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POETRY AND ART
BY THE MEN OF T UNIT
ROUNTREE R&R FACILITY
VOL. 10 2020

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. Over the years, the program has facilitated workshops throughout the county and with your support will continue changing the lives of incarcerated men and women one word, one poem at a time.

We have volunteer instructors conducting classes at the Santa Cruz Main Jail, the Blaine Street women's facility, and the Rountree men's facilities near Watsonville, CA. January 2020 will mark the beginning of our post-release workshops, open to men and women who wish to continue to explore the power of poetry in their lives.

Our website, poetryinthejails.org, will keep you updated on recent and future events. Please visit the site, and remember, your donations help keep us in dictionaries, composition books, and other supplies; and make anthologies like this one possible for ALL our classes.

Special thanks to Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department, Kristie Clemmons, Tona Gonzalez Karlsson, and the officers and staff at Rountree.

Many thanks to Santa Cruz Council on the Arts for their generous contribution. Their support means so much to us and our students!



The William James Association, a 501c3 non-profit, is the fiscal sponsor of The Santa Cruz Poetry Project.

Don't let your journey across the sands of time
be only a trip through a desert.
Find the oasis
or a beach.

Marty McKemie



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Father's Futon

Richard A. Doughty

The historic content still fresh in his
74-year-old mind...the '70's.

He speaks of these things with the vigor of youth,
although his body keeps reminding him of all the
years that have passed.

Whenever I can relate to him in some type or
way, I try...

The cars, the motorcycles, the jobs the jails, the institutions, the
dogs, the cats, the girlfriends, the wives, the daughters, the son, and
now the unknown future.

We share these worries about the future...
When I was younger and had too much energy to
harness.

I had been up and went down in a glorious ball
of flames.

And from the ashes I would emerge re-born,
just as imperfect, searching for what
I wasn't sure yet.

And there always in my corner was my Dad, with his purple futon,
for me to rest on. ◇

An Re

Riley Justine Limroth

Genetically Engineered with rhyme and reason.
12 strands in total.
Born with the capacity of 2.
The will and want to self.
The desire to become.
As evolution holds hands with enlightenment;
3 strands, 5 strands, 9 strands, and finally 12 strands.
A full transformation into a higher self, with the privilege of
existence in the ever so,
Present now!
A walk with thy shadow! Ever so, subtly overlooked!
The lost in translation by analog is eminent.
The Y chromosome is no where to be found.
A core of energy, which empowers an imbalanced
transformation;
Is not so exponential
and infinite.
This un sung song I hear within the distance of our space.
I have a choice!
As well as Se An Re!
We choose; I will not re-write the present future.
Dedicated to humanity we will; forever be.
A not so distant father holds his tongue and strength.
For dedication to humanity we choose to be. Individual; Is one
of our perspectives.
Our lessons of Truth and Reality become stern. The pain is real
but easily overcome.
The replacement of energy, is now the consumption for long
lasting life to those who choose to
Forget.
I have not forgotten the ever-dwindling core.
Grey is a color too, not just a phase. We are here in the now.
I have not forgotten, but guidance is necessary. I am 0 in one
and my test is still to come.
For I must Save AnY ReY. ◇

Tired

Lee Travis Drone

- Tired when I go to sleep
- Tired when I wake up ...
- Tired of baloney
- Tired of story after story, the boasting sounds phony
- Tired of Mr. Me Too
- Tired of every other statement that starts w/ "This is what you should do"
- Tired, sleepy, or maybe I'm not w/ it
- Been here so long, maybe I should've did it
- Why does cold steel drain life?
- How does it cause death?
- Expertise...how do you get it?
- Can you read and become an EXPERT?
- Or do you have to live it
- Breathe it, see it, hate it, know it ...
- Become tired!
- I'm so tired I can barely keep my eyes open!!! ◇

I Wonder

Richard "G-Pa" Walsh

I wonder when I wake up, how's
the day going to go?

I wonder while washing my face, the
soothing water flows.

I wonder when I eat, acquiring
the energy I'll need.

I wonder what will carry me through the day,
reminding me to plant a positive seed.

I wonder why, at 66, I still crave
to understand.

Wondering why I wonder, this hard
life I've led, but never planned.

I wonder why I plagued myself
with serious drug addiction.

Wondering why I allowed myself
such a self-abusing fiction.

I wonder why I had no love
with close family, "required tradition."

Wondering why I was pushed aside
and if this was the start of my condition.

I wonder why I've spent 30 years
of my life in California prisons.

Wondering why my Mother abandoned me
at the age of 6, what inspired
her to make such a traumatic decision.

I wonder why it took so long
to clearly see all the symptoms.

I no longer wonder why. It's simple:
I WAS THE VICTIM. ◇

To

Richard A. Dougherty

Dear Unspoken Word,
Only felt inside, never heard.
Dear Unsung Hero,
Acknowledgement zero.
Dear Best Friend I Ever Had,
You kill yourself, it makes me sad.
Dear Dead in a Bathtub,
Could have been, Narcan and a back rub.
Dear Grief and Shame,
Two left feet doin' donuts in the street don't have to feel that pain.
Dear Change,
Necessary but painful and strange.
Dear Inconvenient Truth,
Like a cavity - sometimes I'd like to pull that tooth. ◇

The Hunt

Marty McKemie

Sittin' on a ridge
Before the breaking dawn
Eyes wide waiting
For first light to show the
Path to be followed by our quarry.

Hiding in the scent of an evergreen
Tree unseen measured breath
Stiff from the stillness.

The crack of a twig brings long-
Awaited hope that the time is near.

Draw back your string, steady your aim
See the majestic beauty of your
Target and know the choice is
Yours. Take the shot. Take
A life. But let out a sigh
And look into the eyes of nature
Content with your choice to
Live and Let Live. ◇

If So Please Help

Nathaniel "Banjo" Wagner

Nice home, good good bed
Burn hole, couch cushion
Hard floor in a bando
The levee, the bushes
Three men bunk in the county
To a bed at the farm
The gutter, the street
Needle in the arm
Back to the county
And back to the farm
Tent city, Pogonip
Needle in arm
Repeat threepeat
Dead before mom
Face down on the sidewalk
Needle in arm
Anyone out there.....if so please help. ◇



90%

Lee Travis Drone

Stale

Like a 3-day-old bag lunch in county jail

Stuck

Like a rock and a hard place, parole hold no bail

Unsatisfied

Like a great white shark always biting never eating

Misunderstood

Like when Kanye West speaks his mind, most of the time

Simplified

Like children that don't know how to spell and the cell phones
that do

Forgotten

Like most of the inner cities of America

Unwanted

Like universal health care ... a border wall ... or harsher
sentencing for crimes

This is how I feel 90% of the time!

Stale, Stuck, Unsatisfied, Misunderstood, Simplified, and
Unwanted. ◇

Bruise

Richard "G-Pa" Walsh

Confusion, contusion, mindful thoughts

Lost:

Drugs in my system, brains all illusion

Like a baseball being tossed.

Back and forth, to and fro, no way for

Self-control.

How we treat ourselves in addiction, self-abuse

And painful affliction.

When will it cease, this dreadful disease,
That goes through our hands
 rolls across our lands
Like a swarm of locusts eating and
Destroying all of where they land.

Today's youth being ruined by the needle
And the spoon, others puffing on a piece
Of glass thinking they're better off. While
Responsible society, including all authorities
Running system, scoff.

When school boys forget their books
And Beauty Queens forget their looks.

How can this be, Conservatives shout!!!
How have we allowed this to happen?
Our children have been poisoning them-
selves and have lost honest direction,
Their minds being ripped off of any
Self-reflection.

So in all sincerity, what will it take
To end all this self-pollution?
One thing's for certain, the addicts
Are hurting, and we must find
A steadfast solution. ◇

Untitled

Richard A. Doughty

Bubbling up and over
Witch's brew
One part dope
A smidge of hope

Washed down with rotten fruit
Anything to distract
From the wrath of reality
Bright orange beanies
Only bring unwanted attention
To those thoughts you don't wanna mention
Staying in my lane
Didn't help stop the blood
The shame
This precious life is just a game
So detached, just plug me back
Into the matrix
Hat tricks where rabbits get pulled
Plugged in but unplugged sometimes I'd rather be
fooled. ◇

Abandonment

Lee Travis Drone

Left alone to fend on my own,
No way to eat,
No place to sleep,
As a little baby...

It may appear it didn't faze me.
Issues mentally swirl about my mind
Most of them sad,
dark, and of a horrible kind...
I'm a sad dad myself,
Getting punched in the mouth
While begging for help!
A drug addicted cracked-out dad
And the needle-plunging whore he had...
They got clean,
Yeah, give them a hand,
They pass judgement, no past

As if they never been down bad.
Sad...no understanding.

I beg you to help me be what you couldn't be for me.
Instead you turn up your nose
Like the roses in your garden dipped in shit still grow!

Abandonment. ◇

Home Was Never Safe

Juan "Replay" Flores

The rumble of the engine again...
The look of terror in our faces
Tears already flowing...
"He's here!" screams my sister Lucy
I'm caught in my emotions
My feet are now enveloped by cement
Eyes wide
A pool of tears at my feet
Everything is closing in
My peripheral vision is white
My heart is beating out of my chest.
"Johnny! Come on! You have to help!"
Screams my other sister Veronica
As she grabs my shirt
Pulling me out of my trance
And into action
I've wasted so much time already
We race to each room
Making sure everything is neat
The van's door slams...
"Oh my God!" screams Diana
"It's OK!" yells Lucy from the hallway
"The bathroom's good!"
"Living room's good!" says Veronica
and Diana and I straighten up the kitchen.

Now the keys at the door...
"Fuck!" I yell as we all work on
The dining room table
"It's OK Johnny, we're OK..." says Diana
Soothingly, rubbing my back as we finish.
I hurriedly pull my homework out of my
Backpack and onto the table when Diana
Checks all of our feet, she gasps
Now the screen door is open...
"Johnny, your slippers!"
Says Diana in a muffled whisper-scream.
"Que!" yells my Dad through the wooden door.
The knob is turning...
I race to my slippers in my room
Shove my feet into them and race back
He's inside...
"Por que handas corriendo?!" Yells my dad
I look down to hide the tears that are reforming
Then look to Diana and she shakes her head
With a look that tells me "Please don't
Johnny, just hold it in..."
He's here...
It's never safe when he's home. ◇

She Needs to Know

Marty McKemie

No I won't gaze deep and
get lost in her eyes.
No I won't hold her hand.
No I won't pull her close.
No I won't hold her in my arms.
No I won't run my fingers
through her hair.
No I won't gently kiss her lips.
No I won't love her forever.
She should know
I'm a liar. ◇

Ma-Ma-Ma My Persona

Richard A. Doughty

My surface like a prison wall built with my own hands.
Razor wire and gunner's tower, and all the many aspects of my
psyche
just inmates on the yard.
From the shooter's bird's-eye view, I kill ways of thinking,
headshots every one of them.
I do away with parts that no longer serve me.
Maybe some parole, parting ways with my brain without a fight.
But most have to exterminated, beheaded, incinerated, turned to
smoke.
Burying these old friends of mine never worked,
they always end up manifesting themselves in my life, one way or
another
like a zombified version of myself
back from the dead, and ready to party... ◇



Water Lust

Sean Bergman

Twisting colors faded thought, memories
splintered into space and time.
Music-laced magic fills ears perked
with fear. Frozen in time the lies
lose meaning, earth far away from
sight. Flying above the moon with
delight, gravity pulls the electric
adrenaline rush to the ground.
I flow to the ocean like lost water,
bringing with me splintered
 diamonds that crash like rose
 petals in the atmosphere
 like flames of blue through
the doors of Reality. ◇



The Pep Talk, Part I

Marty McKemie

Don't hold back.
you're holding back.
let it go fulfill your true potential.

You will fall
but not every time
you need to jump in
with both feet.

Headlong, just go for it
fight for it make it
Happen.

Push hard when there's
push back push harder.

Know it heart feel
it in your soul.

You can do it believe
in yourself find a way
find a reason to live
Life to the fullest. ◇

The Pep Talk, Part II

Marty McKemie

You piece of shit when are you going to do something with
your life you're worthless a waste nothing but a burden the
world would be better off without you you can't do nothing
right nobody wants you around can't stand to look at you a
waste of natural resources stupid lowlife motherfucker no good
scum-sucking dirtbag.

Do something right for once
Tie the noose
Load the gun
Go to the roof
Find a bridge
Take a handful
Tie the bag
Load a full shot
Stop looking in the mirror.
As Nike says
Just
Do
It. ◇

Tic-Toc

Juan "Replay" Flores

Some let it waste away
Some ride the moments like waves
Others find the moments a waste
While others still fight each moment with hate

The rich probably see each minute as a dollar
Spending each one only to get more
The genius spends all his hours a scholar
Never satisfied passing by every one with no remorse.

A lowly corpse spends every second under
Every second until it turns to mush
Ashes to ashes await eternal slumber
I'm wide awake til return to the dust.

Tics don't stop
Until each minute tocs
Wrists won't watch
As the sentence gets dropped.

Hour after hour
It's work work work
It's only check-out time
Once they throw me in the dirt.

Show me a father and son
I could show you where it hurts
If I live in the past
I will never find my worth

I forgive him already
I do
What do I look like beggin' for forgiveness, dad,
If I could never forgive you?

Blessings, curses, schemes...
You probably thought I couldn't see
Hoping I lost my mind
Probably thought I got blinded by my dreams

But here I am today
runnin' round the clock
Workin' toward my future
All I hear is tic-toc tic-toc
 (tic-toc tic-toc) ◇

Law and Disorder

Lee Travis Drone

Centered...
Although off balance
@ any moment ready to do damage...
Power is responsibility.
However, the damage is within me
POWERFUL
Real ill shit
Taking negatives to make positives...
My will WON'T be broken
My life CAN'T be taken.
Is it a dream or a joke...
Maybe a hoax...!!!
We gon' fight the good fight,
I'm NO LONGER tired...
Mentally ready...
All day and into the night!
Fuck Court!! ◇

Music/Life

Juan "Replay" Flores

The vibrations from the speakers
Like waves crashing over one another
Caress my skin. Almost as if
Creating a force field ensuring my
Safety. Saving me from the disintegrating
Light that is the world's view of me
In my own space under the covering of
Sound. As a savior benevolently rescuing
The saved. I sway to the beat.
I have no thought to think.

Only the bubble hovering over me,
Around me, under me. Heaving in
Rhythmic pulsation to remind me who
I am inside. When I leave the studio,
I do not leave my safe haven as a
Memory past. The music is in my body
With me. Never leaving, never left,
Never forgotten. ◇

A Friend That I Can Call Friend

Jonathan "Hustle Man Benjerman" Frazier

Someone to call
Someone to vent to
Someone to show up
Someone to help you
A friend that I can call friend
Someone to come
Someone to run to
Someone to uplift
When things seem unable to
A friend that I can call friend
Make me laugh when I'm mad
A brother or sister that I never had
The thought out of thin air
Thinking of one when they're not there
A true friend that truly cares
A friend that I can call friend
Sometimes a leader, sometimes a follower
Sometimes you follow me sometimes I follow you
You showed me things in me that I never knew
They say blood is thicker than water
I believe that that's not true
A friend I can call friend
Baby Lav that was you. ◇

New Year

Sean Bergman

As I rub the sleep from my eyes,
I strain to try and hold onto
the feelings I had in my dream.
But soon the blissful feeling fades
into my subconscious, gone forever
in my vast vessel of lost memories.
As my mind begins to clear
I exhale and I stretch.
On my stroll to the bathroom, I suddenly remember
where the liquor is kept.
As my head begins to pound, I struggle
to find the light switch, my
hands begin to shake.
And the hair of the dog
I cannot shake.
It's New Year's Day morning
and soon my demons
will be awake. ◇

Hour Glass

Marty McKemie

Mired in the sands of time watching
as each grain falls through the hourglass
wishing you could turn it over and start
the flow knowing you can't you try to hold on
to every last grain with all your might
as it slips through your fingers faster and faster.
There is less and less til the last grain falls. ◇

There Isn't an "I" in Eye?

Robert Cleveland

The eye is me.
I am me, most things
it sees might surprise you.

Was it fair to pass you by
without even a try to
grab your attention? Doubtful —
but to do so was sure to be
painful.

Selfish? Yes! But I
was able to "see" how much
you had healed as well as the
radiant joy that beamed
from within you.

If your eye catches me
I hope and wish
you do the same,
as if you saw the
slobbering beast that,
by some miracle,
startled away
or lost its appetite for
your flesh
just long enough for your escape
to be possible.

I will forever know
how sweet you did taste,
deep down with the whole
of my soul, my heart
how it raced.

Buck fever, some call it.
Bitch, you're out season!
I had my shot —
but you turned
for some reason.

EYE LOVE YOU THAT MUCH,
THAT'S HOW I AM ABLE
TO LET YOU ALONE.

Truly,
Mr. Nameless ◇

It's alright cuz I'm saved...

Richard A. Doughty

Through the halls
The proverbial Screech to your Zack Morris
Saved by the bell in my head
The exoshell on me's dead
I go Slater on the hater
My heart's gonna be with me later
Mr. Belding couldn't tell me a thing
My counter will, will counter Will
Even if he's good at hunting
He still thinks he's good for nothing. ◇

Broken

Marty McKemie

Hearts Dreams Families
Promises Lives

I see it every day in the
people walking by.

How can I help what could I do
to mend them?

I don't have the glue to do
so
but I still try.

It's what I have to do.

I will start now with
the most broken.

Myself. ◇

Lost in My Own World

Jonathan "Hustle Man Benjerman" Frazier

Find me lost in my own world
wounded but fearless
connected but disconnected
I could be anywhere
I could be far away but still right where I started
excited for sweet nothings
need to make a change
but still nothing has changed
like a spider caught in its own web

I created it so I should be able to get out
my belief is you have to believe
but still I have doubts
so how much do I believe
find my lost in my own world
looking for away out
I just want to make like a tree and leaf
but how do I leave
I can see but I'm blind
I'm still lost in my own world. ◇

A Different Addiction

Lee Travis Drone

Smells like cold perspiration on the face of a thug
It's HOT! ...
Although ...
The very first hours of the morning are FREEZING when
selling drugs
To see your breath
All alone in the night
Illuminated by the orange glow of a distant, ever present
streetlight.
Feel not only the weight of your survival mentally, physically
and truly.
Also
The weight of ill-gotten gains
The money attained
Mentally broken.
Hearing sounds in the night
FEARFUL!! ...
More money,
Or have I sealed my fate?
I LOVE the feel of fast money.
Sadness!!
I use my freedom as bait. ◇

Danger Man

Nathaniel "Banjo" Wagner

Once I met a man under a bridge.
He told me as we shared
whiskey and the needle
that he don't fly in planes.
"I'm too scared to die in a
plane crash," he said.

He told me this as he lit
up a smoke and rode off
into a snow storm on his Harley
without a helmet. ◇

Dickie

Richard A. Doughty

He had a cold handle

Posted on the dusty old mantle
was a picture of the heyday

Leather chaps, beards, ponytails and tats

The ol' ladies that came and went
to save a cent and pay the rent
he'd slang and spent fast

With nothing left to show except for
moving slow

Doobie smoke

Some groovy jokes

And that cold handle. ◇

Love

Don Feeley

Love makes a person want to try,
Even when the desire isn't really there.
Love is the motivation for us to change,
Even when we don't really want to care.
Love causes us to lay down our pride,
So we don't have to prove one another's fault.
Stopping our desire to always make war
By bringing our feet to a decisive halt.
Love covers the many sins that we commit
Repeatedly against one another.
Creating a formula that makes it possible
For them to embrace as caring brothers.
Love is the power who called Lazarus back from death,
From where for four days he was asleep in that room.
Love is the one who cast the demons into the pigs
As they obeyed His voice's quiet boom.
Love is who provided salvation as a gift
When because of sin humanity was at a loss.
Sinless blood was required for our redemption,
So Christ gave his own on the altar of the cross.
Love is who lived the perfect and blameless life,
From its beginning to its very end,
Proving the world knows no greater love
Than one willing to lay their life down for their friend. ◇



Thought Ever Present

Lee Travis Drone

Metaphorically challenged
Like a brain that's off balance
That's a simile...
That same simile is deadly.
I promise, it was killing me!
Back and forth
Side to side
Up and down
Like a roller-coaster ride
Kick flip
Then rail grind...
The system seems dead
Like the drug riddled mush inside my head
Most of the windows are clear
Except for the one in the back
The one behind Marty with the head oil smear! ◇

Just When?

Logan W. Thomason

Actin' real cool
 running the streets like a fool
copping
an attitude...not of gratitude.
Greatly making my ways
of sin, no fortitude...
no vitamins...no invite 'em ins...
but here they are, warranted or not, you got caught...
 Flashing lights, bubble gums,
not to chew, just to arrest you.
Watch your ass, wash your ass,
see an ass, get assigned, new
clothing line.
 Stand in one. Get your food.

New attitude, adjusted no more
rude behavior extraordinary...better
than ordinary...Freedom. Now. From. Then.
Hope you learned a lesson...
If not, you'll be back. Just when? ◇

Poems

Fermin Lopez

I heard a lot of poems
in my time.
Most don't rhyme,
some you will never again find.
Some never
written, just told
from my mind.
Some are angry,
some are kind,
some cost a lot,
some you can find
for as little as
a dime.
A lot of people have a lot
of poems. And this
is just one of mine.
It might not be
on paper that's lined —
to me
that is fine. ◇

A poem about a train....

Richard A. Doughty

Laid gently on the earth
Metal to metal rolling forward
Gaining momentum
So connected to earth yet still a machine
This is the way to travel
The strangers in the bar car who have had one too many
The short term relationships you encounter
You can bare your soul to these people, never to see them again
And again rolling forward, outside you glimpse a sparrow, a horse, a
cow, a human, and fields, roads,
Parking lots, cars, as far as the eye can see
Colorful graffiti bringing life to the more drab areas
Where hobos shatter empty 40's and hide from judgmental eyes
And again we roll on ◇

Sides

Marty McKemie

What a concept sides is.
So many different meanings
and views. To pick a side
or be on a side the upside
the downside Right or Left
This or That side
Chose a side
North South East West
Where you're from, where you're
going, the good side
the bad side.
Which side of the coin
will you pick? ◇

Loss After Loss

Lee Travis Drone

My mind's mission is mentally mangled,
Every positive thought I have is personally strangled.
My worst enemy is me.

I dream vivid dreams,
Crocodile tears for goals not achieved.
My mind's mission is mentally mangled.

At times my own image disgusts me,
Always on the turn from those that want to bust me.
My worst enemy is me.

Thoughts of children, family,
So much love, too much loss.
My mind's mission is mentally mangled

The negatives stand out when I dwell,
Positives seem naught, easily forgot.
My worst enemy is me.

Can I change the pattern
Loss after heart-wrenching loss?
My mind's mission is mentally mangled,
My worst enemy is me! ◇

Untitled

Nathaniel "Banjo" Wagner

Deep in my soul there's a hole where my money goes.
I don't wanna heal no more.
Health is the overrated game that I play.
I'm a true martyr of the fucken-off
counterculture.

My family won't answer the phone,
heroin calls my name every godforsaken day.
I know its love is phony and a fraud,
But Jesus just don't send pinpricks of love
up and down my spin...if you know what I'm sayin'.

My mama won't let me in her house so
the whiskey warms my bones as I sleep
on the cold concrete street.

I don't want our love, I want loathing and fear.
I don't want blood to fall from the tears of my peers.

I just want to hitch hike north, so my dog
can head-butt my face, so I can taste the
tinge of copper from the blood in my mouth. ◇



Caged Bird Sing

Richard A. Doughty

The feeble tweet
The cheat
The defeat
The jive turkey
That has the nerve to sing
Aiming octaves up
At those that share the sky
From the cracked streets
Where war torn/unborn/crack freaks
Lack sleep
Out the side of the beak
Like Daffy didn't duck
And Donald didn't give a fuck
We were sold a wolf ticket
A duck tale
About how we just fail
Birds of a similar feather
Together in similar flocks
Then chirp as soon as the cops
Sprinkle the birdseed. ◇



Untitled

Sean Bergman

Sunrises shadows fall fast
Light uncovers secrets past
I wonder
If your minds can grasp
(Hearts like magnets travel fast)
Our minds are ones who find out last,
Trust to sadness
Hot to cold
Remember always secrets told. ◇

Missing You

Richard Walsh

I'm writing to inform you, of all that we had planned,
It's imperative that with me, you'll make this crucial stand.

Plans aren't made for nothing, and this I think you know;
I'm also well aware, you don't like driving in the snow.

The timeline is upon us, that we agreed would be sufficient.
Let's not allow the course of the weather steer us inefficient

So now you know, the point I'm trying to stress.
You're well aware, I love you so, again I must confess.

If necessary, and if you would like, I'd surely pick you up.
After all, you know, I drive a 4-wheel pick-em-up truck.

It's safe, runs well, and I'd protect you with my life.
After all, you did agree to be my loving wife.

It's been twelve days since you've been gone,
And I'm lonely with frustration.

Ever since we've been together,
You've aroused my infatuation.

Your wisdom and love is simply so outrageous,
Your glowing heart that radiates is simply so contagious. ◇

Face

Lee Travis Drone

800 bucks, a flat tire, and a quarter tank of gas,
A questionable neighborhood, a definite puppy mill, fear of
Being robbed, and a warning not to touch your dad...Wheew
What a day!!

Then out you came...my heart skipped a beat!
A handful of gray fuzz w/big bright blue eyes.
Broken tail, sharp teeth and breath only a mother could love,
You made me insane!
Really you gave me a reason to say "cute" as much as possible,
The ohh's and the ahh's
Expanded vocabulary!
I was a grown man,
I dressed up a dog
I liked it,
So what...
Thank you my friend...
Always yours,
Travis ◇

Untitled

Fermin Lopez

When I look at the Christmas tree
I think of my family that misses me.
When I see the birds fly
I think of the freedom of outside.
When I see the plants grow
I think of the places I want to go.
When I see the barbed wire
I think how sharp I'm going to look
In new attire.
When I see the judge
I think about how to let go
Of another grudge. ◇

Imagine

Lee Travis Drone

Imagine...

Being held...
Made to answer.
Being talked down to,
All a misunderstanding.

Imagine...

5:45
Strip search
Emasculation
Shackles
Loaded like sardines in the dark

Imagine...

Doors unlocked
Then locked again
Sally ports
Garages...

Imagine...

Crackdowns

Putdowns

Garbled transmissions

And tasers.

Imagine...

Court

Bright lights

DAs

PDs

Imagine...

Hoping

Praying

And trying to understand what EVERYONE is saying.

Imagine...

Reality

Lies

Broken dreams

Our judicial system

Imagine...

16 months later

Risk vs. reward

Begging for some dumb luck

Missing life, loved ones, and being mentally free

NOW STOP!

Realize that is the true story of

My life, in this moment! ◇

In the End

Richard A. Dougherty

In the end,
Do people care, then again
Food for worms in my chest
Was I deserving of the flesh
In the end
Do people wear it on their sleeve
Fads in laymen's terms that change with seasons breeze
In the end
Do I care what you think, when your fangs sink into my veins and
Drink
In the end
Can I give a little bit
Will they bite or just let the vittles sit ◇

A Poem Could Be Deep

Jonathan "Hustle Man Benjerman" Frazier

A poem could be deep
like the love that I have for you.
Question to myself: how long will the love I have last for you?
Bonnie and Clyde, will my love ride or die for you
I'd rather love and live for you.
Let's plant a seed
and watch it grow and live through you,
express the way I feel
and let you know how I feel about you.
Ask myself will I stand in the rain for you
wake up everyday and go to work
then come home and share my pain with you.
Someone to hold onto you are, look up to God's Blue Sky
and make a wish on a shooting star.
You complete me by far, I wish God give you strength
and teach you how to live, something special you are.

With or without me I wish you to be happy.
But without you I'm cloudy, you make me better by far.
I want to see you complete, set your goals and
follow your dreams.
I want to see you achieve,
continue to follow God and take the lead.
God is in you I believe
and I believe a poem could be deep. ◇

Lost Art

Lee Travis Drone

Love is like a lost art,
Hieroglyphs on a wall
Or Indian art...
Found in the hidden section of a closed Utah park
You might need to be Indiana Jones to find it
imagine...the hat, the whip, and you —
Leather jacket, khaki pants
Searching the world
For a partner to dance.
Love is like a lost art. ◇

Thirst No More

Richard A. Doughty

I thirst no more for these trivial pursuits
I will not develop a fiendish hunger in my eye for just any old
leather boot
I'll save my angst for more valuable loot
I'll save some face, but in the right light, and the wrong place
They still aim and shoot. ◇

Falling Uphill

Nathaniel "Banjo" Wagner

Here, fine sir, hop outta your Porsche
Come sit on this porch
Let yer maestro tell tales
Of proverbial truths of true Hobo Wisdom.

I ain't never filled out no job application
They don't apply to the like of a man like me
I ain't paid one red copper cent of income tax
neither.

I sleep my summer nights away
On that beach right over there
Some nights with strange women I will not
See again and I've had millionaires
With all their stresses and problems
Listen with envy flashing out of their
eyes.

The appreciation of this art cannot
Be bought. It is a virtuous gift from
The gods. The actions of today
Build the memories of tomorrow.
We must master the lost art of falling uphill
And learn to appreciate the bad for all it's
Good for. ◇

I must be a CAT

Richard A. Doughty

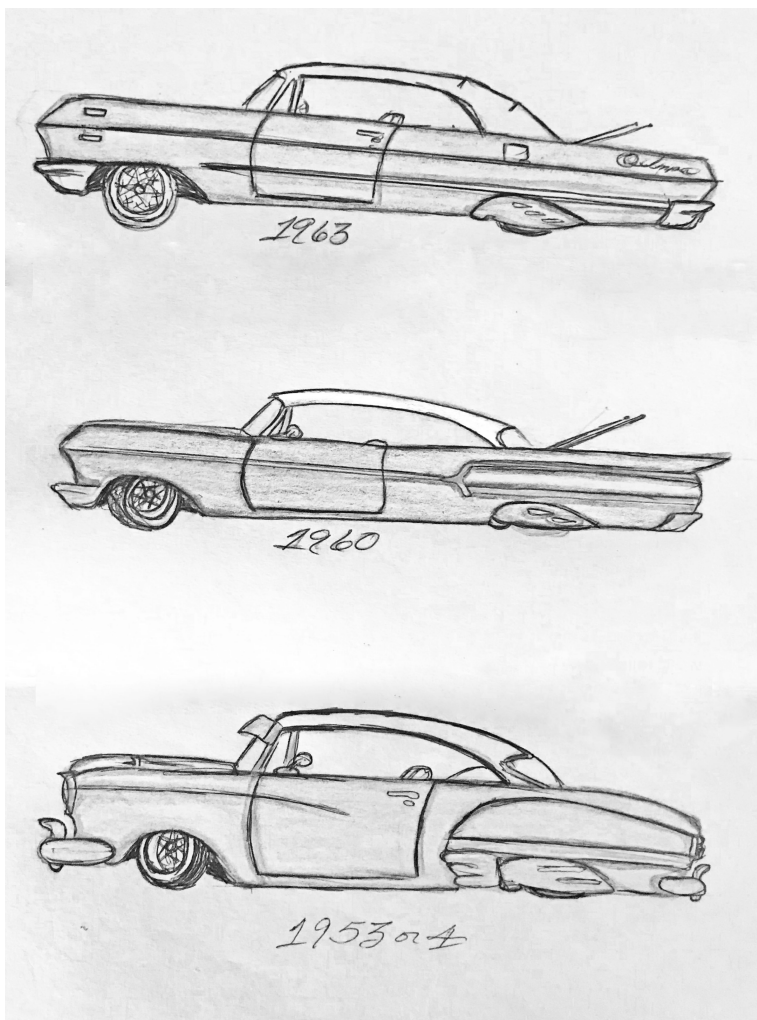
I must be a cat
As many wounds as I've had to lick
I always land on my feet
Even after losing focus
I was serious, the cat nip had me curious, delirious, and
 somewhat nefarious
But when all is said and done
I just need a safe place to purr
I must be a cat
When they shake that box of friskies
I've been known to push up close to a leg or two
I ain't too proud to beg as a cat, and I don't have to go too far to
 find a rat
I've dragged one indoors as a token of my affection
To my loved ones who remind me to use my whiskers wisely
And find my direction. ◇



Fast!

Lee Travis Drone

Fleeting, flurry, living life in a hurry...
Been up for a week.
I'm sweaty, but I'm NOT dirty!
No time for the bullshit
Darting in darkness
In and out of traffic
My trappin' transgressions are tragic
In and out of houses
Monetary gain with no time loss
That's the goal...
Passed out on Mission Street
Jumped the curb
Almost hit a pole
Money motivated, but I'm fading
On speed, while selling speed
Warning signs and caution flags...
Many I passed while gassing
Overzealous greed
In a patriotic American fashion! ◇



Creative Thoughts

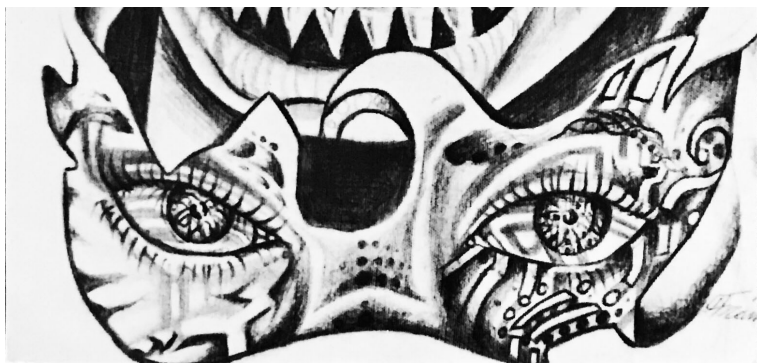
Jonathan "Hustle Man Benjerman" Frazier

I can feel the vibration
Like the train when it's going
I can hear the sounds
Like birds chirping in the morning
it makes my feet want to tap
and my fingers want to snap
Rocking my head back and forth
To the electric waves going through my mind
I was made for this.
Feeling reborn before my pen ever touches paper
writing words down with ink made by men
Breathing rhymes in my mind before they're conceived
Creative thoughts that were meant to be
This is a part of me
Let me dig deeper
Into my own creation
As if I was hunting for something better
Telling myself
It's not on me, it's in me
While I'm putting it all together
I was made for this, creative thoughts. ◇

Untitled

Richard A. Doughty

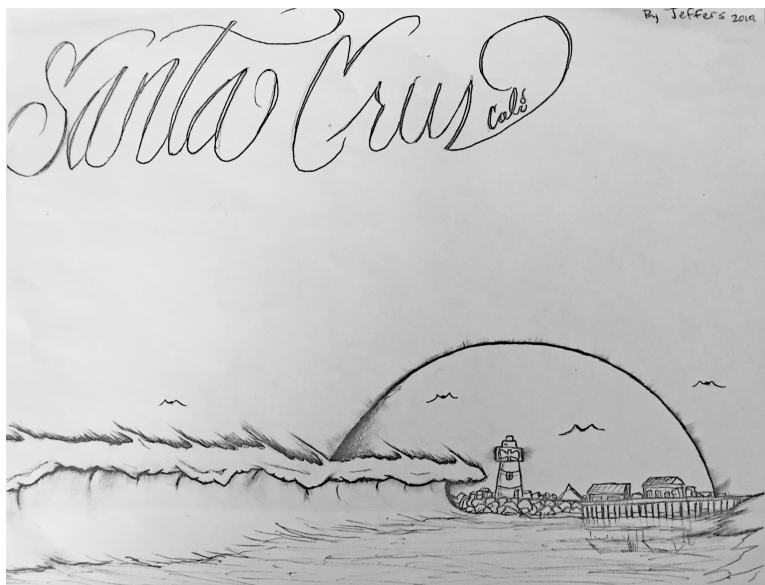
Change
is pain.
But I've watched seasons effortlessly
whisk away
I've also gazed at seasons through the
window of my mind
like waiting for water to boil
the impending doom
the existential dread
just off-balance chemicals
it was all in my head
or was it
these physical obstructions
something you can rub up against
But these walls crumble over time
what was once barriers, open wide
Now they can see inside. ◇



Santa Cruz

Fermin Lopez

I love Santa Cruz County
Located in Central Coast, Cali
Not the pace to be when
You're a two-strike felon
With a no-bail probation
Warrant on your melon.
I didn't tuck tail
But I knew they were coming
So I bailed to the ocean of highways
Without a paddle.
I ended up in Seattle, I went there to hide.
Never did I expect to realize
What I was seeing before my eyes.
A sea of people
Who said hello and goodbye
No one driving by yelling "I hope you die."
I remember the day
I was caught
I almost cried.
They took me back where I didn't want to be brought.
They put me behind a fence to which they had
The only key to the lock.
Sometimes I get lost in my thoughts
And think back to an experience I never forgot.
As we enter a new year
I've got old fears
About what I'll do
When I get out of here! ◇



You Can't Be Serious!

Lee Travis Drone

Hey you,
Yes, you over there.
Why do you ALWAYS end up where I'm at?
Remember the time I was with my son at the park?
You drove by multiple times, looking at me w/ disdain.
I tried not to look back, didn't want to engage.
It's hard not to look at that fancy car you have.
On top of that, my 6th sense made me look!
What made you choose me?
My hair, my backwards hat...no...it had to be my shoes.
Yes...definitely the shoes, they were blue...LOL.
Maybe you saw a father and son playing and it warmed
You heart?
Maybe you wanted to play with us?
That had to be it!
Next time, just get out and join us!
Although you may think you were just doing your job,
You scared the kid...NOT COOL!

Signed,

Every Father Stalked By Police While With Children!! ◇

Cuffs

Richard A. Doughty

My course of action should start
With a foundation
Not built on sandbars
Easily destroyed like ant farms.

I was left to my tedious tunneling,
To where I don't know, but at least
I was at peace, but scared of where
I won't go.

I won't show emotions
My neuro's plastic
But my synapsis is a fizzled out
Hat trick
Plenty times I backslid.

Muscle memory
I hustle endlessly
And run from anything

Married to my ego
And we both get a wedding ring:

CUFFS! ◇

Smokewater

Sean Bergman

When I dream of the past memories surface like drips of water
dreams ripped from the pages flowing like an icy river of pain
painted beautiful. Cold's what I picture, ice, and I shiver from
the sting of the memory. They fade fast but leave the taste of
salt in my mouth I rub my eyes to wipe the tears. It's a
powerful message powerful and bold old but new gone
forever but returning like a storm that blows a feather into a
volcano's smoke, lost but not forgotten in the eye of my mind,
eternal but hidden in the shadows of the past. I take my breath
like it's the first in days. I twist and turn my body burning
with stiffness. Awake forever or alive but dead. I will never
know, and I don't wish to. ◇

Submerged

Richard A. Doughty

Submerged
subterranean, balled up subatomic
aquamarine malaise
thought bubbles slowly float away
then dissipate, then disappear
or maybe just soak back into where they came
from
the force of waves more of a lullaby
from down here

the sun more of a filter from down here

the path I lay more of a nothingness from
down here

thought bubbles slowly float away

existing on the way

then dissipate

then disappear. ◇



Thank you to the poets who made this book. And thanks to those who attended and participated in class, but whose work does not appear. Please know that you were heard and appreciated.

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