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SpeakOut! Journal  
*Breaking the Chains*

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*Spring 2018*

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Patience in the Flesh


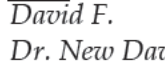
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
## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This issue of the SpeakOut! Journal is made possible through a tremendous collaborative effort. We start with every writer who took at risk and attended a SpeakOut! writing workshop. We are proud and awed by your efforts. We also thank our volunteer facilitators at the Larimer County Jail and the men in Work Release and Community Corrections as well as those working with our two youth writing groups from Turning Point and Remington House: Braveheart, Bree, Cherie, Derra, Donisia, Emily, Emmy, Hannah, Haven, K, Kaylee, Kelly M. Kelly O., Kira, Krissa, Lena, Rose, Sarah, Shelby, Tian Tian, Yibei, and Zoe. A very special thanks to staff at our community partner sites: the Larimer County Jail, Remington House, Larimer County Community Corrections and Work Release, and Turning Point. We also recognize the CSU English Department for providing staff and material support, and give heartfelt thanks to the AJL Foundation and Bohemian Foundation for their grant support of our program. As journal designers and editors, the expertise of interns, volunteers and Holly created synergy that the speedy printing work of Gorham Publishers built upon. As we circulate this issue far and wide, we are humbled by this talented community of writers and thinkers.



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# INTRODUCTION:

The pages you hold in your hands are special, a paper chain linking writers from seven weekly SpeakOut! writing workshops together through words of passion, hurt, healing, and faith. These are stories that are not often heard from writers who are brave enough to commit them to paper. The SpeakOut writing program is committed to making space, to seeing connections between poems, stories, drawings, and experimental forms. We asked the writers in our 2018 spring workshops to reflect on what it means to write and share stories of heartbreak, anxiety, friendship, family, love, fear, regret, and so much more. Here are some of their words:

“Exercising your mind, while collecting creative thoughts...Self-reflection through self-expression.”

“When I come to SpeakOut!, it helps get stuff off my chest when I’m having a bad day or week and it helps me with doing my time in here.”

“I write to be heard. To feel like a free bird. To feel my own words. To learn and be seen. Soar and find me the me I need to be. Not what they see.”

“SpeakOut!, to me, is a chance to be myself and write. A no judgement zone.”

“When you think of LCDC, you automatically think of county jail and all the convicts, fellows, etc. But what you are forgetting is that these convicts are someone’s daughter, son, mother, father. With SpeakOut!, you can see with our artwork and poems. That we are just trying to speak out and have someone hear our story.”

“Depression is a struggle that paper and pen seems to calm and minimize. Dealing without writing would possibly end with me in a lot more trouble than what I already am in.”

“I like to write to practice hands writing skills with my fist, then I’ll do this in a fashion, because writing is my passion. I’m a person that enjoys others. Even sisters but not much my brothers. I write because I am the only one left. Although I write with my hands that’s not right and the pen that’s usually left, left down in my pocket, so deep that my poetry will shoot like a rocket.

These reflections from writers at Remington House, Turning Point, Larimer County Jail, Work Release, and Community Corrections have created links that we must pay attention to. As one writer says,

“Chains don’t have to be a negative thing. For the chains on an anchor are to keep the ship in place on rough seas.”

Enjoy this issue. Read it in public. Talk about it. Write to us with feedback. Pass it on.



ATTENTION SPEAKOUT! WRITERS

You may continue to submit and publish your work through the SpeakOut! Online website:  
<https://speakoutclc.wordpress.com>

SPEAKOUT! JOURNAL

*Breaking the Chains*

SPRING 2018



## *Freedom*

**SimBA+**

Freedom Something that has been at the tip of my fingers  
But I was never able to fully have a hand on and now that  
I can see what freedom looks like, It drives me to my full power  
And to do good for myself and for my family and the people  
That have not given up on me. And now I thank everyone  
That stood next to me when I was down.

*Tone DEF*

**Will C.**

Do you feel more comfortable in Your skin?  
All your life running from Your shadow, Your past, Your monster,  
Your mask  
Is it easier to look at Yourself now That someone knows This part of  
You?  
And somehow it's freed you from the Demons That Know every  
inch of your  
soul

Is it less stressful to speak about the lies you feed your warped  
Mind ( A corpse inside )  
Do You say The names of The sacrificed, Handling life like a  
Mindless machine. A robot's (philosophy in a simulated reality  
Trust in safety, empty and wasting  
Mentally infected, This (Asylum) Bleeding, my perception seething  
The inception misleading any chance of a way out, Closing in on  
itself

Does it make You feel less dead now That You Know, You Are not  
Alone  
in Your Hell?

Does it Make You smile to Know That I Know You like to watch  
me eat myself?

## *I Want, I Need*

**King Jackson**

I want you like a heroin addict wants that wash from the spoon.  
I need you more than a starving person with malnutrition needs food.

I want you like the new Js came out, and you're the last pair left.  
I need you more than oxygen helps me take my last breath.

I want you like an umbrella wants rain as it's pouring down.  
I need you more than a smile needs teeth, if not, you better frown.

I want you like a man wants beer while at a football game.  
I need you more than the addict needs life, so they've changed.

I want you like mid-December wants snow just so we can play.  
I need you more than a hill needs a slope just for us to sleigh.

I want you like blankets want to chill on that winter day.  
I need you more than Hot Chocolate; we must wash that cold away.

I want you like I need you.

But I must confess . . . that I need you, more than I want you.

## *SUNdial spiN*

**Emily B.**

Arching up over the familiar curvature  
The every rotating-hidden movement  
Give away to something that will always stay

Pull you up like drapery at our bedroom windows  
It's time for some illumination  
And over this I have no control.

So let the warmth sink deep into my bones.  
Let my \$oul shine in gold.  
This new day begins, just over the horizon.

## *Untitled*

**Back Muscle**

I wish I had taken that picture, the one of you and me under the clouds, giving them shapes. I had it I had the camera but I was afraid that the flash would ruin the subtle stillness of the moment we had created there in the grass where I had just barely met you. All I have is the fading memory of that day. I close my eyes and I imagine the soft breeze of the wind, the smell of the dirt under us, the feel of the ant going up my arm but I didn't dare move. For once in my 18 years, my life slowed down and I didn't want it to speed up.



## *We Are All*

### ***Collaborative Poem by the Men in Community Corrections***

We are all one  
We are all at fault  
We are all but ripples in a pond  
We are all but shadows of ourselves  
We are all wondering, "I just hope I fit in"  
We are all convinced "I'm right"  
We are all crying "why me"  
We are all addicts, going through something of our own  
We are all learning every day  
We are all still children inside  
We are all worthy, beautiful, brave and happy  
We are all in some way or another, f\*\*ked up individuals  
We are all hungry for love  
We are all co-dependent (or co-defendants)  
We are all existent and with grace  
We are all searching  
We are all one

## *Untitled*

### **Little Bit**

I only want to give you the best  
Baby I've made such a mess  
never meant to let you down  
gotta figure out how I'm gonna  
turn this around I swear I'm trying to change  
never meant to cause you pain, This life is all I know  
No matter how I try the drugs just won't let go

I only want to give you the best  
Baby I've made such a mess  
never meant to let you down  
Gotta find a way to turn this around  
I swear I'm trying to change  
never meant to cause you pain  
This life is all that I know  
No matter how I try the Game just won't let me go  
Baby wait please don't leave me  
you're the one I cannot lose  
Give me a minute you're gonna see  
If I gotta make a choice it's you that I choose  
To keep you there's nothing I won't do  
It's not gonna happen overnight but give me another chance  
You'll see a change in me, swear that I'll make it right  
With all of my heart I Love you

## *Untitled*

**Gus**

All these cigarettes don't solve the problems or take away the regrets  
Drink from the bottle a temporary fix to a permanent condition  
The drugs can't afford them taxing my mind and body  
Impulses to do self-destruction  
Only safe and sane in county jail  
You call it a relapse I call it a lifestyle  
I can't feel bad for the way I am  
Another cigarette to pass the time  
The nicotine and tar  
A cheap way to cover up the scar  
Picking at the wound you never let heal  
Take your blade and shove it in  
Again and again  
All the abuse you know I'm worth it  
When I'm down hold me bind me  
Torture me reopen all the  
Things I've healed  
Bleeding out  
The problems I thought I solved  
You put them back in front of me  
Keep me alive I wish you'd kill me  
No reason to live tired of trying  
I'll stay down  
Bottomed out  
I'm the scum on your shoe  
I'm the scars on humanity  
A sorry excuse

## *Untitled*

### **Wildtire**

Bring on the pain.

Today I feel nothing

My hand quivers

My words, they don't come

Bring on the love.

I want to worship a plague

bring a corpse to dinner

And embrace its tumors

my soul craves the apocalypse

Bring on the beauty.

## *Sunshine & Moonbeam*

### **Little Bit**

You are my sunshine & moonbeam

the lights of my life

every day I thank God that you are mine

you're my Saving Grace

I close my eyes & smile

every time I picture your sweet faces

you shine bright through the darkness

my sunshine & moonbeam make the perfect team

my problems seem so much less in your light

I thank God for you every night

my little angels one & two

## *Joyful Day* **Seven Winters**

Joyful Day—What a blessed Day  
Everyone was gentle; everyone was kind  
Joyful Day—What a happy Day  
There was No struggle lord, there was no strife  
Just like seeing things with newly opened eyes

Look at me! Finally free! Opened up the gates just like the Red Sea  
Pharaoh had to let me go you know—it was my M.R.D.  
Past the looks, into the parking lot—there's my loving family  
They've been waiting oh so long, so very patiently  
I've got one little boy, got one little girl groovin' in the backseat  
Had to dry the tears of joy just to clearly see

Joyful Day—What a blessed Day  
Everyone was gentle; everyone was kind  
Joyful Day—What a happy Day  
There was No struggle lord, there was no strife  
Just like seeing things with newly opened eyes

How she ever did it, Lord, I may never know  
But she's surely my reward for all these years of hope  
For all those long and lonely prayers said in those cold cells  
She's like the beach receiving me & I'm free from Jonah's whale  
Now we've got wind in our hair, sunsets & smiles  
I've got dust in the mirror—top-down for miles & miles . . .  
My children run to greet me, my wife's hands wrapped in mine  
Look I've paid my dues, I'm home at last & everything is fine

Joyful Day—What a blessed Day  
Everyone was gentle; everyone was kind  
Joyful Day—What a happy Day  
There was No struggle lord, there was no strife  
Just like seeing things with newly opened eyes

## *Mother Nature*

**Taylor W.**

I'm like a bird in the sky,  
I'm light as a feather,  
I can flow like the river,  
I am as strong as a pride,  
I am as wise as an elephant,  
I am as large as a whale,  
I surround everything as air does,  
I am the ocean, along with its undertows and kelp forests,  
The forest is my home, along with every bush, tree, and blade of  
grass,  
My branches are of wisdom, they have all of my traits,  
They are me.  
As the ocean is with the sand,  
Like the clouds are in the sky,  
I am true, if you pay attention you can see me,  
I am everywhere,  
I'm the cracks in the sidewalk,  
In the tree branches,  
In every drop of water in the ocean,  
This is me.  
I am Mother Nature.

## *Mind Flow*

**L.A.**

As I sit here in my seat, hard cold and metal, I got instrumentals in my mental, thinking about smelling rose petals, wondering where and why I was getting so high, I think I thought I could fly so high, away from this pain, my heart felt so drained, I turned into a Great Dane with great power gain. But now I sit here with no power and all the pain. What's felt to gain this is insane, I'm still a Great Dane but trapped in a cage with nothing but rage, so lost and so played, still the jack of all trades, like the big joker in spades. I need my space, I need to beat this case. I don't want to face, my heads in outer space, realizing Jesus took my place, with his heavenly grace, these cuffs were so rough and tough. I watch them turn into dust, faith instead of disgrace, no longer in the shadows as I see myself in this herd of mindless cattle, nine stomachs and no brain, Holy Grail never fails, so I pray lets all just live another day.

## *Untitled*

**Skylar G.**

I'm in a world where being lonely doesn't  
Exist. The links of the love chain have been  
Broken and everything feels comfortable being  
Alone; everything is satisfied with what it  
Has and doesn't need judgment to fill the  
Satisfactory pool. No need to yank back memories  
To know how to deal with our present situations.  
Everything works and everything just is. Perfection as it  
May sound to some and destruction as others  
See the links that are needed to this perfectly  
Imperfect universe while others still suffer, cause  
They need. They can't do without this love, lonely,  
Hated, broken-down, always need repair world and  
Self; but apparently neither can I, so as I say  
If you're doing your best at something, you're doing  
It perfectly. This is my world, welcome.



## *Letter to Self*

**Jerika G.**

Hey Babelabe,  
Put down that knife, you're not as terrible as you think you are.  
Don't worry about how terrible your life is now, you'll make it.  
School will be hard, but you'll love it! You're probably rolling your eyes at this, but you'll get past it. It won't happen overnight but things will get better. You may make a lot of bad decisions now, you still want to hurt. But you WILL make it. Sweetheart, keep your head up.

## *Questions I Should Have Asked*

**Lil Unknown**

Questions I should have asked you but didn't:

Look bro, I know I'm stubborn but how could you just let me go down that road?

You could've talked to me and expressed your feelings, but you didn't and now I kinda just want to know. Why didn't you tell me how hard it is to be that grown?

Why didn't you stop me sooner? You could have just let it be known.

Nobody knows the pain I went through, not even you. Did you even want to know?

And even though I'm upset, I still want you close. Would you be okay with that or would you never want it to show?

## *Goodbye Addiction*

**Lynda R.**

Goodbye addiction you are poison  
To my body & soul to every drink  
of whiskey I swallowed leaving no  
Hope for tomorrow to every pill I  
Snorted every pill I swallowed or every pill  
Smoked I release you to the flames  
Heroin you are a dark cloud  
Crystal meth you are Satan in disguise  
You are solid as a rock  
You crumble into powder  
You liquify and flow through our veins making  
Us go insane so again I say  
Goodbye addiction you are like a snake  
Who slithers into every crack you can find  
You are a lion hiding behind the tall grass  
Seeking who you may devour.  
I say goodbye I will no longer give you power.

## *Breaking the Chains*

**Jeny H.**

Twenty-six years, chained up in my  
Own personal hell  
I try and fight, scream and yell  
No one answers, no one hears.

Alone facing my time bound by the chains  
Can't find my way home, lost nowhere to  
Go. Pray someone hears me, takes me by the hand  
To break the chains I must let go and take a stand  
A new day from my chain I take the first step  
I turn and walk away  
Taking life day by day  
A newfound freedom  
A new sense of hope

I shed my old plan  
Reborn, free no longer in chains  
I am no longer in hell  
Able to break free and leave every link behind me

## *Untitled*

### **Lonely**

Real close call I almost lost it all threw it all away  
I've made it this far to almost lost it all in a day  
but what can I say I knew what might happen and  
I did it still. Maybe it happened to open my eyes  
get me to stay focused, show me what I'm working  
towards is really worth it. I shouldn't be taking  
chances like that, cause if the outcome was  
different they would have taken my freedom and I  
wouldn't have gotten it back I'm so close to being  
done but I'm taking risks out here being dumb 10  
months sobriety and my life's on track I gotta get  
this done please God just watch my back.

## *Untitled*

### **Little Bit**

Alone I sit and remember all I cannot forget  
The beauty that I've lost  
That makes me regret the wrong I've done  
Sometimes I just have to let my memories run  
to remember the sweetness & the pain  
to let it all roll together as one  
even as I feel as if I'm going insane  
It plays out like a movie in my mind  
of a time that now seems left behind  
reminding of a simpler time & place  
of an angel's face

## *One Day Comes . . .*

**Sarah D.**

One day comes another one  
Goes  
No matter what happens  
Some forget  
One day comes another one  
Goes  
Some new faces some  
Old  
One day comes another one  
Goes  
But no matter what  
Happens some days you  
Won't let go.

## *A Time I Felt Low*

**Lil Unknown**

A time I felt low  
Was when I thought you would  
Never go  
But now I know it was your time to grow.  
I often dream of you and I feel alone and when I wake up  
It feels so old.  
Life has drifted so far and without you I cannot grow.  
I hope you're looking down on me my friend  
And seeing my future that life holds.  
I hope to hear your words  
Speaking to me saying "Oh the places you'll go."

## *Mountain Divine*

### **Cowboy**

everyday of my life has been an uphill climb -  
from the pit of hell to the mountain divine -  
Stretching and pulling to the  
elevation change in my mind

gripping and grasping my breath  
as I hang desperately to a jagged  
cliff - a cliff of sheer deceit - and possible  
death -

resetting my foot to the problems  
that slip beneath my feet like  
falling rocks you can hear the screams  
as they bounce off the walls of my soul and  
sides of my life  
broken dreams -  
a broken home and a violent wife 24 yrs  
Bipolar fights in what could have  
been a quiet life my children scatter  
from the debris as the dust settles upon  
their no longer innocent feet -

flowing even harder as mud and dirt  
flexing from my fingertips further corrupting  
their clean spirits - searching for a grip  
feeling for holes - pulling only on their souls -

The pain caused from this endless  
climb, it seems it's just misery upon  
misery - day after day, night after night  
I can't let them down, it's just not  
right.

## *Mountain Divine (Cont.)*

I've gained too much ground to  
let go now I wrap my arms around  
them and tell them it's okay. That I  
love them and I will never quit -

Motivated by their spirits and good  
memories in between the bad I prove  
to them that perseverance is what makes  
a Dad -

Fighting the pain and the urge to  
give in I pull up the memory of a  
long lost friend the one I never expected  
to blow his head off, but He did.

Rest in peace Bill and your beautiful  
son Ryan too, I promise I will never  
let go of my children they are my glue  
helping me to hold on and to stay  
true to the end I will see you again  
friend -

The tragedies of life at each level  
of the ascent from the pit to the  
top of life's mountain divine, it's  
what makes me strong and yes it  
takes time -

Tired and worn my hands bleed  
as I pull myself over the edge  
finally reaching to top of the peak I stand

## *Mountain Divine (Cont.)*

God what a view I can  
finally see the character that was  
built from the climb, looking down to the  
smiles looking up. Three kids of a dad that  
never gave up. Love is worth the effort  
A takes to finish the climb.

There's no other view that compares  
to Mountain Divine -



## *Untitled*

### **Thizzle**

Five Shots.

I stood and watched like a deer in headlights.

Suck in shock,

Like a shotgun at a race,

The sound of shattered glass set me free.

But then I watched you die as another 8 bullets targeted me.

I'm stuck in this never-ending nightmare and the thing is—

I would take 8 more just to wake up.

Can it all just be a bad dream?

## *Goodbye*

***Lil Unknown***

Goodbye to the ones who  
Never said goodbye  
Goodbye for the one  
Who told them lies  
Goodbye to the old me for you  
Shall die  
And goodbye to the new me  
You might just be a lie.

## *God in Us*

**SK Crow**

The Universe is  
The Mind of God  
Neurons firing in God's brain  
God's Spirit  
Within you, Within me.

This beautiful molecule  
On which we live  
But teach ourselves to destroy  
We defy God's purpose  
Within you, Within me

Our sun, an atom  
With orbiting neutrons and planets  
The center of all we know  
Is God's own heart  
Within you, Within me

God gave us free will  
Because we are God  
Experiencing itself subjectively  
We each have a Universe  
In our mind  
We are the cells of the earth  
Within you, Within me.

## *Break The Fake*

**Jacob H.**

Once again I'm Back in orange a victim of my  
own demise

**Break The Fake**

This is the 7th Revocation Jacob

**Break The Fake**

It's not Larimer County's fault Jacob

**Break The Fake**

But yet I sit here waiting to fight the DA  
for a better Deal

**Break The Fake**

So I tell myself Break The Fake, this is a deal  
of a lifetime Jacob

**Break The Fake**

Stipulated 6 years to Halfway House **"if accepted"**  
for Felony Menacing with a simulated weapon on a  
peace officer in custody the DA says

**Break The Fake**

Stipulated 4 years to Halfway House **"if accepted"**  
for False Imprisonment concurrent to all cases she says

**Break The Fake**

Things could be way worse Jacob take the  
deal.

**Break The Fake**

Your soon to be wife & children need you.

**Break The Fake**

God wants & needs you Jacob

**Break The Fake**

Keep Faith in God & your family Jacob

**Break The Fake**

They need you home sooner rather than later

**Break The Fake**

Be an Authentic Man & Reject Passivity Jacob

**Break The Fake**

## *Break The Fake (Cont.)*

Baby I'm Bad at Love

**Break The Fake**

You're the only women for me though

**Break The Fake**

Normally baby girl after 3 times of hurting  
someone as bad as I did to you they  
would split & take the easy road. But not you . . .

**Break The Fake**

But not you Dove, You Ride For Me

**Break The Fake**

Why I've Asked you

**Break The Fake**

I Love You, You said. Why stop fighting for  
the man I love. If we can make it through this  
we can make it through anything. I hold on she says.

**Break The Fake**

Soul mates we are my dove, I Hold on too . . .

**Break The Fake**

I Love You Black Hole Dove

**Break The Fake**

This Jail may have me temporarily but you have  
my heart & body for life. No other compares to you my love.

**Break The Fake**

They can't keep me forever Dove like you get to.

**Break The Fake**

The Authentic Man, Husband, & Father is what  
you deserve & our children deserve

**Break The Fake**

I'm always & Forever going to become a better  
Man, husband, & father for our family My Dove

**Break The Fake**

Y'all deserve only the best from me My Dove

**Break The Fake**

## *Break The Fake (Cont.)*

Please Forgive Me God, my Dove, My kids, & readers  
for I'm a Sinner in this broken world & I shall Repent . . .

**Break The Fake**

So let me leave y'all readers with this

**Break The Fake Now You Speak Out Break The Fake**

## *Imprints*

T

Life seemed uneventful we didn't know what was happening next.

Our lives wanting the next best thing

Our souls leaving Imprints of their feet

She's the kind of person that makes the trouble but she doesn't say  
she comes from trouble.

She looks innocent and she wants to empower them so she speaks  
from the top of her mind. The way she thinks she wants to move  
people in the room.

He's the kind of person who can be moved with her words, even out  
of the room, and can move with her words.

When they are separating, she remembers him, moving his shoulders and smiling not making eye contact with her. His masculinity and sensitivity for her Imprints on her soul. She can smell his sweet grass, he has silky skin. When their hands touch, colors shimmer around them, she hears his laugh coming from her soul.

## *Wishful Thinking*

**Harley White**

This is for the toddlers who dance to their own tune or none.

For the young girls who sing into their hair brushes.

For the teen boys who play their air guitars too loud.

For the kids on the sidelines who dream of being first string.

For all the wallflowers to ever go to a dance.

For all the shy girls to ever get a secret Valentine's Day card.

For all the boys who hear 'yes' for the summer's first date night.

For the kids who get an extra maraschino cherry on their sundaes.

For the kid who's always picked last.

For the one who's always left out.

This is for all the awkward

the nerds

the geeks

and yes, this is for me.

Because the Egyptians slept on pillows made of stone.

But it's not that hard for me to dream

that maybe one day you'll write me back.

Maybe one day I'll feel like I belong.

Not feel like a misfit

or a weirdo

or even a clod.



## *Wishful Thinking (Cont.)*

Because everyone deserves to not be forced to the outside.

From the silly  
to the sane  
to the lonely  
or even the ashamed.

So maybe you'll write me back.

Perhaps send me a secret Valentine and I could say yes to you for  
date night.

We could ask for extra cherries on the sundae we split.

So maybe you'll write me back.

*My Masterpiece*  
***Patience in the Flesh***

Motivated by Passion, guided by emotion  
    Beckon burning as a raging fire  
    No need for light the universe is on our side  
Opening the gates as if by remote  
    A trojan horse a gift of gratitude  
    Mood escalating setting off alarms  
Charmed  
    Controlled by vibrations of Earth's stones winter has passed  
    taken over by the flames of summer  
    Fabric burst into glowing embers  
    Darkness unable to dull the sparkle of ivory  
    Lock longing to be turned  
        Key just found.  
Door on eager hinges swing wide  
    Entering the place with caution  
Savoring the interior's warmth and beauty  
    Traveling its long corridor  
        Searching for the masterpiece at the back wall.  
Coals thrown into the flames raising temperatures  
    Sweat trailing a path down the spine  
Climbing to the peak listening for rain  
Hoping for a shower to cool the brow  
Head aching body throbbing getting weak  
So deep is the way but long is the stride  
Beginning to rush in anticipation  
    Bouncing off all the walls in the dark  
Finding my way deeper and deeper  
    Reaching out to touch the prize  
    Suddenly the room begins to shake  
The walls collapse sand subside  
    Sounds of muffled voices heard  
    Conversation growing louder  
        Pushing forward

## *My Masterpiece (Cont.)*

Running out of breath heart beat thundering

Then

BOOM

Can't move any further

A dim light begins to shine brighter, focusing my eyes

The prize

Lies right in front of me

My beautiful

My masterpiece

*Speak Out*  
**King Jackson**

I've been waiting on my chance, I only want to speak out  
To tell you how God grabbed my hand, I only had to reach out  
I was on the highway to hell, he fully put my speed down  
Satan tried to win me over, I am fully out of reach now  
I must be living a dream, my reality is Heaven as a free trial  
I was a hard headed mess, when God spoke He said you are free  
child  
I used to play with the flames, like pulling my own teeth out  
I finally have the correct tools, it is apparent I plant the seeds now  
I was searching for slit veins, praying to God to let me bleed out  
But instead all my pens bleed on this paper that I release now  
He said follow me son, there's so much love within these vows  
I provide a free gift of life, do my works, make me proud  
He led me to really honest people, he cleared my vision I can see  
now  
My path was laid out, He helps me step and I see now  
Those footprints in the sand are truly within reach now  
It's all about perspective, my perception is a beast now  
I salute CSU for putting together SpeakOut!  
Thank you for allowing me to share  
I'll let the other speak out

## *Confined*

**BJ. W.**

Like a song or a film on repeat.  
I sit counting the squares making up the white  
walls that again confine me.  
Same thoughts in my head and images  
behind my eyelids  
causing restless nights, intolerable day  
due to the crimes I once again committed.  
It's a cycle, a circle  
with no break or an end  
vicious and consuming  
endlessly sucking me in.  
How do I break it, how do I make  
it stop.  
It's like a merry-go-round and I'm  
screaming to get off.  
1 brick, two bricks, 3 and four  
hundred of white bricks  
and a solid blue door.  
I'm finally fed up  
I'm done counting bricks on the  
wall.  
I will break these chains  
once and for all

But How?

## *Mathematics*

**Miston C.**

Let me break down some thoughts of mine  
Down to you  
In a little equation called...  
You plus me  
Add that s\*\*t up  
And that equals we  
Now that's a formula  
Not many can f\*\*k with  
But let me ask this,  
What's the point of us?  
If it ain't progress  
That's a little more advanced  
Than a basic lesson in calculus

You take these two people  
What's their common denominator  
The struggle, the hustle  
Divided from a society  
Intended to be broken down to nothing  
The remainder on the floor,  
Put back together intricately  
In my whole I'm questioning  
If in me there's a fraction of you  
And in you a fraction of me  
Indivisible forever, infinity

I could leave that to your interpretation  
I believe you're the answer to my equation  
Not a problem, that's the solution

To a better life...  
We'll prove it!

## *I Have a Dream*

**Ria B.**

I have a dream that world hunger will end  
That all the negativity disappears  
I have a dream that I'll help fight for Syria's freedom of war  
That everyone accepts each other  
And bring each other up and not down

I have a dream I'll go to college and get my masters degree,  
That I'll make a change in the world  
I have a dream that I'll be the first change in the world.

I have a dream that America and other places around the world will  
no longer suffer from war and constant shooting deaths.

## *Untitled*

**Ghost**

Life has its own way to pay with circumstances and situations, how most lose is living life without reservations. I speak only factual statements because life most hate on it, weighing fate on it.

You see the lessons learned either or neither tides to turn when strides is how you earn bridges that burned is the cost when you play with loss living life like you're the boss.

Papers that light the flame, like a gun when one aims, walking aimlessly blind is the vision that one can't tame, now to the lesser measure, measurement no not at all, it only matters the stand after the fall, be a man if you can.

The plan is what one lacks when slacked and before you problems are stacked with a wall now at your back, the only fact that remains to be seen is vision, yes a visionary is he who not only stands after the fall but looks down and dusts his clothes off.

*Untitled*

**Ria B.**

Freedom is what it smells like  
Blood and pain is what it tastes like  
Yelling and screams is what I hear  
End of segregation is what it feels like  
White and black join in arms is what it looks like

*Brotherly Love*

**Jason G.**

My brothers inspired  
Me to strive & push on  
To make my future brighter  
Than my past



## *Let's Talk About*

**Pepper Johnson**

Let's Talk about . . .  
Let's Talk about Then  
Let's talk about now  
Let's talk about when  
When we figure out how  
Let's talk about Then . . .  
Before \$ and girls  
It wasn't our place to have a care in the world  
We wasn't scared of the world, just kids middle fingers in the air  
double dog daring the world  
We were young and dumb and full of . . .  
Come see scars from nightmare scenes that  
I've seen in the world.  
Told at 16, "Can't live here if you can't abide by the rules in this  
house"  
Grabbed a few things and I moved em on out  
S\*\*t look at me now  
Baggies and a digi and a key  
to the city because I'm moving s\*\*t now  
Before 18 sportin 3 DUI's  
Not too long after that—a search warrant surprise  
While fighting that case snitch got me hit  
24 ounces damn look at my life.  
Fast forward through early 30's, take  
a look at my life—still not living it right  
Had it and lost it, over + over again + again  
I can show you how to judge if peoples really your friends  
Get locked up—suddenly no one has time  
No paper, no pens  
I could go on and on, bull\*\*\*t never ends  
So let's talk about now . . .  
No matter if you white or black whats  
your flavor? The dark or the clear?

(continued on next page)

## *Let's Talk About (Cont.)*

Looking back it's a sad fact that they both claimed someone this  
year  
Learning to appreciate the ones that is here  
Hate crying in front of folks so when  
I'm alone is when I'm shedding my tears  
    Let's talk about recidivism . . .  
Catch new cases so they're bringing us back  
    Let's talk about kids . . .  
I have 3 daughters—but they don't have a dad  
And something that's sad  
My D.O.C picture is their favorite, because that's the one they have  
That's truth on a track  
I should be reading them bedtime stories  
Tucking them in at the end of the night  
Hate to think that someone just might  
Start being called dad, hopefully loving them right  
Can't see that they love me, because  
I can't look in their eyes.  
    All I used to talk about . . .  
Is how I used to kill the lights and sit in the park in the dark  
Being watched by the narcs  
Trying to sample these shards but  
My lighter won't spark.  
    Instead let's talk about how . . .  
How we've already figured it out  
We gotta grow up and be men, let's get to getting bigger right now  
Let's be wise like an owl  
Thanks for listening while I'm speaking this out  
    Let's talk about . . .  
How our loved ones should be our Purpose and reason to live  
No more being told get your s\*\*t together we did  
Took some steps and a Bit  
So don't even Trip.

## *Let's Talk About (Cont.)*

Things Gucci and s\*\*\*,  
smile on my lips.

Let's talk about . . .

Increasing our odds

Let's remember our bloodline can be traced to the Gods.

Dirt on our shoulders, brush that s\*\*\* off.

Promise each other—This is our last dance

Make the most of this chance.

Let's talk about . . .

getting out of these bricks

Grab a hold of life, both of your hands,

gonna have to fight battles, have to make stands

Let's talk about . . .

Let's talk about plans

## *Cat Calls*

**Dr. New Dawn**

Can't show no leg, can't walk these halls  
This administration says it's worried about cat calls  
Really they're afraid of a woman when she's got balls  
Cat calls don't scare her at all  
No room to move up, not far to fall  
She'll wear her pride or nothing at all  
She's not scared of the whistles some men make  
She's more afraid of the freedoms her government takes.

Eve at the apple; the original sin  
Maybe that's why in this jail we can't win  
A girl can't even get a job in the kitchen  
Pretty sad but that's what she's wishin'  
Keepin' Cinderella away from balls is their mission  
But there's no Prince Charming here; this pond's no good for fishin'  
Princesses locked down 18 hours a day  
While little boys play Wii just a few pods away

She's had time to think; has the right to vote  
She's not afraid to get cutthroat  
With her mighty pen the dragon of sexism she will slay  
On guard boys, now dawns a new day.

## *War Dream*

### **World War Studier**

I have a dream that  
One day all forces and countries will team up and end war.

I have a dream that  
All cases and History will be forgotten.

That all hate and negativity  
Will be rid and transformed into positiveness.

I have a dream that  
Homelessness won't be a thing and there will always be a door open  
for them.

I have a dream that  
North Korea and South Korea can be friends.

That peace will be a thing.  
I have a dream.

*Johnny Cash + Tacos*

**Brianna M.**

Summer sand on the toes  
ocean waves ice to the touch  
midnight sky or an early morning brunch  
sharp to the nose  
so sweet & so soft  
The aroma hits the soul  
like that old time rock & roll

## *Ocean Minded*

**Manda Panda**

I can look out onto the horizon for eternity  
a story, dream, or opportunity  
with an end written in the sand  
an end that can be re-written  
as many times as you'd like  
with the sun kiss on my face,  
smell of salt in the air,  
feel of sand between my toes,  
and sight of magic in the water,  
my mind is at peace  
knowing that whatever is on the horizon  
belongs to me

## *Water Lilies*

**Chanel**

Water lilies hear me run.  
They drift through the meadow and dive from the sky  
Water lilies will never die  
The sweet silk dew drools off the tip and falls with a drip as it reflects off the sun  
The haze from the rays as they draw with laze come back to water lilies.

*To the Bullies*

***Tinkerbell***

Stand straight and tall & keep your head up high when you walk  
down the hall.

Don't let them tell you you're not good enough. Don't listen to what  
they say.

You are amazing and smart & so play the part.

You can be anything you dream so don't let them be mean.

I know words can cut like a knife and this world will have strife.

But don't let it bring you down or give you a frown.

And don't forget to always laugh and act like a clown.

Dedicated to my son



## *How Afraid*

**Fabian**

How afraid can you be?  
How on earth does this involve me?  
Have you ever thought what life would be,  
if you have no fears? Could you even imagine, or see?  
Anyhow, if you're always afraid,  
What chance do you have, sitting there in the shade?  
Pick yourself up, and move from that tree,  
Then you can move on, and find the key.

## *Untitled*

**Asa**

I am thinking about what I need to do to get to Denver and what I will do after I get there.

When I close my eyes, I see my life as it will be again. It will be full of love and happiness, and **I will do** what I have to do to make it happen.

## *Untitled*

**Katie S.**

my heart is in my stomach, my eyes, they sting with tears,  
my mind is filled with hopes and prayers, getting trampled down by  
fears

my dreams hold an escape, to soothe my troubled soul  
and finding contentment in this place. . . is my ultimate goal

when, though, will I learn to start to focus on me  
and from this angst I feel. . . let myself be free,  
how can I put all my joy and hope into another's hand  
life won't last forever. . . we're only given so much sand

## *Untitled*

**Chanel**

A person is there after you crack a good joke

A person is there to laugh at your joke

A person is the universe that exists only in their mind where the  
law of physics don't apply.

A person is now hard they cry when they found out their broke or  
their dog died

A person is the one who helps the lady across the street with crip-  
pled feet and who can barely speak.

## *The Mask I Wear*

**Chase F.**

This mask I wear it's plain white and  
has a blank stare. Do I wear it because  
I'm scared or is it to leave reality behind  
and go elsewhere? I do care but I hide  
it behind my mask because I'm too nervous  
to share. My mask will smile and light up  
like a flare. But under it is a blank expression  
I do not care to make appear. My mask  
is the new me so I can hide and not  
be seen.

## *My Invisible Chains*

**Roger S.**

My chains are of the worst, rusty, heavy and well, quite frankly, the kind that make you feel like you want to give up and die. Why do I have to deal with these chains of disease? Passed down from generation to generation. I am now thinking with every passing they get tighter and tighter. My hands are the first thing to go. I don't know why but now I am going blind that means they have reached my head. Now all I am good for is to lay in bed. All I have to do is call for help and admit this pain is too much. But how can I sacrifice my pride. I can't believe I made this disease my bride.

## *The Hole*

**JustinS.28**

12 cold cells, white walls, blue doors.  
90 minutes out, not a damn minute more.

Toilets so cold, constipation at its finest,  
Deps start to laugh, I'd like to see them try this.

No one to talk to, but a man inside this wall,  
Like to see who I'm speaking to, but this vent is too Damn small.

Freezing cold air wrapped up in this blanket,  
Depression in every window, so obviously blatant.

Crave for the moment, to act out and make a call,  
And hear another voice, than my echo trapped in these walls.

As I close my eyes to rest, I rely on good dreams,  
Fiction makes reality, more pure than it seems.

Hours pass by, as I awake from this slumber,  
To a storm full of thoughts, hatred caught in this thunder.

When I notice my location, still trapped in this cell,  
Is when I reflect on my life, now it's time to prevail.

What is a man, whose without his daughter,  
Every damn thing she knows, someone else has taught her.

Every chance that I had, I threw down the drain,  
All for a drug that's forced wars in my brain.

Now realizations are true, and I hate to admit,  
Being here in this hole is what made me give a s\*\*t.

## *The Hole (Cont.)*

But the promise to change, had done all but one thing.  
And that unlock this door, to prove what I mean,

50 days left, to think of mistakes I can change,  
To walk out a new man, with my life rearranged.

12 empty cells, white walls, metal desks,  
What a terrible sport for a human to reflect.

## *Untitled*

**Corey C.**

You may or may not know me  
I destroy homes  
I tear families apart  
I'll take your children and that's just the start.  
I'm more precious than diamonds, more valued than gold.  
The sorrows I bring are a sight to behold.

If you need me I'm easily found  
I'm all around you in every city and every town.  
I live with the rich and with the poor  
I live down the street and even next door.

I'm made in a lab just not the kind you think  
I can even be made under your kitchen sink.  
I can be made in the closet or in the woods  
If this doesn't scare you to death it certainly should.  
I have many names but one you'd know best  
I go by the name of Crystal Meth.

My powers are awesome just try me and see  
Try me twice and your soul will belong to me.  
Once I possess you you'll steal and you'll lie  
You'll do whatever it takes to get high.  
The crimes you'll commit for the high and the fame  
Will be worth millions once I hit your veins.

You'll lie to your mother you'll steal from your dad.  
When you see their tears you won't even be sad.  
You'll forget all your morals and how you were raised  
Once I teach you my worthless ways.

I'll take your friends, your control, and your pride  
But I'll always be with you right by your side.

## *Untitled (Cont.)*

You'll give up your friends, your family, and your home  
When you run out you'll be all alone.

I'll take and I'll take till there's nothing to give,  
And when I am through you'll be lucky to live.

You can try me for fun but I'm no game  
Given the chance I'll drive you insane.  
I'll give you nightmares while you lie sweating in bed  
I'll even be them evil voices inside of your head.

You shouldn't have tried me, how many times were you told?  
But you challenged my powers, how could you be so bold?  
You couldn't say no, and just walk away?  
If you could do it all over what would you say?

I will be your master you'll be my slave.  
Don't fear being lonely I will walk you to your grave.  
I'll show you more pain then your deepest betrayal.

So come hold my hand  
I'll walk you to HELL!!

*For My Grandson*

**Brandon C.**

I give you a soccer ball. I give  
You this because I didn't continue to  
Do what I loved. I let bad influences get in  
The way of working hard, having  
Fun, and pursuing my dreams.  
Mi pasado mi presente



## *All My Me . . .*

**Salzman**

i found a love that's worth it all,  
with the man of my dreams, who calls me "doll."  
He's my best friend, we're as close as could be,  
there's nobody else in the world for me.  
2016-18, Bonnie and Clyde,  
Ride or die . . . been one hell of a ride!  
The last time i saw him, we danced like fools, the 100th time play-  
ing our song,  
we smiled and laughed . . . hand in hand, knowing we didn't have  
long.  
Now all i want is to just hear his voice,  
But i can't even have that, i can't have the choice  
Cause now i'm to the point, where i have no control  
Just thinking of the man, who has my heart and soul.  
So i'll take care of our baby—will you take care of mine?  
i need some reassurance love, tell me that everything's fine  
and don't forget, that i love; you see?  
with all of my heart, all my soul . . . all my me . . .

## *I'll Be There For You!!!*

### **Silent Cruz**

When you need a  
Friend that will be by your side,  
I'm here for you!

When you're lost and  
can't find your way, I'll be there  
to see you through!

When you need a  
shoulder to cry on, I'll be the  
one you can rely on!

When you feel like  
you can't go on, Call on me and I'll  
be there to help you no matter when!

When you feel like the  
world is on your shoulders, I'll be  
there holding it with you!

When you feel like no  
one is listening, I'll be the one who  
wants to!

When you feel down and  
no one else is around, I'll be there  
to comfort you!

I want you to know my  
love, my heart and soul,  
Are all yours forever!

*I'll Be There For You!!! (Cont.)*

I wanna be the one that's  
there for you, till the very end my  
friend!                      Why? 'Cause I'll be there

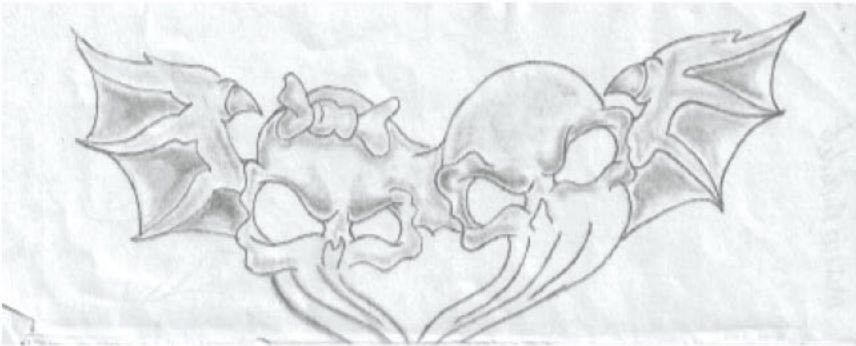
For you!!!

## Bonnie & Clyde

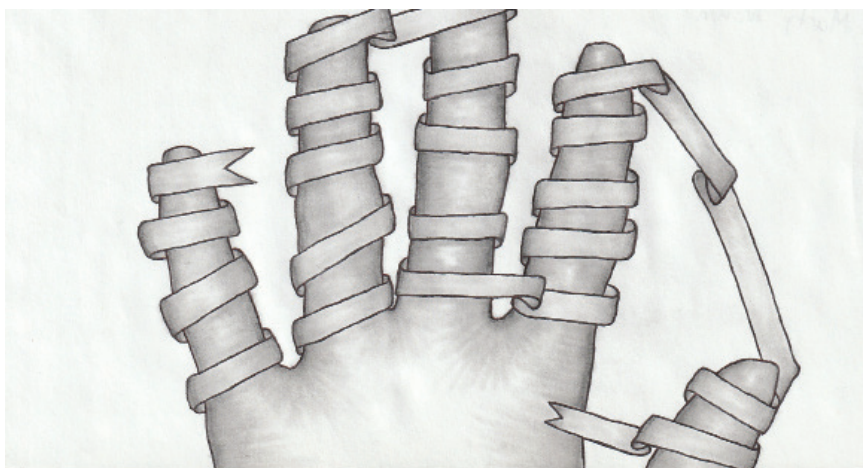
Alissa Lynn

Q Bonnie & Clyde  
You were supposed to be my Clyde, my soul mate, my righteous ride r die always by my side. Down for one another while we both live a sober life. You were supposed to be my Clyde, my future husband, partner in crime, you promised me a happy life. Time heals, though I'm still waiting for this pain to subside. You were supposed to be my Clyde, my baby love, changing your ways as I change mine. Where is our real chance? I asked for your heart when you stole mine. I wish I didn't believe all your lies in disguise. I fell into a vicious cycle, I always forgive you when you crossed that line. You were supposed to be my Clyde. You were the right amount of crazy for me, the best kind. All the b\*\*\*\* you put me through. Look how f\*\*\*g hard I tried. Your mistake became a choice, you've done it more than twice. Take responsibility, accountability, grow up, open your eyes. I tell you the same damn thing every time. No more always and forever, forever and always you and I. I want you out of my dreams and thoughts. I'm about to lose my mind. Abort this f\*\*\*g mission. Access denied. Perfectly broken heart. Fairytale promise declined. I can still walk away with my pride and my head held high. You gave me with all the fake b\*\*\*\*. You don't about the REAL life. You wasted my time, too many tears I've cried. No excuses, done with your lies. I was your Bonnie, your righteous ride r die always by your side but I'm letting go moving forward and goodbye to Bonnie and Clyde.

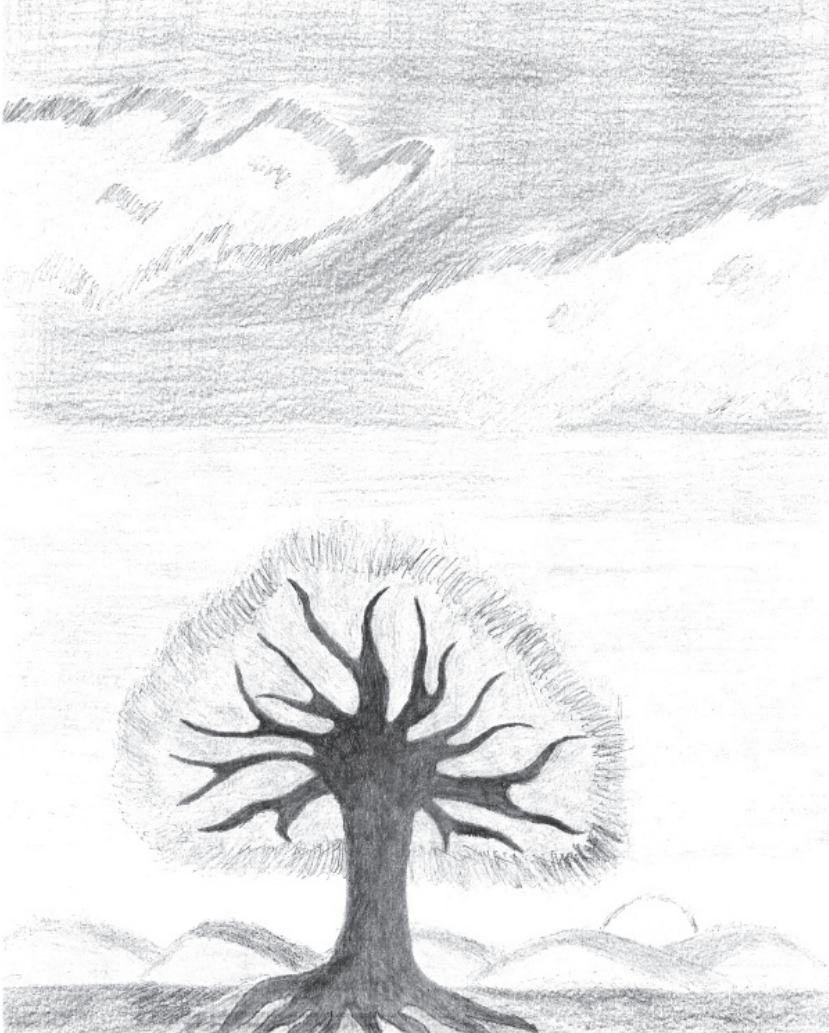
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**Mario A.**



*Untitled*  
**Marty N.**

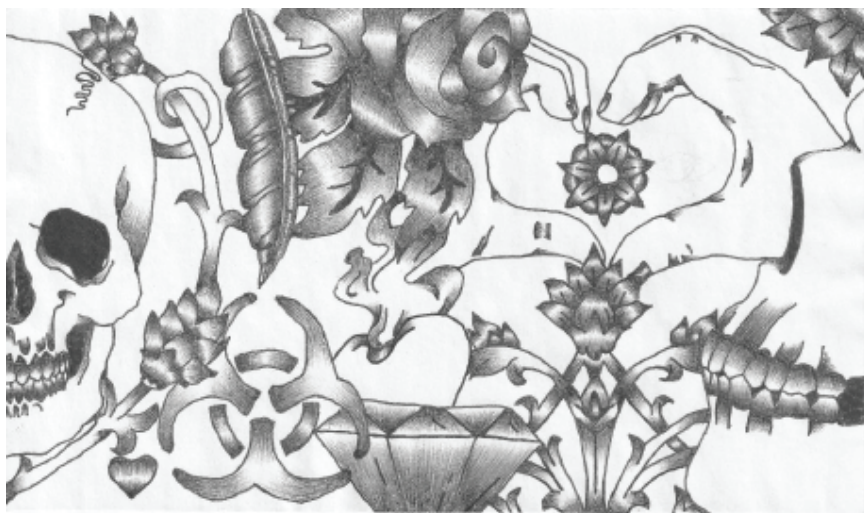


*Untitled*  
**World War Studier**





*Untitled*  
**Marty N.**





*Third Eye*  
**Seven Winters**



*Untitled*  
**Thizzle**

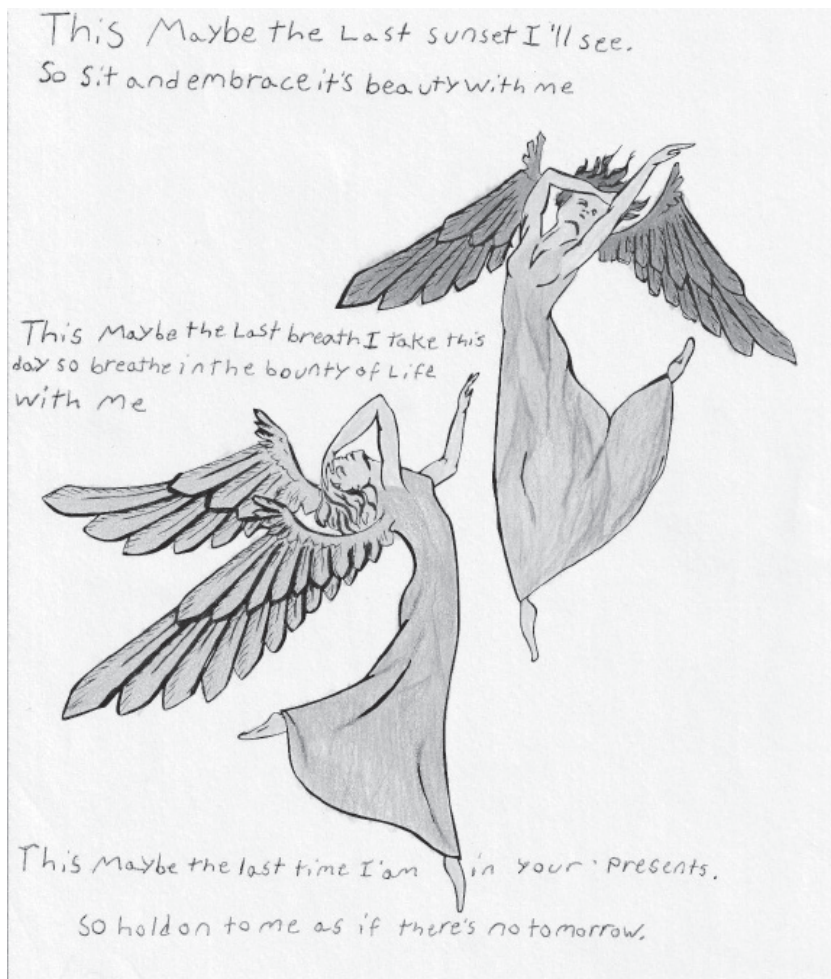


*Untitled*  
**Marty N.**



## Untitled

Matt F.



Untitled  
Hasty





*Untitled*

**Tom L.**



*Hands, Chains, Butterflies*  
**Collaborative Piece by the Women at LCJ**



# *Untitled*

## **Epic**

Nothing . . .

    Lasts forever,

        Except, . . .

    Nothing As Never,

        Changing.

    Even

        Unconditional love.

    Changes.

        As it Grows

            Stronger

    A constant state

        of flux.

            Stability

    Is an illusion

        Continually

        Different . . .

    Nothing is EVER . . .

        CHANGING\_



## *Untitled*

**Matt F.**

being young was full of fun times exciting  
times explosive times and hard times looking  
back now makes me laugh at all the fun times  
we had I would not change one thing about my  
youth days. I remember when we would cut  
class to Drink or to go fishing I don't know where  
the time goes but it goes fast and Just like that  
we were rebels that didn't have a clue and are  
bad attitudes. We were brave and stooped most of  
the time I wish i could go back to those days. My  
world has changed a lot these past years i have a  
daughter now I have the most wonderful fiance  
too. I look at my past and I look at my present  
and see how much has changed for better or worst  
but i will never change it

## *Untitled*

**Marty N.**

Watching my daughter laugh and play  
On such a beautiful day  
Sounds great, wouldn't you say?  
But instead I sit and pray  
That I will once again see that day

My eyes are blue  
They only see you  
Your eyes are brown  
I am astound  
Your beauty makes me smile  
And it makes me high, for a while

Roses are red  
Violets are blue  
I'm almost dead  
Damn i hate the flu

## *This Road Called Life*

### ***Tinkerbell***

As I sit here writing on this cold hard seat,  
listening to my radio and this rockin beat.

I think about all the people I will meet  
once I'm released and on my feet.

I can't wait to prove them wrong...  
They should have known I'd be strong.

On this road called life there's always going to be some strife...  
And sometimes we make a left when we should have made a right.

But we must continue to fight with all our might  
to remain a vessel for his light.

*Life Poem*

**World War Studier**

This is my life.

How boring and decise.

I have been abused and amused.

I can't seem to get out of being accused.

I have been told that I have hurt.

I really mean no harm.

But I can't stop acting out.

I really wish I could leave, but I can't get out.

I can't seem to be happy.

But no one really makes me happy.

This was my life.

Please have a better one.

## *Untitled*

**Rex Gold**

I screwed up my whole life  
gettin' high in the low-life  
Life's a flash like a strobe light  
I'm in my cell as it goes by  
It's been a cold night  
Tryna hold onto hope like  
I'm suicidal got the rope tied  
I lost it all to the dope pipe.

## *Every Day*

**Tannia**

Every day I ask myself why?  
Why me? Why not me? Why?  
Sometimes I wonder who?  
Who's there for me? Who  
Really cares? Who wants to  
Put up with me?

## *Untitled*

**Aracely J.**

I could change the first time I did drugs at my school in front of the principal and stole shoes the same day because all that changed my behaviors right away, and I was never the same after that all happened. I became a criminal and got involved with the system. I lost my dad's trust, lost a lot of good friends got lost in the dark, and just that one mistake ruined my life and changed me.

## *The Mirror*

**Avacluna**

I crumble in the presence of existing. I am lost and trying to be found. I love and hate all within the same space and I don't know what's right and what isn't. In my mind, my walls turn into T.V. screens, and I struggle with knowing me. The planes that leave their remembrance all over my body, they comfort my chilling veins. I love you I say to the devil in the mirror, but then I realize that the devil is me, and I don't know who I am going to be.

## *Acrostic Philosophy*

**Ryan E.**

For my 1st phrase  
I'll trap myself in a maze.  
Right along your beautiful gaze.  
Should I say my silly ways.  
To test what I'm going to raise.

Let's whisper in God's ear.  
Every Bible verse through a mirror.  
Talking about all the blood shed and tears.  
Thinking of sinners and all the cheers  
Eating pizza, dancing, and drinking pint beers.  
Racing thoughts in my fears.

Of course I'll show you what's mine.  
Full of grace is my valentine.

Enemies stalking him alone.  
All he knows is his mobile phone.  
Catching him outside his comfort zone.  
His undercover is blown

Lilies in a field that will glow.  
I will listen to all that you know.  
Nice friends is what I've to grow  
Elephants running at me I say NO

## *What They Should Teach in School*

**Brandon C.**

How not to be a class clown  
Not skip class  
Have fun  
Be responsible  
Properly do hygiene because  
Peoples breath b kicking  
Be respectful  
Stay away from trouble  
BECOME A MAN

## *Voicemail from a Ghost*

**JoLink**

“Hey, it’s Leslie! I just wanted to call and say I love and miss you! I can’t wait until you can come home! Everything is perfect here, as always, but I miss your arms holding me while we sleep. I know you’ll be here soon, I could tell you the exact time and day, though I don’t want to scare you. Don’t worry, Love, we’ll be fine, though waiting for you is agony to me, I need you to stop trying to hurry home. You’ll be home soon enough, for now though, take care of the kids and remember, I’m dead, but I still love you and I’m waiting for you. Until we can hold each other again, be smart and Love again.”



## *Those Eyes*

**Anthony H.**

Those eyes,  
The stare  
The glare  
That stabs so deep  
Pierces my soul  
And captivates my heart.  
Those eyes,  
That mesmerize and hypnotize.  
Under their spell  
That to which I cannot break.  
I am a slave, there is no mistake.  
Those eyes.  
When they met my own  
I find my home.  
I feel complete, I feel whole.

## *Beautifully Broken*

**Meggie**

In your voice I hear your hurting  
Wishing I could take the pain away,  
Beautifully broken on the inside.

I see the warmth in your eyes  
The kindness in your words and the hope in your smile  
I want you to start to heal  
Start mending the pieces like a puzzle,  
Beautifully broken on the the inside.

You let people continue to hurt you  
You deserve so much better,  
Beautifully broken on the inside.

As I see you grow, I see the  
Brokenness begin to fade into the the sunset  
Soon forgotten,  
Beautifully broken on the inside.

I hope you will let me see the  
brokenness restored,  
Beautifully broken no more.

## *Across the Atlantic: Writing between [REDACTED] and Fort Collins, United States*

20 writers, 2 nations...one heck of a story - this was how we advertised the recent collaborative writing project between one American jail and one British prison to prospective writers in [REDACTED], England. And it did indeed, turn out to be, one heck of a story. Ten highly talented writers from [REDACTED] and twenty from the Larimer County Jail in Fort Collins, Colorado stepped up to the challenge. Leaders from both workshops offered writing prompts via video so that writers could find inspiration from a range of ideas and thinkers. We wrote and then exchanged writing for feedback.

It wasn't always easy, and every writer in their own way challenged themselves to stretch their talent further, and write in styles they hadn't previously considered. Perhaps the most challenging part of all was to give and receive feedback to a group of other writers, equally committed to their practice, but who were first-named strangers sitting somewhere across the Atlantic. Each writer in this position must stand and fall by his words alone... but no one fell.

Here we are pleased to feature some of the work composed by [REDACTED] writers (and some of the LCJ writers will be featured in "The Manor," a [REDACTED] publication in Fall 2018). Some of the [REDACTED] men are already accomplished writers. [REDACTED] has an express train of a novel that combines plot and philosophy into a tightly woven narrative of conspiracy and prophecy. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are both poets and short story writers who have an ear as well as an eye for the poetic, and [REDACTED] is well on his way to writing a life story that has all the familiarity of your childhood backyard but with the wicked sting of [REDACTED] humour to keep you on your toes. Other writers had less experience but no less commitment to developing their craft and produced some really powerful pieces of work; [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all shaped their ideas into lines that were at times razor sharp and stark, at others beautifully wrought with the cadence of skillful prose.

There was support, inspiring words, heartfelt encouragement and the slow process of learning the craft of writing in the company of others. It is an ongoing process, a work-in-progress, and it is a privilege to be able to share some of the story so far. We hope to continue our international collaboration in the future!

*Tobi Jacobi (Colorado State University, USA)  
and Ella Simpson (Bath Spa University, UK)*

*Professor Moss 2006*



“It’s going to affect your hearing.”  
“I’m a bit deaf already”! said.  
Surgery, Chemo, now a Radio Ring,  
I suppose better this than end up dead.

The shock of diagnosis  
Never left just changed direction.  
Inducing neurosis, and psychosis,  
Predators you can’t run from.

“You’re in very good hands, she’s  
The best in her field .... Oncology”  
Someone said ..... but not to me.  
“He’s not himself” an apology  
“He hasn’t been -for quite some time, you see.”

## *A New Start*



All my life, from day Dot, all I have ever done is simply - survive  
The future though is my time, a time to THRIVE

Because at all my violent convictions,  
I have been contained and controlled by restrictions

It has been an epic Battle, to be locked up  
here, there, everywhere - Driven about like a piece of cattle

Am I an animal? A piece of Dirt? A waste of space?  
No, I am a mammal - Just like you

Do I deserve less from life than you... or you?  
I remember, that time in church - we did share a pain

Indeed I have made mistakes - but have you not?  
for me the stakes were higher but God loves a trier!

I have seriously considered suicide because I can't  
Seem to coincide since I tried to commit the homicide

So here I sit up high, on this parapet, looking  
down on all of you, because now the tables have  
turned, oh yes I have been burned, but now those  
old scars have healed and the real David  
has now been revealed

I know now that I can be Somebody and do you know  
what? I'm quite happy that Somebody is me!!

## *Forever and Always Ash*



If I had never met you I would still be bitter. I would not know happiness, love and joy. I would still be immature and hate myself and the world around me. I would have succumbed to the darkness around me and I would end up old and alone. Drugs and alcohol would be the focus of my life. I would be swept along with no aim like a plastic bag in the wind. The streets would be my domain and the rage inside me would be untamed. My soul would be lost as it did not have a mate to play with. I would forever and always be lost to the world that does not understand me. The end would come I would be burned and turned to Ash unclaimed and Unloved.

## *I Was Lost*

**King Jackson**

I was lost in transfiction held captive by an appearance.  
She was stuck by persistence, and her thoughts held the clearance.

I knew perseverance would complete her, she could hear it.  
She's in a trance, don't fear it. I see our reflection without mirrors.

So I wonder what she's afraid of? I can sense the Hesitation.  
My sensimillia blazing allows for her to sniff the sensation.

Now she vibrates when I speak, but I'm still lost in Her Creation.  
I rip my heart out and hand it to Her, with no need for Persuasion

I noticed She was waiting, She found the Virtue in Patience.  
Her mind is what I'm craving, Her tree of Knowledge for my tast-  
ing.

Sip her wisdom slow, in moderation, You know that mental stimu-  
lation.  
Such a stunning presentation, it only took some simple communi-  
cation

She's Artwork, Everyone brushed by Mona Lisa at the show.  
Fool, if you want Real Gold, you must learn to study slow.

I found a Diamond throughout the Gravel, never missed Her Glow.  
I was lost inside Her Painting, observing how her Paint Flowed.

She's appalled by the outcome of a Brief Smile then Hello.  
We are now Lost Together, Her hand I'll never let go.

We Are Found

## *Wonderous Blossom*

### **Cowboy**

Casting the wild seeds that I sowed;  
Not really knowing even if they might even grow—  
Left to right and right to left; the movement  
In my attempt to throw—  
Surely thinking, God only knows where they  
Will end up, where they will grow—  
Knowing my preparation of the soil was  
True; properly turned dry, hard ground, dirt  
To air and over again, amending with the  
Hands that feed me, as I till with earnest  
Care my fingertips hurt and bare—Bleeding  
And cracked I leaned not on my own  
Understanding—knowing God rewards  
A laborious man, I didn't worry, I didn't  
Need care. The master gardener from the  
Garden of Eden, clothes the lilies of the  
Field, even feeds the birds of the air—  
And I could sense His spirit near—  
King Solomon's riches couldn't compare, never as  
Beautiful splendor did He ware—so, with  
The faith of a farmer I waited and watered,  
Between the rains; I prayed—through the  
Hot days of the sun, in the evening my  
Thoughts pondered and peaceful night skies  
Slumbered—wishing and hoping that on a far away star dreams  
Come true awakening to the morning mist  
And promised dew—an answered prayer or two?;  
The very thing only God can do, and me  
The faithful farmer with effort true—  
“A wondrous wildflower bloom”



*Living Here I Am an Alien*

**Lynda R.**

Living here I am alien to this place.  
Once I am gone I will leave here without a trace,  
like a shooting star I will one day fade,  
like a moth to the flame burned by the fire  
I am eager to acquire  
life after love,  
life after death  
for am I am an alien in this place.

## *A Letter of Love*

**David F.**

I love you like the sun loves the moon, the moon loves the night,  
the night loves the stars, and the stars love the inky blackness of the  
space.

I love you as the dead love the dirt, the dirt loves the worms, and  
the worms love a place to hide from the birds.

I love you as much as a dog loves a bone, a bone loves to be buried,  
and a buried bone loves to be found.

I will love you if you can never bear to be apart and I will love you if  
you cannot stand to be near.

I will love you until my hair turns grey, my heart stops beating, the  
clock stops ticking, the world stops turning, the galaxies fade and  
all of existence stops existing.

I will love you as much as the freshly painted fence loves a spring-  
time Rain.

I will love you as much as anyone can love and for as long as anyone  
can live.

*All My Me . . .*

**Jeny H.**

In my dream I'm free  
Without worry or pain  
No more letting my ways consume me

Free to walk the right path  
No looking back  
Free from my inner wrath  
Shed the guilt  
Shed no more tears  
Released from my prison of fear

One beautiful dream  
One moment in time  
Free to feel whatever I want  
Alone in the dark, a light comes my way  
Open my eyes, for a new life I fight.

## *Allow Me My Significance*

**Madee O.**

Allow me my significance  
I am the symbol of evil but  
people would say with the love I  
give a demon to some or an angel  
to others there is no in between  
with voices spinning out of my  
head you might think I  
was just a little on edge

With meds that are prescribed  
that you would think that would  
work making it seem as if everything  
was coming out subliminal

Let something come from nothing  
no one is listening . . . like Sally  
the ragdoll needing stitching . . .  
when the doctor says all you need is  
to be patient I have to whisper  
to myself "I don't want to be  
patient" but I have no choice  
to slip this night shade in his  
drink whispering to myself I need  
to get out to think excited to  
see my Jack Skellington when  
I can even tho he's like the boogeyman  
I always hope to see him in my  
dreams & nightmares even  
seeing him makes me think of  
him a better plan seeing him  
makes me think of him as a better  
man . . .

## *Allow Me My Significance (Cont.)*

Even tho he grew tired of his  
crown if they only understood  
he'd give it all up if he only could  
with these thoughts & feelings we could  
feel inside of our bones to understand  
how we could never grow old, with  
thoughts we have year after year  
with a lonely past that we never  
get to relive

To say I know how you feel . . .

## *Untitled*

**Lil Unknown**

I often catch myself at the cemetery which brings me peace, I feel it bring me joy when I look between the trees, nobody understands, maybe not even me, but I come here to be alone and pray for peace. I miss you dawg, your smile and everything and when I visit you here it often brings me peace. I think about you always, hoping you hear me! Do you see the way I talk about you just as royalty. You was my only friend but the streets took you from me. I miss our friendship and everything that was supposed to be.

## *Goodbye*

**Nina G.**

Goodbye...Although I never  
Got to say it  
And I will admit I hate it  
You couldn't even write me  
A letter  
And you left my dad  
Now it's kinda sad  
How you could  
Leave your family just like that

## *The Reality of Life in the Fast Lane...*

### **Silent Cruz**

I have a mother,  
So I know what love is,  
I have looked into her eyes,  
    So I know what faith is,  
I have planted a seed,  
    So I know what hope is,  
I have seen a sunrise,  
    So I know what beauty is,  
I have seen an eagle fly,  
    So I know what freedom is,  
I have hurt,  
    So I know what hatred is,  
I have been abused,  
    So I know what rejection is,  
I have used and sold drugs,  
    So I know what survival is,  
I have been locked up,  
    So I know what hell is,  
I am serving my time,  
    So I know what punishment is,  
I have faced my problems,  
    So I know what reality is,  
I have Survived all of this,  
    So I know what the power  
    of God is

That's why I am

able to Love  
You.

## *Untitled*

**Mugz Mac**

I tell them leave me alone  
I'm in my zone  
I'm trying to crawl out these slumps  
I'm trying to make my way home

Out here on my own  
I'm trying to crawl out these slumps I'm in  
I'm ready to change  
Ready for this life to end

Ready for a new life  
New opportunity  
I stay true to thee

The pack that I make  
The path that I take seriously

I made these mistakes  
Cuz the curiosity was killing me  
Running with the enemy

Sending me into the line of fire  
God said I'm beautiful  
The devil made me a liar

Stealing everything I aspire to  
Corrupting my every move  
Now I'm locked up thinking of the things that I cannot do



## *The Beatles*

**Michelle Z.**

My name came from my dad. He loves the Beatles, so he got my name from the song “Michelle.”

Every time it's my birthday, he sings it to me on his guitar. <3

“I love you  
I love you  
I love you  
That's all I want to say  
Until I find a way  
I will say the only words that I know you'll understand”

“Michelle  
My Belle  
These are words that go together  
Love my Michelle”

## *Untitled*

**Roger S.**

Where am I at? What happened to me? Why don't I know who I am?

Why do I give up all my liberties for something I can't stand. I bow down to a master of destruction, death and loneliness. I don't deserve death but God didn't give me a rock bottom. I need to start over... Damn!

Vulnerability, forgiveness, humility, please find me soon!

## *You Will Never Know*

**Nina G.**

You lost us when I was only 2.

You will never know the things I had to go through.

Remember our weekly visits I had to go to?

You will never know the excuses I came up with just so I didn't have to see you.

Losing your kids didn't even motivate you to get clean.

You will never know the self esteem issues that caused me.

That left me to question myself.

Was I good enough?

You will never know how confused I was.

Why didn't my own mother want me?

And why is that so hard to see?

You will never know how much that hurt me.

It's been 15 years since you've seen me and my brother.

You will never know how much I love my new mother.

And because of you it's sometimes hard to trust her.

You will never know hard it was for me

To go through all those foster homes,

Waiting for you to get clean.

And the biggest thing

You will never know

Is the woman I came to be.

*Angelina*

**Aracely J.**

Although I have never seen you in my life, I always have thought about who you really were.

Never does a day go by without me thinking about you and how different things could've been.

Going on and on smoking pot, doing drugs, selling drugs, not knowing what I'm doing to my life, also not even caring what happens to me.

Everyday always on the streets doing whatever I want, then thinking how disappointed you must be with me.

Lately I've been in jail. You must think, "What are you doing to your life?"

I hope you understand why I do this. Please forgive me. I still love you but please understand that I was raised poorly and lost all of the people I loved.

Never in the positive space. I wish you were here with me. 'Till this day I need your guidance to help me get back on track. I feel like I'm lost without you.

Aye, I know I'm not a good child but understand that I try but it's not always so easy living this kind of life. Hope you're doing great.

## *My Name*

**Dr. New Dawn**

My first and middle names were given to me by my parents. My last name I stole, no, earned from my ex-husband. I love my name, especially the way it sounds when spoken by someone who loves me.

The single syllable my children speak pours like sunshine after a rain, sprouting a tree in my chest. At once it grows strong and proud.

The three syllables from my lover's lips send an electricity flowing down the roots and through the branches growing from my heart. The echo of his voice pulses through me leaving every root tip and bloom inside me tingling.

My name sounds organic, alive, immense, and abstract, delicate and forgiving. It is in and of itself a poem, that in just three "words" tells an origin story. A poem of loves and battles, all told with passion, all revealing purpose.

My name tells the story of a tree. A tree that has survived and still thrives where others could not. It is a story about family and individuality.

It is the name of a mother, a botanist, a poet and secret keeper, a writer of scientific studies, a daughter and sister, a felon and inmate, a lover and survivor, and so many more identities, some still a mystery even to me.

I will not tell you my name here, but I will tell you where it can be found. The path was made by moccasins and cowboy boots, tread softly.

You will find it unexpectedly along the journey, when the wind suddenly stops and the leaves of a tree will continue whispering, my name.

*I'm From*

**Ria B.**

I'm from the sea  
Where sharks and mermaids swim together in harmony  
Where fish and stingrays mingle together.

I'm from the ocean  
Where the coral reefs dance and sing with the water.

I'm from the Atlantic, deep in the sea  
One beautiful place  
where all creatures in the sea can come together and dance and sing.

I'm a mermaid who lives and loves being in the sea  
Playing with my best friend Oscar-  
A beautiful, colorful fish

## *Untitled*

### **Pops Brown**

Although circumstantial standing had me roaring from cages.  
Pacing slowly through incarceration seeking all faces...  
For the kinda love that may be mine  
because I'm blinded to see. How will it be to lose my mind and is  
there love meant for me.  
Because I'm lost and sorta dead outta sight and all minds right  
show me a god who never pokes and prods or takes away eye sight.

Cause where I'm at I'm feeling trapped. Attacked by demons in  
darkness. A crucial conflict with the heartless. Like my life be the  
target  
How will it be losing my mind and is there love meant for me.

Because I'm blinded to see the light that shines throughout prison.  
Phone conversations reminiscin' has me hopefully wishin' for the  
type of love that tends to tug at a lonely thug's passion.

I'm just a product of the poverty police be harrassin'  
So set me free and let me be maybe fly without wings.  
Liberate me from the string but somehow manage my things.  
Because I'm lost and so alone without a love of my own.

Feels like the walls are closing in im suffocated by moans. Show me  
a god founded in stone because I doubt the existence.  
He said, gamble with your life pops or handle your business.

I felt a deep pain and it hurt for so long. I lied lifeless until it disap-  
peared and i'm gone.  
See the world wasn't the same the pain eventually died.  
I heard a voice that said to write this and leave it behind.

## *Untitled*

**Jacqueline B.**

I look into my brother's eyes  
He asked me why  
I told him I'm sorry, I was shy  
Wasn't meant for you to see  
It was supposed to be once or twice  
Not a million times  
Everyday I remember you told me to stop  
I look into your eyes and see the pain I brought

My scars were bad enough  
I'm sorry, I love you  
I won't do it again, I promise  
Don't cry, Bubba, it'll be fine.

## *Untitled*

**Will C.**

Desperation is the last word in a final argument, a plea from the soul when your mind shuts down and the heart takes over. An unmarked grave marked with 4-leaf clovers. A shackled retreat to the darkest feelings you avoid at all costs. The moment you come to understand your last breath, shadowed by all that you lost. It's hard to move when everything in your life stops. A thought that never ends wraps itself around. You're inside out, demanding communion with the reality that keeps you sane, and you know you've changed by the look of your face, by the way you can no longer smell the rain. You feel like a stranger when you hear your own name, losing everything beautiful with nothing to say.

*Giggle to a Stranger*

**Emily B.**

Something universal and oh so human.  
Me relating with you to something unrelatable  
I don't know where you came from  
You don't know where I'll go  
But from here to there  
Walk with me and a giggle we will share.

*I Am From. . .*

**Jacqueline B.**

I am from Florida,  
where it's sunny and nice  
but now I'm walking out on cold ice  
far away from my loved ones  
closer to the snow  
I want to be on the beach again closer to home  
I don't want to leave the snow,  
So I'll take it with me back to my lovely home.

Watch it melt cause it won't survive  
oh well I'll have to say goodbye.



## *To Me a Woman*

**Lynda R.**

To me a woman is modest, respectable and true. To me a woman holds it together even when she's feeling blue.

To me a woman is honest, loyal, and strong. She works throughout the day and all night long. To me a woman is loving, caring and true loving all those around her, even you.

## *The White Buffalo*

**Dr. New Dawn**

They call her the The White Buffalo, or Buffalo, or sometimes Buffy. She is legend and power and the rebellion. She is Maria, but not Buffy. She has a huge presence and an even bigger heart, but it is brittle; with my own eyes, I have seen her seen her fall apart.

Buffalo, our wise elder who speaks frankly with riddles hidden in well chosen words. She has seen the mountaintop but something in her is afraid to act on the knowledge of what she has seen and felt and knows to be true. Her knowledge of the mountaintop has not yet become part of her wisdom. She is a fighter but too often she fights herself, fights her own transformation.

Many who know her say “be a public speaker!” She is. The words and audience will transform when she is ready. I have seen her when my eyes were closed as a professor at a prestigious university. Her students and colleagues gravitate to her enormous energy. She is well loved and confident. She is radiant light. She left her darkness somewhere behind. Professor Maria, The White Buffalo, wears a white blouse illuminated from inside, glowing from the white light of her spirit. She wears a school girl skirt showing she is still a child at heart, and tall black boots—the kind made for walking. When she lowers her head to read she wears glasses, but when she lifts her eyes she doesn’t need them to see you .

She is, The White Buffalo and she is transforming. Struggling like the butterfly to break break free from this cocoon, she is getting stronger. Pretty soon she will fly.

*Untitled*

**Nessa G.**

Blur the lines  
It's all fine  
In society  
It's not that bad  
To lie. In this world  
You're told you can  
Fly but not how high  
Or even why.

## *I Am*

### ***Patience in the Flesh***

The thing about being a strong man

Is just that, a man I am

Pain is part of being strong

Hurt is strong

My hurt is stronger at times

So more pain

Endure,

I can.

When a tear falls

The silent dance begins

Pain, its melody

Standing on the ledge

lashes its footing

Delaying the fall

The fight

Is to deny the ability to endure

Heart thightend

By the vice grip of my reality

Challenging

My will to survive

Endure

I will

The thing about being a strong man

Is just that,

A man I am.

## *A Mask*

**SimBA+**

A mask is something you hide behind  
Something I put on after I get out of the shower  
A mask can cover all the pain and hate that you have In Side  
It is something you wear so people think everything is ok  
I always have a mask on so no one can ever see the In Side  
Of me I only ever show a low number of people the In Side  
Of the mask and every time I do that someone turns around and  
bites me in the a\*s

I will never put  
my mask  
Down  
Unless?

## *Her*

**Brianna M.**

The Freezing Desire  
The Cold Shoulder; Ice cold heart  
Silence; Dark; Lonely

Hot headed temper  
Sizzling mouth; Spicy body  
Soul food; hot tamale

*Laced Emotions/Diamond-Laced/Spider Bite, Part 1*  
**Patience in the Flesh**

Hearts laced with string  
                    Black is the widow's web  
Praying Mantis  
                    Feeds,  
                                After receiving its seed.  
                    Winters are cold  
                                Throwing nothing to the heartless  
Empty in need to fill the hollowness  
                    Searching for someone  
                                But only finding  
  Victims.  
Waiting for the moment  
                    Her web tingles . . .  
                                Hungry.  
Mating  
                    Only to strike vengeance . . .  
                                Satisfying nature . . .  
  
Dying.  
                    Knowing it's not enough.  
Afraid of love  
                    Due to the danger  
                                A rogue touch . . .  
                    Hiding behind the shadows of a clear glass.  
Innocence broken . . .  
                    All must suffer  
                    Mistakes have taught a lasting bitter lesson . . .  
The mark of the diamond.  
                                Screams beware . . .  
                    Enter at the risk of your own choosing . . .  
Wounds have healed  
                    But from the time  
                                Calluses have grown . . .

*Laced Emotions/Diamond-Laced/Spider Bite (Cont.)*

No room for any more hearts on the sleeve

No vacancies.

Is it pain?

Is it hate?

The goal?

The reason?

Is it love?

The source?

Is it control?

The issue?

Or are the questions in itself?

The answers . . .

Life is what it is . . .

Pain caused

Doesn't mean

Pain given . . .

Remember,

Vengeance isn't ours

It's his . . .

## *Arachnid Phobic, Part 2*

### ***Patience in the Flesh***

Minds Intertwined

With the lines of divine  
Beauty . . .

A serpent coiled around its

Prey . . .

Lies and deceit

Set at the marionettes  
Feet . . .

Made to jump and leap

Only by the serpents  
Speech . . .

Unaware of the danger

Cause the cadence is  
Amicable/Harmonious

The scene is set

The script is written  
Illusions

Guided through shards of glass

Acid rain and  
Broken hearts

All alone

Only company  
Tethered strings

Spider bitten hands

Spinning webs  
To capture thoughts

Moth to the flame

Dirt upon which it  
Floats . . .

Envy of emotion

Cast away  
Drifting Wilson's palm



## *Arachnid Phobic (Cont.)*

Jealousy mixed with vengeance  
    On a rampage  
                    Cold.  
Order told through code  
    Love, emotion,  
                    Solid . . .  
Feeling abandoned  
    Yet the one that is  
                    Recluse  
Afraid of the past  
    Resting in shadows  
                    Of hate  
Shrouded in self made  
                    Darkness.  
Ice filtering ventricles  
    Beautiful polish at the tips of  
                    Tentacles.  
Lost . . .  
    In a sea of their own pain  
                    Masked by others  
After looking in the mirror  
    Coming to realize . . .  
    Why they are afraid of  
Spiders.

## *Untitled*

**David F.**

The tension was palpable. As the sweat rose from his brow and the nervous twinge grew in his chest, he knew he was afraid of the stranger sitting across from him. He was out of breath and the words were lost in the tempest brewing in his mind so many fleeting thoughts and nothing he could find safety or stability with. He simply longed for the good old days spent alone at home in front of the fire, sipping hot cocoa and watching the snow fall through the window. Longing for the safety of those times.

## *Human Being*

**Chanel**

Human being is being human, that's the easiest way it's said.

Being human is being happy, sad or mad.

Human beings try to cook angel food cake, and add egg shells when they say add egg whites.

They also hide the candy in their house so they don't eat it all at one time.

They even forget their friends birthday because they were busy trying to find that same friend a perfect Christmas present because they know they would do the same.

Even at times when they probably should cry, their eyes feel as dry as a desert.

Human beings are being humans, there's no other way around it.

*Dear 10 Year Old Me*

**Back Muscle**

Dear 10 year old me,

Don't you f\*\*king dare it's a trap you don't really know what you're doing right now or why or how? But knowing me knowing you, it's not a good idea so no just no.

Sincerely,  
20 year old you

Dear 20 year old me,

Piss off old man. Don't tell me how to live my life you think just cause you are me that you know me no you stop.

Sincerely,  
10 year old you

P.S. Got some cash I can borrow?

*Untitled*

**World War Studier**

I smell a scent that is mood set

It reminds me of my mom's house

Oh how lovely and cozy

I will cover up when it's snowy

Will drink a cup of hot cocoa so slowly

It is cold and lonely

My mom is at the store

I wish we had a fire

But my heater is not yet wired

I wish I had more friends

They live in Copper

Oh how I feel lonely

But at least I'm cozy

## *The Promise*

### **Tinkerbell**

Our love is tried and true.  
I have always believed in you.

The promise we made, I still trust...  
To never give up on us.

I am yours and you are mine.  
Together I know we'll stand the test of time.

So when you're feeling blue...  
Know no matter what you do, I will  
Always be there for you.

Dedicated to my love

## *Reassurance*

### **House of Ravens**

Don't cry my beloved Dark Angel,  
Everything will be okay,  
I'm here for you my Love,  
Listen to what I have to say:

Nothing you have done,  
Will make me walk away,  
Everything you are,  
Is what makes me sure to say.

## *Letter to Self from 2017*

### **Michelle Z.**

Why are you so dumb to fight people and go to jail? And why did you not leave that abusive relationship? You deserve better, you did not need that in your life. You couldn't even stay in class man, you always had to ditch with your damn friends. You could have bought the stuff at the store instead of robbing them. Now you're in this placement away from your family. You couldn't even be there for your little niece wondering where you are or your mother when she needs you the most. Now that the judge gave you a chance to change, change. You will soon make it and have your freedom again.

## *Tranquil*

### **Hasty**

I ponder about what's to occur  
Often fallen amongst Earth's offer  
Will I circumference fate?  
Is there none but so to suffer?  
Massive weight fragrance fear.  
None is one to another year.

Still facilitate will to plunder  
To the new abyss, an old wonder,  
Exhilarance portray as light fades  
Steel amongst dull blades  
Monotone ad nauseum full days.  
Hold me silent in quiet rage.

Many more to come to flight  
With nothing more than pill of night  
Forseek what's gone but not  
Forgotten to reinstall Faith &  
Rid the rotten.

Once more doing in his own  
Mind, had a plan the entire  
time.

## *Everything in Orange*

**SK Crow**

I probably won't ever wear  
The color orange again  
I've been wearing it so long now  
It should feel like an old friend  
I used to think it was happy and fun  
It's the color of the sun  
But now it's just reminding me  
Of all the stupid things I've done  
I was born and raised here  
But I no longer call this city my home  
Now it's just a series of triggers for me  
Too many memories finding myself  
Way too high and alone  
Tired of running, nowhere to hide  
My sanity is frail  
It seems that every high is only  
One step closer to coming back to jail  
I am leaving very soon  
Stepping out through the revolving door  
This is the last time, I swear  
I just can't do it anymore  
Orange is the color  
Slowly driving me insane  
Once I leave this place  
I will never wear orange again.



## *Daddy Figure*

**Baby Diana**

I never had a daddy figure. They wasn't even together. He left his unfinished business to my jefa so I look at my jefa as a daddy figure. She play in a way to never look ashamed. She always found a way. She told me to never be ashamed cause she'll always be in the way. Don't mind that cause we will always find a way, we'll always beat that case. I never had a daddy figure but my jefa showed me love that I can't never get from a n\*\*\*a not even my own daddy figure. I like how my jefa always finds a way even tho she didn't have to change but she wanted a better way. She was never ashamed. She taught me the game. So I won't waste my time with a n\*\*\*a that's lame cause my jefa will always be in the way. I never had a daddy figure. But that okay because with my jefa as my guardian angel I'll find a way.

## *Untitled*

**Little Bit**

Here I sit locked behind these walls thinking about the life I had before. No one seems to answer my calls. Guess I'm forgotten behind the slamming door. Wish I could forget the cold ache inside the feel of these metal bracelets that I cannot hide. Marked as a criminal marched in to court for the judge to see, treated like an animal. My mistakes make them think less of me. No way to change the past, no way to make this better, oh God, how long will this last? Man I gotta get it together.

## *Untitled*

**Ryan J.**

In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, I believe that the Savage and the Controller both have veiled points. But I think that the Savage has a better opinion. I believe we need pain and suffering to truly enjoy all the positive things in life. We need to choose a higher power or not to believe in one altogether. The Controller is a dictator, telling the people how to think, feel, and act. God gave people free will, the Controller wants to take that away. If the Controller does not take that away then he has no control. He keeps the Bible and all the other books locked in his safe so no one can read them that would question the world they live in and some would inevitably defect or uprising to overthrow those in power. It is human rather to question everything and to suppress it with a drug is wrong no matter what. The Controller states that his people are conditioned to do the things he deems acceptable . . . he is having to change almost all human traits to reach a state of "bliss." If someone does this, we stop being human and become half human, and stop advancing as a species. If we are not advancing, we are not living; we are existing.

*\*Faith\**

**Rose**

My Faith falls  
Short at times  
I wonder what it means  
How do I grasp it take  
Hold of it. Something that  
Is like the wind. You can  
Feel it most days but can't  
Touch or catch it. Blows  
Away with a second of  
A doubt.

## *Untitled*

### **Back Muscle**

Sunday's that friend that for some reason is always connecting things to Jesus. The one that always messes up the joke by saying things like Jesus can or Jesus would or what would Jesus think

Monday's that prissy chick with perfect hair that's always like oh my god like look omg and you're always questioning them existing

Tuesday's that guy whose name you never remember but you always end up talking to and is always there for some reason

Wednesday's that cool friend that is always there to help you out and get you to the end

Thursday's that friend that just drones on and on and on and you want to do the fun stuff but he keeps droning and droning

Friday's that frat that always tries to get you to party and you sit there and say no but he knows

Saturday's that person that you are always excited to see but always has a hangover and no one remembers why

## *Remember that Time*

### ***Tinkerbell***

Babe, remember that time we climbed the tree?  
These are the memories that mean so much to me.  
That night under the overpass?  
Oh how we had a blast!  
The Suburban Inn will always make me grin.  
Cause Babe that was where it all began.  
That time on the back roads where we left your shoe . . .  
that wasn't the first time you would have to buy new.  
Always looking for a place to be alone . . .  
cause we didn't have a home.  
The crazy times we have had  
couldn't have been all that bad . . .  
Cause we're still standing strong  
even after this long.  
You have always been the one;  
I love to have the most fun!  
Even through our hardships and tears,  
I would never trade these years.  
For I love you even more today,  
than I did those yesterdays.  
And no matter how long we are apart,  
you forever have my heart.  
You always did, right from the start.

## *Between the Lines*

**King Jackson**

I never knew beauty until the moment I saw her eyes.  
I said we can share our poetry, I'd love to hear your rhymes  
She looked at me and smiled I'll see what I can do.  
You've read my work, will you share your poetry too?  
I agreed to her question then caught a glimpse of her soul.  
Artwork so beautiful, it was filled with Diamonds and Gold.  
I knew she was amazing so it was hard to catch my breath.  
I gave her every part of me, every poem I had left.  
Did she think of me while reading them, how my words connect.  
The dots to who she's missing, that love, peace, respect.  
Inside my speech is a map, does she hear my language now?  
Could she comprehend the meaning of my poems, vows?  
Would she allow it to set her free, No more bondage from his pen?  
Would she read Between the Lines to see her King inside of Him?

## *To the Woman of my Dreams*

### **Chance**

To the next woman in my life:

I have big problems when it comes down to relationships having been abandoned both physically and emotionally by every single woman that has ever been in my life since I was 12 and that includes my mother. I love fast and deep but will run away from conflict in a heartbeat. I don't play games but physical contact is very important both sexually and not. I will work my a\*s off but I expect an equal effort both working and at home. If you don't work then fine don't get mad at me when I want a lunch packed for me every day. And if you are working and I am not don't think that I am not going to pack you a lunch because I will. If I don't come to your work and go with you to your lunch. I want more than a lover or a wife. I want a mate both as lovers and friends someone who will make fun of people at Walmart with me and who will also ride my a\*s when I am f\*\*king up and vice versa! Someone who loves to laugh, is very sexual while being loyal and level headed, strong enough to handle my bullheadedness, open minded and willing to try new things, who loves to make out like teenagers in the car or sitting at home on the couch. Who is not scared to kiss or have their a\*s grabbed in public someone who isn't afraid to get dirty in the great outdoors this isn't a world of 50%/50% we are living in a world of 110%/110% anything less is half a\*\*ing it I want someone who lets me worship them as my goddess or idol in the very literal terms of the words (will explain in depth later) and understands the exchange of power I am not looking for someone who is perfect just someone who is perfect for me. This has perhaps been the hardest thing I have ever had to write but I think it speaks volumes about who I am and who I am looking for at this particular time of my life. This is something that I have been looking for my whole life but never had the words to explain either out loud or on paper.

P.S. No cat ladies please.

*Untitled*

**World War Studier**

Your hair shines like the morning sun

I can't bear to run

I feel trapped in one place

I feel like this is a race

To get you in my heart

I wish we could be together and not apart

You now shine brighter than the morning sun



## *That's Love*

**SK Crow**

In her eyes I am perfect  
In her eyes I am complete  
In her eyes I am more myself  
    Than with any friend  
    or lover before her  
In her eyes I am me  
    And for once in my life  
    I feel like it's enough  
I am enough  
That is love

## *A Poem about Duality*

**Wildtire**

the paperboy sees all  
his parentals sell satellite  
dreams of dishes strewn about  
like wild sunflowers, but  
they (the sunflowers) are too  
busy pushing up daisies  
in solar panel shadows  
and with wind turbine  
blocking photosynth sun  
not even a single blade of grass  
can survive your sustainability

## *Balanced*

### *Josie Opus*

I spent countless hours separating everything into two. Everything I did, said, thought. Everything I observed, heard, & felt.

Happy or Sad

Right or Wrong

Pure or Evil

It seemed to make everything easier to understand. To me, it seemed like I was looking at things for what they really were. But then I started to let the habit take over. I started to tear myself into two.

Happy & Sad

Right & Wrong

Pure & Evil

I felt like I was in two halves because of my habits.

One side            the other

Happy            Sad

Right            Wrong

Pure            Evil

I let myself get plagued by this.

But I realized I shouldn't see them as separate things because both sides are what make me, me.

Happy and sad to make me.

Right and wrong to make me.

Pure and evil to make me.

*On the Other Side of the Street*

**Sarah D.**

On the other side of the  
Street

I never thought I would  
Say if you don't like  
It over here go on the  
Other side. Well I been  
To the other side of  
The street. I have everything  
I wanted in a mate, an  
Inlaw. Everything that  
Matters in a family on  
The other side of the  
Street.

## *Losing My Son*

### ***House of Ravens***

I can't explain adequately,  
What it feels like to lose my son,  
That amazing feeling ripped away,  
The agonizing pain.

I was so proud to finally be a father,  
To be the daddy to my little baby boy,  
That warmth that flowed through my veins,  
Ripped away made cold as if some sick joke from God.

I can't sleep worth anything anymore,  
Yet when I manage to close my eyes,  
Only nightmares,  
The recriminations and accusations flow.

I find solace only in the sound of my wife's voice,  
We lean on each other for strength,  
I don't think she realizes she's what gets me through,  
Each of us suffering but too scared to admit it.

Cards and mundane distractions,  
Don't work at all to keep me sane,  
I get a few minutes of peace on the phone,  
And work semi-peacefully at the Easter play.

I wonder if it'll ever stop hurting,  
I need it to.  
Not sure how much longer I can halfway cope,  
Though I know honestly I will.

I still have my beloved Dark Angel,  
She's worth more than everything to me,  
And if I'm honest with myself,  
She always has been and always will be.

## *Withdrawals*

**Emily B.**

Avenues to experience reality  
Conductor to all the human perception  
Dejavu crew.  
Scenes full of these slight reminders.

Every face begins to look the same  
Blurred together  
Dreams is all I see  
Lucid visions come as slight reminders

Screeching vibrations  
Whistles with no hesitation  
Why does the sky cry so loudly?  
Haunted opera that comes as slight reminders.

Skin is crawling spider style  
Joints knotted up  
Oh what I seem to do for such a simple rush.  
Pins and needles come as slight reminders.

Craving sugars rush  
Smell has amplified substances touch  
Sensitivity free me to the candy trees  
Distaste for reality comes as slight reminders.

Tunnels free to manifest crippling emotions  
Subtle master of now all my senses  
Odor tracer trails, I must know how dogs feel.  
Intoxication that serves as slight reminders.

All these pains named my five ghost  
You know them too  
Creators of the human view,  
Maybe one day I'll remember.

## *Untitled*

### **Problem Child**

It's god's choice  
To either take me to hell or heaven  
I fight with my demons or pray with the reverend to tell the truth I  
did little of both ain't no telling where I am going until my body's a  
ghost.

Hook:

The whole world gonna hate me at the end  
Cuz there ain't nothing else burning but the fire. The whole  
World gonna hate me at the beginning to the end

Wish I can go back to when I was kid  
I didn't have anything to worry about back then.

## *Freedom*

**JustinS.28**

Thinking of the moment, when I walk out this  
Jail.

Anxiety rushes deeply, thoughts dropping like  
Hail.

The moment of my dreams, finally getting off  
paper,

Good actions I've made, now freedom's my  
Savior.

Sitting in my cell, I can't stop to think,  
The actions that caused my entire life to sink.  
How can I change and avoid this again,  
To a life of now, and not to back then.  
Days move so slow, now that I know when I leave.  
My calendar shows a date; not even I can believe.  
April 21st, the day where I can start over  
Live a life for my daughter, maintain being sober.  
Some call it soft, the new actions I've created  
But I'll do whatever for my daughter, and that's  
A bold statement.

Now as I wait out my time in this depression  
Filled place,  
I force myself happiness, a new life without  
Hate.

29 days, until it's my chance to prove  
That my new role as a father, was my ultimate  
Best move.

## *Let's Go to War*

### ***House of Ravens***

I stand for Faith,  
I stand for Family,  
I stand for Freedom,  
Let's go to War,

I stand for Samantha,  
I stand for Serenity,  
I stand for Security,  
Let's go to War,

I stand for Future,  
I stand for Food,  
I stand for Fire,  
Let's go to War,

I stand for Protection,  
I stand for Proliferation,  
I stand for Peace,  
Let's go to War.



## *Dolphin*

**Ria B.**

I resemble a beautiful, peaceful animal that glides through the ocean water.

I resemble an animal that connects with humans, an animal that laughs all the time, but my laugh resembles a squeal.

I am a happy animal.

## *White Wolf*

**Taylor W.**

I have yellow eyes  
I have thick, white fur  
I have four legs and isolated paw pads  
I live in the cold  
I love my big family  
I hunt with my family  
I have a bushy tail  
I have sharp teeth  
I have good senses  
I can run fast  
I am loyal  
I am seen as sacred to some people  
I am hunted by humans  
I have been feared by humans for a long time  
I am wild  
I am me  
This is me

## *Untitled*

**Pam V.**

From the moment we are in the womb the two senses touch and hearing are a given of course seeing too so three senses are already in effect before we are even born . . . After we are born and our new life on this planet we call earth smell and taste we are able to acquire . . .

It's amazing how these five senses have so much to do with us from the womb to the beginning of our baby life after we arrive. It's also amazing and intriguing how when someone does not have one of those senses the others are magnified.

Also interesting is how a dog's senses are heightened way more than ours especially hearing and the sense of smell. The way God designed different things from humans to animals to even plant life to have all of those senses or at least one is pretty mind blowing if u think about it.

*So Cold*

**Katie S.**

frosty freezing pit  
silent ice heart shivering  
cold shoulders chilled sweat

*Untitled*

**Chance**

My only friend the mean little monkey flexes wicked tongues,  
unlimited fire sword through the neck at my touch. The circus child  
whose tongue I love. The lady's back arches melting my eyes and my  
heart with pain from a smoking pentagram. A bad part.

*Dear 2017*

**Lil, G Baby**

Dear 2017,

I hate you. You got me locked up. You were the one that didn't rewrite me with my family. You were the one who made me start doing illegal stuff in my life. 2017, I hate you 'cuz you almost killed me. Thank God I'm still alive. 2017, did you want me to fail? Were you the one who laughed at me everytime I failed, never recognizing when I did good? F\*\*k you 2017.

LiL, G Baby

*Go Through*

**Baby Diana**

It hurts to see my family have to leave their family for mistakes they didn't even do. 3 months of mixed emotions that they stay facing everyday, because they don't think life gonna change, they're scared for their lives because they don't know when one of us is going to die today or 12 sweeping one of us up because we ain't illegal. It hurts to see my family go threw this like didn't we already lose a lot? Why does it have to be more, lil girls and baby boi crying because they're thinking their loved ones didn't want anything to do with them. But they're too young to understand that my family is different, they didn't leave because they wanted to they just had no choice. It hurts because my family that goes through this. They fight everyday to come back to the United States to see their loved ones, but there's consequences. That's why they are scared. Everyday they don't know if life's gonna change. They're sick and tired of this they just want to stay.

*Hear Me?*

**Brianna M.**

Do you see me?  
or what the news states?

Do you hear me?  
or what the courts say?

Do you know me?  
or from my mistakes?

I am a woman! Should it matter my race?

## *Untitled*

**Gus**

You put me in a cage I can't break free all your pent up rage has  
caught me trapped in your hate can't escape you've got me caged in  
my head what did I do what did I do wrong chain me in shackles  
throw me in the water all the pain you heckle me I'm drowning take  
my heart out smash it with your hammer razor sharp tongue cuts  
deep I can't swim Deep struggling for air Probably taken more than  
I should take forsaken me for heaven's sake I keep smiling and bare  
the pain Rubbing salt in all these old wounds you know each one  
tear them back open you put me in a cage I can't break free I go to  
bed praying I was somebody that I was somebody that never met  
you my biggest regret is you like I stepped in something and drug  
it in with me the thorns with none of the roses If I'd stayed out that  
bar that Friday I wouldn't be barred in this personal prison you put  
me in a cage I can't break free

I can't break free

I can just break

Go ahead Break me

*In Loving Memory*

**Selena M.G.**

In loving memory of Christopher J. L., my Brother and Best friend

No sound escapes

No words to hear

Sadness expressed in rolling tears

No sound escapes

No words to hear

Part of me taken away

No sound escapes

No wails, no cries

Just the sound of silent

Good-byes



## *Sonnet*

### **Epic**

Your momentum ever-changing  
    Shifting direction without compromise  
Our velocity adding to animosity  
    The intention of inertia killing  
Kinetically without a cause . . . a true atrocity  
    Synchronizing a strategic love  
A lyrical missile from above

    Trying to fit in, like a glove  
A feather painfully plucked from a dove  
    Used as a pen, inked as a quill  
    To sign a contract for a thrill  
An everlasting lust  
    One can never be fulfilled  
    A love so cold . . . chilled.

## *Let it Go*

### **Scholar**

Here we go, here we go, here we go now.  
I gotta let this all out  
Like there's no room for repetition. Cannot be repeated  
If the spaces are empty  
The clause is motivated making sense is not important when you're  
tired of the lyrical clash  
Of the dancing around, the thoughts pain n' bulls\*\*t  
Flooding your f\*\*king brain, Just let it Go Go

Down! Fear not the editing, fear not the punctuation,  
The meaning. It's a winner, it's a loser.  
It ain't a race and won't take place if you don't let it go. . .  
Now my lady on my mind, camper n' dampers out a time --  
Low expectations disappointing, down to Earth  
I no longer feel, listless control takes over. . .

And over and over we go. Uh-uh.  
Over and over we'll flow. Ha ha.

So blow down the doors, open the gates, let out the praise  
God for giving you space to let it go.

## *Wanted*

**Fabian**

Love, is this what I've always wanted?  
As I lay here in my bed, I start to really dread,  
Do I know what Love really is?  
I thought I did, her name was Liz.  
But just as we got close,  
She began to really dose.  
That will only bring me down,  
As I sadly think, with a frown.  
If I don't figure this out,  
Will I always be in doubt?  
As I began to shout,  
I realize I can't really live without.  
Then it hit me, Love is already here,  
I just had to look in the mirror.  
God is Love, and he is right here.

## *Untitled*

**Skylar G.**

I love you like a rope loves knots  
I love you like Silence loves the open air after an argument.  
I love you like the mind Loves to Dream.  
I love you like a Junkie Loves to get high and a high loves to never last.  
I love you like salt loves to change the texture of an entire meal.  
I love you like heavy-metal band loves to headbang.  
I love you like soreness loves a workout.  
I love you like a bathtub loves a wet fart.  
I love you like a tissue loves a sneeze.  
I love you like gambling loves the casino.  
I love you like caffeine loves a coffee shop, and a coffee shop loves baristas  
I love you like a traveler loves to be far away.  
I love you like a dragon loves its dragon trainer.  
I love you like a bear likes to s\*\*t in the woods.  
I love you like a towel loves to get wetter as it dries.  
I love you like karma loves what goes around comes around.  
I love you like butter loves to be on a roll. I am Butter  
I love you like a kiss loves a cheek.  
I will love you as the world keeps on changing.  
I will love you if it stays the same.  
I will love you like a nightmare loves fear.  
I love you like a joke loves laughter.  
I love you like a chair loves butts.  
I love you like a bookshelf loves its books.  
I love you like a song loves a chord and a chord loves a note.  
I love you like a tatoo loves the skin.  
I love you like veins love blood and blood loves the heart.

*Broken Love*

**Cowboy**

I loved her to death  
I guess that's the reason she  
blamed me for her suicide attempts

I loved her through all the  
pain, I guess that's why she  
beat me

I loved her instead of myself  
I guess that's why I never left

I loved her to death the  
death of my soul

She said we should get grey and old  
together, that's why I finally  
left—

I loved her to death.

## *Cover Me*

**Antoinette S.**

Cover me with your sleep,  
Jog my memory.  
Fill me with your voice,  
and I close my eyes to see.  
As the Darkness settles in,  
and the stars bleed the sky,  
The echo of your fading footsteps  
run away with the night.

Cover me with your thoughts,  
every line, every page.  
cover me with your love,  
it's the bars to my cage.  
Cover me with your dreams  
and pace the aisles of my heart.  
Closer to you than breath itself,  
such a torture we had to part.  
You're under my skin,  
desire races through my veins,  
curing every scar, every scratch, every pain.

Cover me with your song,  
as we dance, every dance.  
Two people fall in love,  
two lovers take a chance.  
A chance to inhale love + exhale hate,  
with every step, every breath,  
every move we make.

Cover me with your secrets,  
and I'll tell you no lies.  
Cover me with your hope,  
I see tomorrow in your eyes.

## *Cover Me (Cont.)*

Cover me when you're ready,  
cover me when you're sure.  
Because I don't know how much pain,  
my heart can still endure.

as we dance, every dance.  
Two people fall in love,  
two lovers take a chance.  
A chance to inhale love + exhale hate,  
with every step, every breath,  
every move we make.

## *Untitled*

**Ria B.**

I miss being around him  
I miss being in his arms  
I miss being beside him  
I miss talking to him  
I miss laughing with him  
I miss his smile  
I miss his touch  
I miss A.C.

I'm in love with one guy and I've have been for many years.  
Some people think it's dumb that I still love him  
but I don't.  
I mean it's hard  
I don't know how I feel about you  
I mean I'm aware that I'm in love with him  
But it's complicated as hell it's barbaric  
he treats me like a queen and other days  
he treats me like an animal of no meaning  
Andre is the one who keeps hurting me  
Andre is the one I'm in love with unconditionally  
Andre is the one who treats me like a queen  
Andre is the one who takes me for granted all the time.

I've been praying for my whole life  
I've been praying for you,  
you're my Sunday.  
Talking in my love like it's holy  
you've always treated me like sunshine.



## *Untitled*

### **Back Muscle**

A time traveler from the past  
he wore funny clothes  
and spoke funny words like thou and whom  
So I guessed he was a time traveler from the past  
The elevator scared him  
and earbuds confused him  
So he was probably a time traveler from the past  
He looked for knobs on the faucet  
and kept smelling the soap  
It was very likely he was a time traveler from the past  
But what sold it for me  
the moment I knew  
Was when he looked  
At me turned to the gentleman  
next to him and said  
“I thought this was Whites Only”  
That’s how I know he was a man from the past

## *Splinter*

**Ramona F.**

The first cut is the deepest  
the last stride is the steepest.  
I remember goodbye,  
earth and tree;  
hold bright in his eyes  
mine; the color of the misted sea  
I tried, I tried  
the folly was mine  
pale moon contrasts the color of wine.

Light skewers darkness  
opal fires surely burn.  
That feeling; I don't miss  
it is for sunshine, I yearn.  
Never again will I submit  
to the depths of despair  
in the basking rays, I sit;  
shaking my golden hair.

When all is said and done  
which isn't a lot to be honest  
Against darkness I won  
for that I will not be modest  
the scars that I wear  
like a heart on my sleeve  
marks proof!! I say  
that anyone can relieve  
the shackles of the darkness  
every one of us  
holds the key.

You should never be ashamed  
of the hold it once had.

## *Splinter (Cont.)*

We are all survivors  
We all overcame the bad  
circumstances of life  
which seem unusually cruel  
God as you understood him  
Keeps turning the spool.  
That weaves the greater fleece  
That readies us for winter.  
This life is not a thorn,  
merely just a splinter.

*Untitled*

**Jacqueline B.**

I look back in the past and wonder why it didn't last

Taking care of my brother was a pain in my a\*s

Loving him to death until the end of time

Wondering why I did not try

Looking into my brother's eyes as the tears are running down his face

Still looking back asking myself why I didn't pace

Missing him until this day, I only seen him once a week

We aren't together they pulled us apart, broke our little hearts

We think of plans not thinking right, loving him to death until the end of time

## *I Hate November*

**Thizzle**

November November . . . the 8th of November.

A day I will never forget.

A day I wish I wish I didn't remember.

Had I known it would be my last chance,

I would have given you

A hug,

A kiss,

And said thank you.

In a moment that would last forever.

## *Days Drag Out Like Molasses*

### ***Little Bit***

Days drag out like molasses  
Can't stand how slow time passes  
Minutes seem like hours  
Tears fall like showers

It's all dragged out and slow  
The same everyday, you know  
Surrounded by loss and sadness  
Stuck in a place where there's so much madness

Every day it seems there's another lost  
Seems like my heart's paying the cost  
For it seems I've lost everyone that I love  
Now I'm stuck just dreaming of

Another time and place  
Wishing I could just see your face  
Knowing that I never will  
Time drags on while I sit still.

## *Untitled*

### **Meggie**

We gained an angel that day  
And no matter what others say  
I wanted to take the time to thank you  
I know it's your job, but you guys gave heart too

You come into the building never knowing  
What the day holds  
Or what duties will unfold  
But you continue to believe you will  
See a change in us  
And it won't be us on that next bus

You have made a difference in our lives each day  
Even when we don't want to listen to what you say  
We do have respect  
and sometimes it's hard to reflect.

I'm one who hates to admit I need anything from you  
But you don't show judgement  
Even though you are in blue  
So again thank you  
to the ones who treat us like we are worthwhile  
And not that worthless pile

Many of us are at that ultimate low when we come in  
And you help us see it's not the greatest sin  
You help pick us up, dust us off, and help us see the past is the past  
And the future can last . . .

Thank you!

*Dream House*

**Jacqueline B.**

I want to be on a beach  
Where I can just sleep  
With the sun shining on me  
Feeling warm while I eat  
Never leaving the porch right by the sea  
Walking in the sand with my warm feet  
Looking at my house sitting on the beach  
Warm as hell everywhere I eat  
I don't want to sweat where I stink  
Sitting here waiting for my true love to rescue me  
Watching the sun go down  
Looking at the slowness of its colorings  
Getting very tired and ready to sleep  
Goodnight sun, see you in the morning



## *Dream Job*

**Jacqueline B.**

My dream job is to be a vet. I want to be a vet because I want to help animals. I want to fix them if they're broken, to save them if they need help. Make sure they get a good home. Animals make me very happy; I love animals. A tear goes down my face when I see they have broken hearts and the upsetting look they have. I want to start my own company that helps save the animals that need it the most. It breaks my heart when animals don't have a home or even look skinny, maybe even beaten. This is why I want to be a vet.

## *Incubate*

### **Wildtire**

I can not control it I  
can only try to figure  
out what the rules are  
for this [poem] I try to  
organize them (my words)  
like a child the composition  
has its own genetic code

~ DNA ~

Do Not Arrange  
no assembly required just  
breaks line breaks wave  
breaks crashing foamy fountain  
washing memories from Sandy  
shore. See?

There

it

goes (again)  
sometimes the muse is awe  
inspiring. Pain, beauty  
sometimes the muse is  
~ Poetry itself ~

She won't let me be . . . like  
a nagging Jersey Mom and  
she was right in telling me  
"You'll thank me later!"

"There are starving

Kids

in

China

who would love to have  
those words." Maybe they'll  
share because my words, I don't

*Incubate (Cont.)*

think begin with enough “X”s  
these days.  
sitting at [the]  
kitchen table with  
whatever this is (becoming)  
it can have my Sunny D if  
it wants. I haven’t been  
able to drink it since I  
used it as a chaser for  
[Jack Daniels]

## *Untitled*

**Ryan E.**

A			F
B		E	D
C		C	B
D		A	G
E	F		E

My Face is a note on a float  
Try the E of an Elvis for a goat  
By the G of a guitar when F gloat  
This is B just broke when I take toke like a moat

D is the down of my syndrome  
F is the Friday of Ice Cube's Conundrum  
A Quarter of my life has been on algorithm  
See my whole note when say ahhh oh umm

## *Dreams*

**Christina W.**

As an innocent child I had big dreams but someone told me my dreams would change. How did they know my dreams would change? Did they know I would get raped and abused for years, that that would send me into a downward spiral, that I would lose hope in my future, in my dreams of being a doctor. That all I will dream of from now on would be to stop hurting, to find something, or somehow to ease the pain. To forgive my mom. To find myself and put myself back together again, just to be able to love how I did before anyone ever hurt me. How did that person know my dreams would change.

## *Price of Addiction*

**Antoinette S.**

I stand in the shower,  
Drowning myself in the choice I made,  
I wish I could wash it away,  
watch all the hurt and the pain  
run quickly down the drain.

The hot water pierces my skin,  
but the scars still remain,  
All the while, the Devil is running rampant in my veins  
When will he release me from his fiery chains  
He only calls me by my sin, and never by my name

I stand in the shower,  
with the water now cold as ice.  
nothing, no words, will ever suffice  
some live, some learn  
If you touch the fire, it will burn  
and for me I've paid the ultimate price.

## *Chains*

**Jack M.**

Chains Would be an Emotional Restraint  
To unsolved and or unasked childHood,  
Life-Long Questions, or experiences, Hence  
Creating chains to link to our  
Addictions. Either Physical or Mental  
brought on By Trying to Forget or Live  
The chains That started The First Links  
of the chain in Life and Death As  
we Link Together The Path that Binds  
US.

## *If Addiction Wasn't Real*

**Nina G.**

If addiction wasn't real  
People wouldn't have to go to rehab to heal.  
If addiction wasn't real  
We wouldn't have to take methadone to deal.  
If addiction wasn't real  
I would still have my mother and my mother would still have me.  
If addiction wasn't real  
There would be a future I could see.  
If addiction wasn't real  
Vexx would still be alive.  
If addiction wasn't real  
Your kids would still be in your life.  
If addiction wasn't real  
You wouldn't sell yourself just to get high.  
If addiction wasn't real  
You would remember your last meal.  
If addiction wasn't real  
You wouldn't use a needle just to feel.  
If addiction wasn't real  
You'd still have a stable job.  
If addiction wasn't real  
I wouldn't be such a snob.  
Especially when the withdrawals hit.  
If addiction wasn't real  
We wouldn't have to get high just to be lit.  
If addiction wasn't real  
We would actually have a reason to live.



*Keeping A Secret From My Lover*  
**Madee O.**

Keeping a secret from my lover,

does cheating mean you're a w\*\*\*e

is it right to expose the chick with  
an "A" on her door on valentine's is  
that ok? lover

That promised empty promises  
to be mad & give you chocolates  
and wait for him to score with  
his lover that lives next door

To play mind games while you're  
talking to voices in your head wishing  
you were dead taking one after  
another pill that is . . . wishing  
the game would just end

Thank you lover for your  
valentine's gift but no thanks  
I could've done better instead  
wishing you were wearing your  
favorite color & that's Red

after that whispering  
the voices will never end . . .

## *Just Because*

**JoLink**

Just because I'm intelligent doesn't make me a  
Nerd or a Geek

It doesn't make me weak or mean I can't  
Work hard

Just because I'm intelligent doesn't mean  
I like school, I dropped out of high school before  
I got a degree.

It doesn't mean I don't get angry or sad  
It doesn't mean I understand everyone  
even though I'm always misunderstood.

It doesn't mean I don't love or have the  
capacity for hate.

Just because I'm intelligent doesn't mean  
I can't be stupid or screw up.

## *My Friend*

**Chase F.**

My friend till the end  
you were brought to me in a time  
I was in need. When you were carried  
through that door I was in disbelief.  
Then you were handed to me the look in  
your eyes made my heart sink. Just  
in a couple weeks we had a bond as  
strong as concrete. Over the months  
your love and protectiveness brought out  
the effectiveness I never knew I had.  
You were brought to me as a puppy  
and now you're my full grown friend.  
Love you Roxy you are the best.

## *Untitled*

**Scottie R.**

The memory I think of all the time is of the first day i met my wife K.R. and it was at a park in Loveland after we had talked on the phone for about a week after she found me on Facebook. I did not know who she was but as we started talking, I had never talked to someone for that long. It was just something about her that made me fall for her. It was crazy because she felt the same about me. Then we finally met face-to-face. It was off and on for three years but every time with her was the best time ever. Then about ten months ago, she came back into my life and now we are getting married. Love is a b\*\*\*h but can be the best thing ever. Love you babe.

## *Untitled*

**Mugz Mac**

Look sometimes I find it's hard to deal with these scars of mine  
Searching for things I value, but can't find  
And most of the time I feel like I'm losing my mind  
Trying to hold on to my grip on reality

But I think it's slowly slipping away  
Trying to find the words I need to say  
Distracted on the streets chasing pay  
Got everyone fooled they think I'm ok  
But all I wanna do is fade away

I'm blind constantly on my grind  
Trying to find a better way  
See a brighter day

I can't stay down I gotta get up  
Cuz ain't nobody gonna get it for me  
I struggle to stay alive  
Against the odds I thrive  
Struggling to weave out the lies  
That was fed to by spoon  
Hoping I'd be dead by noon.

## *Untitled*

**David F.**

Life is a comedy to those who think,  
A tragedy to those who feel,  
Time to feel what's real  
Comedy as a meal,  
Tragedy comes,  
Beneath the thumb,  
Pain becomes surreal.

Most powerful memories  
Those powers of the mind  
More powerful I find,  
Love is Tragic,  
Yes I've had it.  
Wasting all my time.

I've let you fly,  
Just get me high,  
I'm wasting pills,  
From being ill,  
Can't get you off my mind.

Love that I give that's unconditional,  
Giving with no repercussions.

My heart unleashed.

## *Untitled*

**Mugz Mac**

I'm so Tired of the struggle Never knowing what's gonna happen  
next  
Ending up on the same spot tho I tried my best  
I man for real tho How many times I gotta say so  
I'm tired of going down this broken road  
So many Times I'm just Trying to stay afloat  
While so many people trying drill holes in my boat  
So it's Always back to the sink or swim  
Finish Line in sight and but it seems I can never win  
But I didn't came this Far Too Far To Quit  
They say there's a light at the end of the tunnel I know it,  
That's why I strive on right or wrong mind strong  
Hoping that the people in the struggle Hear my song  
Ending up on the street Im A be the best I can be,  
Those who want Another life take your cross and follow  
me, In my America we're anything but free  
cuz Rain clouds and night skies  
A better life is what I'm looking.

## *Untitled*

### **Meggie**

I wish I wouldn't have listened to what other people thought  
And throughout the years we missed out a lot  
You were my white knite  
Who I loved with all my might

You never realize what you have until it's given away  
It ended on that day in may  
I almost took my life  
The day I was no longer your wife.

All of my fears  
Were falling in my tears  
I was lone with a son  
Who at times I hated a ton

I wanted to kick and fight  
And I lost my light, there was no end in sight  
You were my husband, my baby love  
And then you became my ex beloved

Our lives started moving on  
I hated you for missing out on our son  
I never thought we would speak  
Once again those tears start to leak

Now fast forward thru the years  
And you are nowhere near  
We aren't able to speak without a fight  
Even though at times we tried with all our might

We had said our goodbyes at that lake  
But I didn't mean it for my sake  
That day played in my head



## *Untitled (Cont.)*

“Do you hear, our song is playing” that’s what you said.  
And now you are back in my life  
And I’m still your ex-wife  
At times I want to love you  
And other times it feels safer to hate you

So you ask me how I feel  
Well here’s the deal  
I don’t ever admit, you have me scared  
And through everything I still cared.

*Untitled*

**Brianna M.**

I can choose to be free.  
The person I want to be.  
Break the chain of family.  
Prison. Drugs that ain't me.  
I am actually happy, come a success  
Sobriety, I am free.  
No more chains to hold me.  
I am Bri, the real me.

## *One Chance*

**Levy C.**

If you got one chance  
Why not make it a chance to succeed  
Come follow me if you need  
Cause I got my mind right  
Future looks so bright  
Not going to lose sight  
So don't try and simmer me down  
When this active warrior says . . .  
Pound for pound  
I'll beat you round after round  
It's been taught to me  
Since days of long ago . . .  
A fighter never wins  
And a winner never fights  
Take the highs with the lows  
No more, he more flow  
She more Doe  
Cause this Gangster's got 2 go  
On the road to success  
I'm going to give it my best  
4 my chance 2 succeed

## *School*

**SimBA+**

Things that I think school  
Should teach us is how to  
Roll burritos all sizes  
And how to make fried chicken  
And make tacos and eat  
Watermelon and how to square  
Dance and ride bulls

*Untitled*

**JoLink**

Power, pain, Fear, and joy  
weapons we hold within and without

Demons Dancing in my head  
Visions of the walking Dead  
Pleasure in another's pain  
Escaping dreams, plots in vain  
Tormented daily, our fears  
unveiling, slight in the distance  
Dare we hope?

## *Untitled*

**James**

Her smile shone like the brightest star,  
Her grimace cowered like the moon.  
She hung around one lonely bar,  
Until the late afternoon.

People came to say a good “hi!”  
Then they left with a sad “goodbye...”  
They only noticed when she was high,  
But never when she was blue.

Evening came quickly as she made her way home,  
The shadows became more scary.  
She made faces at the men who gawked,  
They all wished it was she they could marry.

As she walked on to the bathroom she looked in the mirror and  
gave her a sad smile,  
It only took one deep long gasp before she was lying on the floor in  
a puddle of bile.

She got up with a sigh and grabbed the knife,  
She took hold of her arm and cried.  
It only took one sad little sob,  
And with that she ended her life.

*Untitled*

**Brianna M.**

A rose is so deceiving  
Beautiful but misleading  
The touch feels like a bee sting.  
Come close, get poked, it's pokey  
But poke the bear and you'll see.  
The me I hate to be.  
The monster makes me flee,  
Like the thorn you can't see  
On the ruby red rose. Just like me.  
Beautifully dangerous.

## *Why Do You Write?*

### ***Reckless***

I write to be free to get things off my chest, to maybe explain what I've been through how i've changed things and turned 180 degrees my life around, maybe to help people with positive words, maybe influence someone or make that person say something like hey I know where you're coming from. Writing for me is like a release of energy. That's positive and how I am feeling, mostly just writing



## *Speaking Out*

**Erin P.**

Writing is passion.

It is expression.

Voices that would otherwise just

speak, can speak OUT.

Outside the chains that are

bound around our souls,

and force our bodies, but

NOT our minds into

confinement. Minds of the

daring the different, the

BOLD. Minds with

stories to tell, and

toasts to be made for

Cheers. To Remington House, Turning Point,

CommCorr, & Larimer County Inmates

## *Music is My Speakout*

### **Amateur**

Music is my Speakout and the strings they are my tool.  
My guitar speaks like waves in the ocean  
Under winds so gentle, calm and cool.  
My piano speaks echoes through the mountains  
Like songbirds singing in their glee.  
These sounds are what allow me  
To live life happily.  
My drums they are like thunder  
Beating to the rain.  
These sounds they are what make me  
OK, Alive and Sane!

## *LCDC*

### **Corey Kentucky**

Nasty hot musty  
Pits everywhere in this Jail  
You can't run or Hide

Ice cold cells in Jail  
Freezing chilly Heart Attack  
Makes you not come back

## *The mannerisms of a stranger*

**Avacluna**

I crumble in the presence of existing and being ok, I like pain. No specific pain, just any kind. It becomes one with your heart and your mind, just as the dull canvas of your body was clear of paths from the lanes leading to different locations of hurt and then there is light, it just takes time, until it makes you sick to realize the sadness is addicting. The way I can't stop. Sadness is familiar, it's comforting and it's easy in a sense that it comes naturally to me. I know it very well, almost better than I know how to chew gum and walk. It comes through your dreams, but dreams are essentially silent, unlike pain. It's almost as a fire that consumes me, but I am the fire. You wear a mask for so long, you forget who you are beneath it. It's comforting, just as the sadness is, to completely regain yourself, and then losing everything. But then again you need to remember to be gentle with yourself, while ripping yourself apart with the weapons, that soon become cigarettes, not meant to ill, but to feel. Remember to never apologize for burning to brightly or collapsing into yourself every night. That is how galaxies are made, and you are one. The planes that travel across the canvas I call my body. They leave their trace for scars to grow. It's living between hurting and healing, the burning of the vodka and the burning of losing yourself. Over and over. Even the smallest bit of rain creates mud and you need to stare into the darkness to fall in love with the stars. Pay attention to the living lights in a sleeping city, the mannerisms of a stranger, and the color of your veins when the guns become your best friend. Sometimes you win and sometimes you learn, and sometimes you lose, and it feels good. No one will know why. But you are such a soft and messy thing, and nobody knows how to take care of you, not even the mirror. It's when you feel most calm, when the devil puts his mark on the dull canvas, and you let him. You become an existence, and if that is all you can do, exists, that's all you need. And not being OK, is alright, but also being OK is too, linger with the pain, and let it make you exist.

## *Footsteps in the Dark*

**Garza Love**

As I walk through the streets fighting the shadows of my use,  
Feeling all the abuse.

I remember you saying you love me,

And that you would never leave me.

Then I dropped to my knee, begging you not to leave.

As I fell to the floor, next thing I knew

You shut the door.

Laying there crying, feeling like I'm dying.

Fetting up off the floor, opening up a new door.

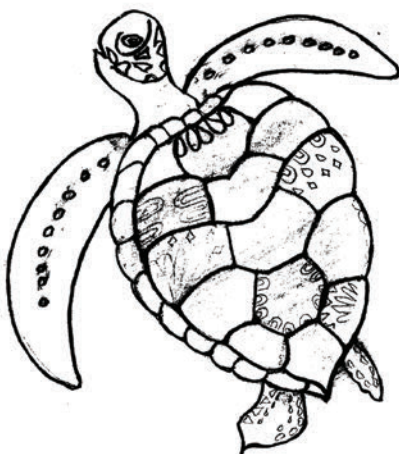
Now that I stay clean, I'm no longer called a fiend.

I put my hand up high, wanting to fly, then say goodbye.

## *Turtle Suit*

**JoTaurus**

A promise that you've broken can lead to so much more.  
You promised me you loved me, and then you slammed the door.  
Now my heart is broken way worse than before  
The shell is what I'm wearin so I can hurt no more.  
I promise I won't hurt myself, like I've done before.  
I'm taking off the "Turtle Suit" I'm leaving it alone.  
You can have your promises, I'm gonna make my own!  
The world is going crazy, the women have lost their minds.  
The men are steady hustling, staying on their grinds.  
The children are all suffering for something we cannot find.  
Trust, Love and Loyalty, all character traits left behind!



## *Untitled*

**Noel S.**

Down this long winded road  
Where it takes me no one knows  
But I'm not here alone.  
The grass is green, the sky is dim  
When will we see each other again?  
Standing side by side,  
Riding these waves emotionally high!  
This music plays again in y mind  
I wish I could turn back these halls of time...  
I love you I miss you, How have you been?  
Wil I ever see my family again?  
Searching through emotion, trying to gather our thoughts;  
We become one view, one love, one thought!  
Are we free, are we hop, are we love?  
Is there a God or a Heaven up above?  
Look at me, down on one knee...  
Are you watching? Does this make me weak?  
Hear my whisper, don't you cry.  
Buildings go up, up, up in the sky!  
Where do we go, what do we do?  
Let's start from the beginning  
Where the sky turned blue!  
I live my life like your long red dress  
When life was so simple and f\*\*\* the rest!

## *Untitled*

**Lexy**

I love you to the moon and back  
And infinity and beyond  
Nobody can explain my love for you.  
It can go on forever.  
Just as our lives are  
When we can be together.  
So always remember  
I love you Rubixcube  
To the moon and back  
and infinity and beyond.  
Always and forever.  
One love.



She fully intends one word  
to turn the earth's heart.

~Patricia Smith



## OUR MISSION:

**To create alternative literacy opportunities that work to educate and empower underserved populations. The Community Literacy Center supports university literacy research and outreach that promotes community action and social change.**



## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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