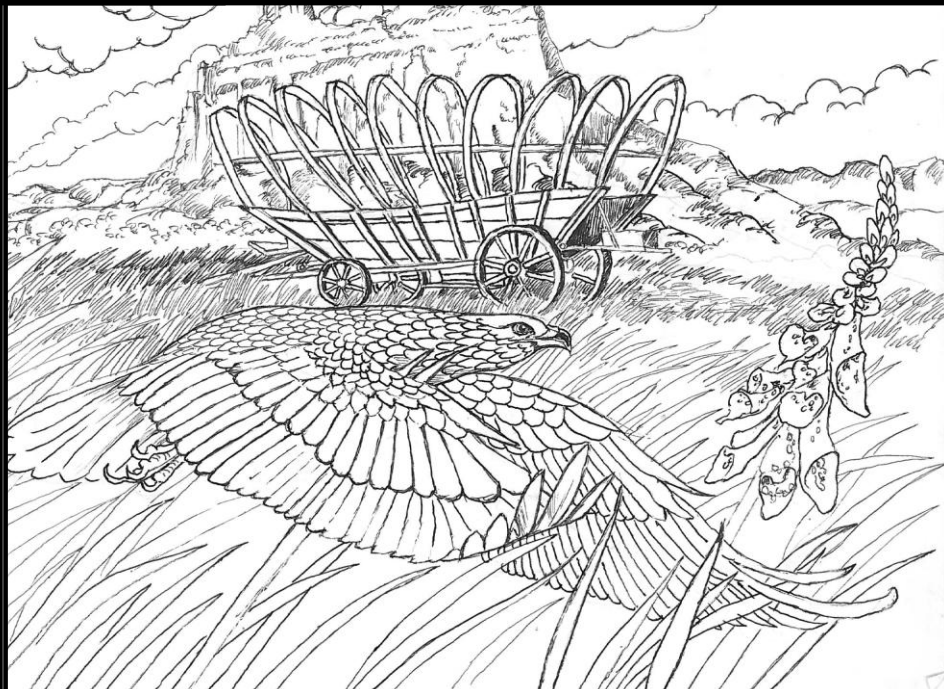




Prisoner Express

Poetry Anthology

Volume 7



Welcome to the 7th volume of the Prisoner Express Poetry Project. This volume has had many editors and variety of people who have worked on it. In the past usually one editor would start and finish the anthology, but it has not been the case this time. A series of mishaps followed the process of creating this edition. The good news is that when it looked bleakest a volunteer would show up and put the project back together. While I seldom invite adversity into my life, I have to acknowledge that it has the potential to make us stronger, and more able to deal with the trials and tribulations that accompany the experience of being alive on this planet.

This issue is shorter than the previous issues, but the poetry has been carefully chosen by the student readers who read thousands of submitted poems. We stopped accepting poems for this volume many months back, and all the newest poetry has been accumulating in a file. As soon as this edition is mailed we will start reading the hundreds of new poems we have, and begin working on Volume 8. Perhaps some of you who are disappointed not to see your poem in this edition will be pleasantly surprised to see it in the next edition. We get so many poems it is impossible for most of them to be printed in these booklets. Perhaps if we find more funds we can enlarge the size of the publication.

While I think poetry as an art form is less appreciated in the free world than it was in the past, I can see from your writings how much poetry serves you as a vehicle for self expression. I am very impressed with the poetry I have read and hope we can soon offer a distance learning packet on "Writing Poetry". For many of you the prison experience has caused you to develop a love of reading, drawing and writing. I am glad to help encourage you to explore these avenues of self discovery.

This whole project started a few years back when Toby, a student volunteer pointed out all the great poetry you were sending, and he took the time to create Volume 1 in this series. Toby has long since moved on, but has left a legacy in the continuation of this important literary project. We post every anthology online and I know folks in the free world enjoy and appreciate the poetry shared on the website.

Our intent at Prisoner Express is to provide you with opportunities for creative self expression in a public forum. This project certainly accomplishes that, but it also does much more. Your poetry opens all our eyes to the humanity of the people who are incarcerated. While Prisoner Express is not a political organization, I hope that your words will the effect of opening up the hearts and minds of folks on the outside. I envision them embracing the concept of reforming the prison system so that it offers opportunities for rehabilitation through arts and education to all who have the desire to learn and grow. I know it is easy to forget the humanity of those locked away. These volumes of poetry serve as a powerful reminder of the lives of those behind bars. All of you who participate in this project whether your work has been selected for publication or not, can feel proud of yourself for being an instrument of hope and change. We never know when a seed planted will grow and bear fruit, but if put in fertile ground and cared for it usually will. My hope is that each of your poems planted in our minds can influence public policy and generate compassion.

While I am writing the introduction and coordinate the Prisoner Express program I have contributed little to this particular edition. I want to thank Julie, Alexis and Sophie for doing much of the work to keep this effort afloat. Alexis has volunteered to take on the process of coordinating the next edition Vol8 which I hope we can mail out in late winter 2011. My goal is to mail these anthologies every 6 months. Please keep submitting your poems and writing with any suggestions on how we can make this program better. I appreciate the opportunity to work with all of you, and hope extraordinary good fortune knocks soon at your door.

Best wishes,

Gary

Artwork

All of the artwork done in this issue is by **Jeff Harnden**. Jeff is a very talented artist who has been sharing his work with the Prisoner Express program for many years. Most of these reprints are pages he has designed for a coloring book we hope to produce someday soon. Jeff has impressed all of us at Prisoner Express with his sharp eye for detail. He also excels at using coffee as a colorant to make noir style pictures. What we are including in this issue is just a sampling of the fine work he has shared with us. Thank you Jeff for your inspirational art





speaking out

Black World **Edward W. Gallagher III**

We need a new world
This one is trash
This planet is dying
We get to watch it crash
Whose hand will you be holding?
The final day has come
Cards are folding
We get to blame no one
My soul is black
Like the tattoo on my skin
Pearly and fiery gates open
Which one will I go in?
Think about it
Think long and hard
This life is over
Time to count the stars...

Untitled **Dawey Pierce**

Everything I got my people worked hard for, scrub floor for, shot by 44 for, lynched by the neck and even burned alive for, so there's no reason to lie for, I'd die for my people though I know most would never cry for, let alone take the time to even ask why for.

There's too many triggers cause everybody knows that there's too many niggas and not enough dough, trickle down economics trickle down slow there's less degreed bros than blacks with c.o.'s, shortys get weeded out and up being weeded out, and get cheated out of the life that they dream about, yeah, it's the same pain you get drunk to be without so I know you feel what I speak about when I blow you speakers out, representing shit that's hard to read about.

My College Or Grave **Clayton D. Jefferson**

Hear "ye" hear "ye" you may need to read this.
How long can they keep me silent and secluded in the mist?
Why should I wave the towel, is it because they captured my flesh?
And that my heart hurts badly, and bleeds through my chest.
What good are tears, when you can't catch them to stop the grief?
When life became a choice in a chance and your decision was brief.
When chaos has become the norm, and your soul searches for peace.
Inhale and release...
Educators or plot takers, society or rock breakers, jail cells with a mirage of fakers.
The vision is suspense with the pain intense, that crumbles the marmor and reaches the points of intent.
If you only took the time to look through the wires of the doors that have infected my pores, you would see our sores.
And the misery can't be ignored.
I placed my heart on this page, just so you could peek into my *college or grave...*

Predator **Charles Chatman**

The cold war hot as hell these days
A different face to another arms race
Beating way drums wherever victory pays
While depositing diseases without a trace
So much hype for the mightiest
Scaring their own shadows in the dark
So much false security in a global fight
That will make the predator the prey's mark



A-mer-i-ca **Henry Lee Townsend Jr.**

A-mer-i-ca, top corporation of all incarceration.
Gain with lives they have grounded.

To change my ways rehabilitate,
This is what Public Officials swear and state.
But, those of us who pay realize
These prisons hurt,
They dehumanize.
How can thoughtless men inspire,
How can their acts admire?

Less we forget what they have shown,
Now is the time to make it known.
Don't let your vengeance play the fool,
Not let your anger make you cruel.
A bitter death that eats away,
for us the sun, moon, stars are crossed with prison bars.
Where then compassion's reaching hand
As God would have us understand.
As thou has done the less of these
Enter my Hell
Enter my peace
A-mer-i-ca

Status Quo Democracy **Charles Chatman**

Status quo with a national police force
Answering only to those among its ranks
Civil murders as the main recourse
Agent provocateurs at the helm of its flanks
Centuries of suppressing freedom of speech
A lifetime dedicated to reactionary pursuits
Domestic wars protecting the corporate leech
Raising the fascist flag for new recruits

The Paradox **Andrew R**

The paradox of our time is that we oppose violence,
But we legalize it through sports like UFC and boxing
And we are against things like human life destruction,
But we legalized the death penalty and abortion,
And we claim that human beings are all equal
But we allow such things as low, middle and upper class to
exist amongst our people
And we oppose sexual in every single way
but we allow porno industries and the likes to remain
And we travel to other countries on this earth and back,
But we can't seem to find time to visit our neighbors for a
quick chit-chat
And we oppose the selling and the using of drugs
But we legalized beverages that kill people such as alcohol
And we label criminal those that break the laws we've got
But don't realize that we are all criminal, 'cause we've
broken the laws of God,
And we find temporary solutions for some of our problems
on life
But we don't get rid of the source that creates these
problems of our age and time.

Cattle **Ray Sanchez jr.**

Enraged
Bred to be caged and enslaved
Chickens in coops
Pigs in pens
Pre-arranged, maintained disorder
Medications freely given
Tranquilizers, anti-depressants

Do you believe
A caged bird would choose
Three meals and a place to sleep
Over the risks of the world
A chance to fly free?

Build new barns for the herbs?
Broken spirited, dull-eyed cattle
Future meat for political mouths
California Department of Corrections
Such a happy little slaughterhouse!



I wish to fly away

Prison **Darell Kingsberry**

Shackles cut into my ankles,
Every step is a cryful pain.
I can't walk no longer...
The shackles has cripple me,
But I must continue my journey.

Handcuffs locked around my risk,
I am bond by chains into bondage.
The essence of slavery in modern time.
Plantation are now prisons justified by crime.

Families torn apart, warriors spirit broken,
Humans fed to a justice shark.

Eaten alive by the jurisdiction system.

Is this the work of God or the devil's wisdom?

My Mistake

Jermaine E. Lanos

It is my mistake
That my mind is restless,
And my heart is broken.
But my biggest mistake
Was to place in your hands the weight of my Emotions.

My smile is gone,
My passion is dead,
But it was my mistake to make your smile my only
Source of joy and happiness.

Yes, it was my mistake, I take the blame.
But before you go, I gladly give you all this pain.

Fly Away

Lawrence G. Hawkins

I wish to fly away
Fly away to a world of no sorrow
That knows no pain today nor tomorrow,
Which has no past of destruction
Or deep hearted corruption,
Where every mouth and stomach is fed and full
And no worries of psycho's killing at schools,
Hatred that's unleashed cast genocide
Has put graves of babies side by side,
In this world there's no such thing
As joyless thoughts filled with pain,
But if we all could really fly
Then to this life I'd say goodbye,
Just maybe it'll come; that day,
Where I can fly,
Fly away!

Locked Away

Michael Atterbury

Release the seals, release calamity
Open Pandora's box and set us free
Break open locks, break open binding scrolls
Unchain the gates, relinquish our captive souls

Here we are
Hiding behind this lid waiting for you to come and insert
the key
We've waited for so long within this box
Waiting for our time to finally come
We're so close from breathing air thought so far away
Trapped inside this space void of oxygen

Here we are
Hoping the end will begin
The end of our bounded captivity

So release the seals, release calamity
Open Pandora's box and set us free
Break open locks, break open binding scrolls
Unchain the gates, relinquish our captive souls

The Prisoner Express

L. Sodorff

While standing on the shoreline
and waiting in the queue
I saw the "Prisoner Express"
as it sailed into view.

Shoving my way to the forefront
to get a better peek
I walked up the gangplank
and took a seat.

I've taken many a trip
down memory lane
and been around this block
traveled to foreign countries
and walked on an Italian dock.

So glancing at the passengers
that were already on board
I heard what they were saying
and it really struck a chord.

It was music to my ears
but I just had to add this note
please put me on your passenger list
cause I'm in the same boat.

Elnakysa Revistied: Circa '89

A.E. Nkosithani VII

Remember when we were free
When you knew the pain of love
When you would share unconditionally
When you could smile or laugh
at the simplest things...
When you used a museum
as your hide and seek playground...
Remember when you were free
Yeah, remember...
When you could use your tongue
and taste pure water from the sky
When you would shelter in my arms
just because you could...
Remember when you held free will
When you wore our royal garb
and held your head high

When your nature raised your heart
When your spirit spoke volumes
and we'd just be happy being together
with nary a word 'cept our breath...
Remember when you were
Yeah, remember when you were we.

Run Away Ben Winter

I run for my life
But I can't catch it
No matter how hard I try I'm still out paced
For each step I take
Life takes two
Leaving me in the dust

I run for my life
And I can't keep up
My feet seem to be in some kind of rebellion
When I say "left"
They go right
Leading me astray

I run for my life –again and again–
But despite my best efforts
There's no finish line in sight
And once I think the goals been met
There's a new horizon to be tamed.

I've run for so long that I know nothing else
Only a life perpetually out of reach
A carrot on a stick
That taunts my empty stomach
With promises unfulfilled.



I run for my life
Though it seems out of reach
Striving to touch the suspended carrot hopes
But as soon as I get near
The string is pulled again
And I'm left with grasping hands

I run for my life
But not for escape
Stretching myself further and further as I go
Closer to death than to life
Or so it would seem at times

I've run so far from where I started that I could never find
my way back
Still
I must run for my life
The life that ran away

My Father's Seed Harold Austin

The first of my father's seed,
So the birthright's mine–
The last of a dying breed,
Of this Austin bloodline–
Consider what that means,
What reality that brings–
Being a single link on a chain of kings,
The last component within the bigger scheme...

My father's father was a hustler,
And so was my own–
A survival trade bred into brothers,
Deeper than the skin and attached to the bone–
The importance of life,
That each tribe demands–
Survival based on the need for strife,
The strengthening elements within each man...

The adage unravels the basic truth,
Of strong and determined individuals–
Tribalism has digressed into shades of red & blue,
Being descendants of Afrika is now criminal–
The racism & cultural poisoning is effectively subliminal,
Not easily noticed or descriptive–
Internalized at every social level,
(all) people of color are considered captive...

Some say that the black man is the last man,
The Alpha and the Omega–
Throughout the history of the land,
The first to know God's favor–
And the cornerstone of his plan,
As I love, I shall die ~a reflection of history–
Being the last of a dying breed, and the first of my fathers
seed...

Have You Ever
Dwayne Waterman

Have you ever seen a nose grow,
But one you couldn't smell.
Have you ever watched a bird sing,
But you couldn't really tell.
Have you ever watched the wind blow,
Swiftly through the trees,
But only left to wonder,
How it felt to feel its breeze.
Have you ever watched the rain come down
Like teardrops from the sky
And wondered how it felt
To never ever cry.
Have you ever seen wild horses run
So gracefully and free
And imagined what a tragedy
If they were stuck in here with me.
This is my perspective
That I know all too well,
It's what I see outside my window
Within my cold, dank cell.

your sweet kiss

Love
Chris Schoworth

This is to you,
My love.
You were sent
From up above.
You have been in my dreams.
It's been that way
Forever it seems.
Your sweet kiss,
Your gentle touch,
Reminds me of how
I love you so much.
Our love will stand
The test of time.
I'll always be yours,
You'll always be mine.
Always and forever,
Our love stands true.
You belong to me,
I belong to you
Our love shines bright
As the noonday sun.
Forever, you're my only one.
It is you I love,
To you, I belong.
With your love,
I can't go wrong.

Now that I've told you
Just how I feel, I hope you know
My love is real.
You are my lover,
You're my best friend.
You are my life
Until the end.

Super Hero
Dave Gordon

You think I'm your Super Hero
With a cape and a blue leotard
To rescue you from all your sorrows
And to act as your National Guard

Whenever you see there is trouble
Whenever you see there is pain
You know I'll be there on the double
Each time that I hear you complain

But lately I have a confession
And I feel I must share it with you
I'm showing some signs of depression
That's caused by the things that you do

Like when you got drunk at that party
And ended up locked up in jail
Did you notice that I wasn't tardy
When I showed up to pay for your bail

And what about when you got fired
For goofing around at your work
Did you know that I got you rehired
By saying that you're not a jerk

But lately I'm really not certain
If saving you's what I should do
Because it's just me whose been hurting
From all of this crap caused by you

So as your Super Hero
I'm making a new set of rules
That go into effect tomorrow
That'll keep us from looking like fools

Rule number one is one you could guess
And it's one you should never forget
It says when you cause for yourself a big mess
You deserve all the crap that you get

Rule number two is there to tell you
That when problems cause you misery
It's all up to you to do all you can do
To solve them yourself without me

And rule number three is the best one of all
It involves who I am in your life

I'm not here to call every time that you fall
I'm not your damned mom- I'm your WIFE

Precious Love
Carlos Delagarza Jr.

Before you and I met, there was a faint echo of song
lingering deep within my heart. There was a feeling of
emptiness that forever invaded the very depths of my
soul... only the sounds of loneliness resonated throughout
the chambers of my existence.

But the moment you entered my life, I knew at first glance,
that my life would never be the same... I was stricken by
your captivating charm. My heart fell victim from your
magical spell and left me spinning through a kaleidoscope
of love that I never knew existed.

The love we shared is treasured moments to cherish for a
lifetime... truly unforgettable memories! How could I ever
forget? And the beauty behind this precious love reflects
the richness and passion that we shared. For it is engraved
deep within our hearts never to be erased.

A Hidden Rock
Jesse Nuño

All things are
Rarely as they
Appear: Perception
Skewed at times
By tears, at times
By joy. True pictures
Seen by eyes that
Require the truth
To clear the view.
A woman... flesh
And blood, Mother,
Daughter, Friend.
Today these things
You are all,
But you're also
An anchor, a rock,
Supportive.....
Today you bless
Us by your strength,
Grace and love.
To merely speak
Thanks is not
Enough, Please
Know... My soul
Says so!

God of Love
Harold Austin

The Essence of Love
Is nothing compared
To the blessings of love
Hearing (all) the confessings of love
Knowing not the protesting of love
And testing of love
Desiring the inmate caressings of love
To aid the emotional digesting of love
While respecting the very best of love
Requiring all the rest of love
For those who've made a mess of love
By only adding stress to love
To digress from Love
Confusing the heart & vexing the understanding of love...



Sophia
Casey M. Jordan

She whispers to me,
The rhythm of her heart is my melody,
Hand in hand we stroll through life
God's greatest gift a loving wife,
I rise to see her smile cresting like the sun,
As I fall into my dream it is to her that I run,
Her warm embrace soothes my soul,
Within our love there exists no concept of growing old,
What hope she brings to my world,
Nothing can change my dedication to my girl,
She whispers to me,
I do not believe you are all that you will ever be...

Single White Male
J. Wimberly

I am a 34 year old man,
Doing time wasn't part of the plan:
Now alone with no one to have my back,
Fake friends are something I don't lack:
I love the outdoors and I love to fish,
I love to spoil ladies with a candle lit homemade dish:
Wanting a loyal friend to share goals and dreams,
A companion to help show me that life isn't as hard as it seems:
With six more years to wonder and ponder,
I hope to get a female responder:
I believe there is still hope for me,
But only time will tell,
So until my female responder writes,
I remain a...

Single White Male!

Our Love
Mark Wright

Our love is a seed
That will grow to become
A beautiful flower.

Our love is a grain of sand
That will make the time
For each passing hour.

Our love is a mountain
That is mighty far and wide

Our love is a dark night
That holds the stars
That shine ever so bright

Our love is a rainbow
Full of many colors
That are pure and true

Our love is the sun
That brightens our world
And defines my love for you!

Addressing My Love
Ray Sanchez Jr.

My Love,
My life's only purpose
Let me live in you
As you live in me
So that we may survive in each other
Throughout eternity
A beautiful thought
A loving memory

A comfort to each other
Now, and forever
My heart's desire
My soul's lover
You are always
My love

angels

A Prayer
C.F. Christian

If I could only glimpse
A small part of your great plan
See where earthly joys have flown
My soul aches, why can't I see.

There is a deeper meaning
That is kept from me
In anger, I tear at a veil that no man can see.

Though all around me is darkness
I hear his whispered promise
You are not alone
Take joy in your trials.

Help me to understand, I pray
If god is with me
Who can stand against me?
A mighty promise.

Wherever I go,
God goes with me.
I go on faith alone
Knowing that the outcome will be good.

But if I could only see
I know angels would be
Revealed to me.

God Became A Man
Joseph Watkins

In order for God to fulfill his plan
He needed to become a man
So to a virgin he was born
And he took on a human form
He became one of us
So he could win our trust
He gave us the sight
To do what is right
He taught us the way
So we would never stray
He told us not to worry
Go ahead and tell his story
Of what he had to give
For you and I to live

Before he went away
He taught us to pray
So we could go to him every day
And no more sacrifices would we need to pay
He told us not to grieve
But only to believe
Our souls were set on fire
With the desire
To do his will
And to climb that hill
To offer our lives to the cross
So we would never be lost
When it comes time for us to leave
To this world we will no longer cleave
For we will be in a better place
Where there is saving grace

God Began To Cry
Joseph Watkins

When I die
My spirit will take to the sky
As I reach the heavenly gate
I shall not hesitate
When I am led to the almighty throne
I notice I am not alone
I am told I cannot speak
My future sure looks bleak
As I wait my turn
I listen and I learn
When it is my turn to give an account
My fears begin to mount
I am told to watch the history of my life
Between right and wrong, it is hard to sift
I could not look him in the face
As I tried to plead my case
I stood there in a trance
When he said I gave you every chance
I begged him to let me stay
He said please just go away
As I turned around
I thought I heard a sound
I cannot tell a lie
God began to cry.

free to choose

Esperanza (Hope)
Candido Sanchez

As the present becomes the past,
One tends to ask.
How long will this awful pain last?
Will it linger deep in my soul,
Or will I be able to just let it go?
Shall I shove all my memories away,
Will I be able to keep my emotions at bay?
And keep on hoping for better days...

Mirror Back
Calvin Wilcox

I've seen this person before,
Of whom I see in the mirror now.
A reflection of the past,
How in the hell did this get out?
I see the pain on my face,
I see the rush in my eyes.
Blood boiling, adrenalin going,
Thumping on a chest full of pride.
I closed this relationship,
It was brought to an end.
My own worst enemy,
Who was once my best friend.
I turn a back on myself,
I need to reflect.
The reflection I seen,
I seem to never forget.
It follows me to places I
Always thought I escaped.
Memories I'm trapped in,
More than I can isolate.
I turn around and gaze
At the face of my past.
Until my eyes have relaxed,
And a faint smile has cracked.
If I couldn't laugh,
I swear I couldn't make it.
And I swear that sometimes,
I feel a few tears away from crazy.
This is why I have to face me,
Only I can see the signs.
My facial features speak volumes
Of what's really on my mind.
So... not to face myself,
What type of fear is that?
I stare till I see a better face,
I mirror back.



Untitled

Deborah Kai Benesley

The cool, calming spring breeze
Caresses my face,
It ruffles my hair with a lover's touch.
Bringing to mind, my chance of freedom,
Available just outside the Gates. Though
near are far away. Outside my reach.

I lift my face up into the breeze,
Reveling in its soft, gentle butterfly kiss.
Knowing that this path that I am on;
Of self discovery, wisdom, strength, faith, hope and
courage,
Will one day lead me to freedom and inner peace.

Free to pray, free to dream,
Free to think, free to feel,
Free to choose, free to act,
And free to walk away;
From strife, guilt, pain, shame
And fear.

Like the caterpillar turned butterfly,
Freed from its cocoon, free to soar and fly away.
Free... at last.

Mis Understood

Heidi Myers

Please do not misunderstand me
And mistake me for being cold
The truth is that I am very sensitive
And really don't want to be left alone!

I am not really the snob
That you say I am
I am only protecting myself
By not letting you in.

Please don't hate me
Or hold against me
The cold words that I sometimes say
I do NOT mean to hurt anyone
I am only trying to push them away!

Fear's Path

J. Stewart

I must not Fear... Fear is the mind Killer.
Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration.
I will face my fear, I will permit it to pass over me,
To pass through me. And when it has gone past,
I will turn the inner eye to see its path...
Where the Fear has gone, there will be only void, nothing.
Only I will be. Only I will remain.

So You Say

Lucio Shadow Urenda

So you want to say that the world is cruel
That no one cares for you
That your life is full of gray
That this world isn't fair
Yet you never stop to think
About the little things it brings
About the rain drops that it poured
When it was hot outdoors
Or what about the times it blows
And you feel the cool breeze upon your face
When it sprinkles you with snow flurries
And covers the land with a white wool fleece
When it covers the land
With all the colors of the rainbow
So how can you say the world is cruel have you ever stop
to think
It might just be you?

Unexplored

Lucio Shadow Urenda

New world of enigma
Land of inquiries to examine
Twin temples of perfect dimensions
One cross embedded for perfection
A landscape never touched
Never explored
By this roaming forgotten soul
Creative images of a new
World to explore
Play in the mind of this unknown

Thoughts & images to traverse
Valleys and trails to roam
Further up above it's shining
Essence beauty is bright
Two slanted crystal orbs a light
This world passionate gaze delight
Terrains of playgrounds
Treasured to be found
Paths of obscurity
To find my mind's serenity

Urban Symphony

Robert Deninno

Upward grasping palm trees
Silhouette serrated skyline
Power lines trellised under
Pinholed indigo canopy
Growing puddles and glass bits shine
It's mirror up from pavement pitch

A kicked bottle rolls out
 Shimmering cymbal melodies
 As footsteps fall in four four time
 Held together by tangled fingers
 Distant horns blaring brass
 To bass drum beats pounding in my ears
 While bellied butterflies flutter like bats
 Wings applauding urban symphony
 Like a favorite blanket draping their shoulders
 Raincloud bursts begin to pout
 A diamonds jeweled cascade
 As winos peek from trash bin shadows
 Like cherubs among steam vent clouds
 A moment's bliss in a shadowed kiss
 Elysian fields could never better
 This their pedestrian paradise
 Never was a moment more perfect
 Nirvana echoed in a midnight alleyway.

Silence Returns: A Haiku
John E. Christ

A frog croaks loudly
 Bird swoops across the pond
 One less sound

Mine To Remember
C.F. Christian

My memory is excellent,
 I just don't like
 What I remember.
 So, I lie, to myself, and
 To others of course.
 I changed my history,
 My past... is my story.
 The way I want it told!

My life, what has
 Time done to me?
 How did I suddenly
 Get old?
 This is maddening, a crazy
 Runaway train, with no
 One at the controls.

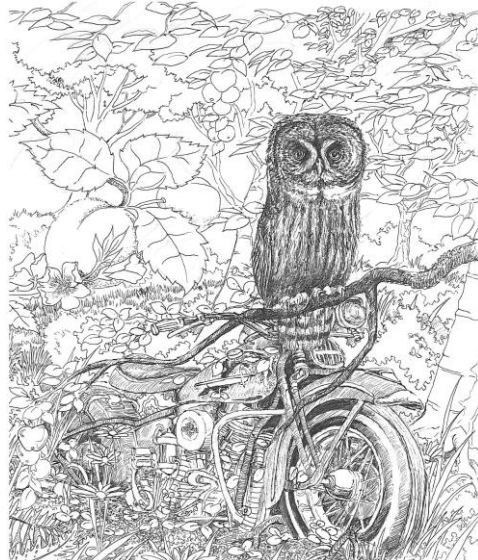
I smell and taste
 My memories... she
 Owns me, and knows it!
 Locked away, in my file cabinet,
 My story, creations...
 My home movies. Mine!

Where I Dwell
Kendall Francois

This is not my house, this is a cell
 This is not my home, this is where I dwell
 I've missed so much, I've lost it all
 My whole world is held back, contained behind this too tall
 wall
 I could strike in anger, strike in fear
 It would only deepen the darkness, my existence here
 I once tread in shadow; my strength, my night
 I now tread a path more holy; his strength, my light
 This place my actions put me, for how long I cannot tell
 This is not my house, not my home, for this is my present
 hell.

Memories

Dreams are dreams, but the memories are not enough; but
 living with these pains are starting to get a little too ruff.
 Everyday I wake up, it brings back memories that I just
 can't stand they're memories of a young boy trying so hard
 to be a grown man.
 Every time I gaze into his eyes I see the pain that only he
 wants me to see, but I still fail to understand why he takes
 the time to show this to someone like me.
 But while I stand there and gaze deep into his sad, sad eyes,
 I see a memory that shows me of all the bad I've done and
 worst of all the so many lies.
 This memory that I see it hurts me to the depths of my soul;
 and it makes me wonder if I should listen to what I've been
 told.
 These memories he's showing me are things I need to
 change before it's too late; he shows me all the good I've
 done that deserves forgiveness to wash away some of the
 hate.
 How as I stand there looking face to face, with this young



man that I knew so
 very well; now I'm
 glad that we shared
 these memories
 because now I have
 a story to tell.

the dark

**Bumps in the
 Night**
Chad Bennett

Young & alone, in
 a room with no
 light

A child hides from the noises that go "bump in the night"
 He can't see them or touch them, but knows they exist
 The Phantoms all scream and he clenches his fists

His parents ignore him when he says he's afraid
So he hides beneath blankets, reminding Jesus he prayed
all through his childhood he continues this fight
Avoiding the noises that go "bump in the night"

Growing, he battles – the noises don't leave
They whisper a lie that the boy will believe
Speaking their language, this child understands
Embracing the noises, he stands as a man
Reality is tainted – wrong becomes right
Thanks to the noises that go "bump in the night"

After many mistakes, this man becomes wise
His life is destroyed & he opens his eyes
But he'll never recover from his terrible plight
So he loads a syringe and fades out of sight
Dissolved by the noises, it's his last "bump in the night"

A Day in the Life

Living with strangers
You never get used to it
Friends are hard to find

Lights, noise, constant din,
Three-dollar headphones filter
Music, news, escape.

Prison clothes pressed.
A visit from family.
Please call me name soon.

They wouldn't count us often.
We sit, the chow hall waiting.
My stomach rumbles.

Dayroom lights go off.
The dark is the best blanket.
Mark my calendar.

Knock Knock Edward W. Gallagher III

A sick psychotic nightmare
A knock on your door
You act surprised, but deep inside
You know what it is for

I know there's no good answer
I have no clue
Knock, knock, reaper's gonna come for you

A sick and twisted daydream
A doorbell rings
The revolution of the earth
The angel sings

Do you have a purpose?
Do you dream at all?
Just close your eyes
Visualize
You'll wear the reaper call

The call is in the future
For me and you
Knock, knock, reaper's gonna come for you.

Something Cold About The Rain Brandon Rushing

Warm summer evening
A gentle breeze fills the air.
And the scent of nature's flowers
How they linger everywhere.

Treetops softly stirring
A storm moving off the plain.
And the mood it is foreboding
Something cold about the rain.

Autumn leaves tumbling
A dither to and fro.
And the flash of golden leaflets
How they put upon a show.

Wind-chimes excitedly tinkling
A clanging sound of pain.
And its wild music is unnerving
Something cold about the rain.

Meadow grass rhythmically swaying
A dance beyond compare.
And the beauty of this moment
How so long for it I stare.

Tin roof loudly talking
A story of a man at blame.
And the chill it is so telling
Something cold about the rain.

Untitled John Groff

Darken the scar
Reach into my soul
Looking on the star
Gear becomes a hole
Pain becomes pleasure
Men become flies
Death is my treasure
Truth is in the eyes
Dare me to live
Want me to die
This love I will give

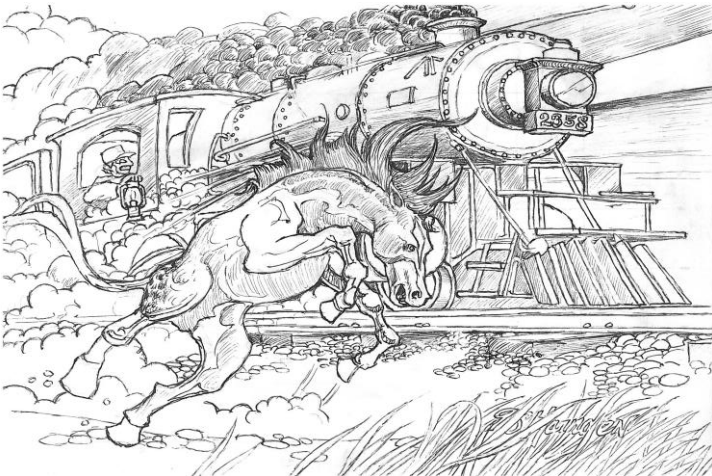
To uncover the lies.

Strangers
Olie O. Wright

No name do you have for them
They pass through in groups
Sometimes in only ones or twos
The only thing in common is you
Some speak being a gentleman
Others for pure sentiment
But most say nothing, they just don't get it
Always you stay polite
Telling yourself to get a grip on it
It's not always you in this predicament
Different people, different days
But now we know one thing
Which steady remains the same
No names to put with faces
That continue to remain plain.

Trek of Solitude
Ray Reyes

No
True place to call home
No
Possessions, truly my own.
A
Nomad, I roam this
Concrete
And steel
Dwelling I live—



Alone.

Hale Salty Demons
Robert L. Hambrick

Hale salty demons
Rend the sails tattered,

Moriah's gales
Do plunder my maiden's timbers;
Poseidon's cruel cursed wash...
Tempting.

Far from pleasant port or smidgen isle,
No sun's smile,
Only torrents of merciless hail
Casting heart's courage asunder.

Oh dreaded night,
This...
Which my soul may take;
Wherefore salvations code
Should allow a peaceful parting,
Not such terrible terrors.

Would that my mordant evil
Should merit such an end,
Ne'er a moan cry I;
But God as my witness
I owe no man.
Yet this mocking, raging sea
Doeth boldly beckon.

I am lost;
Oh, I am lost.

No One Asked
Robert L. Hambrick

I am tired of crying damnit!
But if the tears should cease... only rage will remain.
The anger was not born within me,
It was given.

I crave the wandering time-kill of sleep,
For my nightmares are in wakefulness:
The indignity of the cold steel cage—
The cruel mockery of abused authority—
The ruthless, grinding destruction of the will—
Humanity taken, stomped and torn...
Methodical soul-kill.

Living relentlessly in frozen framed past,
For no future is offered.
Only a blind scented march toward oblivion.
Wasting mind games challenge rambling sanity,
(I feel the slippage).
Memories separated from reality,
Rebuilding again and again, and again
Indigo speculations
Of what "might have been."
Yet fantasy can never paint over pained regret.
Escape and rest come only
Through tear faded dreams.

No, I am not a quitter,

There is nothing left for me to quit,
Nothing left not to quit.
I have nothing... nothing at all,
But this burdensome breath,
This useless heartbeat,
This non-life.

No one asked why.
They just mindlessly ruled, "no more chances."
Mystic powers of circumstance
Could have given them reasons, (not excuses)
But no one asked.

No, no... don't let me out now!
Ooooooh Noooo! It's too late.
Too many stained years have slipped by,
Killing desire, robbing need.
This dog has been beaten too much.

Some can now recognize the dull red grazed shadow in my
eye.
They fear me... they should,
I need to be left alone.
But I am not evil,
Just spent.

Punishment extended too long,
Simply destroys.
I know I am no longer human.

Hanged Man **Dwayne Waterman**

Ripped sheets
Braided together
You made a rope
To hold your weight
To take your life.
You hung yourself
From the basketball rim
On the rec. yard.
In the box you were in
You couldn't get out
To even save your life
You shed no tears
As your life
Was
Choked
Out of you.
It rained that day
The day "they" cut you down.
The world cried where
Others could not
And you could not.

Into The Void **William Hagen**

Sitting in the darkness that has become my life
I forfeited long ago my family, friends, and wife
Running in the fast land never once looking back
I sold my immortal soul for pills, speed, and smack.
Hollow-eyed junkies the peers of my realm
All trying to buy another hit along the road to Hell.
The Hell that I created the one in which I must live
It's taken a mighty toll on me until there's naught left to
give.
Standing on the edge of a cold, deep abyss
One final step and it's over but tell me what will I miss?
Surely not the pain that I bury deep inside
Nor the never-ending need for the things that got me high
Not the cold and lonely night which brings another lonely
day
While my tenacious hold on sanity slowly slips away
The friends that turned their backs in the hour of my need
Not the never-ending struggle with the demon whom I feed
No more can I resist as the darkness pulls me down
Into my new reality six feet underground.



family

Mother's Eyes **David Cross**

Mother's eyes still sees the boy
Even when there was no joy
Her love and praises I did hold
To warm my ugly wicked soul

A mother's plan she had for me
Refused to listen would not see
Praying and crying what to do
Why can't my love save you

A mother's heart not to understand
Where had gone her little man
Begged and pleaded to her sorrow
What new torture comes tomorrow

A mother's lonely dying plea
Her son's happy life to be
In her sadness, woe, and dead
A cry to God from her death bed

Her love caresses me in the night
Her voice still chases away my fright
In mother's eyes I've never grown
Even now when I'm all alone

Recipe for a Child **L. Sodorff**

Take a slice of sunshine
spoon in a touch of breeze
add a cup of playfulness
and a touch of tease

Pour in an ounce of happiness
sprinkle in the dew
a heaping of love
and a drop of honey or two

Stir it all together
don't whip or beat
for this batter will be ruined
and won't rise to its peak

Place into the oven
set the timer to nine
rotate slowly
and baste with time

Serve upon a golden platter



garnish with a cloud
a sweet and tender delicacy:
a child in which to be proud!

Unworthy Son **David Cross**

Oh mother, how I disappoint thee
Your love and guidance I did spurn
Patience and wisdom your best for me
For lust and evil did my heart turn

If God is real you need his help
For the ways of man is sin
You have bred an ungrateful whelp
Heart so hard there's no way in

Oh mother, your pain has no depth
If not for you who else would care
Your good son, only when I slept
Consumed by hate for all I did dare

You gave your all so do not frown
Life's many chances just one more start
My only sorrow I let you down
I wish I could heal your broken heart

Oh God, I know her time is near
If there are angels then I've met one
When you have back the one you hold dear
Let her feel the love of an unworthy son

Mother **Cody Robinson**

I saw you with a tear in your eye
And your memories of dreams that failed
You look into the past
And hope to warn yourself of what will come.

Tell me, as a child
Did you ever smile at the sun?
Did you ever blow the seeds
Off a white dandelion
In a brief, fantastic burst
And make your wishes for tomorrow?

Or have you ever counted through
"He loved me" and "He loves me not"
With an open heart and shaking fingers,
A picture of your age of innocence
And gone on to wonder why things
Didn't turn out the way that you expected?

The world is such a lonesome place
With no one there to hold your hand,
With no one there to guide you

Across the highways of this life.

Happy Mothers Day
Ocie Ola Wright Jr.

Dear Mama I know today is your special day so please take pride in how I express it my way, although its been a while since I seen your bright smile

It still lights my way as it gets dark once in a while.
I sit and think often how lucky I am 2 be ur child.
It started in the days I was young & wild
Knew right from wrong but it wasn't my style
Home early from skool you only got loud
Kept good grades only to make you proud
Now I sit and think how lucky I am 2 be ur child
Couldn't stand to see no man treat you foul
A queen in my eyes you do no wrong, even now
A miracle worker always leaving me in wow
It all started back in the days when I realized how
Still I'm lucky to be your child.

Blood Calls to Blood
Fernando Quintana

Blood calls to blood with a force all its own,
it moves in a vein that cannot be disowned.
To summon a legion or call one alone,
without a respect for a judge or a throne.

A free man can find himself being a slave,
when blood calls to blood from the veil of the grave.
You need not believe in the spiritual realm,
you cannot control it, you're not at the helm.

Blood calls to blood though it may never call you,
resist it and madness will surely befall you.

When blood calls to blood it can be an addiction.
Physicians cannot diagnose this affliction.

Blood calls to blood like the call of the wild,
the elderly feel it and so does the child.

When blood calls to blood it can cause you to wonder,
does it hibernate like a beast, feeling no hunger?
Does a catalyst destroy its peace-loving slumber
and cause it to roil like lightning and thunder?

Blood calls to blood in ways still untold,
a knowledge passed down from before days of olde.
It is older than time, it is deeper than space,
We can all once day feel its immortal embrace.

There are mysteries that given time man will solve.
Will this call still remain if we ever evolve?

Blood calls to blood for its very survival,

ancient and violent towards any rival.

Burning with fever, or cold to the bone,
blood call to blood with a force all its own.



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