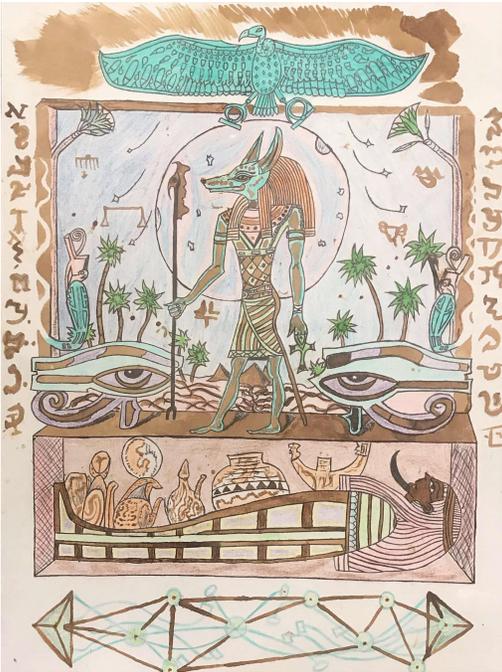
Awakening from the dark, I come into this  
 life,  
 No way of knowing the coming times of  
 strife.  
 The trauma of birth was a relentless call,  
 Of things to come and the things I saw.  
 Many bad things have happened and I've  
 asked "why?"  
 Many might say I've been given a "ticket to  
 die."  
 A ticket to die and no clear reason why,  
 Commonly wonder and look for an answer  
 in the sky.

Desperately seeking somebody's hand,  
 In this troubles and forsaken land,  
 Through this pain and sorrow,  
 Will there be a better tomorrow?

Changing my mood from glad to sadness,  
 Will there be an end to this constant  
 madness?

Love me and take away this endless pain,  
 Don't let my love for you be in vain,

Don't tell me you're leaving; don't say  
 "goodbye",  
 Authentic until the stars fade from the sky.  
 What I'm going through you can't  
 understand,  
 Would it be too much to hold your hand?



Anubis by Jeremy Brown

**The Dragon Slayer by Sandy Blazinski**

Here comes another dragon  
 guess I better get my sword  
 I fight these battles day and night  
 and I fight them all alone  
 What I wouldn't give if just one time  
 Someone would come up and say  
 "It's okay, put down your sword,  
 You don't have to fight today.  
 I'll fight this battle for you,

I'll slay this dragon so you don't have to."  
 Yes, that would be nice, but until it  
 happens...  
 I guess I better get my sword  
 Here comes another dragon.

**School Jewels by Michael S. Griffis**

All across this gracious land  
 from East Coast to the West  
 our teachers with the toughest task  
 yet always ace the test  
 From A,B,C's and 1,2,3's  
 'til days of graduation  
 our mentors guide with loving care  
 it's more than just vocation  
 It's so much more than all the three R's  
 at times it's life and death  
 A child saved from reapers grasp  
 with teachers final breath  
 They show the best in worst of times  
 and too they pay the price  
 the gift of love is life itself  
 and that of sacrifice  
 These heroes songs are the most unsung  
 their feats not brought to light  
 a thousand times a day take place  
 with strength and grace and might  
 Today tough brings this song of praise  
 to those that make the grade  
 mentors, teachers, helping hands  
 this written accolade  
 Thank you for my faith renewed  
 our teachers get an A  
 our children too from coast to coast  
 have yet another day.

**The A-Z Poem by Angela Rizzo**

Always fair, so I try to be  
 Bargaining chips, they're not for me  
 Challenge my mind, change my heart  
 Dare to stay, never apart  
 Ending and ending not a good start  
 focus on the bullseye, throw the last dart  
 Griping and fighting, what is the point?  
 Headache and headache, what is the point?  
 Inside here everyone see's  
 Justice and freedom, those things are a tease.  
 Keep to one-self, that's your best bet.  
 Learn to be humble, owe no one debt

Mercy and grace gifts from above  
 Nothing to gain, if you fall in love  
 Open my eyes, keep my mouth shut  
 People are haters, I go with my gut  
 Quicken and quicker the day the days fly by  
 Rushing to years end to say my last  
 goodbyes  
 Sorry can't stay, so sad to go  
 Under the radar over the wall  
 Victim no more made the last call  
 Walking papers feels so right  
 X-ray eye's, now I'm out of sight  
 you can be you, and I can be me  
 Zen till the end, that's how life should be.

**Untitled Poem by Eric Pepke**

Heart like a coal briquette  
 Black dust pressed hard  
 Burns hot maybe once  
 Grey ash blows away

**Abandoned by Michael Mosley**

I hate being in the dark  
 Cause that's when the thoughts  
 Torment my heart  
 growing up  
 Parents—halfway played their part  
 Abandoned, I remember...  
 Birthdays in the park  
 Watching ice cream and cake melt  
 Waited on mama too long  
 She don't know how it felt  
 Having parents that didn't care  
 Was just the hand I was dealt  
 Juvenile Detention

"Son, who can we call  
 To come pick you up?"  
 "I guess my Dad."  
 "We did, he basically said:  
 He don't give a f\*ck"  
 "Damn, forreal? That's how he feels?"  
 "Said he washed his hands  
 he's gonna let the state deal."  
 Add another name to the list  
 Of people who lost hope  
 I've always been replaced by  
 something else  
 With my mama, it was dope  
 With my Dad- Alcohol

I remember just being a kid  
 getting told I was a lost cause  
 Lock down, lights out, I pause... to reflect  
 even if it torments my heart  
 Its time to accept  
 Im lost in this life  
 but what's the cause for all the strife?  
 Maybe it was being abused in my youth  
 People - simply never care to hear  
 the truth  
 only a toddler, left in the dope house  
 sometimes for no reason  
 I'd get punched in my  
 mouth  
 violence was a regular occurrence  
 everyday  
 You can either run from it and be a coward  
 or embrace it an be okay  
 I had no other choice  
 In order to live, I had to play  
 can't you hear the cries  
 of a man who's been led astray?  
 at night, by myself  
 I clasp my hands and try to pray  
 "Dear Lord, I know up to this point  
 I've been a product of my  
 environment.  
 My life experiences have caused  
 To resort to violence.  
 Listen, as the tears take away the silence.  
 I've been abandoned, stranded  
 Forsaken and disowned  
 I just ask for your forgiveness  
 For all the one's I've done wrong."

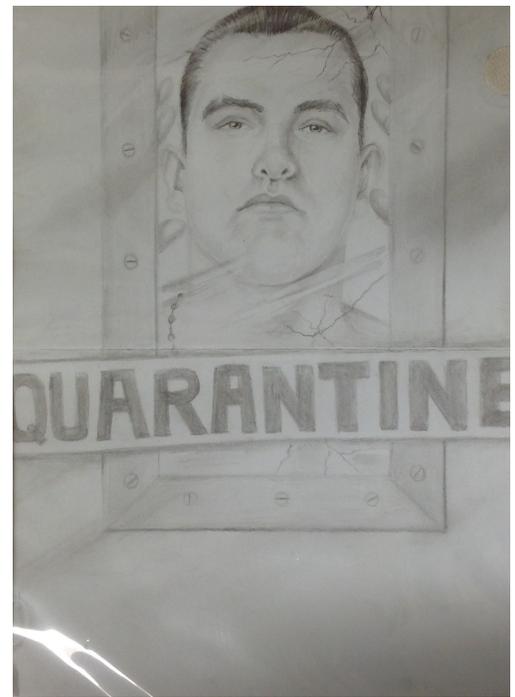
#### Choices Covid-19 by Brittian Osorio

Everyday thath you clock in  
 You make a major sacrifice,  
 To work on the frontlines, risking your own  
 lives.  
 Mentally and physically ready to lose your  
 mind,  
 And although you try to hide them we see  
 the tears in your eyes.  
 Ever segment on the news someone breaks  
 down cryin,  
 Because we see the choice you make to keep  
 us safe and alive.  
 Other people wouldn't be able to make the  
 same choice in time.

To save someone's life whether it's yours or  
 mine.  
 I saw a commercial that made even me  
 wanna cry  
 We see what you go through but I don't  
 know what its like  
 All the fear in your heart yet you put it to the  
 side  
 To helo him or help her no matter what you  
 feel inside.  
 You're the definition of humanity, an  
 example of love  
 So let me express my gratitude and support  
 to the ones,  
 Out there everyday and night, doing their  
 part to help us  
 Together we will stand endure and Rise Up

#### To be Young Gifted & Black by Michael Haynes

To be young, gifted and black, is a  
 wonderful thing  
 Use your talents well and watch what it  
 bring smiles to peoples faces, if you dance or  
 sing  
 Scream and holler, if its a sports thing  
 It could be television, acting or something to  
 do with school  
 Whatever it is, do it wisely and don't be a  
 fool, you'll never  
 Know, who may look up to you. To be  
 young, gifted and black  
 Expectation maybe high and the pressure  
 higher, but if you  
 Go about it right, you'll get what you desire.  
 Just don't  
 Forget those that helped you along the way  
 and  
 Remember to give back and they'll have  
 good things to say.  
 So, if your young, gifted and black, follow  
 your dreams, you have nothing to fear, make  
 the right choices and they'll stand  
 Up and cheer.



Quarantine by Juan Ochoa

#### Where's My Homies??? by Cory Lott

Should I have copp'd out 2 a sex crime??  
 Or should I have told da truth by dropp'n  
 dime??  
 2 say this doesn't bother me @ times...  
 Would B a mothaf\*\*\* lie!!  
 I would've neva thought dis would've come  
 Back & Bite me...  
 I thought da only... hting dat sticks on  
 records  
 Are felonies!!  
 Now look @ me... Im still doing time 4  
 someone  
 I swore was my homie!!!  
 Its crazy how ppl look 4 anything 2 B'lieve,  
 jus so  
 Dey assume it'll make U weak...  
 I see people laughing @ me, But I still can't  
 find whats so funny...  
 I'm Glad I C what ppl think of me...  
 I'm not one 2 hurt easy... so aGain...  
 Where's my homies...Who said "Plz look  
 out 4 me...  
 & Plead Gulity!!"??  
 OH I see... Its time 2 let Blame fall on  
 Cory!!!  
 When oui Both know...it's U who loved  
 young pu\*\*\*!!!  
 \*Whoa 12 me\*...

Da crazy thing about this... is it made me  
look in a whole New Perspective!!!  
Betrayal from a street GanG... Dat I swore  
my

AlleGiance with!!!

I was left'd alone 2 wear Defoulmnt...  
Of where da nxt man put his d\*\*\*!!!

It wasn't about how much... I can stand...  
It was da feeling... of dismantling "A family  
MAN"!!!

DID U ALL 4Get... Who open'd up endless  
avenues??

I made sure our clique stay'd... fresh, fly &  
new!!

Wasn't I Da One Who Gave otha hood  
curfews... jus so da elderly could come as  
dey choose??

I Gave a name 2 our Block... By collecting  
from rival crews!!!

Oh U must've 4Got... How I Got shot... By  
dem fools in Blue!!!

Jus 2 retaliate screaming "soo- woop"... I'm  
dat dude!!!

Nobody can do... what I do...  
everybody...felt

safe coming & Going to school... Once I  
gave da signal... Dat everything  
Is cool!!! All of dis... 4 my love 5 piru!!!

Im glad I faced such a tragic shittiation...  
Because.. It taught me 2 "NevaJudge"...  
regardless 2 what someone case is!!!

A simple Guilty plea... OPen'd my eyes  
More Den I thought

I'll be able 2 c... Basically... My Homies  
used me... Jus as quick as dey expect'd me!!  
I took it all in stride... Because I got morals  
& principals Beyond my pride!!!

Dey say all good things come 2 an  
end..

But I say... Be careful whom U take in... As  
friends!!!

No losers wanna c u win!!

You'll cross alotta fakes &

phonies

& please don't end up like me... S.M.H. @  
my

"So-called Homies!!"

Peace!!



*Losers Weepers by Kenneth Zamarron*

### **Your Memory Lives On by Michael Mosley**

this poem is dedicated to my homie Randy

White

A-K-A Ray-Ray

I know its taken forever and a day  
but how could I write this  
or even find the words to say  
when we lost you in the worst way

Im moving too fast

let me rewind and push play...

though we had many mutual acquaintances  
we didn't meet until our incarceration

I still remember

yelling through the cracks on doors in  
segregation

making sure the guards juxtaposed us in the  
rec cages

you motivated me to write  
where upon I produced pages  
after midnight at the vent  
you told me all about Texas  
and the sister that you missed  
you was there on Christmas

When I drenched the c/o with p\*\*\*

I can still hear echoes of your laughter  
released from the hole

just to return 2 weeks after

"inciting a riot"

tried talking our way out of it

but they didn't buy it  
killing time, playing poker  
always joking  
didn't care if it made us broker  
in different pods, swapping poems  
I kept yours in my folder  
You told me: "keep writing, you're getting  
colder."

behind bars we formed a bond  
but it went far beyond  
made it to the streets  
after years, it was a blessing to be free  
first thing you said on the phone  
"you gotta pull up on me"  
"of course your my everyday  
guy"

I remember telling you  
"Bruh, you gotta stop getting high"

I remember telling you  
Kicked out, homeless, without a dime

I drove an hour to pick you up  
wasn't gonna leave you stuck  
made a phone call to my mama

"Bruh, go get your stuff  
she said you could stay

its all the way in White Bluff.  
this is your chance to get clean  
get off them drugs"

but my plans never worked out  
I couldn't do much

Running from the law, sleeping couch to  
couch

seen you right before I got arrested  
your eyes were filled with doubt

"I feel like Imma die, if I don't get out of this  
house"

thats what you told me word for word  
your voice full of desperation but I never  
heard

halfway through my stint of incarceration

I got the news

just a mile down the road  
you were found in a car, overdosed  
that night I cried

in the midst of your ghost  
another life claimed by the opiate epidemic

Heroin ravaging our communities  
your just another caught up in it

I guess its true

our fate really is suspended  
and for some reason I'm still dangling  
but only by a thread

wondering why the man upstairs  
didn't take me instead...  
i'm left with pain and fear  
that any given moment  
I'll find out someone else I love's not here  
never thought a person  
could run out of tears  
but I've shed so many in just 23 years  
for you, my brother  
plus countless peers  
lost to the system or the streets  
just know your memory lives on  
for as long as my heart beats.

### **In the Red by Johnny E. Mahaffey**

FREEDOM-eyed among those aside  
Set in societal asphyxiation  
and social media strangulation  
under unqualified state- pride!

A decades long legal mudslide  
of constitutional suffocation  
and mass incarceration facilitation  
now coming to an end with society OPEN-  
eyed

This much needed prison reform makeover  
not from heart, but a financial arithmetic  
under a voter-getter guise as empathetic  
this complete punitive classification  
turnover!

Due to the erroneously over-convicted  
spillover  
resulting from so much greed it's pathetic  
decades of unending incarcerations  
unsympathetic  
with their eye-for an-eye, Constitution plow  
over!

Mentally ill were tossed away with no one to  
confide  
innocent with guilty with partially guilty in  
desolation  
together without divide; because, of the  
corrupt takeover  
of courts (with?) guilt (with?) blame (with?)  
some money pathogenic?

### **Enough by Jeremiah Taylor**

I've taken all I can take!  
I've stood by all these years!  
I watched you come and go!  
You tore my heart open and then shoved it  
shut!  
we've fallen in and out of love.  
I've gone from sane to crazy!  
Enough!

I held my doubts!  
I've cried myself to sleep!  
I've rose from being the underdog to only get  
knocked down again!  
I've been brusied, beaten, broken!  
Told you were born this way!  
Enough!

I've ran with the crowds just to fit in!  
I loved to only get it raken and never  
returned!  
I cried out to just let me die!  
End this pain, let me be set free! Shattered!  
I've given up! Reached the end! but it is'nt in  
my blood!  
Enough!

It's time to be a fighter:  
It time for me to step up! Speak up! rise up!  
It's time I mend the pieces, rise up from the  
ashes  
a defeat, find out who I am: Set me free!  
Speak life into me:  
Enough is Enough!

### **The Graveyard by Paul Burton**

The graveyard weeps of saddened souls,  
a darkened say has taken tolls,  
For those who  
could hace changed the world,  
for those who's time  
We can't control,  
We can't replace  
and won't forget  
the things youve done  
or what they meant

The graveyard weeps of broken hearts,  
for those thats been there  
from the start,  
Those crying eyes of crystal tears  
torn away by sharpened spearsd  
by blood knives

and foolish fears,  
The graveyard weeps of Ravished Dreams  
The great The wise, we held so dear  
Just like the leaves, when autumn falls  
their beauty lives the world  
goes on,  
we turn the page and start from  
New but don't forget the things  
you do.

The graveyard weeps it cries for you  
the ones we lost and  
gone too soon

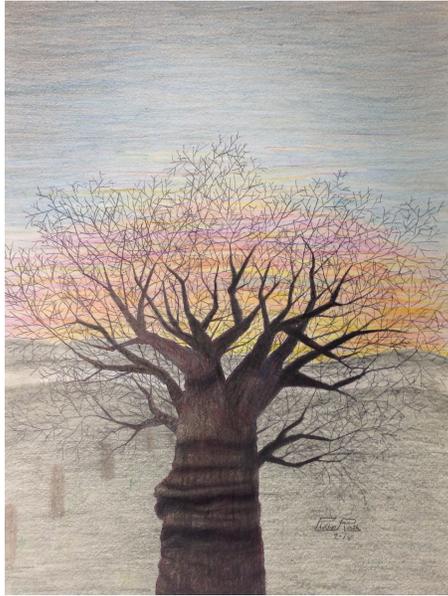
### **Prison within A Prison by Jason Minner**

Within these walls of concrete and stone,  
Deep in the mind so far from home.  
I see many others with little to no hope, so  
many zombies stoned on state dope.  
We fight and we yell to our convict peers,  
Can't even tell a secret due to too many ears.  
We stand in a line waiting then and now,  
While some kind in a badge loudly yells  
"CHOW!"  
Sitting upon a metal stool trying to cut some  
crap with a spork,  
What I would not give for a regular knife  
and tined fork.  
But you can not trust this psycho with an  
everyday item,  
All because I'm way too crazy or I'll just  
hide them.  
With ramen-noodle soup I buy, I trade and  
sell,  
Anything to make it easier in this not-so-  
private hell.

### **Putty Cat by Matthew Shelton**

Her whiskers whisper, scraping across my  
leg.  
Her purr almost a sillence,  
But felt when she nudges me.  
Saying "Hello"  
Black and white, and friendlier  
Than a whole box of kittens,  
She isn;t afraid of the 'Red Ticks' and  
'Blood Hounds'  
In the Kennel.  
She might envy the horses,  
But only cause they have a better vantage.

She sleeps all day, and hunts all night.  
 She's the only one not "locked up," free to  
 prowl.  
 Her ears perk up when the count whistle  
 blows,  
 And the dogs begin to howl.  
 She's the first to greet us inn the pre-dawn  
 light.  
 And always my first welcome sight.



*Grand Old Oak* by Phillip L Roth

**Love Deserves a Second Chance by Andre Stuckey**

love deserves  
 a second chance  
 For a heartbroken  
 As you sit  
 And contemplate  
 Your purpose  
 In Life  
 Do you have  
 the strength  
 to wonder  
 How long  
 Has it been  
 Since you  
 Truly loved someone  
 Will you continue  
 To be a slave

To your broken heart  
 or will you fight  
 For what  
 Love has to offer  
 Life is not  
 Complete  
 Without  
 The joy and happiness  
 THAT love  
 has to offer  
 whether  
 Its the love for yourself  
 or a  
 significant other  
 Love deserves  
 A second chance  
 For a heart  
 that has been  
 Broken once  
 And often several times  
 As you call out  
 My name  
 How long  
 Has it been  
 since you had  
 The faith  
 AND truth  
 IN someone  
 to truly love again  
 As you call out  
 my name  
 As you rely  
 on me  
 more and more  
 For the  
 Daily Joy and Happiness  
 love has to offer  
 As you call out  
 my name  
 While you lay  
 In my arms

**Poem by Jermetras Watson**

Sorry For your pain,  
 and lonliness,  
 But I love you and you must love yourself,  
 Sorry For your pain,  
 Do not allow this world to put a stain on  
 your heart,

Sorry for your pain,  
 Please smile for me because my love will  
 never part  
 and you will remain in my heart,  
 Sorry for your pain,  
 Remember everything in this world is  
 materialistic and  
 you can't take any materialistic thing with  
 you to heaven,  
 Love yourself because you are special no  
 matter what she said or he said about you,  
 they are only upset  
 because they see the light in you and not  
 themselves and  
 only want to push you down,  
 Sorry For your pain,  
 keep love alive, which means you must live  
 because of  
 the love inside your soul,  
 sorry for your pain,  
 please take my hand and by the way, my  
 name is Kindness  
 and it is a pleasure to meet you and I believe  
 our  
 Friendship will last, because Love and  
 Kindness go well with one another,  
 Sorry for your pain,  
 Please take my hand and I will love you and  
 teach you  
 to trust again until there's is no more tears  
 from your eyes,  
 Sorry for your pain.

**JUST BEECUZZ by James Newman**

Golden honeycomb of happiness  
 Abuzz with springtime joy  
 Where festive feet tap the time  
 Very Anxious to deploy  
 Antennae know when a warm breeze  
 Blows, follow fragrant scent  
 Ambrosia flows, striped stomachs  
 Grow, flower petals bend  
 When stamens dry, flap wings and  
 Fly, It's time all buzz on home  
 An'pay sweet honey homage  
 To the Queen on golden throne

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To all who submitted poetry for this anthology:

I hope you have enjoyed this poetry anthology. Tavo is a new worker at PE. When he found out I was looking for someone to read all your poetry and create this anthology he jumped at the opportunity. Typically I ask a few people to work together to create the anthology, but the pandemic closed down the university and slowed down our ability to do our programs. Luckily for all of us Tavo kept working on the project. He must have read many thousands of poems to find the ones he selected to go into this publication. It is a hard job to choose a few from the many. I know many of you are thrilled to see one or more of your poems included in the anthology, and I also know many of you feel hurt when you do not see your well crafted poems included. Poetry as we all know is subjective. Whether your poem was chosen or not, is not a reflection on you but rather on the values and beliefs of the editor. What is a reflection on you is that you took the time to craft a poem and submit it. Doing that while facing the daily grind of prison life indeed makes a positive statement about you, your character, and your desire to connect with others. This anthology is meant to celebrate your creativity and the power of the human spirit. Writing and submitting a poem shows your strength, your desire to be part of something bigger than yourself. These traits will serve you well in the future.

We received a number of poems after Tavo finished the selection process. All of these poems will be considered for the next poetry anthology #24.

You are Prisoner Express! As long as you continue to write I hope we can be here to promote your writings, both to other prisoners and to citizens in the free world. We will continue to use your writings to raise awareness of the humanity of all who are locked away, out of sight. Your writings remind us all of the bright spirits that reside in each of us, and I hope you will continue to participate in Prisoner Express writing projects.

I have encouraged Tavo to include a poem in the anthology. If you want to write to him at PE, I will forward your mail to him. With campus still closed down these are most unusual times. As are all of us, we at PE are adapting to the changing conditions. When you next write let me know what you think of the PE Poetry Project.

Best,

Gary Fine



*Untitled by Unknown*