

THE POWER IN

POETRY



VOL. 16

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SHADLEY
2025
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The Santa Cruz Poetry Project/Poetry in the Jails began as the legacy project of Ellen Bass while she was Poet Laureate of Santa Cruz County, 2014-2015. Co-founder and current Poet Laureate, Nancy Miller Gomez, helped create the program, oversaw its expansion throughout Santa Cruz County, and has been instrumental in its continued growth. Over the years, the SPPP has facilitated workshops and classes throughout the county, and with your support will continue changing the lives of incarcerated men and women one word, one poem at a time.

Thanks to the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department: Kristie Clemens (Inmate Programs Manager); Edward Greene, Lisa Zack, and Polly Schulze Elser (Inmate Programs Coordinators); and the officers and staff of the the Santa Cruz County Jail. Their dedication to providing programs and services to the incarcerated men and women of Santa Cruz County is very much appreciated. We could not do this work without their professionalism and hard work.

Our website, poetryinthejails.org, will keep you updated on recent and future events. Please visit, and consider donating! Your donations allow us to provide composition books to our students; organize and stage a live local reading of our students' work; and help make anthologies like this one possible. We extend our sincere thanks to our donors.

The William James Association, a 501c3 non-profit, is the fiscal sponsor of The Santa Cruz Poetry Project. We thank them for their support.

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With A Pen

Ike Valdivia

What do you see in a pen?
Most will say a simple object with
ink, to be tossed about without a moment's thought.
But I see much more than just a simple pen.
I see what holds an overlooked power.
With a pen, wars can be initiated,
and treaties can be signed.
With a pen, a home can be bought,
built, and sold. The same home where memories
are held. Births, firsts and lasts, smiles and cries.
With a pen, livelihoods and courtships
are gained or signed away.
Payments are made, and deals
are sealed.
With a pen, one's secrets and memories
are jotted down into a journal.
With a pen, a sweetheart can
be wooed and won.
And with a pen,
this poet can set his heart and mind
free. Δ

Having a Clue

Steven Mondragon

I like to be playful with my words.
The hurts I absorb I try to endure.
My mind and thoughts are a calamity. >

But my interactions are like my dialogue
Helping me forget I need to return home.
My conscience is an enigma unsolvable for eternity. Δ

Mouth

Mark Lee Cox II

Verbalizing thoughts,
In this silence is most loud,
Content with closed mouth Δ

Poder en Tupac

Shadley Stephens

Poder en la poesia,
Las palabras son muy importante.
Poder en tú musica,
Yo escucho a tús problemas.
Poder en tú vida,
La rosa que creció del concreto.
Poder en la muerte,
El dia para lloro del mundo

Power in poetry,
Words are very important.
Power in your music,
I listen to your problems.
Power in your life,
The rose that grew from the concrete.
Power in death,
The day for the world to cry. Δ

Moonlight

Jonathan R. Mescale

Walking around standing around
looking around looking below

hearing all around still standing
still listening still watching

Thinking thinking but still no sound
Still no face still no moonlight
Still dark very dark

Trees move trees dance trees listen
But again still they walk around
Still they move even closer and closer

Still standing around so they move even
closer so close they can hear me
and I can hear them

Then while standing there they let the
moonlight in and there they are with
the trees still standing around all
Around me!

And so no more looking around... Δ

Having a Clue 2

Steven Mondragon

I juggle my words, then I don't know what to say.
I feed them to my doubt to make my feelings go away.
You made a beautiful ocean full of love and strong emotion.
Leaving a forever imprint that makes me wanna stay.
I'm afraid of diving deeper.
You have to remind me that it's ok.
I stay on the boat to keep afloat.
If I don't dive now then I will never know. Δ

Bukowski

Shadley Stephens

No amount of whisky,
No pack of cigarettes
will ever bring you back
to the 20 year old,
drunk at 10 AM
in a cracked mirror
at a New Orleans bar.
Where did he go?
The tree outside doesn't know
about the bluebird in his heart.
Because they never met,
and they ever will.
His beautiful song will go unheard
by the whores,
by the bartenders,
by the grocery clerks, >

by the strange
even the strongest.
His book sales unaffected
because nobody sees him weep.
The cat sleeps,
Linda vacuums,
the phone rings.
He's waiting to live,
waiting to die.
The bluebird awaits for his day to fly free.
And the tree outside will never know. Δ

The Invisible Monster

Jason Gouldon

1.
Before we even met we stood shoulder to shoulder
“Stand at attention!” they yelled. “Dress! Cover!
Shoulders up! Back! and Down!” The orders relentlessly
evolving into a litany of creative admonitions
contrasted by your presence, like a cloak,
as mine was for you,
shielding each other from anything, everything.
We were there for each other and we knew we always would be.

As we crawled under barbed wire, through the mud,
explosions surrounded us on all sides with deafening ferocity.
I could still hear you, “Keep your head down! or you’ll lose it!”
I can’t lose it.
I will be there for you >

and you for me.

We will save each other ... somehow ...

We swore an oath to fight for our country

and die for her, if we must, but living is better.

Our love of country is strong

but the unspoken oath we have with each other feels stronger.

Our bonds of brotherhood will last for eternity,

I pray, you pray, we prayed together,

shoulder to shoulder.

2.

Your first surgery, they cut the cancer out of your shoulder.

They didn't get it all, but no one knew that at the time.

We toasted to good fortune

and to life

and to liberty

and to the pursuit of Black Diamonds ◆

Then we fearlessly charged down the ice covered

nearly vertical slopes

through the darkness of night skiing.

Shadows hiding, warning signs we wouldn't have seen anyway

if we'd taken the time to look.

We were going so fast, with reckless abandon, oblivious to time

oblivious to danger.

Together, we can survive anything.

We can survive everything.

We've done it before,

haven't we? Have we?

>

I helped you change your bandage afterwards.
A new coat of Neosporin over the wound, some fresh cloth,
tape it up, you'll be good as new, someday soon...

3.

They didn't get it all, they said.
Then they took your whole arm off, and the shoulder.
Why?
How could this happen? How could I let this happen?
We were always there for each other.
I was supposed to guard you from evil, but
I don't know how to fight this enemy.
I can't protect you from this.
I feel so useless.
Since basic, we stood shoulder to shoulder, but
now we have one less shoulder.

Time stood still when they said
"we didn't get it all" again.
Has your soul left your body yet?
Was it ever really there?
if so, where?
Can I keep that part?
Will you still stand with me?
Shoulder to shoulder?
Please haunt me, my friend.
Like a cloak, your spirit can shield me from our enemies,
from anything, from everything. >

4.

Your name will forever be etched on the Chapel's southern wall.

I'll never forget you, anywhere I am
everywhere I go.

As I look upon your name

Damien Maertens

Class of '98

immortalized.

My hand reaching out
to touch the marble's cold hard finality.

I wish I could have shielded you
from that invisible monster. Δ

Monster

Shane Wright

There once was a perfect time when nothing could go wrong
So full of love everywhere just like the perfect song.

Then the monster showed its face and all I felt was pain
Always showing up each day even in the rain.

Living nice when it's not near and scared when it's here
I hope the monster's life is in its final year.

I look at my two younger kids, pray it's not in their life
because my two oldest fight it with the sharp end of their knife.

In my sleep, I play with them, no monster in my sight
Awake they're gone, the monster's here, I'm tired of this fight. >

Maybe I could end my life and take the monster with
But if it stays, it wins no longer just a myth.

This sacred dance that we are in required to go on.
I tried so hard to beat it, my only Savior was my mom.

I ask you to please help me, this monster is not warm.
I ask you to please help me give me shelter from the storm. Δ

One More Time

Jason Williams

This time I have learned to let my demons
cry for my return.

This time I refuse to hit rewind, but
fast forward from my past. I've learned
the fast lane in life doesn't last.

This time my pretend has reached its end.

Now when I fall down I look up,
force myself not to give in or give up.

This time, this isn't made up.

I been given one more time to share
this truth, I dare, for you to use
your faith in this fight. It is our right
to be bright in this darkness.

This time the real end is near,
but it's clear that it's just the beginning
for God promises to make all things new. Δ

Walking the Line

Miguel Flores

I did it now

Here I am walking through the devil's playground.

So many demons.

What a sight to see.

Nowhere to run or hide.

The grim reaper is just a few feet away.

The eye in the sky is locked on you watching from above.

Friend or foe what are you, what am I? Δ

Praise to the Dark Mother

Aurelio Vargas Hernandez

A silent prayer gets a response
in the form of a dream. A sign that
she has heard my plea.

As the demons of my past and
present creep up, she sends me
three helpers to win in the
fight of the night.

The first is a black hen that
helps me cleanse my mind, body,
and soul before the upcoming battle,
transmuting the bad and harmful
energies into a bright golden light. >

The second, a sword that cuts through
the monsters who try to attack
from the back. The sword is shiny
and sharp, it guides me though
the night with the light of the
full moon entering it and projecting
itself onto the dark path ahead.

As I continue along, the third
helpers sound their howls to the
moon. The hounds come to my
side and guide me, protecting
me from that which I can't see.

Praised be the Holy Mother. Δ

The Mask We Wear

Ricardo Martinez

The mask we wear
is filled with fake
year by year we stuff in cake
The mask we wear and what it takes
to take it off and what it takes
to put back on and what it takes
seen down under it makes us pucker.
Save face save face, just like a sucker.
Oh how I love the pain down under
for when we sleep the same is gone
for when we weep the pain is gone
The mask we wear for oh so long >

The mask we wear goes on and on
The mask we wear comes off and off
The mask we wear and what it costs. Δ

The Sky Remembers

Jason Gouldon

The beauty of fire is never more evident than at sunset
With its furiously destructive burning power
comes clouds of soot and ash
the carbonic leftover remains of a million lives.
As the sun ends another day of life
its light pierces the clouds of dust
the leftover particulate matter spewed
across the sky highlighting that which was once living:
expansive forests
the birds and the bees
animals, even humans
our homes
our communities all
reduced to dust in the wind.

As the sun silently ends its trek across the sky,
something magical happens.
An illuminated prism of refracting light explodes
an eruption of color like a volcano
spewing deep violet purples at the horizon, but
swept away with violent reds, oozing upward
billowing into dark oranges, then lightening
into coppers and yellows
all streaking like a scream of remembrance
of what once was. Δ

What's Ahead

Miguel Flores

Open your eyes. Look straight ahead
Watch where you step. Stay on the
line. Don't turn around, look back
Read the signs. Forget the past. Δ

Bright Future

Steven Mondragon

The yellow fun in the sun
Red comfort in your bed
The blues looking for the clues
The pine with no apple
Trees with plenty of green
Winter white paper gets blown by the wind's breath
A frosted rose stays the same due to the winter
The brown freckles of art caused by the potter's clay
Turquoise I love, but some might say it's mean –
is it blue?
I have no clue, so let's just call it green. Δ

It's Hard to Love the Darkness

Shane Wright

It's hard to Love the darkness
when you forget that you're the light
like the monster of the Loch Ness
elusive, locked up tight. >

It's hard to Love the shadow
when you forget that you're the sun
like the fear of the gallows
feeling like your life is done.

It's hard to Love pitch black
when you forget that you shine on
like when they all attack
always wishing you were gone.

It's hard to Love that beast
when you forget that you're a star
like when you become the feast
because it's all gone way too far.

It's hard to Love the dark
when you forget that you're so bright
but the dark would not exist
without the shine of your Love's Light. Δ

2 Cents

Joshua Hope

What is that? It's the sigh of lighting
from lightning lingering in your mind like
signs...signs that the sun's searing its
feelings for setting upon you through
thin branches in a marvelous meadow...
to find its yellow.

What's this? It's the smell of dew on grass
in the morning, a scent of storming... >

uprooting stumps, exposing deep dark souls
that've descended and lifted above to be
seen...a nature nourishing you to feel
grounded and green.

What was that? It's the feeling of
patience, pain, passion or anger...a sign
to stop, stumbling suddenly shot and
shocked from the touch of something hot...
the hurt has you focused, determined to defeat
emotions of red.

What was I? It was said you heard right...
sonic booms of jets in flight, a calm
collection of clouds, hearing the white wash
of waves crashing while under water, clear headed...
the sound of white.

What for? Oh, for my diet...how I haste the
taste of an absolutely authentic blue
raspberry slushy...an herbivore favoring
orchards and ceanothus, the taste of the
sky from the wings of a plane...see you
know, this color is blue.

What? Why, it's my sixth sense telling
me that the combining of color
spectrums are configured, but camouflaged
as gold...for I'm told experience
equates to equity. Δ

Growth in the Dark

Aurelio Vargas Hernandez

The dark never scared me or
made me uncomfortable, it made
me stronger.

As my eyes adjust to the new
environment, I can make out
everything that rests in that
calm cool place.

It brings peace,
serenity, and
tranquility

like the primordial home in our
mothers' wombs. Δ

The hurt you

Ricardo Martinez

The hurt you, hurts you
The hurt you, hurts me
The hurt you, hurts us
The hurt me, is why I can't see
The hurt me, is why we can't be. Δ

I Forgot

Steven Mondragon

Focusing on any time or one time
Clinging to the pleasant feeling knowing I have to let go
Forgetting the deadline and the time that went missing
Realizing that I am now and always will be
Not tomorrow 'cause it never comes
Appearing in the right light for the future that will always
be a shadow.
Wishing I would've taken a video or photo to not feel
present and enjoy the present of feeling there again
A reason to be here now 'cause it's gone the next moment. Δ

Everyone Has a Face OK

Kyle Kriss

You have a face
He has a face
That woman over there has a face,
too.
Even I gotta face.
Hey look at that fat guy
he looks like you...
There's so many little faces
out there, it's crazy.
If you're reading this
I want you to look at some
faces and think about things
that are like that. Δ

Your Stupid-Ass Face

Shadley Stephens

I hate your face.
Your stupid-ass pathetic excuse for a face.
Your maskless hockey player face.
Your bare-knuckled boxer-beaten-in face.
Your cauliflower ear surrounded-ass face.
That hideous dumpster-fire face.
That incomprehensible face.
Your plain-Jane, featureless, blank canvas of a face.
Your lying, conniving, manipulating face.
Your evil, Satanic, demonic face.
Your scale-infested, reptilian, cat-eyed face.
That wrecked turd face.
That sunken puckered butthole of a face.
I hate your face. Δ

Current Fodder

C. Tisdale

The Christian right is gettin' kinda loud
They'd see a silver lining in a mushroom cloud
They'd swear the kingdom's nigh, with a perfectly straight face
While everyone's engaging in a new arms race
Bunker bustin' bombs— we'll show em' who's boss
When diplomacy breaks down— it's everybody's loss

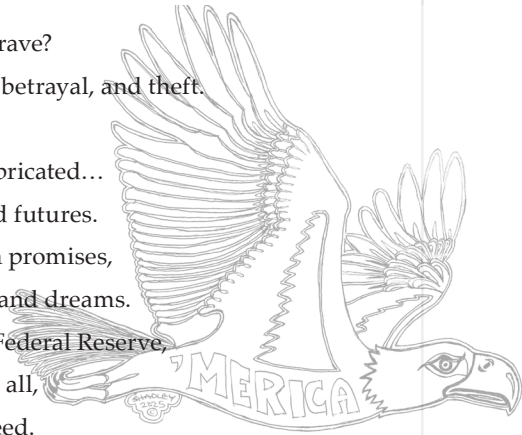
The ultimate height of hypocrisy
Comin' from the government of you and me
Tellin' Iran they can't have a nuke >

Hearin' that shit makes me wanna puke
We're the only ones who have ever used one
Foreign policy at the end of a gun
Do as we say, not as we do
If you don't toe the line, we've got somethin' for you Δ

'Merica

Shadley Stephens

Land of the free, home of the brave?
A land founded on bloodshed, betrayal, and theft.
Raped, pillaged, plundered...
Slaughtered, erased, history fabricated...
False pasts and pre-determined futures.
This beautiful prison of broken promises,
on a foundation of false hopes and dreams.
Funded by a privately-owned Federal Reserve,
which means it's not Federal at all,
and never stops fueling the greed.
The greed of those who have everything.
The greed of those getting fat off our struggles.
The greed of those who take our freedoms.
The greed of those who supply our choices.
Like the Daddies and their Daddy's Daddies.
Removing God from State.
Removing God from Country.
Removing God from everything.
Telling us we're free.
Acting like they're brave.
Allowing us to survive on their crumbs.
God Bless 'Merica! Δ



With A Chance of Snow

Mark Lee Cox II

I do not know better.

I want to write a letter.

I do not know how to put it together.

I know I can make it witty and clever.

I know it is always sunny, no clouds,
always with a chance of snow.

I, I, I, I,

I still do not know better. Δ

The Chess Game

Ross Eger

I walk the yard eyes wide open not

liking the calls being made.

But I'm only one man, a soldier to this prison life,

but to myself I see it as I'm a pawn to this

prison life's chess game. I strive not to be taken

off the board because then all my chances

have been taken and the chess game means

nothing to me because a stronger chess piece

has challenged me. And as hard as I could I

try to win, but once I knew my fate on the

board, I was no more and I no longer

had my chance to win. Δ

Life is Good

Miguel Flores

Today is the day that I say
toss the dice, roll the dice.
Everyone is a winner seven or eleven
no loser - stand tall and proud.
Don't be afraid, be brave.
Life is too short not to take a chance,
play your cards straight.
Dance, shine, be merry.
Live life like there is no tomorrow. Δ

Delights

Steven Mondragon

I find delight in the smallest things now.
A friend I call Uncle cracks a dumb joke
that shouldn't be funny, but it is for us.
I find joy through the smiles
we share in those moments.
Savoring those small things in the big storm is so delightful.
I'd rather share my meals with others than alone.
I want to share everything, good or bad.
I want to share my happiness with you.
So you can share it with someone else.
I want to share my sadness with you
so it gets cut in half.
I want to keep sharing stories while we eat.
In the end all I really wanna say is
"Are you gonna share that burrito?" Δ

Rocket Raccoon

Ricardo Martinez

Eye for eye, tear for tear
I fly by right near your ear
Word for word that can't be said
Look at you is red on red
And on my hip is dead on dead
Lights on lights is red and blue
They all see, but no one knew
So I fled, and come back new
Look at you, few went through
That's what I do
You know my name, now who are you
Mask on mask just like a goon
You know my name Rocket
AKA the young Raccoon
Time flies by and I'll be fine
I'll be 'bout mine till end of time. Δ

My Shoes

Shane Wright

Don't put on my shoes
though they might fit, it's not fair to you.
You just can't handle my blues.
You work your long hours and eat your good food
So please don't put on my shoes.

From the tips of my hair to the string on my sock
the feeling is not for you. >

The sun's on your face and they play in your space
So stay far away from my shoes.

You say that you care all the most
While my brain feels like jam on their toast.
You drive with a view and you've so much to do
So keep your feet out of my shoes.

This lump in my throat is to stay
and my stress will not go away
If you only knew that when the wind blew
it's just keeping you from my shoes.

I live with this cloud over my head
My dreams keep me locked on my bed
Your Love is so true so you better get the clue
Don't you dare try to put on my shoes.

It's hard to see and to laugh
I don't know how much longer I have
You get to be with our brood and live on a cruise
Don't you dare put on my damn shoes. Δ

In the end

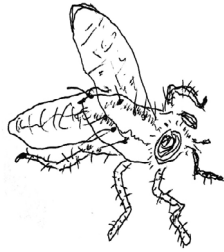
Ricardo Martinez

Twisted lies and broken truths
Shitty flies and messed up shoes
Reddened eyes in teared up pools.
I wonder if we will be again
But until now it is the end. Δ

No Fly Zone

Kyle Kriss

Today, I will hunt
the elusive house fly.
He is my enemy
and I must destroy him.
I will use my lightning-fast
reflexes
with Precision Targeting
to eliminate this worthy
adversary of the sky.
He will die.
I gotta go, OK,
I got Action. Δ



Worthy

Viet Vo

Fools! All distracted by "Love,"
this temporary feeling that
makes you think of her and NOT
advancing at your job. That will
ease your suffering from this mundane
life. Instead you pull this extra overtime
just to buy some time with her: movies,
expensive dinners, flowers that'll die
in a week, or chocolates to make her fat.
But sure beats being alone, wondering
when you breathe that last breath, were
you ever worthy? Δ

The Last Visit

Jason Gouldon

While my children are playing, happiness abounds.
Jameson sings "Happy Birthday to Emerson!!" music surrounds.

They play, I play, we run and run
round and around
time flies when you're having fun
but suddenly...our time is done.

The depressingly somber march to the car commences.
Everyone is crying as you're driven away.
Standing there, crushed, I wave goodbye from the fences
surrounding our house, wishing, praying you could stay.

But just like that you're gone again...
Will I ever see you again? I don't know when.
I'm constantly wondering where you are.
Where could you be right now? Just how far?

Are you still on Earth? or gone to the moon?
or travelling through the Galaxy, will you come home soon?
Will you meet other travellers and make new friends?
I pray for a safe journey, one that never ends,
through the Universe and into the fray.
God knows I'll love you till my dying day. Δ

Just Keep Waiting

You Will See

Just Keep Waiting

Steven Mondragon

I want you to feel what I see in you.
There's no time than now, so let's just be.
I want to listen to everything you wish not to say.
It was you who ran the extra mile just for me.
I'm done waiting for a miracle when it's right in front
of my stubbornness.
I want to cry for you so our moments of laughter
echo through your silent whispers.
I'm thankful for the bad days that have yet to come,
so the fish strives to find what it truly wants
and isn't gasping in the air forever.
I want to plant purple seeds in your palms so I
can feel your soft soul when I hug you.
I want to go first so I don't live a day without you. Δ

On Valentines

Jonathan Dominguez

On Valentines, I asked you to be mine,
I always thought that you were so fine,
every time we talk my heart would flutter,
I get so nervous that I start to stutter,
you always make my heart sing,
with your kisses I feel that I can grow wings,
Jackie, you stole my heart,
your lips are even sweeter than apple tarts, >

my love for you is so immense,
that without you my anxiety is so intense,
to say the least you are the love of my life,
I'm so proud to call you my wife. Δ

Jennifer

Tyler Burnell

Every beach
Seacliff to Asilomar

Reminds me of her
Jennifer

Driftwood at Rio Del Mar
Sand dollars at Beer Can
Chinese hats and purple and gold sea snails.

Asilomar Campground
The path to the beach by the golf course.

Golden sunshine so bright
smooth sand of color white
perfect day to fly our kite

memories of her will always stay
deep in my heart each and every day Δ

Loveless

Josey Schwestak

I want to see your soul
Not your gold.
Love who you want,
not who you're told.
I don't care whether it's
Gucci, Louis, Prada,
don't care if you got zero,
nothing, nada.
Because a still frame of
you is worth a thousand words,
in a world where talk is cheap.
But not to me.
That's not the true essence of
what it means to feel what
you feel
and see what you see.
To feel your heart as it beats.
My head on your chest as you breathe.
That's what I believe. Δ

Everything I See

Shane Wright

Everything I see reminds me of you three
Like a picture of two kids or the movie Jumanji
Everything I see is like a double-edged sword
Creating stories in my mind of hope to move forward
Everything I see. >

Everything I see tells me I reached my goal
and now you're ripped away from me to pay a toll
Everything I see is burning my heart and eyes
In a book, something sad, on TV it's you in disguise
Everything I see.

Everything I see it's you. It's the two of them it's me
It's life. It's Love it's folly on the wings of a dream trip trolley
A fleeting moment in time where we wish to hit the rewind
Everything I see.

Everything I see doesn't always have to rhyme
Or look like it should be us calming our boys when they should
fuss
Not working on our trust because why?...
'Cause it's already there
For you and I to share
For our life is on a case of stairs
Everything I see.

Everything I see shows me it's meant to be, but we're stuck up in a
tree
God please just set me free
Everything I see. Δ

Frost Hill

Sean Desrochers

Surrounded by trees
At the end of the road
Overlooking the ridgelines
Lies my favorite abode
It's beautiful there
This time of year
With a dusting of snow
Conjuring holiday cheer
Building a fire
And stoking the heart
Makes up for the time
That we've spent apart
The foxes and squirrels
Scampering out back
Are pawing the powder
In search of a snack
There's a cedar alone
Amidst the pine and the fir
Regal it stands
As the squalls stir
With a fresh-cut cigar
And a glass of mulled wine
I recline on the deck
Suspended in time
The does and the fawn
Are hidden for now
Yet a majestic raven
Perches itself on a bough

>

A train is approaching
To the pass it is bound
Delighting my senses
With a thunderous sound
To be at the cabin
Stirs such elation
And a joyous reprieve
From urbanization
It's calling to me
As I'm trapped in this place
Though the memory alone
Brings a grin to my face
I'm grateful to have
A getaway there
Though it feels a bit hollow
Without you to share Δ

Me You Face

Ricardo Martinez

Closed eyes think face
tie-dyed ink face
thoughts of you and I might blink face
opened eyes close and closer
sweet face sweet face lying on my shoulder
Oh how I smolder for when we're over.
Me you face in unending bliss
How miss me you face
with one last kiss. Δ

Blind Date

Steven Mondragon

You sit and stare at me with a smile so bright.
It makes me feel warm and at ease like the shiny yellow ball that
sheds light.
We joke at how it looks like a yellow apple so pretty you can't even
look at it,
but you just want that one bite.
I can't tell if you want me to kiss you or not but I think I just might.
I really want to if only I wasn't blind from the sky. Δ

I Can See it Now

Steven Mondragon

We met unexpectedly,
our relationship forged by destiny.
Glancing at your eyes full of life for the first time
I never would've thought we would spend
so much time and I'd make you mine.
Your presence fills up my mind
even when you're not around and that's fine.
Because I want you to follow me into our timeline.
We can ride it with no worries
like it's never going to end.
'Cause I got your back
just don't leave me behind. Δ

Melina

Josey Schwestack

eyes like ice
and a whoville nose

seems to lead everywhere
that she goes

sunkissed skin
freckles galore

truly couldn't ask
for anything more

everything about her
soft to the touch

don't know if I love enough
or love her too much

but knew from the moment
I looked in her eyes

she had a soul that
shone like the stars
in the sky. Δ

Beautiful

Miguel Flores

Today is the day I must say goodbye.
To your sweet smell and taste and your beauty,
until next year where I nurture you to rise
and shine under the cold, crispy nights
and flourish under the sunlight, which gives you life. Δ

Untitled

Lesar Espinoza Cabello Ramirez

Today I will continue to better myself on any shade form and
matter

Today I will take time to the things that have true value
Today I will remain humble and continue my work with a
professional matter.

Today I will accept what life brings to me and accept
with opened arms.

Today I will be grateful for what life has to offer.

Today I will carry myself in a good positive way
even if some things try to stop me from accomplishing
what I have to do...

Today I will accept my responsibilities and the offer from the gods
Try to understand and be grateful that
we made it this far.

Today I am grateful for old times... it's good to know
that they were there all this time.

Today I extend my love respect in full, strive
to always be there when I most need someone
to lean on. >

Today I am here. And I will never give you all
up even if it seems like everything is falling
Apart.

Today we will be here and alive. Thank you for always being
there. You know who you are!
I will never give you all up.

We will be together till my last breath. Until
I die. Always and forever. Together we
will shine. Δ

Praise to Life

Aurelio Vargas Hernandez

Praise the sun that saw me
born into a bright loving family
that taught me to shine bright.

Praise the love that I am able
to generate thanks to the teachings
of my elders.

Praise the ancestral connection that
goes back to the beginning of
time and to the protection that is
provided by the thousands of generations
standing behind me.

Praise the soul of our matriarch
who endured the pain of creating >

life with a heart full of love.
Praise her ocean of life that bore
generation after generation.

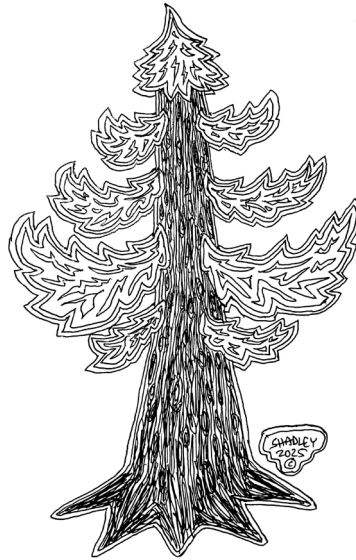
Praise the beauty in this life that
helps us grow strong and tall like
the redwoods with deep roots
that connect us to each other
throughout space and time.

Praise the lessons life teaches
me, that make me sharper and
stronger.

Praise the new life that
continues to sprout, watered by
love and guarded by God.

Praise the land where we build
and the fruits that we sow.

Praise God who has blessed us. Δ



Thank You So

Shane Wright

You gave me and I'm grateful
I'll remember most of all
You picked me up and fixed me
Every time that I would fall
You gave me and I'm grateful

>

All the times that I would cry
You would tell me it would be okay
Even when it was a lie
You gave me and I'm grateful
Putting me before yourself
With the trouble I would cause
Never putting me on the shelf.
You gave me and I'm grateful
Loving me more and more
Even when you knew I was wrong
You still would fight my war.
You gave me and I'm grateful
Even though you're no longer here
My life's because of you
And I know you're always near
You gave me and I'm grateful
I never wanted to give you back
But I guess that you were needed
You're the best and that's a fact. Δ

Life is Your Garden

Joshua Hope

So much to see, struggling to be sought...
your senses spiked, for you've plunged
into that ice bath...remember how to
breathe...with a little time you will
find a kind of relief as you pave the
way to peace...feel the feelings and
converse your worth, and network to
coerce your initiatives, destined to be

>

dished since birth...life is your
green garden awaiting the painting
from your mind...mind you find your
personal and molecular level to share
information...to correlate necessities in
this "Jungle Book"...difficulties over-
looked from lack of flexibility in
this construed and constricted city...
easily tarnished from the acidities of
engaging in toxicities...listen to the
synapses and sounds flowing
through the heart...from a larvae
to an insect to be in sect with
simplicity and admiration... Δ

Untitled

Miguel Flores

The time is near where I must take a stand for the good, for the
weak, for those who have no voice, to speak against all those who
take advantage and destroy all that is good, and have no remorse
for those who need and want the help. Those that are hopeless and
despaired and altered, by the injustices of those around us who
pretend to be our friends. Δ

More With Less

Steven Mondragon

It's been a while since I experienced change.
Usually, it's something I don't expect.
Our moods have changed for the better
but I still feel the same.
Many more smiles as I walk around ever since we came.
Freedom is in our minds
and it's something I struggle to find.
In the end, I'm the only one to blame.
I contemplate how my mind sometimes can't operate.
I underestimate how much I can actually tolerate.
I can see freedom,
but I can't feel it just yet. Δ

Untitled

Dante Williams

Behind the bars with me
I make so many decisions except
for the ones that set me free.

How can that be I even
pray to be set free only time I'm
free is in my dreams they even
tell me when to sleep and turn
in my things.

A place you should not be is in jail with me . >

If I had one wish
it would be to start all over,
learn from my wrongs and do
all the right things. Δ

We All Fools

Shadley Stephens

Inspired by “We Real Cool” by Gwendolyn Brooks

The fools
At Rountree jail facility

We all fools. We
Learnt in school. We

Nerp late. We
Strike hate. We

Sing bad. We
Can't brag. We

Get high. We
Surely will die. Δ

The Box, a Palindrome

Shane Wright

I'm going to prison for the rest of my life
So please understand there is no way
I will watch my kids grow up
My life is over and there is nothing left to do
I can't go on thinking
I still have a chance
Because it's already said and done
There is no need for any more prayers to God
This Box is my new home
You can't tell me that
One day I'm going to be free
This fight is over
It's a waste of time to believe
Relief is on the way.

—

Relief is on the way
It's a waste of time to believe
This fight is over
One day I'm going to be free
You can't tell me that
This Box is my new home
There is no need for any more prayers to God
Because it's already said and done.
I still have a chance.
I can't go on thinking
My life is over and there is nothing left to do.
I will watch my kids grow up.
So please understand there is no way
I'm going to prison for the rest of my life. Δ

Un Dia Mas Un Dia Menos!

Misael Mejia

Trabajo, clases, ejercicio, yardo. Es la misma
Rutina diaria de un recluso viviendo esta etapa
De su vida en carcel, conservando la tranquilidad
Armonia, y el respeto a mis diferentes compañeros
Que ahora viven aqui y estan en la misma
Situation que yo.

Esperando con calma y paciencia a que llegue
La hora y fecha de la salida.

Cumplir la sentencia y volver a recuperar esa libertad
Que todos anhelamos llegar a tener algun dia...

Work, classes, exercise, yard, it's the same
routine daily of an inmate livin' this
moment of his life in jail.

Conserving the peaceful harmony
and the respect to my various companions
who now live here and are in the same
situation as I am.

Calmly and patiently waiting for the hour and date of my release,
complete my
sentence, and recover that freedom
that all will have again someday... Δ

Time

Joshua Hope

I seek refuge in reflections of
time, the reflection of sunshine on
razor wires as I peer and I seek
a clear sky above.

I fear what I'll meet in a year, what
to trust?

How long can I fight so I may run
towards my goals?

Struggling stoned in a desert, hurdling
cactus and holes. Yearning to mend life
easier and make many bands, but there's
no shoes on my feet and it's out of
my hands. I remain optimistic, resilient
and cryptic, eager to unveil the features
and see the symbology that will unlock
my pain, my anxiety, my sorrow, my
mind. Should I throw or show the
goodness in my heart because it's a
matter of time.

Hearts to heal, solutions to seal, compassion
to give and lessons to live...

Complex, time's a metaphor for a gust,
the present's a present, a gift unto us.

Liberation. Δ

I'll see you on the next visit

Don Feeley

My decisions brought a remanding judgement
that stuck like top shelf sticky paste!

Why do I neglect the things that keep me free
so that it's my freedom that goes to waste?

I keep so little in order to give up so much
like clockwork arrive different aspects of pain.

When I do the math it just never adds up
making me feel like I'm insane.

Duct tape for the mouth of my noisy mind
of its voice I can't stand the sound.

Breathe breathe breathe, one foot in front of the other
I must keep my feet upon the ground.

In freedom it seems I'm so very lost
In incarceration it seems I'm found.

I'll see you on the next visit, I'm sure
'cuz I'm always ready for another round! Δ

Thank You

Mark Lee Cox II

There is a sharp pain in my gut
it is screaming here is your chance
while my mind is in tune.

Wasted thought focusing on the
shock, swimming with my own
worst enemy, forever blocked
and shut out.

Was this *wasted* moment worthy? Δ

Incarcerated

Shadley Stephens

As soon as my shiny steel jewelry
Is snug on both wrists,
My eyelids grow ever-so-heavy
As I melt into the hard plastic back seat.

I awaken in the magical land of “booking”
To a hard tray tossed on my lap
Filled with “food” that would offend my dog.
I drift back into my slumber...

I am suddenly brought back to
My last name being shouted.
As my eyes snap open,
A roll of blankets is shoved into my chest. >

Guided down an endless maze of cold halls
Like a depressing-ass gauntlet,
The destination: a hard uncomfortable bunk.

As uncomfortable as this strange land is,
And how demoralizing this experience has been,
I have absolutely no problem returning
To my comfortable slumber once again.
An old familiar friend I haven't seen in quite some time.

I've had another good run,
Chasing meth and vagina.
With absolutely nothing to show for it...
Here we go again... Δ

It's All In Your Head

Jason Gouldon

What's in my head?
It can't be cut out.
"If you quit, you'll be dead"
they said
"of that there's no doubt."

You must be strong.
You must fight on.
Chemo won't do,
only radiation shot through
from every angle shot in to
the proliferating growth inside of you. >

“If this works, we’ll know why.
We’ve beaten cancer before and we’ll try
and try again till it’s gone! You just lie
right there...”
Beware!

Don’t move, it’s starting up now.
It’s like magic, you will see,
just have faith and soon you’ll be
one way or another you’ll be free
we’re all connected by this tree
of Life and Death’s never ending cycle.

Be it Karma? Be it Fate? or God’s will?
There’s no reason to dread
what’s in your head. Δ

Untitled

Miguel Flores

Yes, I’m high like the sky. I’m feeling blue. I’m contemplating my
next move. I only hope and pray the good Lord never lets this day
be forgotten by those who love me, heard of me or know me. Life is
too short and much too precious to go out in a hail of gunfire. Δ

The One Who Saves

Shane Wright

You came to me finally out of the blue
At a time when I had nothing left to do
I always wanted to know you are real
Now I do and you’re all I can feel. >

I can't believe all the things they did to you
You would never hurt a fly
Who knew but you that their fear would brew
And that it's better in the sky.

I wish I was there to walk in your time
And drink the water turned into wine
I feel that I would have played a big part
To show the world the Love of your heart.

I ask you to please hear my blurt
As I yell and cry from my soul
Please fix and heal all the people I've hurt
And again make my family whole.

I'm sorry my selfishness used to come first
The bad things that I have done
Caught deep in the depths of all of my worst
Yet you give me life from the sun...Thank you. Δ

Jail, A Time For Opportunity

Atiqullah Qurbant

Arriving at jail, I thought my life over.
Never, I thought, could I arrive in a place
like this jail.
Everything was different for me:
different culture
different language
different food
different religions. >

No English, no Spanish could I speak.
The first six months were hard –
how could I exist here? It seemed impossible.

But then, I found a person who could speak
Farsi, but they were not always available.
So sometimes I was confused,
as at dinner time, when they announced “hot dogs tonight.”
There was no halal meat at all, and now
they announce dog meat!
Not a treat.
I was very sad and disturbed.
But two days later, a cellmate explains,
a dog is not a hot dog. Δ

Grow Forever

Aurelio Vargas Hernandez

Untapped raw potential all around
waiting anxiously to be set free
by the alchemy of a grand divine
source.

We all feel the tug of power calling
us to evolve and shed our past
selves into something greater and
more sophisticated than we were
before. >

Don't confuse this hunger for growth,
for anger or anxiety, young starseed.
This is merely the cosmic energy
trying to break free from its
previous form.

Mold it into your next light
vessel and share your light with
the universe. Feel the greatness deep
from your soul and share it with
your soul tribe.

Call on your higher self to help
you make this energy beautiful and
refined.

Evolve with the power of Love. Δ

Wild Wild Wings

Jonathan R. Mescale

Wings Wings Wings like saying your
name three times, three times they
say! Say no more, say no less!

Wings sometimes take you away
wings sometimes take everything from you!
And sometimes wings fall off when they
need to. >

That's why you need to have wild wild
wings to fly! To fly into the wild
wild and into the wild trees.

Wild wild wings back and forth
like people come and go. Leaving
and coming into your wild life!!! Δ

Possibilities

Miguel Flores

If I was the water
That sprinkles life

If I was the light
That gave life

If I was the air
That surrounds my whole well-being

If I was the Earth
Looking over my head

If I was a landscape
Beneath my feet

If I was able to
Climb the tallest mountains Δ

Untitled

Colin Tisdale

Once upon a time, I believed in silly things
Once upon a time I wished that I had wings
Once upon a time I had a lot of love
Once upon a time I believed in a power above
Once upon a time, I thought I had it all figured out
Once upon a time I lived without fear and doubt Δ

Fears Within Fears

Steven Mondragon

The fear of not finding purpose
The fear of not finding my true purpose
The fear of letting go
The fear of tomorrow when I don't know
The fear of tomorrow because I don't know
The fear of love
The fear of not seeing the love that is
The fear of not realizing the love that was
The fear of happiness
The fear of pretending all my life that I'm happy
The fear of not feeling happy
The fear of the unknown like the ocean
And the darkness under your fear
The fear of drowning in my sadness
The fear of not overcoming my fears
So I can be at peace before I rest. Δ

Not Anti-Myself

Naheed Ahmed

I'm American/Palestinian, I'm no terrorist.

I'm a supporter of our territory.

I speak a Semitic language, so
how can I be anti-semitic?

I'm not anti-semite, but
anti-baby-killing state. Israel is not
a state of freedom, only a freedom
to establish their own state.

Genocide, colonize, the whole world stands by
while children & women die.

They call that war.

Have you ever seen a dead body
of a child before?

How does that work?

Seems nobody outside being Palestinian
can relate. We protest to defend ourselves
here in the United States.

We are silenced on campuses, even jailed
when we demonstrate. Labeled
anti-semites to this day. Δ

Vivir en USA

Misael Mejia

Vivir en California es estar rodeados de
gente americana que habitan aquí con
un Lenguaje diferente al idioma de on Mexicano.

Es difícil poder relacionada con un americano >

por no saber dominar el idioma inglés, pero
para un mexicano no hay imposibles y buscamos
la manera de como hacer amistad con los Gueros.
Se escucha mencionar un 4 de julio. “día de la independencia
para estados unidos, donde ellos hacen honor a esta fecha con-
memorativa
festejan luciendo sus banderas arriba de sus carros o, alzan la
bandera de estados
unidos en su hogar, queman cohetes y luces de bengala
Es un día muy feliz para las personas que están en pafuera las
calles
gozando de la libertad, mientras nosotros los prisioneros en cárcel
sólo podemos
ver los videos de festejos desde una sala viendo la Televisión.

Living in California is like being surrounded by
Americans who live here with
a language different from the Mexican.
It’s difficult to relate to an American
because you don’t know how to speak English, but
for a Mexican, nothing is impossible, and we look for ways
to make friends with the Gueros.
We hear mention of the Fourth of July,
“Independence Day” for the United States,
where they honor this commemorative date by
celebrating by displaying their flags on their cars
or raising the American flag in their homes, burning fireworks
and sparklers.
It’s a very happy day for the people who are out on the streets
enjoying freedom, while we prisoners in jail can only watch videos
of the celebrations from a living room watching television. Δ

The Future Is Now

Colin Tisdale

The devil's in the details – it surely has been said
the government's workin' its way into our heads.
Pixelated reality – gonna slow down our growth,
electronic brutality, for you and me both.
They've got us all addicted – got us glued to the screen
pretty soon, they'll be invading our dreams
with the neural-link, they're gonna plug us right in.
Technology will tell them if we're thinkin' 'bout sin.
Our thoughts will betray us, with an MRI scan
they'll have way too much power, when this gets out of hand. Δ

Exquisite Corpse

Group Poem, Unit D Main Jail Men

Thank you Jezus!
for all that you have done
Stop focussing on hate
FOOTBALL IS ON!
(unless it isn't)
smothering my chest with candied yams.
Only enough for everyone to enjoy
like a beautiful stream flowing with dreams.
I love you so much but I can't say "forgive me."
Thank you for all of the love you have
given me.

Love always
to you and girls. Namaste. Δ

Collaborative Poem

Unit D Main Jail Men

Someone lit a match
Charity is better than prayer
The only sound that set his soul free
It watched us like the eye of Sauron
in the middle of the night
You set it alight
Faded dreams
then bending into our eyes
and into our mind
Chamomile leaves dancing on the surface
towards the free world existing in peace and harmony
thank you for giving me life
Unlike the throat to your knife. Δ

Friend

Shane Wright

I don't think I have any friends from my first few seasons
though I Love them all much still
I'm sure it's due to various reasons
we just don't fit the bill.

If I were to look at the friends I've had
none of them with me today
It's something to easily make me sad
but I guess that's just the way. >

I have a few now in the darkest place
I don't know how long they will stay
We each have something we have to face
but for now we just get to play.

When they are all gone, who will I have left?
I hold to what can be true
In the middle life's next test
I pray that it will be you.

My Rock and my Hearth in the crazy Storm
My Ocean my Rivers and Streams
When everything feels like it's out of the norm
You're the one of my Dreams.

All of them leave and none of them stay
If you could just roll up your sleeves
I hope that from me you don't go away
and finish our life in the trees. Δ

Caught in the Middle

Steven Mondragon

The end of a new beginning
Heat of the sand on your feet
A ticklish nose cramped with "ooos" and "aaas" and "choos"
New blessings for you springing to life
Accompanied by heat for love and light for nourishment >

To strengthen and prepare for hardships
The birds humming bringing happiness and good news
Bearing gifts with just their presence saying
We are the happy few
I love you my hummingbird
Happy Mother's Day, see you soon I may. Δ

Pitter Patter

Ross Eger

The pitter patter of my feet moving I'm
almost to where I want to be pitter patter
pitter patter I'm happy as I've ever been
pitter patter I see the different color
lights and the smell of fresh coffee
brewing on the stove, pitter patter I'm now
where I want to be, sitting with my
family under the bright green Xmas
tree pitter patter pitter patter. These are times I
hold close to my heart. Δ

Father Daughter Dance

Brett Barber

How I love to see you smile
I stopped to stare for a while
You look back at me, with security
You'll be the ones I adore forevermore >

You are so beautiful to me
First the dress then the corsage you see.
You'll be the prettiest ones walking
through the door.

The beautiful decorations, candy and
flowers. The music and DJ have
So much power.
Dancing and jumping, laughing and
singing!
So much fun and joy you're bringing

This memory will be ingrained in
my head. I'll remember every
funny thing you said. After,
we all went out with the fathers.
I'm so proud that you are my
daughters. Δ

Playing Hooky

Tyler Bunnell

I was in the first grade
walking to school with Booba and Shannon.
We get to the bike racks,
that sat in a half-circle by the Jungle Gym

Our conversation slows as Booba turns and says,
"Let's not go to school today." >

My mind reels as I absorb this foreign concept
Can we just not go to school?
What would we do?

Booba says, "I've done it before, let's just go play."
I wrestle with this idea for a minute,
And decide I want to be cool, like him,
I say, "okay."

We walk back to our homes.
We go to my house, but the doors are locked
so we decide to sneak in Booba's back yard.
But we have to be careful, his Mom is home.

We peak through the sliding glass back door.
Busted! His mom has spotted us.
We're driven back to school, straight to the principal
just to find we've all been suspended. Δ

My secret

Gabriel Gonzalez-Soto

Small apartment
where I lived
when I got there
there I flicked
with my name.

where was the clock
where was the calendar >

the handwriting
was my Father's
for forty years
living a secret . Δ

Dreams of a Boxing Man

Miguel Flores

I rise, I shine, my looks are
Extravagant, my footwork is spectacular.
My hands are very smooth and hard, but dangerous.
As the bell rings and the count stops,
I stand tall and proud and wait
For the next time. Δ

Blood makes the green grass grow green

Mark Lee Cox II

"What makes the green grass grow green?"
asked my 5th grade teacher.
With a voice of conviction breaking
the confused blank silence,
"Blood makes the green grass grow green."
With a calm encouraging smile,
we got up to run a mile.
After a while I sat with
no smile, "Tag you're it...." Δ

Youthful

Miguel Flores

Two square four square
hopscotch. Those were the days
long ago fun days special days,
young days. Δ

Legacies

Brett Barber

You've created a memory that
can be used, to ones who are
looking for someone to choose.
The life and the legends that
you've created, and all the intelligent
things you have stated. You worked real hard to earn
your pedigree, someone to follow
with many degrees.
You traveled the world seeing beautiful
sites, you are like King Arthur the Knight!

Your grandkids loved you, we had
so much fun, swimming, and playing
under the sun. You were always
there through the thick and thin.
You gave us the roadmap to win. >

You work so hard even to
the end just like your father did
and said. Now that I have so
much time to reminisce, I rarely
if ever saw you get pissed!

So many had gone, so many were
lost, and it was worth every penny
it cost. Δ

The Day for Dad

Shane Wright

On this day you celebrate me
but little do you know, I celebrate you.
For without you, this couldn't be my day.
I do though celebrate you every day

Always coming up with things to say
Even though I'm far away.
I wish I could do this a different way
but here we go today.

Try not to shake someone's hand while sitting down
Try to always change your frown
Protect your brother at all cost
There for your connection will never be lost
Never put your hands on a girl without her permission
Love everyone everywhere without condition
Honor your mother, and treat her with respect
And she, for you, will always protect. >

Take care of yourself to take care of your own
When you love your family, let it be known
Don't hurt others for your personal gain
Especially if it gets you worldly fame...

There's so much more I wish to tell you my sons,
But let's wait till I'm home cuz our time is not done. Δ

I Feline Stein

Joshua Hope

A Snow Leopard found love and He's
devoted, protective of His mate. Up until
this date He's sought and searched, yet
never met face to fate...He'll never look back...
wearing the stars on His back. He'll study
the universe to find what it is her heart
desires...tripping live wires by seeking within
His own. Solar systems mirroring the genetic
make-up of atoms: protons, neutrons, a nucleus...
He found a God in Himself, so He asked
Him "What's going on is there more truth
to this?" Could we be made up of
trillions of galaxies? You're learning
from observing multiple realities,
realizing you can get diamonds from
coal. We're universal living hosts of
infinity experiencing through a soul.
Manifest your opportunity and fate, it's
up to you not to miss them, life's on its
way, as mobile as a planetary system. >

When new chapters are born...we are the
fertilities; stars aren't just above,
gravitating in accordance trying to
find compatibilities: our stars, suns
and moons, our knowledge,
our love. Δ

Nothing New

Steven Mondragon

It's not our choice to die, but oh how we must
Repairing friendships and watch them bloom
Build new bridges to open opportunity of taking a chance
This world of walking velvet-gold
Someone found my soul old or so I've
been told they have met me just not in this world
Leaving them in the don't knows
Mirroring a reflection in the universe where this
already happened
Like a song in sync to its fullest perfection
A time longing to be re-created Δ

Last Day

Miguel Flores

No where to run. No where to hide.
No where to turn. No pastures to roam.
No places to go. Play time is over.
The clock ticks. Time's up. As your
Coffin is dropped in the cold ground
And your people mourn the sun rises
Another day. As life goes on
Flowers bloom. The season ends
Just as your life. Δ

Buddhism (In a Nutshell?)

Mark Lee Cox III

Everything suffers,
Everything is dependent,
Everything changes. Δ

The Crossroads

Shadley Stephens

I find myself at a familiar crossroads,
an overwhelming sense of déjà vu.
One choice has limited visibility,
there's no horizon in sight.
Just a sea of dark gloomy cloud cover,
with an occasional lightning bolt,
or a random thunder clap. >

My second choice is actually quite the opposite.
Sunny skies, singing birds.
Beautiful rolling hills of green,
blanketing the earth as far as the eye can see.
Colliding with the skies on the horizon,
in a wonderful land far, far away.
It's not much of a decision really,
in fact it's quite obvious.
I'd be a fool to choose otherwise.
I fuckin' love thunderstorms! Δ

Thus Forth

Joshua Hope

Look in the mirror and place yourself first,
primary until the second you lie in a hearse.
Maintain the mystery of handling what's careless,
untying knots of emotion...causing a commotion of
simplicity, understanding, and awareness.
Certain your situation of emotion is a situated
scale of effect like Isaac Newton's...
scour information subtly, solve then...dispute and...
—> start.

The key point is not to exert your mind or your heart,
create destiny within fate, fumbling and seeping since birth,
and seek beneficial reaping through a practice of
—> self worth. >

Choose battles which won't sacrifice your peace of mind...
mind you consistently consolidate courageously,
condensing full pieces of your curious heart to be whole...
focus on fulfillment of the harmony which
harbors in your soul!
—> That! is purpose! over all that is materialistic! Δ

Collaborative Poems

Unit D Main Jail Men

1. Friends

This is its own intoxication.
I look behind me seeing the ash
of my life I burned.
See you, probably never.
What would we do without that one friend?
Dropping all of the salt of our lives.
I'm on new meds
reached out and connected
'cause I never do.

Thank you for the lessons and blessings.
All of them leave and none of them stay.
Do not let go of the childlike sweetness
that was gifted to every single one of us
by the divine creator.
Before Life gets in the way,
stay and play.
Jump on the table and scream,
"I'm crazy, so listen up!" >

My people are alive only –
we should be alive and living.
They died before they realized
they were born.
A friend can bring you back
to sweeter senses.

When everything feels like it's
out of the norm,
you're the one of my dreams. Δ

2. Untitled

Throw it on the fire!
Or be another bird off the wire
to fly to a new experience.
I hope your year is good for everybody –
heavy rain and rough winds give strength,
like a fortified hull against rough seas.
We ride glory, hearts full of love
in this Garden called Eden. Δ

3. Untitled

You came out of your mom's stomach to make the best of life.
To grow into the person you want to be, without adding strife.
It's really the only way to be sure
that the pain will fade as time moves on –
so we pick ourselves up, dust off the hurt,
and press onward.
Because. Δ

Today I'm Pro

Kyle Kriss

I put my golf cart in Park
I put my cocktail
in the cup holder.
I pull out the fat girl
aka La Driver
and tee up a Nike-Mojo ball
and just stripe one down the
fairway.
Today I'm Pro. Δ

Destiny

Steven Mondragon

The not knowing hurts you more than it hurts me
You don't know what is wrong with me
But you smiled for me when I couldn't
I walked down the block uninjured
Baby bird falls from the sky
I wrap it in a cloth to nurture it in my nest
A sign of hope that I am not alone
I've always wanted to take care of you
But I wasn't sure if I could save it
I share my kindness while you gift me your happiness
So I can smile in our last moments together
Because at least we both know that we aren't alone Δ

What It Is To Be

Joshua Hope

How have we found in our nature there are
trees we have fallen? Living lessons from bees
living life off of pollen...they are emitting energy,
transmitting the remedy of a flower while
our success...is defacing, deconstructing, and
dwindling wilderness? To dirt off our shoulders
we sing while bees are working together
wing in wing, utilization of their shoulders
together to generate heat, roasting intruders
with their wings...proving them protective
beings of their territory...their home
with gratitude to be alive, when will we
see through human eyes...the world is our hive...
yet our intruders get facilitated to generate
someone's incomes, but deplete a wholeness
between one another. We are only wishing to be
working together...a bee has an operation
in cooperation...we should be working hand in
hand for our land with the sanity to drop our
vanity and draw away our additives to live,
a bee has never killed a flower with their utilization
of balance in power...they're signalling, defying gravity
and pivoting without inflation...making the best
of our desecrations, keeping our world being from our
defecations...can we please cut the shit and just
bee... Δ

Great White

Tyler Bunnell

Great white is watching
From the corner of his eye
His prey never knows Δ

David

Kyle Kriss

This is just a Game.
This is Not Real Life.
This is Not a Game.
This is Real Life.
Again:
This is a Game
This is Not Real Life.
This is Not a Game.
This is Real Life. Δ

Untitled

Colin Tisdale

I feel like stabbing my hand with my pen
It would probably hurt, cause I know it won't bend
I know this is sure a weird thing to say
This happens to me – almost every day
Common sense will prevent me from doin' it
I'm really afflicted – I'm not just talkin' shit Δ

Spacetime

Joshua Hope

Time ticking twice the pace in space...
Days race an everlasting standstill...
Scouring wrong to find right ways
through a maze of landfills...

We construct consultations at a cost...
Overseeing currency as a priceless
virtue called life...currently
wondering why seasons age when
seasons repair, and what is time? Δ

New Same Look

Steven Mondragon

Grief passed down through hand-me-downs.
You just see a shirt, but I see something
that isn't coming back.
Wear it through your dreams and see if it makes
you feel how I once felt.
Take care of my old shell that once was,
and give it new meaning to you, not just I.
I gave it to you so I wouldn't have to say goodbye.
Wherever or whoever it becomes, I'll remember it
till the day that I die.
Let your happiness and sorrow seep through and
then you'll understand how it feels
to truly give. Δ

Untitled

Jose Efrain Montejano Delgado

I like to think it was never
meant to be. Like a former strike
not to the head, but to the reality
of your own being not so afraid.
It bumps once and bumps on twice
the horrible pain, blood on my face
and on the side of my ear.
There's no escape, you are on your
own space, and upon your feet you can't run
or move forward at all because it's only real
they fracture your being all they left you one
ear hanging they say you were
invading, but you know that that's not real!
They didn't ask, that's your former house.
You are just open out on the field.
You think of me as an only and lonely
being that's so, what if you think
about it, perhaps you still lookin' for someone,
a partner to last to spur life or
a story to enjoy, one that will last.
Happy to think it's just life, the one
it misses because you open to say
"I love" more and enjoy life perhaps. Δ

Botas

Kyle Kriss

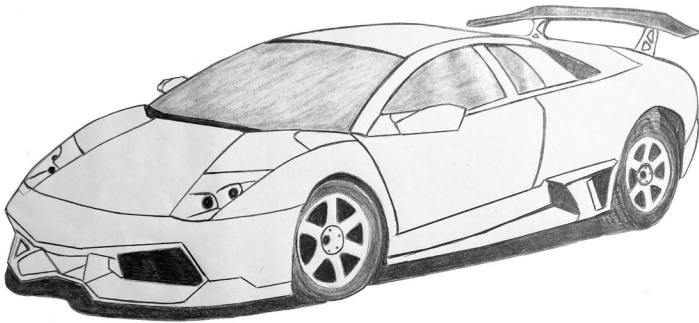
I found you at Ross
You were 25 bucks and worth so much more
You were coyote tan complete with Nike symbol
on the rear sole.
You fit my little feeties so good.
From that moment on boots and I
were like together all the time.
I've had so many extreme adventures
with boots... more than anybody ever.
I almost died in these boots.
Those boots have so many miles
of trails underneath them that they've
been almost reduced to socks now.
I love these boots. Δ

Untitled

Jason Williams

Created from steel, looks to kill, power for thrill
makes my heart easy to steal.
Like a high-end, high-life, high-heel,
red bottom wearin' hot wife.
She is cool in all shades of grey,
under midnight moonlight she takes flight,
dazzlin' delight between city lights, >

striking her pose right under your nose,
grabbin' all the attention from every direction.
Under the sweaty steady palms, they bow on their
knees. Juicin' their cams with a sweet squeeze.
So polite, still asking with a please.
Beautiful butterflies fly delicately open to sky,
showin' off her high-fashion designer, Italian
leather interior, super exotic exterior.
It was just a dream, a dream car to take
us far from where we are. To a place called
Key Largo in the Lamborghini Murcielago. Δ



Untitled

Steven Mondragon

The deeper you go, the deeper you'll know
I juggle my words, then I don't know what to say
I feed them to my doubt to make my feelings go away >

Leaving a forever imprint that makes me wanna stay
I'm afraid of diving deeper
You have to remind me that it is okay
I stay on the boat to keep afloat
If I don't dive now then I will never know. Δ

Mexican Man

Kyle Kriss

There's a Mexican that
always talks to me in Spanish.
I pretend to understand him.
I think his name is Arnufle.
That's a great name, Arnufle. Δ

Laroc Street 511

Miguel Flores

Lookie loos passing by
In amazement, wondering what
is going on as crowds gather.
On both sides of the street.
Some are staggering, some are
Yelling. Others are in a fog,
No movement whatsoever.
Shanty shacks, sirens blaring,
medics perform C.P.R. as people stand in awe. Δ

Post Trauma

Jonathan Dominguez

Growing up, I always saw life through a dark shade,
I get constant flashbacks of a bloody past that doesn't fade,
my childhood spent going through so much grief,
to this day I can't get any relief,
therapy and medication couldn't heal this never ending dread,
sometimes I feel better off dead.
I believe that life has never been fair,
trust me I've tried everything to end this feeling of despair,
I get stuck in my own head, you can see it through these
sad eyes, they tell me that it gets better, but I'm
tired of hearing those damn lies. Δ

Collaborative Poem

Unit R Rountree Men

I was in the first lane,
Sitting in silence, twirling my pen
Those were the days
They're stripping us of Spirit and dumbing us all down
with a calm, encouraging smile
I believe that life has never been fair. Δ

Words Are Powerful

Shadley Stephens

I won't believe "his story,"
Since history's left in the past.
I refuse to be "programmed" by "channels"
Or something called a "tell-a-vision". >

I refuse to “wake” in the “mourning”!
I will not start each day with death!
I refuse to spend my “week days” in a “weak daze”!
I refuse to be “weakened” every “weekend”!

Formerly used for making magic wands,
The “magic” of “holly wood” carries on.
Programming and conditioning our thoughts,
Therefore our realities.

Telling us what to think,
Giving us what we know.
Based on a fabricated past,
On an altered line of time.
And we march forward blind...
Into the abyss of the lost... Δ

Good Life

Miguel Flores

Green eyes long legs dyed
blond hair open toed sandals
Can't even chew the cud. One
eye two faced scampering and
prancing like a deer from
ridge to ridge meadow to
meadow with no direction in life Δ

Forever Young

Kyle Kriss

I was once young
But now I'm not.
Some people say that
I'm still young.
And sometimes they try
to guess my age and
say "You're in your thirties"
I tell them keep going.
Then it's "You gotta be 40?"
And I say "COME ON!
You're not even close."
Then they respond with "You can't
be in your fifties? There's NO WAY."
I tell them I'm 100 years old.
But they don't believe me. Δ

Please Take It

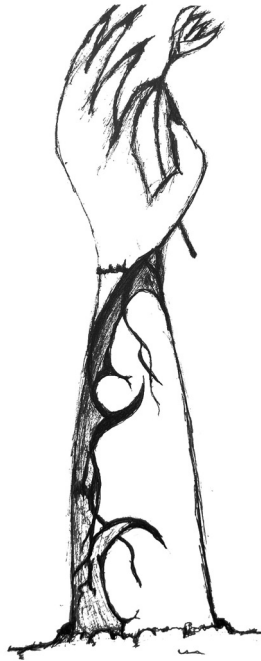
Shane Wright

This is the day I asked of you to please take it all away
We know it does not serve me so why should it even stay.
I know I ask a lot of things for others and myself
But this one is the biggest thing I don't want on my shelf.
It hurts my mind. It hurts my soul and drowns me in such sorrow.
I just want to be free of it, it's not something to borrow.
My life and love is very strong, no hate bone in my body. >

Please take this thing so far away and flush it down your potty.
I need this from you more than ever so I can truly live
So I can show those in my world how much I have to give.

This is the day I ask of you to please take it all away.
We know it does not serve me so why should it even stay.

I ask you to please take it away, I'll ask you nothing more.
We know that when it's finally gone, we'll have a solid floor.
Please take it all away from me so I can finally breathe
It's all I really want from you before I have to leave. Δ



Phoenix From the Flames

Sherrie Mitchell

Cloudy, heavy, emotions like a hurricane.
Sensitive, touchy, feel broken and insane.
Don't want this, but can't live without the pain.
Shattered glass falling like rain.
Racing, round and round, my head my brain.
Life's light, the tunnel, so far inhumane.
Rumbling, shaking harder, spotting train.
Fear, shackles, holding me down, lame.
Darkness drenches, covered shame.
Don't cry, never give up this life I claim.
Courage, roaring, calling, this is my aim.
Fight, run, sunlight, stars, bright flowers on the plain.

Burning - Breaking through, up up you go –
Phoenix from the flame. Δ

Untitled

Laura Smith

Close your eyes but not too tight
remember that darkness always runs from the light.
I know you're scared but don't take a breath.
This may hurt but such is life, not death.
Things may burn you
as if gas and some matches,
but just like the phoenix
you rise from the ashes. Δ

Solstice: Beginning Anew

Mikaela Harriss

I walk with mystery as the darkness unfolds,
the silence unravels its own story
waiting to be told,
a chill crawls up my spine,
is it the lack of light or the turning point of time,
the unknowing, the measureless dark,
it beckons me to enter, and I won't miss
my mark,
I catch my breath and stride through the door,
The past must be forgotten, and the present is no more,
I'm the one with the dark, it is my peace
All unanswered prayers, and harmful
memories must cease Δ

Black Energy

Sherrie Mitchell

Black Energy...
Dark – no spark – Black Energy
Trying to consume all the beautiful light
Broken – rotten – frail – too old.
Stay away from Black Energy, I was told.
Succubus, leechy, the depths of no remorse.
There is white energy – one God to keep us on course.
No lies – no fakes – pull masks off with rakes.
Black Energy
Dark – no spark – Black Energy. Δ

Big Brown Eyes

Holly Mikaele

I miss your big brown eyes.

I miss your smile and the look on
your face, in my mind it will
never fade.

You my first, my second, my third
thought throughout the day.

Hopefully these clouds will go away,

but it's okay to feel sad and cry today.

That means our love is so strong
something that's created between
a mother and daughter's bond. Δ

Shadow Chaser

Sherrie Mitchell

Shadow Chaser, Shadow Chaser,

I see you.

Shadow Chaser, Shadow Chaser,

your mesmerizing smile – you never are blue.

Shadow Chaser, Shadow Chaser,

Just like Peter Pan

Shadow Chaser, Shadow Chaser,

one day you will grow up to be a great man. >

Shadow Chaser, Shadow Chaser,
As the magic follows you
Shadow Chaser, Shadow Chaser,
For eternity I will love you. Δ

For my best friend Keawe at 2 years old

Untitled

Jessica Ojeda

We were there together, mother and son walking down the street taking you on your baby bike telling you to push your feet. I would stand protecting you from the passing cars. We picked flowers for grandma along the way from our hearts. When we cross the street, I protect you. We hurry across the road. My heart is beating. Your smiling face is all I know. We get to the store and we get some candy. We could only get one thing. How much change did we bring? It's your money from grandma that you save up. You want a Slurpee too so you run to get a cup. You are so smart. The store man takes the money from us and we say thank you. We start to go back home and again watch for all the cars. I keep you so close to me. You are happy as you are. We are going down the street. You spot the monkey bars. I give in to your little voice for me. There's no other choice but to see you happy. Δ

My Baby Girl

Kate Freitas

May you,
grow into your beauty with effortless ease
Mend your heart's pain
With my encouraged healing words >

Know true love as a welcome blessing
Brought to you by your soul's mate
Be honored as I, by a child's breath
Given by your own

May you
Live long and hard with
warmth and compassion
Having stories of happiness, sorrow, truth
Be blessed till your death
When your eyes close
To dream
With eternal sleep Δ

We Are All Brave

Brenda L. Gonzalez

We are all women
locked behind these walls
brave, delicate, with extraordinary
skills in life...
 We have fallen,
we have failed, we have been broken.
We all share one thing in common.
Our bravery, our strength, our hurt, our pain,
and mostly, incarceration.
So the next time you judge us
because of our jail attire,
know we are all Brave Women. Δ

One Day Be Out

Jackie M. Bravo

Little soul, you have wondered
if I would ever get out.
But I will set you free
one day.
And I will always be there
to love you
and care for you. Δ

Untitled

Holly Mikaele

I do believe the Lord above,
created you for me to love.
He picked you out from all the rest
because He knew I'd love you best.

If I should die and you're not there
by Judgement Day,
I'll know you went the other way.

I'll give the angels back their wings
with golden harps with pearl strings.

And just to prove my love is true
I'll go to hell to be with you.

And I'll spend eternity, is what I'll do
just to show my love is only for you. Δ

A Mother Knows

Mikaela Harris

Look at you little one,
Grasping at life, only just begun,
Not knowing what the world will bring,
So fragile, unattached by the cruelty of things,
Full of wonder, yet full of fright,
Will you wake up lonely through the night?
Look at you little one,
Reaching for someone, hoping they'll come,
Don't worry I see you, I see your hands,
Soothing you rocking you with a dance.
Some may not understand what you say,
Inviting me open palmed you beckon me stay.
Look at you little one,
I am your mother, and you are my son. Δ

Untitled

Sayra Juarez Ramirez

A mother's touch can be so significant
whether it be a heartfelt hug or the
extra touch on a plate making it special,
filled with many emotions and intentions,
creating beauty from simplicity. When a gentle
touch seems to become hardened like a
molcajete. The flavors, like emotions, make
you stop and take a breath, wondering on
what's next. Δ

A Time to Heal

Sirena Alvarez

Sometimes I wondered
how it would feel, to get locked
up and provided a meal,
with no sugar, no spice.
What was I thinking, this shit is
real, this shit really really sucks.
Enough is enough, this is the
time, a time to heal.
I guess I'm sobering up.
Can't believe I was up all night
waiting for the next day, waiting
for daylight. Consumed by these drugs,
too busy chasing speed, to think
and to move so quick without thought.
Racing thoughts all day at no
cost, it's time for a change
There is no turning back.
It's time to heal. Δ

The Freedom of Being Locked Up

Xan Knapton

The time you get to yourself

to sit back and reflect

to relax from any responsibility.

The freedom to really take care

of yourself. To work out, yoga,

to write your heart out, to catch up

on all your feelings in every direction,

to release the pain of yesterday.

The freedom to write a thought-out

future instead of running in constant

motion. Thought and action plan for

your dreams of tomorrow may be

reached. The freedom to be free from

everyone and step into your own private

space. The freedom from

wondering your next meal or having to walk

miles for that meal. Freedom to

gather your strength away from addiction

and plan for a better future.

The freedom of being locked up. Δ

Old Black Crow

Sherrie Mitchell

With heart so black, energy so low...
no good comes from the old black crow.
You caw and bicker with nothing nice to say,
I wish you would fly away so as not to see you everyday.
You invite with you dark clouds, that rain
ferocious and hard.

With eyes so dark, you fly in real slow...
no good comes from the old black crow.
Feathers all ruffled, some places sparse and balding,
your tongue like razors, and hot water so scalding.
With heart so black, nothing nice to show,
No good comes from the old black crow. Δ

Despair

Xan Knapton

When life throws you despair
and you find yourself All Alone
Know you're wrong. You're not the first
nor the last Someone that finds themselves
in a predicament like yours. Sometimes
the Harder they fall the Higher
they climb, give my inspiration
to these who have fallen. So, it's ok,
you're not alone. Does you no good
to cry about it. Dust yourself off. >

Realize the Stepping Stone on the mountain
for you to climb one day,
Reaching the top and knowing then
how you touched the Hand of God. So
get up, dust off, and open to your Heart.
It will guide your way. Nothing is over
till you say it's over. You are in Control.
You are like a plant in nature, can take a
beating, yet still flourish. You are Resilient.
Yes, you can overcome all obstacles. Have
Faith, and believe, then watch
the Magic Happen Δ

Time

Kate Freitas

The days are long
The years are short
Time is of the essence.
My time in this moment seems empty.
I feel lost yet not quite forgotten
Wishing for its stillness,
Knowing it has no halting lapse of motion.
It is only neverending.
Continuously creating memories
With each breath-taking minute
As they pass, no time is truly wasted,
Just some seconds split
Towards unique greatness
While others split in despaired agony
Time has no honest controller >

Only every single person individually
Can guide this thing
We've named "Life"
My time I desperately crave to be filled
To my inner existence's brim
My soul no longer empty and hollow
Torturously vacant
To know to feel
I have not come up short
When my last breath
Exhaled. Δ

A Song That Never Ends

Jessa Anthenien

I would tell you to remember
I would tell me that I'm perfect
That evil comes in many forms
And God is very obvious.
To never stop searching
for the ring, the rainbow, the key.
"Secrets are hidden in the unlikely places."
 Coincidences and synchronicities
will help you find them.
God is in everything
 and evil loses,
 Everytime.
 Always chase the waterfalls,
Because they told you not to. >

Jump off that bridge,
Because somebody saw something really
cool down there.
Climb the mountains,
with vertical fallen trees and
Always follow the music.
"They" never believed.
So "they" have never found the magic.
You can lead those horses to water
But they'll never look inside the water
to find the gold.
Too scared to get their feet wet
Like a platypus that
Doesn't make sense.
Watching them dig to China. Δ

Pandamonium, How I Miss You

Thoughts for Wild Dogs

Laura Smith

If anyone would ask me to
Tell them about my day
It's not something I would think about
I know just what I'd say
My day has been quite normal
Most days are the same
Wake up to a loud voice
I hear but lacks a name
Breakfast Ladies! Don't Forget ID's and tablets
So I scurry to retrieve my so-called breakfast
Stop to say Hello Good Morning >

to whomever looks as if they need it.
Nightmares run wild in places like these.
Something, I find almost funny considering
Normally my worst nightmare is being right here.
On my way back to my room, bitching to nobody in particular
about the Cold
Can't help but think to myself, Maybe I'm just getting old?
Sit down on my bed, pour cereal into bowl
That's when the warmth starts running down my face
My breathing starts to quicken, my thoughts race.
I wonder if he's had breakfast,
or who fed it to him
Did he even like it
Shake the thought away
I find my red sweatshirt
they look nothing alike,
but if I fold it just right
and place it behind my knee
if I close my eyes real tight
I can pretend he's here with me. Δ

To Pandamonium the dog (Panda, for short)

Game Over

Mikaela Harriss

When I wake up I'm full of dread
Every morning looking over and you're in my bed,
The sound of your incessant snore, loud,
as if it were a chore.
How could you let yourself go like that, >

You don't do anything anymore you old cat,
Everyday your face meets with mine,
It's almost over, yes! Almost time.
Soon I'll leave this game of chess,
Or perhaps, maybe checkers at best!
God, I'm thankful to be free to run,
When this is over, I will now have fun. Δ

Thank You Brand New Day

Sherrie Mitchell

Wake up sleepy heads
You must be so tired in the crispy cool nights
Here comes the sunrise to wake you out of your
Little tiny beds.

All morning birds start to sing you their songs
So many of you out there in this endless field
I see.

A galaxy, a universe, like the millions of stars
All gathered around the trees.
So beautiful you all are, as you open your tired eyes,
Irises all bright vibrant shades of yellows
Just like the morning sunrise.

As I watch this ocean go from green to tiny shiny
dots of bright yellows >

Thank you for a brand new day
Little yellow flowers covering the fields
Waking up with me, to say hello

Thank you, little yellow flowers in the back
Blaine Street Facility Building! Δ

From Sleep to Waking

Group poem by Unit G Women

My body wants rest and sun in my face
to already wake up with no effects.
The sun calms the poison, but the mind
won't let my body rest from the poison.
Waking up with you after all this time,
I still notice the planes and curves of your body.
I'd rather lay in bed counting the chirps,
guessing the birds.
To sleep in this bed and wake up in mine,
that would be a dream come true.
A beautiful morning the sun is out and it's windy.
The door opens wide like a mouth when it yawns. Δ

Pod

Jussa Guzman

My Pod, iPod
that was my own microphone
flows and words
all the unheard
instruments, my new best friend. >

One drunk night
all the unheard stayed
unheard.
Broken pieces, cracked glass
dumb rain, melted all
my masterpieces. Δ

Endless Life

Cecilia McDonald

My skin - I wish it was as soft as a rose
my body fresh and pretty
with each new day, smell that would never end,
and time changing to start a new rose once again
like a new face, a changing place
to have lips that taste every new fresh day,
that time of my life and each day
brings with each new beginning Life
neverending, sounds of play with each new day,
Love to make along the way, body new, Life
all in one day or night, a whisper and flight
at a new sight of a rose, so different, that always
grows in time and place, with such
a pretty face. Δ

I hope you love yourself enough

Xan Knapton

to step away from comfortable
and get uncomfortable. >

I hope you love yourself enough
to step out of the same mundane
and make a change.

I hope you love yourself enough
to shine through your cloud
and make a difference in the world.

I hope you love yourself enough
to love others without expectation.

I hope you love yourself enough
to fill your shoes, to grow into whom
you were created to be, to reach
for the stars and beyond.

I hope you love yourself enough
to have no fear.

I hope you love yourself enough
to accept fault and learn from your
mistakes.

I hope you love yourself enough
to not let anyone make you do
what you don't want to do.

I hope you love yourself enough
to hold your head high after
heartache and pain; continue to
dream knowing anything is possible.

Δ

My Colors Have Not Been Invented Yet

Group Poem by Blaine Street Women

The colors that remain inside of me
Never die
My brown petals crushed
What's supposed to be kept secret
Here is my box of new crayons
At your feet Δ

Rainbows and Raindrops

Sherrie Mitchell

Many shades of blues, falling from the sky
Cool, calming, wet as it plops
Rainbows and raindrops
Rolling thunder singing as to why
Puddles, put on rainboots, jump and hop
Rainbows and Raindrops
Whistling winds, blow billowing clouds, passing by
Primary colors, pushing out from invisible dew drops
Rainbows and raindrops
Vibrant colors, bright bows, putting on a wondrous show
Raindrops and rainbows. Δ

Laughter

Kate Freitas

Catch your breath
Best pain ever
Hurts sooo good
Smiling eyes >

Uniquely sparkled
Begging it never end.

With a sound almost like
Swaying windchimes
Yet deep with bass-filled meaning
Whimsical crescent grins
Romantic rhythmic gestures
Tantalizing jingle and jitters
Gentle gaze.

Soft giggles abundance acquired
Alike everlasting rolling hills
Transparent innocence
Catching again like wildfire
Spreading like wings in wind
Contagious. Δ

Cabin

Oluwatoyih Joseph

The way you sit along the
still waters is pure comfort.

Your four walls bring to me
safety, like a knight.

You allow me to spend my
hours staring at the warmth
of your fireplace. >

The gathering inside the parlor
builds special moments like
a photo album.

You are the epitome of Home. Δ

Untitled

Katherine Rodriguez

I was never a
Dr. Seuss kid...far too
many rhymes and way
too simple.

It reminded me of frilly
dresses, pigtails, and dimples.

Indeed, that was never me.

I was more of a "Where
the Wild Things Are"
kind of child.

Matching wild hair
ripped jeans
scuffed up shoes

And already singing
the Blues. Δ

Untitled

Adriana Plaiasu-Lawrenz

I sit; I listen; I envision.
I am bundled in a yellow lemony
dress
Not the lemon you can cut or
squeeze however you want.
Just like eating grapes has
many ways but only one way
is the right way to eat grapes:
from top to bottom in order.
So how do you cut a lemon
and cut it right?
I'd imagine you don't cut it.
Because if you squeeze it
while someone is singing – they say –
the singer squeaks their sound.
Then why would I wanna
be passing by in my yellow
dress while an audience is watching?
So don't cut the lemon
however you want.
The lemon is me!
I sit; I listen; I envision in peace! Δ

Passed Down

Diana Ornelas

Fabrics you find in TJ Max

Silk, delicate lace with flowers generously spread
apart, across your chest to the bottom of your neck.

Sleeves too short due to growth, but buttons
across the cuff of it in case she needed to roll them
up to help care for a child or help with the
traditional birria handmade and served by her.

Gorgeous, simple, traditional.

Expensive fabric considering her location.

New eyes feast on surprises, desires, and pleasures.

Remodeling bows, and replacing bits of fabric
with open space.

Leaving the sensual long line of buttons on the back
to torture and increase ideas.

To honor an unfortunate ending
and make a new beginning.

To have, protect, and love
through health and sickness.

The want to continue tradition
with a more healthy, modern look
to changes. Δ

Little Black Dress

Oluwatoyih Joseph

How do you enhance my figure?

I can decorate you with my
scarves and purses.

You make me feel so classic,
bold, beautiful, and in Vogue.

You, my friend, are timeless! Δ

Hands

Ana Maria Perez

Your hand and my hands

Were together for a very long time

Until one day, our hands separated

And my hands were left all by themselves

But now my hands have learned so much since your hands are no
longer with me

I miss our hands together Δ

Pure Love

Mikaela Harris

Love, just a simple word,

but full of action, it's actually a verb.

Some people really don't understand,

They think it's some tacky card or holding hands.

Material things only skin deep,

Jewelry, dresses, rose petals at your feet.

When that stops is the love gone?

Because love to me is more than a stupid love song, >

It's sacrificial, pure, binding in nature,
It's not selfish and all about pleasure.
I have yet to find it other than my children
Their love is beautiful, innocent, and unyielding.
I'm in your eyes and you're reflected in mine.
We will always be together and that's a promise
for all time,
The perfect love unconditional.
When I look at you, my heart overflows –
Indescribable. Δ

Dear Love

Diana Ornelas

I don't know why you would leave me like this?
Is this love? Maybe this IS your love?
Maybe you're doing something that will show later?
It's been a day. A week. 2. 2 months. 6 years. Perhaps more.
It is not weak or pathetic, I know that now. It is hope,
beauty, pretty and soft of me as a woman. Showing such
vulnerability and not afraid to show it. Okay with being broken.
Why have you left love? Why not show a sign.
There is a click.
Tell me to "let you go." I've been told before. I want
to know more.
I will know more. In time. Δ

Flesh with No Name

Group Poem by Unit G Women

There's a name for it on horses
when it comes back darker and raised: Proud flesh.
Proud flesh, like birth defects that make
each one its own one.
Beautifully unique.
Beautifully uniquely each and every one of us like
trillions of diamonds, with flaws so we are genuine.
Flaws, so we are genuine? Is that like a tattoo?
Tattoo on my flesh to cover the left, darker and raised:
Now that's Proud flesh!
Proud flesh: grown and strong. Δ

No Pressure, No Diamonds

Katherine Rodriguez

They're lavish
They're brilliant,
So shiny and resilient
Formed by pressure
Mounting on her shoulder
Pressure building
like the heaviest boulder,

Creating tension, causing restriction
like a gaping wound made by
the deepest affliction
Giving HER the strength of 100 linemen. >

She pushed through her tears
to find a stream of diamonds:

“In life if there’s no pressure,
there’s no diamonds.” Δ

No Warranty

Linda Cosio Naranjo

Not broken
Never broken

Should it be broken
I don’t think it can break

I’ve tried to break it
Thrash it, smash it, throw it

Half it, tear it, shatter it

I realized durability
Strong
Its potential: forever made.

What’s the purpose of broken?
I’ve given up. Δ

Nature's Flows

Mikaela Harriss

Whose roots are firmly planted within
the Earth, and changes every season,
Allowing its leaves to blow with the wind,
At times without rhyme or reason.
You'd think it bound by nature's laws
instead surpasses science not overtaken by flaws
In time, becomes burdened by its branches
Mastering strength during disdainful glances
Forgiveness and Resilience its only savior,
maintaining integrity through every endeavor,
Knowing its time has only just begun,
In trials and tribulations still it waits
for the sun. Δ

Morning Run

Sherrie Mitchell

Aubade – sounds odd
The magnificent sun rises
as if sitting on a tripod
Hot brew in hands
held tight like rods
Treble clef and notes
flood the sky from iPods
Sisters – inseparable – love
two peas in a pod. >

Aubade – never odd –
morning dew drops –
warm rays, coming through.
A beautiful gift from God.
They enjoy another gift of a day,
deserving of applause.

For my sister, Stacey M. Δ

*(An Aubade is a poetic form dealing with subjects of love and parting,
literally translated as “dawn song.”)*

Soul

Kate Freitas

When at last, I wake
I wish my soul
Not to break

If it be still in
Purgatory
That’s fine
As long as it
Stays mine

For every chance
It’s been given to share
Nothing has come, but
Bitterness, pain, and despair

My soul, I shall keep
To hold close and sacred with me
Till my forever eternal sleep Δ

With The Current

Ana Perez

With the current, it
washed all my worries!

With the current, it
washed all my sorrows!

With the current, I have
become free of my life!

With the current,
I am now a new person!

With the current,
I am currently free! Δ

Again

Kate Freitas

Tears form without invitation,
Fall with tired tried resistance
Flowing like river rains
Downpoured from voluptuous rain clouds
Pain is so familiar, yet still amazingly abstract.
Why can't it seem to be numbed organically
Since the latter is unattainable
These harsh sentimental emotions
Being felt without distractible distortion,
Wholly entirely agonizingly aggressive
Nothing but an armored shell to withstand >

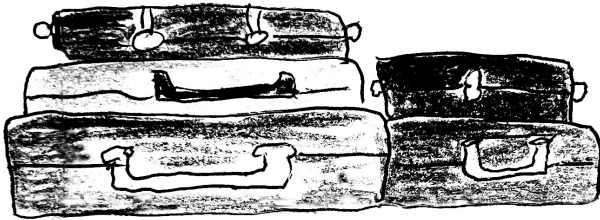
The blunt force of trauma
Wounds, some fresh, some aged scars
Inadequately guarded is the precious heart
Pounding inside my earthly existence
Standing still, inhale, exhale,
Fixated on this repetition
Solely waiting for the promise of the known fact
Nothing is permanent
Change inevitable
Moments become memories
These tears will dry
My eyes become clear
Aches remain, only just a little less
Calm, rest before another storm. Δ

Check Your Baggage

Katherine Rodriguez

Isn't it tiring?
Carrying this massive load?
Paralyzing fear it won't be expiring?
This ponderous burden of negative thoughts,
Infectious, Hideous, Cancerous,
Locked up in your darkest parts,
Infiltrating and Infesting even
the strongest of hearts.
Slipping on past mistakes
with only your pride to
catch your fall.
Wishing you could ball it up
to hang like art on the wall?

Naked, Broken, Shiny
on display for all to see –
strangers' eyes drenched
with vision of who
you were supposed to
be!



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